

STRUCTURE OF VERB PHRASE IN ÀRÙM

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Abstract

The study explores the structure of the Àrùm verb phrase with a view to determining its syntactic configuration. The study is descriptive, and employs the use of interviews to generate the data. Data were sourced through interview with native speakers as well as observation. A Voice Recorder as an instrument was used to record the data during the interview sessions. Lexical items belonging to the verbal domain in the Summer Institute of Linguistics Comparative African Wordlist were helpful in the collation of data. From the data analysed, it was discovered that in Àrùm, the verb, just as in other languages, is the only obligatory element in a verb phrase. The verb is, therefore, the head of the Àrùm verb phrase (henceforth, VP). The study also revealed that a verb can occupy the VP slot (that is, a verb can stand alone in a VP). It was further discovered that the VP slot can be occupied by a sequence of two verbs, a verb and a noun phrase (henceforth, NP), a verb and two NPs, a verb and an adverbial phrase (henceforth, ADV.P), verb and a prepositional phrase (henceforth, PP) and a verb and an adjectival phrase (henceforth, ADJ.P) The study concludes that the structure of the verb phrase in this language is as follows: VP→V + (NP) + (ADV.P) + (ADJ.P) + (PP), where the verb is obligatory, while other elements are optional. In transitive verbs, however, the object is also an obligatory element. This study also concludes that the verb phrase in Àrùm is structurally systematic and linguistically significant within the grammar of the language. The study suggests future studies on the morphosyntactic properties of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) in Àrùm and a comparative study of verb phrase structures across the different dialects of Àrùm. This study contributes to the hitherto scanty literature on the language, and specifically to the syntax of the language.

Keywords: Structure, Verb, Verb Phrase and Àrùm.

Introduction

The syntax, that is, the structure of sentence in a given language, as an aspect of grammar plays a major role in every language. Specifically, verbs and verb phrases are a major part of almost every sentence structure, as native speakers communicate with one another. Therefore, its adequate description is very important and necessary for better understanding of the sentence structure and the overall grammar of the language (Adamu, 2026).

The Àrùm language which belongs to the Ninzic sub-branch of the Plateau languages, under the East Benue Congo sub-classification of the Benue Congo family, subsumed in the Proto-Niger

Congo, and spoken in Wamba Local Government Area of Nasarawa State of Nigeria, has not received much linguistic attention. Existing linguistic studies related to the language are limited to Blench and Dendo's (2004) *Tarok and Related languages of East-Central Nigeria*, Blench and Kato's (2010) *The Təsu Language of Central Nigeria and its Affinities* and Decker, Onoja, Jonah and Muniru (2021) *A Sociolinguistic Profile of the Arum (AlomoTesu) and Atoro Languages in Nasarawa State, Nigeria*. Furthermore, while areas, such as the phonology and morphology of this language have received some form of attention as captured in Blench and Dendo's (2004), Blench and Kato's (2010) and

Decker, Onoja, Jonah and Muniru (2021), this statement is not true for the syntax of the language. This area has received the least attention. This indicates that there is a paucity of linguistic studies on the word classes of the language as well as on the verb and verb phrase of this language. The only available linguistic work on the syntax of the language is Wade and Umaru (2022) that examined the structure of Àrùm Noun Phrase. Although, in Blench and Kato (2010), a page is dedicated to the noun and verb of the language, their focus is merely on the elementary morphological features of the language, for instance, number. Hence, there is a paucity of studies on verb and verb phrases in the language. The knowledge of the verb and verb phrases in a language is fundamental to the understanding of its syntax. It is in this wise that the researchers aim to explore the structure of verb phrase in this language, with a view to establishing its basic structure (that is, the order of constituents and the relationship between the verb and its constituents). This will go a long way in revealing the structure of verb phrase as well as the components that are necessary in a verb phrase of this language. This will not only help reveal the verb phrase parameter in this language but also help in deconstructing and understanding the grammar of the language. The study adds to the body of knowledge on the syntax and grammar of the language.

