Original Paper

Relativization in Ikwuano Dialect of Igbo

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Abstract

This paper examines relativization in Ikwuano Igbo. The problem of word order and the selectional rule for grammaticality in the realization of semantic affinity that exist in sentence construction cannot be ignored. This study investigates the embedding features that make sentential structures to be embedded in other sentences. The relative pronouns found in Ikwuano Igbo include; "ónyé-who,whom", "nkè- which", "nà- that", "mà- whether", "kà- that". The relative pronoun occurs as the subject of a relative clause making it to be grammatical. The theoretical framework adopted by this study is the embedding principle of "Principles and Parameters". This theory is a brain child of Noam Chomsky. This study takes a descriptive approach of language analysis. The data for this paper is elicited utterances by adult native speakers and intuition from the researcher. The aim of this paper is to examine relativization in Ikwuano Igbo with a view to establishing the Ikwuano strategy. This paper explains the motivation for the relative pronoun strategy and its behavior in the language. This study reveals that relativization in Ikwuano Igbo remains the most productive strategy in Igbo and many other languages for grammaticality. The study shows that relativization performs an emphatic function in the grammatical structure of Ikwuano Igbo.

Keywords

relativization, embedding, head-initial, grammaticality and semantic affinity

1. Introduction

Ikwuano is a dialect spoken in Ikwuano Umuahia area of Abia State in Nigeria. Ikwuano is located at the triangular axis of Umuahia, Aba and Ikot Ekpene in Akwa Ibom State. This study seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of relativization in Ikwuano Igbo. Ndimele (2003, p. 199) posits that relativization is a syntactic process of turning an otherwise full-fledged sentence into a subordinate (embedded) clause, so that it becomes a modifier of a noun phrase in the matrix clause. Matthews (2007, p. 342 asserts that relativization is the formation of relative clauses specifically, the process by which one element is represented by a relative pronoun or its equivalent.

1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study has the objective of discovering whether relativization exist in Ikwuano dialect or not. This

study seeks to have a descriptive competence of relativization. To examine how word order are formed in relation to selectional rule of the language. To examine relativization in Ikwuano Igbo and also to investigate how sentential structures are embedded into another sentence.

1.2 Novelty of the Study

Man is genetically endowed with innate capacity to produce and comprehend languages he is exposed to (Uwasomba, 2020, p. 208). This is the crux of generativivism as opposed to traditional grammar that describes features of languages in specified individual languages in a taxonomic system. One of the most weaknesses of traditional grammar, being that hardly could generalization be made of structures and processes of natural language faculty, Radford (2004) calls it the internalized grammar (i-grammar), which subsequently manifests as a physical reality. Proponents of principles and parameters (P&P) describe the I-grammar as a mental package containing the rules of languages system. These rules cut across all human language. However, the nuances noticeable in the manifestation of the internal rules are referred to as parameters. Chomsky (1981) says that theory of universal grammar consists of interacting sub-system which can be studied from two deference perspectives. These are the rules system s of grammar and the sub systems subsystem of principles. The sub-components of rule system are: lexicon, syntax (categorical and transformational components). PF-components and Lf –components are the interpretive components. The lexicon specifies the peculiar features of a word. Guided by the base rules, words are inserted into nodes in the D-structure and these mapped to the S-structure by the move alpha rule. At the S-structure there may be traces of movement as well as co-indexing of anaphors with their antecedents. This rule is called the transformational components. The rule can also appear at PF and LF. The PF (Phonetic form) is a level where the physical structures are represented phonetically. The LF (logical form) on the other hand is the level where meaning is represented. Emenanjo (2015) asserts that there are restrictions on the choice of lexical items. The restrictions are associated with the headedness of phrases in Igbo and other languages. The lexical categories such as Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs and prepositions are assigned heads in their phrases, (Uwasomba, 2019a, p. 136).

The head of a phrase bears the name of the phrase. Words are taken as projections from the lexicon (Chomsky, 1995, p. 189), its precursor being the matching and substitution formats. The projection principle in Chomsky (1981) are merged into structures one –by one. To build phrases and sentences, words project phrases of the category. Thus, nouns project NPs, Verbs VPs, Adjectives ADJs, Prepositions PPS and Adverbs ADVPs. Relativization is applied to Ikwuano Igbo as a natural language that serves the communicative functions to the speakers. The universal formular in language acquisition is applied to Ikwuano igbo and to every other natural language.

2. Method

The researcher collected data from fluent speakers of Ikwuano Igbo with pen and paper. The researcher also relied on her intuition as a native speaker of the language but where any given set of data

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contradicts her intuition, direct oral interview was used to elicit comparative data from other native speakers of the language. This study takes a descriptive approach of language analysis.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 The Concept of Relativization

Emenanjo (2015, pp. 406-407) posits that relativization is the process of forming a relative clause construction. Relativization is a syntactic process which involves the derivation and use of a relative clause to modify the head of a noun phrase. In Igbo, the relative clause is the outermost part of the noun phrase to which it belongs as an optional, post-modifying structure. The Igbo relative is thus post-nominal and follows the head noun unlike in Japanese, Tibetan, Turkish and Korean where it is pre-nominal. Igbo, like English, has some WH-words. Many Igbo scholars have worked on relativization in Igbo. Some of the Igbo scholars are Green and Igwe (1963), Abraham (1967), Welmers (1973:426), Anagbogu (1978), Emenanjo (1978, pp. 197-200), Ndimele (2003, pp. 125-127), Obichili (2010), Anyanwu (2007, pp. 111-112), Mbah (2016, pp. 116-125), among others, have written about relative clauses or relativization in different lects of the Igbo language. In English, the relative clause can be marked by an overt WH- word, a complementizer or a zero morpheme. Quirk and Greenbaun (1973, pp. 376-384) hold that English has four types of relative clauses: restrictive (or non-defining), headless, and sentential.

