

THE MORPHO-SYNTAX OF ADVERBS IN CHRAMBO

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Abstract

This article seeks to describe the morpho-syntax of adverbs in Chrambo, a Bantoid language spoken by an estimated 29,000 speakers in the village of Bambalang, Ndop Subdivision, Ngoketunjia Division, North West Region of Cameroon. It also aims to contribute to the knowledge of adverbs by providing their description in terms of the morphological structure, functions, and syntax. To achieve this objective, data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources, and the analysis was conducted within a structural framework. The findings reveal that the language has both pure and derived adverbs and are realised by particles, such as [ní jí] "fast", as individual lexical items, through reduplication of words like [shishi] "well", derived words like "[ní njí] "with strength", and word groups such as [ngohu yua] "last year". It was also observed that the majority of adverb clusters in the language encode meanings related to manner, frequency, magnitude, group size, location, and time. The syntax governing their co-occurrence is constrained by a hierarchical order and is seen as the nature of the interface between them is explained based on their distribution and properties in the language.

Keywords: Adverbs, Chrambo language, Morpho-syntax, Types of adverbs, syntactic distribution.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An adverb is derived from a Latin word "adverbium", from "ad" to "verbium" (verb) and the nominal "suffix-ium", (Butterfiels 2015). The term implies that the principle function of adverb is to act as modifiers of verbs or verb phrases. According to Payne (1997), Modern linguists note that the term adverb has come to be used as a kind of catch-all category, used to clarify words with various types of syntactic behavior, not necessarily having much in common except that do not fit into any of other available category. Adverbs are modifiers of an action word, a descriptor, another intensifier, a relational word, an expression, a statement, or a sentence that communicates some connection of quality, place, time, degree, number, cause, resistance, assertion, or forswearing. They provide context in a sentence by describing how, when, where and to what extent something occurs.

Saah (2004), believes that adverbs have not received a lot of attention in African languages in general, and (cf Nurse & Philipson 2003), bantu languages in particular. This paper seeks to contribute to the knowledge of adverbs in Chrambo by providing a descriptive analysis of the semantic distribution in terms of morphological

structures, functions and syntax of adverbs in the language. Chrambo is an Eastern Grass fields Bantu language spoken by an estimated 29,000 people (Gordon 2005) in the village of Bambalang, Ndop Subdivision, Ngoketunjia Division, and North West Region, Cameroon. It is listed in the Ethnologue of World Languages as 'Bambalang'. Data for this work was collected from both primary and secondary sources and adopts a descriptive approach.

1.2 Word order

Chrambo language is subject verb object (SVO). Word order alternation can produce an object, verb subject (OSV) in order to analyse constructions such as topicalization, focalization and relative clauses as illustrated in the following:

- 1- À fé piɛŋ nì miyǎ (SVO)
3sg give bag to girl
" Give the bag to the girl"
- 2- Mímɓà yé nì n-jáí ndĩŋ vīgĩ (SVO)
man that see brother possessive
"That man saw our brother"
- 3- ɒ-kwǎ yè mǐnú (SVO)
I like the dog
"I like the dog"

2 Classification of adverbs

Adverbs in the Chrambo language can be classified into four categories: pure or simple adverbs, compound adverbs, derived adverbs and adverbs formed through reduplication (Mbu 2021). Such adverbs can equally be classified according to the function they designate: adverbs of manner, frequency, time, place etc, (Mbu 2021).

2.1 Pure or Simple Adverbs

Like many Bantoid languages, Chrambo has very few lexical items belonging to the category of pure adverbs. Though few in number, they designate several functions. Consider the example below:

- 4-[shíshí] “well” (manner)
- 5- yua “yesterday” (time)
- 6- tán “market” (place)
- 7- yá “always” (frequency)

2.2 Compound Adverbs

A compound adverb is a construction in which one adverb is paired with another adverb, or a verb. They are used to modify verbs, adjectives or another adverb. Consider the following examples.

- 8- lle-mbbi ŋkaon
Plu. Somedays before
"some days before",
- 9- pa lle-mbbi ŋga tɔgo
plu. Day some after
"after some days."

2.3 Derived Adverbs

The Chrambo language, equally makes use of adverbs that are derived either from the particle [ní], preposition or from the noun to form an adverbial expression examples are shown below.

- 10- ní nji
with power
powerfully
- 11- b- a ní tɔ ngɔhu yíní
he p2 come year last
"He came last year."

Considering the examples above, it can be seen that in example (10), the particle /ní/ is pre-post to the word it modifies while in example (11), the word /yíní/ is post-posed to the noun it modifies.