Objective of the study

The general objective of this study is to examine the syntactic structure of the verb phrase in Àrùm. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the constituents of the Àrùm verb phrase.
2. Determine the structural patterns of VP formation in Àrùm.
3. Examine the relationship between the verb and its complements in Àrùm.

Literature Review

Verb

Verbs are words whose prototypical function is to predicate; that is, to state something about a referent (Searle, 1969; Croft, 1999; Croft, 2001). The best examples of verbs are actions, events, and processes (Givón 1984: 52), but verbs frequently convey static meanings as well, such as

location or knowledge. In terms of distribution, the prototypical function of a verb is to serve as the head of a clause. Typologically, it is common for verbs to mark the grammatical categories of tense, aspect, mood, polarity (negative / positive), evidentiality (source of knowledge), epistemic modality (attitude towards the statement), event number, verb class, or grammatical relations (information about the participants in the clause and their relations to one another) (Haspelmath 2001; Dixon 2010).

Hieber (2020) noted that nouns also indicate grammatical relations; it is quite common for North American languages to indicate grammatical relations on both nouns and verbs. An important difference is that markers of grammatical relations on nouns indicate their own role in the clause, while markers of grammatical relations on verbs indicate the role of its arguments in the clause. A verb is an action or a doing word or a word that helps make statements. Any word functioning as predicator in a grammatical or acceptable sentence is a *verb*. Verbs are words that show the relationship between subject and object in a sentence. Examples of verbs irrespective of their sub-categories can be found below as obtained in Hieber (2020:70):

1.
 - i. kill
 - ii. break
 - iii. fight

Verb Phrase

A verb phrase (hereafter VP) is a part of a sentence that contains both a verb and a direct or indirect object that acts as a dependent of the verb. In general, a VP is a syntactic unit or structure consisting of predicative elements of a sentence that provides information about the subject of the sentence. In other words, a VP is a syntactic unit that corresponds to the predicative structure of a sentence. Stockwell (1977:40) defines a verb phrase as groups of words in surface strings whose cores are verbs. The VP has an obligatory verb, which is the head of the verb phrase, and VPs are named as a result of which the action of the main verb changes from the subject (agent) to the object (patient).

A verb phrase is innately defined as an independent group of words consisting of a verb stem and some of its dependencies, such as arguments, complements or modifiers. It is a complete sentence with the syntactic role of a simple lexical verb, consisting of a verb (main verb) and other verbal particles (Noel, 1986). A complete verb phrase according to Noel (1986) contains a lexical main verb and may also contain auxiliary verbs. In fact, VPs focus on verbs.

In terms of structure, the verb phrase is the largest extension of the maximum projection of the verb (Ndimele, 1999). In other words, a verb phrase is a grammatical or syntactic unit in which a verb acts as a head. The head of the verb phrase, which is the verb, is the element on which the sentence focuses, and everything depends on it. In the light of the above, Lamidi (2008) points out that the structure of the verb phrase is determined by the types of verbs present in the component. Since the head of a verb phrase is a verb, the type of verb is determined by the characteristics of the subcategories of the verb stem or head, for example, transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, and di-transitive verbs. According to Yusuf (1997), a verb phrase is traditionally called a predicate. Armstrong (2005:22) says that the verb that is the

head of the VP contains the predicate part of the sentences. The verb must occur with or without complements. Thus, the structure of the verb phrase according to him, is made up of the verb and its particles:

2.
 - i. VP → V XP
 - ii. VP → V NP
 - iii. VP → V NP NP
 - iv. VP → V NP PP
 - v. VP → V AP
 - vi. VP → V Adv.P
 - vii. VP → V IP

As obtained in many languages, a verb phrase consists of a single verb and one or more auxiliaries, complements, objects, or other modifiers that function specifically as verbs. Tallerman (2005) reported that VPs contain lexical core verbs marked in present and past tense. He also argues that verbs have a grammatical property of finiteness, which according to Yadugiri (2006) is a grammatical property of all VPs, because VPs are marked as finite either by the first auxiliary verb if an auxiliary verb is present or by a lexical verb if there are no auxiliaries.

Empirical Review

This work focuses on the verb phrase structure of Arum. Thus, in this section, works done on verbs and verb phrases of other languages are reviewed. It is subdivided into works on verb and verb phrases across continents, such as Europe, Africa and Nigeria.

Parkin (1972) explores verb phrase in Mandinka (a language spoken in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Chad, etc.) verb phrase. He adopts the descriptive method for his analysis, and adopts no theory. This makes the work similar to the present study from the point of view of methodology. He discovered that the verb and verbal operator are the two main constituents of the Mandinka verb phrase. The study establishes that the following verbs are the key operators in the Mandinka verb phrase:

3. *Ye, be* and *te* ‘can, may, and will’

Parkin (1972:79) argues that in this language, in a verb phrase, the operator *ye* can be inserted into a framework within the Mandinka verb phrase as demonstrated below:

4. *à... dínɡotàajée – à ye dínɡotàajée* ‘he/she/it took the child there’

This work is very comprehensive, and gives detailed accounts of the Mandinka verb phrase. This makes the work related to the present research, since the present work is set to discuss similar concepts, and hopes to be as exhaustive as possible.

Mugisa (2011) discusses the syntactic structure of Kihema (a Bantu language spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo (henceforth, DR) Congo) verb phrase. Although the methodology is not clearly stated, it is descriptive in nature. Findings in this work reveal that Kihema, just like most Bantu languages and English, is a VO-language. This, he said, is because of the fact that the surface, objects, prepositional phrases, sentential

complements and other elements follow the verb. Mugisa (2011:9) gives examples to buttress his point:

5.

- i. *Omukazi a-ka-t-a ebyokuliahameza*
Woman SP-PAST-ASP.put food on table
'The woman put the food on the table'
- ii. *Omwaana a-ka-t-a omupiraha rusu*
Child SP-PAST-ASP.throw ball on roof
'The child threw the ball on the roof'

Findings also show that Kihema is a symmetrical object type language since all post-verbal NPs may display primary object syntactic properties. He further states that in Kilema, the passive suffix *w-* is attached to the verb, as shown in the data below:

6.

- i. *Yohaana a-ka-h-a omwaana amata*
John SP-PAST-ASP.give child milk
'John gave the child the milk'
- ii. *Omwaana a-ka-heb-w-a amata (na Yohaana)*
Child SP-PAST-PASS-ASP.give milk (by Yohanna)
'The child was given milk by Yohanna'
- iii. *Amata ga-ka-heb-w-a omwaana (na John)*
Milk SP-PAST-PASS-ASP.give child (by John)
'The milk was given to the child by John'

The work is related to the present study in that both are similar in subject matter. Although the work is exhaustive, he fails to clearly indicate by means of glossing where the verb phrases actually are in the data presented. Although the language is a tone language, Mugisa (2011) fails to mark tones on the data, which represents great difficulty for the linguist and non-native speakers. The present study will rather be more explicit by glossing appropriately for better understanding of the reader.

Chirah (2024) carried out a descriptive analysis of Tiv verb phrase with focus on its functions, structure and distribution. The study sought to investigate the usage of the verb phrase in the language. In the work, attempts were made to explain the relationship between the verb phrase and other related grammatical components. The structuralist theory served as the theoretical framework for the study, and the data for the study were derived from introspective acumen, library and internet sources. Findings show that the verb phrase in Tiv is head initial, which can be followed by other syntactic constituents. The study

unravelled another kind of verb in Tiv known as the raising verb. The verb phrase can perform both 'agent' and 'patient' roles in Tiv sentences. The study classified Tiv verbs into four (4) namely: copular, auxiliary, transitive and intransitive verbs and defined the functions, structure and distribution of the verb phrases in Tiv sentences. The study is similar to the present study, in that, they both examine verb phrase structure of endangered African languages; although the previous study places Tiv language on the map of developing languages.