2.4 Reduplication

In linguistics, reduplication is a morphological process in which the root or stem of

a word or even the whole word is repeated exactly or with slight change. Reduplication is used in inflection to convey a grammatical function, such as plurality, intensification, etc., and in lexical derivation to create new words. It is often used when a speaker adopts a more expensive tone or figurative than the ordinary speech and is often but not exclusively iconic in meaning. The language under study make use of both partial and total reduplication as far as adverbs are concerned. To begin, numerals in the language undergo partial reduplication to form adverbs which function to designate size of groups. Consider the examples below.

- 12a- Kwe- four
- b- Kweyíkwe
"Groups of four"
- c- Pá-two
- d- PáyíPá
"two by two"
- e- tɛ -one
- f- tɛ yí tɛ
"One by-one"

From the data above, we understand that for a numeral to reduplicate, we need to add the morpheme /yí/ which functions as a connector for addition.

Full Reduplication

Total or full reduplication occurs when an entire word, word stem or root is repeated. In Chrambo, its function is for emphasis. Consider the examples below.

- 13a-Shìshì well
- b-pɔpɔɔ slowly
- c-pie-pie red
- d-kwì-kwì short
- e-ŋgɛŋgɛ sometimes
- f-kwɔ-kwɔ bed
- g-ntsɔ- ntsɔ work

3 Functions of Adverbs

According to Mbu (2021), adverbs in most African languages can perform a wide range of functions: they can modify verbs, adjectives, and even other adverbs. There can either be placed before, or after the word they modify. They equally play some adverbial functions which can be carried out by single words, or multiple word adverbial phrases and clauses to show the time,

manner, frequency, place, degree and the level of certitude. This section describes the different types and functions of adverbs in chrambo.

3.1 Adverbs of Manner

Adverbs of manner in Chrambo depicts the way something is done. First, we are going to give examples of single words to check the morphology of the word and secondly put these words in

sentences to examine their syntactic positions and functions. Consider the examples below:

- 14a- pəpərə slowly
- b-ni nji powerfully
- c-dina nu carefully
- d- njaa very

From the data above, we realize that some adverbs of manner in the Chrambo language have the structure of individual items (see examples 14a, and c above), while others are compounded such as examples (14b, and d above). As far as position is concerned, they can be pre-post or pose-post. That is, they can appear after or before the word they modify. In the examples that follow, adverbs are in bold while the words they modify are in italics. In (26a and b), they are placed pose-post to the word they modify and at the sentence terminal position.

- 15A- a *tie* **ní jí** (**final position**)
3rd run with strength
"She ran with strength."
- b- a swí **njaa shíshí** (**final position**)
He smoke very good
"He smokes very well."
- c- Ali tso me nwáhálí **pəpərə** mɔ njiedá yí (**medial position**)
Ali is read book gently in room his
"Ali is reading gently in his room"
- d- Píkí **yá** n-chwí píe yígí **shíshí'i**
we **really** punt boat our **well**
"we really punted our boat well"

As earlier mentioned, the examples above show that adverbs of manner in the Chrambo language can occupy the initial, medial and final positions as examples (15 a, b, c, and d) can show. Equally important is the fact that in examples (15 a, and b, the adverb /**ní jí**/, "powerfully" and /**njaa shíshí**/ "very good" are placed after the verb /*tie*/ "run" and / *swí*/ "smoke" respectively and are all modifying the verbs "run" and "smoke". It is however important to note that in example (15b), we have the co-occurrence of two adverbs \b{njaa} and \shíshí meaning "very" and "good". While \shíshí is showing the manner \bjaa is showing the intensity. In (15c), the adverb /**pəpərə**/ "gently" is placed after the noun /nwáhálí/ "book" which it modifies. Concerning their positioning, we realized that it is placed at the medial position. Looking at example (15d), one realizes that there are two adverbs, the first is \b{yá} which is placed between the subject and the verb it modifies, while the second is \shíshí'i placed at the sentence final position modifies the noun /píe/ "boat".

3.2 Frequency Adverbs

Adverbs of frequency in Chrambo, are words that depicts the number of times an action happens within a particular period of time, (Mbu 2021). In English language, adverbs of frequencies are generally being placed after the noun or pronoun that acts as the subject and before the main verb if there is just one verb in the sentence. However, in Chrambo, they are placed at the final position just before the noun they modify. Consider the examples below:

- 16a- ηwɔηε- "always"
- b- ηεοηε- " often "
- c- Pítε+ **kí'ε**
some times
" sometimes"

- d- Píkí yáge m̀̀n̄ ɲyĩɲ ɲwɔɲɛ
We go Loc farm always
"we always go to the farm"
- e- Píkí yáge m̀̀n̄ ɲwáhálí ɲɛɔɲɛ
We go Loc book often
"we often go to school"
- f- Píkí yáge m̀̀n̄ ɲyĩɲ Pítɛ+ kɪ'ɛ
We go Loc farm some time
"We sometimes go to the farm"
- g- Á n̄ n-tho ɲ-ḡɛi nú Tíshù ɲḡɛɲḡɛ
I p PROG go prog time time
"I used to go to Bamenda"

In the examples above, one realizes that adverbs of frequencies in this language are placed at the sentence final position after the noun as seen in examples (16d, e, and f) above. It is also worth noting that in examples (16 d, e. and f), above, adverbs of frequencies are post-posed to the nouns they modify.