Bebey (2025) examined "serial verb constructions in Chrambo (Bambalang): A bantoid language of North-West Cameroon". The study attempts to describe the syntactic structure of Chrambo multiple verb constructions using the Chomskyan generative theory and a descriptive-analytical approach. Analyses of data from secondary sources indicate that Chrambo exhibits a variety of serial verb constructions: instrumental, aspectual, sequential and directional. The study reveals that Chrambo exhibits consecutivisation among processes of serial verb constructions. It is

demonstrated that when they occur in series, all the verbs do not always count as one verb in this Bantoid language; however, the grammatical features and negation apply to the entire sentence. The study demonstrates that SVCs, in this language, play a number of roles such as TAMs marking, verb valency indication, motion expression, direction indication, etc.

Jelili (2025) examined “Serial Verb Construction in Ìgáṣí” using both syntactic and semantic structures. Ìgáṣí is an endangered language spoken in the Akoko North Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The data for the research were sourced from the native speakers of the language, and their utterances were recorded for transcription. The study deploys the Minimalist Program for its analysis. The findings show that serial verb constructions in Ìgáṣí are mono-clausal, and the actions or state of affairs conveyed by the verbs in SVC constructions show that they occur within the same temporal semantic frame. It is shown that verbs in SVC are symmetrical and asymmetrical based on the semantic and grammatical content. It is also argued that the subject Determiner Phrase of SVC with causative and performative agents are generated at Spec-vP (outer core vP) while those with theme theta subjects are generated at Spec-VP (inner core VP). This study contributes to the existing studies on SVC and brings to the fore the documentation of an endangered language.

From the foregoing review of empirical studies, it can be deduced that, literature abounds on Verb Phrase (VP) structure in Nigerian and African languages, and while Nigerian indigenous languages (Àrùm inclusive) share certain syntactic affinities with each other and with other foreign languages in terms of verb phrase or verb serialisation, there are significant differences in their Verb Phrase (VP) structure that is worthy of linguistic enquiry and which renders problematic the notion of linguistic universals and underscores this research description of the structure Verb Phrase (VP) particularly in Àrùm.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theory of generative grammar. Generative grammar is a theory of linguistics, primarily associated with

Chomsky (1966). It is a theory that posits a system of rules that can generate all the grammatically correct sentences of a language. It suggests that humans have an innate capacity for language, including a built-in set of grammatical principles called universal grammar. The concept of universal grammar proposes that all languages share a common underlying structure and set of grammatical principles. These principles, which are believed to be innate, are then further shaped by exposure to a specific language during language acquisition. Thus, generative grammar aims to create explicit rule systems that can generate all and only the grammatical sentences of a language. These rules describe the relationships between different elements of a sentence, including words, phrases, and clauses.

The linguistic theory therefore focuses on the systematic structure of human language, emphasizing the concept of grammatical transformations to explain the deep and surface structures of linguistic expressions. Generative grammar explores the processes by which sentences are generated, including the combination of words, phrases, and clauses according to grammatical rules. It also examines how these rules can be used to create new and novel sentences (Chomsky, 1982). Generative grammar distinguishes between linguistic competence (the internalized knowledge of grammar) and linguistic performance (the actual use of language). The focus is on understanding the underlying grammatical competence that allows individuals to produce and understand language. Thus, generative grammar aims to explain how humans learn and use language by describing the subconscious grammatical knowledge that underlies language (Chomsky, 1982). However, the theory of generative grammar provides a powerful framework for understanding the structure and underlying principles of language as it distinguishes between the underlying deep structure (semantics) and the surface structure (syntax) of a language. It provides a framework for exploring the cognitive basis of language.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive study and the qualitative research design is adopted for this

study. Data for this work were collected using primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the native speakers of Àrùm Sarki dialect of Àrùm language from Wamba Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Oral interviews were conducted with ten (10) respondents from the ten (10) council wards of Wamba Local Government Area of Nasarawa State: Arum, Mangar, Gitta, Nakere, Konvah, Wayo, Wamba West, Wamba East, Kwara, and Jimiya; who were randomly selected as respondents based on their competence and vast knowledge of Àrùm sociolinguistics. The observations and intuition of the researcher as a native speaker were also very relevant for the work. The secondary sources on the other hand, include: The SIL Comparative African Wordlist containing 1700 words, revealing a lot of verbal and verb phrase features of the language, scholarly works on verb phrase structure in Nigerian and

African languages in textbooks, journals and the internet, as well as some published and unpublished materials on Àrùm language. However, the data collected were analysed descriptively, based on the data collected from native speakers of the language and those collected from secondary sources coupled with the researcher's intuitive knowledge as a native speaker of the language. The theory of generative grammar is the tool for analysis in this study. This is appropriate for the study since the study is set out to objectively describe the structure of verb phrase in Àrùm without any bias or manipulations. The theory provides a powerful framework for understanding the structure and underlying principles of language as it distinguishes between the underlying deep structure (semantics) and the surface structure (syntax) of a language. Hence, the analysis focuses on the syntactic structure that underlies verb phrase in Àrùm.

Data Presentation and Analysis

What follows is the presentation and analysis of the data elicited. In each unit, the data is presented first before the analysis.

VP → V alone

7.

- | | | |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| i. | <i>hafa</i> | 'Cultivate!' |
| ii. | <i>hèndè</i> | 'Work!' |
| iii. | <i>kpato</i> | 'Play!' |
| iv. | <i>trisa</i> | 'Cook!' |
| v. | <i>hwara</i> | 'Wash!' |
| vi. | <i>shimba</i> | 'Cut!' |
| vii. | <i>luhu</i> | 'Ask!' |

From example 7 above, it is obvious that Àrùm verbs can be used in place of the VP. Interestingly, the sole verbs in this expression function as imperative sentences.

VP → V + V

8.

- | | | | |
|------|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| i. | <i>gu</i> | <i>bá</i> | |
| | Carry | come | 'Bring it' |
| ii. | <i>gu</i> | <i>ná</i> | |
| | Carry | go | 'Carry it and go' |
| iii. | <i>shì</i> | <i>séré</i> | |
| | Wait | hear | 'Wait and hear.' |

iv. *sá fà*

Collect cut

‘Collect and cut.’

From the examples above, it can be seen that verbs in this language serialize. Interestingly, in the examples above, which are in serial forms, they serve as imperative sentences, just as example 8 suggests which may not require any subject. Thus, within the VP, the V on the left-hand side are the V1, while the ones on the right-hand side are the V2. That is to say, in each of the examples above, the V1 and V2 configuration occupies the VP slot.

VP → V + ADVP

9.

i. *mé nzá ñó nì mwèlé*
 1SG see him at yesterday
 ‘I saw him yesterday.’

ii. *a nàtí ba andrèmẹ*
 3SG AUX come today
 ‘He will come today.’

iii. *mé ryá ajàkámhá nì nẹrẹbí*
 1SG eat rice in morning
 ‘I ate rice in the morning.’

iv. *à lemla gaga*
 3SG sleep much
 ‘He/she sleeps (too) much.’

v. *Mè bù tí ná-mbọrọ àfya*
 3PL are TNS go-us house
 ‘We are going home’

vi. *àméré ré a gbó vẹ*
 Boy the 3SG run slowly
 ‘The boy runs slowly’

vii. *ányífa re a kpaàmumu ígbúgbó*
 Girl the 3SG sing fast
 ‘The girl sings fast’