3.3 Adverbs of Time

Knowing when something is happening, happened, or will happen has a lot of significance in the lives of human beings. Adverbs of time are meant to denote when exactly an action is taking place (Butterfield 2015). Here are samples of Chrambo temporal adverbs:

- 17- a-ndwɛ "now "
b- ɲgɛ-nduon " later "
c- ɪkaon " before "
d- ta'a-ɲgɛ " at once "
e- Shi'a " today "
f- ɲga'o- yini " next year "

Temporal adverbs in chrambo consist of single words as seen in examples (17a, and c), two words construction as in (17b), (d), and (f), above.

- 18a- a ní tso **yua** (final position),
he p2 come yesterday
"He came yesterday."
- b- a ní tso **ɲga'o- yíní**
he p2 come year last
"He came last year."
- c- A ní ngo krá **tútú Shi'a**
3rd p2 go prk morning today
"he visited the park this morning"
- d- A shî má ní mɔ **nɔ fí**
3rd FUT come back in month new
"she will comeback in the new month"

The analysis of time adverbs in Chrambo points out that adverbs usually occur after the core elements (subject, verb and object.) of the sentence or clause. In the language under study, putting an adverb that tells us when an action takes place at the end of the sentence is neutral, but when they appear in other positions it is to give emphasis. Considering the examples above, we realize that in (18a, b, and c). the adverbial expressions of time are placed at the sentence final position. to draw emphases on the time.

3.4 Adverbs of Place

Adverb of place are adverbs or expressions that change or qualify the meaning of a sentence by telling

us where things happen. They always talk about the location where the action of the verb is being carried. According to Payne (1997), there are six simple roles that can help determine adverbs of place.

- 1-An adverb of place always talks about where the action of the verb is being carried out.
- 2-Adverbs of place can be directional,
- 3-They are normally placed after the sentence's object
- 4-Adverbs of place can refer to distance
- 5-An adverb of place can indicate an object's position in relation to another object.
- 6-Some adverb of place can contain more than one word. Consider the examples in Chrambo below:

- 19 a- núhɔ búfí kwɔ-kwɔ
put cat bed
"put the cat on the bed"
- b- níhí búfí mbɔ píe
put cat bad in
"put the cat in the bag"
- c- twɔ nə ɲwahalə piepie hɛnɛ
bring the book red here
"bring the red book here "
- d- ndá tá pɔ mbá bárá
house father+mine is near by
"my father's house is near-by"

Considering the examples above, we realize that adverbs of place in the language under study are placed after the clause they modify. Note should be taken that adverbs of place do not modify adjectives or other adverbs in this language. Some adverbs of place can be used as prepositions.

3.5 Adverbs Use as Prepositions

In Chrambo, when used as preposition, adverbs of place are followed by a noun. Consider the example below:

- 20a- Pia lɛɛ njí ntíhí yɛnɛ
Lets hide behind tree that
"let's hide behind that tree"
- b- Á mághá prapín ghɔ fɛ
He drop plate the ground
"He dropped the plate on the ground"
- c- mbɔhú mbɔ núhú pín ghɔ nkúwɔ tábrɛ
I+ beg hand keep dish the on table
"Please put the dish on the table"

The adverbs in the examples above are also prepositions because they modify actions and describe spatial or temporal relations. We should also understand that the examples above are not used to form prepositional phrases. This means that each preposition functioning as an adverb appears without an object. Because of this, it is not only a preposition but also an adverb.