From example 9i-vii, it is demonstrated that the VP can be represented by the verb and an adverbial phrase. Example 9i and ii show **mwèlé** ‘yesterday’ and **andrèmẹ** ‘today’ completing the VP immediately after the verb. In 9iii, the prepositional phrase **nì nẹrẹbí** ‘in the morning’ (here, a prepositional phrase is serving as an adverbial) serves as an adverbial phrase that functions together with the verb to make up the VP. In 9v, the intensifier- **gaga** ‘much’ is the adverbial that completes the VP in that configuration. Notably, the VP structures in example 9 above are illustrated within sentences so as to avoid having too many examples that seem to be imperative sentences. Thus, the VP section, which is the focus of the paper, has been highlighted in each example for clarity.

VP → V + ADJP

10.

- i. *Anvu abù ize*
 Anvu is tall
 ‘Anvu is tall’
- ii. *Áche a bù àjìjì*
 Áche 3SG is beautiful
 ‘Ache is beautiful’
- iii. *a bù agba*
 3SG is big
 ‘It is big’
- iv. *amwo ambórọ́a zànána*
 water our is clean/pure
 ‘Our water is clean/pure.’
- v. *ibi ré a hungwa*
 goat the is black
 ‘The goat is black.’
- vi. *àmgbàsho áre a bù atása*
 book this 3SG is white
 ‘This book is white’
- vii. *ìda arọ́ a zọ́họ́*
 house that is beautiful
 ‘That house is beautiful’

From example 10 above, it is crystal-clear that the VP in each sentence comprises a verb and an adjectival phrase. For example; in 10i, **ize** ‘tall’ is an adjective that describes the subject- *Anvu*. *Ize*, however, is a constituent of the VP in that configuration. It should be noted that while the focus here is not on adjective phrase, the adjective phrase serves as a constituent of the VP. From example 10ii-vii, just as in 10i, all the adjectives within the VP occur as last elements (words) in each structure.

VP → V + NP

11.

- i. *mi hwra àsùbẹ́ rẹ*
 1SG break egg the
 ‘I broke the egg’
- ii. *Audu à sá gbogbrondo*
 Audu 3SG buy car
 ‘Audu bought a car’
- iii. *mí mlà ibi*
 1SG kill goat
 ‘I killed a goat’

- iv. *Bala á fà irishí*
Bala 3SG cut rope
'Bala cut the rope'
- v. *mi ti re rya*
1SG AUX/TNS eat food
'I am eating food'
- vi. *à na-tí mlà ikwi*
3SG AUX/TNS kill rat
'He will kill a rat'
- vii. *àfyà àmyá bù-tí trisà rya*
wife my AUX/TNS cook food
'My wife is cooking food'
- viii. *àdá à myà mbọ audu bù-tí á-re rya*
father my they Audu AUX/TNS 3SG-eat food
'My father and Audu are eating food.'

As illustrated in example 11i-iv above, the verbs project just one object. In other words, the position of the VP is occupied by a verb and a single NP. Just as in languages, such as English, the object of the verb comes after the verb. This is evidence that the language operates an SVO sentence pattern. Again, it can be seen that in this language, the auxiliary verb is used within the same configuration. Just as in many other languages, the auxiliary occurs before the main verb in this language.

In all, but one in example 11i above, it is demonstrated that the **bù**, which is an indicator of auxiliary, is constant. In example 11i, where **bù** is absent, **tí** serves dual function: as the auxiliary and the tense. It can also be noticed that a pronoun, which makes reference to the subject of the sentence, is sometimes attached to the verb. An illustration of this is **á-re** in which case the **á-** refers to the pronoun, while **-re** refers to the verb. Examples 11v-viii illustrate the verb within the VP projecting one object, too. However, there is an auxiliary verb before the main verbs in these examples.

VP → V + NP + NP

12.

- i. *mí sá má àfyà myá gbogbrondo*
1SG buy for wife my car
'I bought my wife a car.'
- ii. *Bala à-ngá ñnwò àsùbé*
Bala 3SG-give 3SG egg
'Bala gave him/her an egg'
- iii. *Audu à trèsa ñnwò ìrya shidi*
Audu 3SG cook 3SG food some
'Audu cooked him some food'

In examples 12 above, each of the verbs projects two objects. That is, each of the verbs transfers its action to two objects. Just as in the mono-transitive verbs, the di-transitive ones have their objects occurring immediately after the verbs. More clearly, the VP slot in the examples is occupied by a verb and two NPs.

VP → V + PP

13.

i. *à bù nímèe ida*
3SG is in room
'He/she is in the room'

ii. *mbọrọ (bù) uwè*
3PL (are) here
'We are here'

In example 13i and ii, it is shown that the prepositional phrases- **nímèe ida** 'in the room' and **uwè** 'here' occupy the VP slot, alongside the verb.

Discussion

The study examined the structure of verb phrase in Àrùm, a Benue-Congo language spoken in Wamba Local Government Area of Nasarawa State of Nigeria. The set out to identify the constituents of the Àrùm verb phrase, determine the structural patterns of VP formation in Àrùm, and examine the relationship between the verb and its complements in Àrùm. From the data analysed, it was discovered that the verb phrase in the language has several elements or constituents, which include the verb, the NP, the PP, the ADJP and the ADVP. The structural patterns of VP formation in Àrùm show that, in all cases, the VP elements, other than the verb, occur after the verb. The findings reveal that, it is possible to have a configuration whose VP has only a verb. In other cases, the position of the VP is occupied by the elements or constituents (that is, PP, ADJP, ADVP and NP).

This indicates the relationship between the verb and its complements in Àrùm. In fact, in some structures, the VP may have a verb that has two objects (that is, double NPs). This is illustrated under the VP → V + (NP) (NP). The findings, therefore, reveals that the structure of the verb phrase in the language is as follows: VP → V, VP → V + (V), VP → V + (NP), VP → V + (NP) + (NP), VP → V + (ADVP), VP → V + (ADJP) and VP → V + (PP). In form of a schema, the structure of the verb phrase can be summarized as follows: VP → V + (NP) + (ADVP) + (ADJP) + (PP). In the schema, it implies that verb is the obligatory element in a verb phrase of this language, as it applies to other languages. All other

elements are optional. The verb is however, the head of the verb phrase. This finding confirms with the finding of previous studies that show syntactic affinities among the verb phrase structures of African and some foreign languages with significant distinctions in terms of verb phrase or verb serialization which renders problematic the notion of linguistic universals. The finding is also backed by the theory in that it posits that all languages share a common underlying structure and set of grammatical principles. These principles, which are believed to be innate, are used to generate all and only the grammatical sentences of a language. These rules describe the relationships between different elements of a sentence, including words, phrases, and clauses in the language. Thus, the study of the structure of verb phrase of Àrùm language, not only help reveal the verb phrase parameter in this language but also help in deconstructing and understanding the grammar of the language.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the verb phrase in Àrùm is structurally systematic and linguistically significant within the grammar of the language. The structure of the verb phrase in the language follows: VP → V, VP → V + (V), VP → V + (NP), VP → V + (NP) + (NP), VP → V + (ADVP), VP → V + (ADJP) and VP → V + (PP) pattern. In form of a schema, the structural pattern of the verb phrase can be summarized as follows: VP → V + (NP) + (ADVP) + (ADJP) + (PP). This implies that verb is the obligatory element in a verb phrase of this language. The verb is the head of the verb phrase, as it applies to other languages; and

all other elements are optional. Therefore, the verb functions as the head of the verb phrase and determine the presence and type of complements that may occur within the construction. However, the verb phrase in Àrùm is not only central to sentence formation but also crucial for understanding the overall grammatical

architecture of the language.

Recommendations

The study suggests future studies should investigate the morphosyntactic properties of tense, aspect, and mood in Àrùm and compare verb phrase structures across the language's dialects.

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