3.6 Adverbs of Negation

Adverbs of negation generally negate an action, thought, or phrase in some way. These adverbs are generally placed before other adverbs or adjectives present in a sentence. Adverbs of negation can also strengthen or clarify a sentiment by being used together with nouns and verbs, (Aarts 2011). Let's consider the examples below:

- 21a- a lɛ **núnká** tsənú shíco
he neg come school
"he no longer come school"
- b- a **shíha** níchí ríshí
he neg eat riseú
"He never eats rice"
- c- a **shíha** máchirá chínánkú
he neg speak public/amongst people
"e never speaks amongst people"
- d- Á lɛ njĩ jĩhĩjĩ ɲǎ a ʃɪn tɔ
He p1 know neg that fut come
"Little did he know he will come"

From the examples above, it can be seen that adverbs of negation in Chrambo are placed between the subject pronoun and the verb

3.7 Adverbs of Quantity

Quantity adverbs modify the quantity or intensity of an adjective, a verb, or another adverb. Concerning their position, they are typically placed immediately before the words they modify (Butterfield 2015). Below are some examples:

- 22a- A nú **ntənɲ** kɪ
3rd drink much water
"he drinks much water"
- b- A ɲwodíɛ njá wɔ **ʃé** mɔɔɲ
3rd always eat just little food
"she often/ always eat little food"
- c- **apíhí** ʃegě pie ghɔ ləno
almost small bag the full
"The bag is almost full"
- d- A ghí **ʃé** chrambo
She speak little Chrambo
She speaks little Chrambo

In Chrambo, they are pre-posed to the word they modify as seen in Example (22a and b) above. In examples 22a, the quantifier adverb /**ntənɲ**/ "much" is pre-posed to the verb /kɪ/ "water", meanwhile in 22b, the quantifier, /**shíhá**/ much is placed before /**mɔɔɲ**/ "food".

4-SYNTACTIC ORDERING

This section is devoted to the analysis of the co-occurrence of adverbs and the constraints resulting from such co-occurrence. Basically, the language under study has the co-occurrence of two or three words within a clause or sentence. Consider the examples below:

4.1- Co-occurrence of two adverbs

The order of adverbs in Chrambo is manner, place, frequency, time and purpose. It is unusual to find several adverbs modifying the same word. However, it is possible to have the co-occurrence of two or three adverbs co-occurring successively within a sentence. In this case will have this order, manner first followed by frequency as seen in example (23a) or an adverb of manner followed by another adverb of manner as seen in example (23b.)

- 23a- Píkí yá ntɔ- ntɔ **shí** ɲwodíɛ
We s.m live life good always
" we live well always"

- b- Píkí yá nfá nfá shí shí
We S.M work work well well
"we work very well"

Example 23a can equally be reversed by moving the last adverb \ηwodíε\ always and place it after the subject pronoun\ Píkí\ without distorting the meaning of the sentence. Consider (23c) below:

- 23c- Píkí yá ηwodíε ntso- ntso shí
We S.M always work good
We always work well

4.2-Co-Occurance of Three Words

As earlier mentioned, when three adverbs co-occur in the language under study, we have this order: Manner, followed by an adverb of intensity, and finally ends with an adverb of frequency as seen in example (24a) below. In example (24b), we realized that there are more than three adverbs successively placed in the way that one follows the other without the insertion of any word between them. Here we have intensity, followed by manner, next we have place and finally time.

- 24a -Píkí yá nfá nfá nja'a shí ηwodíε
We S.M work work very well always
"we work very well always"

- b- Píkí yá ntará nja'a shí shícúlú jua
We SM talk very well school yesterday
" we talk very well at school yesterday"

However, we can also find the use of more than two adverbs placed at different positions of the same sentence or clause. Consider the example (25) below:

- 25- pɔpɔɔ, Banda ní ntú nkíha bó juá
small small Banda past play good ball yesterday
"Slowly, Banda played football brilliantly yesterday"

Looking at the example above, it is clear that manner adverbs can be placed at different positions of the sentence. For example, we have /pɔpɔɔ/ "slowly" placed at the initial and nkíha/ "good" placed at the medial position. These manner adverbs can be followed by adverb of time and not that of frequency or quantity. Consider the example below

- 26a- *pɔpɔɔ, Banda ní ntú nkíha bó jé
small small Banda past play good ball small
"Slowly, Banda played football brilliantly small"
- b- *pɔpɔɔ, Banda ní ntú nkíha bó ηwodíε
small small Banda past play good ball always
"Slowly, Banda played football brilliantly always "

The sentences above are ungrammatical because in this language some manner adverbs cannot be followed by adverbs of frequency or quantity.

5-CONCLUSION

We set out in this research paper to present the morpho-syntax of adverbs in the Chrambo language using the descriptive approach. From the analysis of data, the findings point out that: the language makes use of three forms of adverbs: simple, compound reduplication. The researcher equally discovered that major clusters of adverbs in the language play varied functions, such as: manner, time, place, frequency, quantity, and negation. Concerning the form of adverbs in the language, we observed that there exist both pure and derived adverbs. Again, that the syntax surrounding adverbs in the language indicate that adverbs can occupy the initial, medial, and final position depending on their functions. Finally, that two or three adverbs can co-occur within an adverbial clause or sentence and the order can be altered without any effect on the semantics of the sentence.

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