Watters (2000, p. 225) describes relativization as a syntactic process that generates a type of structure in which a noun phrase includes a clause that modifies the head of the phrase, just as adjectives in a noun phrase modify the head of the phrase. He claimed that relativization is used more frequently in African languages for adjectival functions where European languages would use adjectives, for example "the tall man" as opposed to "the man who is tall". Brown and Miller (1988, p. 137) claim that relativization is a term that describes the formation of relative clauses which are embedded clauses that are generated out of main clauses in order to describe a particular nominal head. They make a clear structural distinction between clause complementation and relativization.

Emenanjo (1978, p. 199) points out that in the absence of many descriptive adjectives, Igbo often uses relativization to express Igbo – adjective notions. Baridisi, (2020, pp. 55-76) posits that in Gokana in River State, a relative clause follows the head noun it modifies. It is introduced by a relative clause marker which is realized as <u>e.</u> The relative clause marker bears an inherent mid tone. The relative clause can co-occur with any head noun regardless of the syntactic position of such a head noun in the sentence. Thus, the relative clause can occur with a head noun in the subject position or object position of the matrix clause. The relative clause also occurs with a head noun that is the complement of a preposition.

Tallerman (2011, pp. 251-259) asserts that relativization leaves behind a gap in the relativized position in English syntax but acknowledges the possibility of some cross- linguistic variations to this phenomenon. She compares the Hausa with the English translation (the Hausa word *da* at the start of the relative clause is a relative marker) as demonstrated below.

(i)   wuqud [da ya kashe ta da ita]

knife RCM he kiiled her with it

"The knife that he killed her with ---

Compare the Hausa example with this English example

(ii)   The forms [that --- arrived yesterday] -subject

(iii)   The paper [(which) we discuss -- next week] --direct object

(iv)   The film [(that) we're going to --- tonight] --prepositional object

These relative clauses use the "gap strategy" the relativized position is simply empty

In English more or less, any position in a clause that can contain an NP can be relativized, including the subject, direct object, and object of a preposition. The relativized position in the above examples contained a gap, each gap is marked and its position (grammatical function) within the clause is shown in the English examples. English is actually unusual, cross-linguistically, in using the gap strategy when the relativized position is the object of a preposition (the film we're going to --). Compare Hausa in (a) with the English translation. The relativized position in the Hausa and in the English translation is the object of the preposition *da*, "with". English uses the gap strategy, and allows prepositions to be stranded at the end of the clause: left with no prepositional object. But most languages avoid this one way or another, for instance, by using the resumptive strategy as the Hausa does.

In verb-final languages, though, the relative clause often precedes the head noun. Consider the Japanese examples in (v) and (vi): and the relativized position is the gap within the relativized position, Japanese example illustration below:

(v)   [kimura - san – ga -- katte – iru] inu.

kimura – Mr, - NOM keeps- NON PAST dog

"The dog that Mr. Kimura keeps"

(vi)   [kimura – san – ga – inu – o ageta] Kodomo

Kimura – Mr. – NOM dog- ACC give PAST child

"The child to whom Mr. Kimura gave a dog".

In example (v), the relativized position is the direct object of the verb "katte" keep", recall that Japanese is an SOV language so the "missing" object NP immediately precedes the verb in the bracketed relative clause. And in (vi), the relativized position is the indirect object of the verb "ageta" "gave", the basic position for an indirect object in Japanese is before the direct object, hence the position of the gap shown here. There is no equivalent to the English relative pronouns "who" or "which" in Japanese, nor any other word introducing the relative clause, and that does the relative clause simply come right before the head noun.

This constituent order "relative clause-head noun" is common in other Head-final languages. For instance, the relative clause construction which is native to Turkish (a language with SOV constituent order) is also head-final in this way (Kornfilt, 1997), and the same applies to Korean, Hungarian, however, has both types of relative clause- the English pattern "head noun- relative clause" as well as

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the head- final pattern. Another type of relative clause is from Bambara, a member of the African language family Mande. Relative clauses whose head noun appears inside the relative clause itself. This type is much rarer cross-linguistically. Consider first a simple sentence, where the constituent order is SOV; as demonstrated below.

(vii) Tye   ye   so   san   (Bambara)

Man PAST horse buy

"The man bought the horse"

When "so" the object NP of this sentence is relativized, the relativized head noun "so" actually occurs within the structure of the relative clause, as shown in (viii).

(viii) Tye   ye [ne ye   so   min ye] san

Man PAST I   PAST horse which   see   buy

"The man bought the horse which I saw".

From the examples this study has given from other languages, we observed that relativization has different typology as:

-Head – initial relative clauses

-Head – final relative clauses

-Internally – headed relative clauses.

2.1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is the embedding principle of Principles and Parameters. This theory is a brainchild of Chomsky (1981). It arose out of the weaknesses of the transformational rules, which do not appear to head towards a minimal rule of linguistic generality. The principle and parameter theory (P&P) has introduced two vital concepts namely, principle and parameter. A principle refers to hypotheses, which capture a syntactic feature shared by all languages, Mbah (2016:116). On the other hand, parameter is a measure of variation from or adaptation to the general principle.

Richards (2012, p. 177) posits that embedding is a generative grammar concept that indicates the occurrence of a sentence within another sentence. He illustrated with this example. "The news that he had got married surprised his friends". Two sentences are fused into one.

(a)   "The news surprised his friends"

(b)   "That he had got married".

Sentence (b) is embedded in sentence (a) and is therefore an embedded sentence. In early transformational grammar, the embedding transformations generated as many sentences as possible. Ejele (2014, pp. 128-129) asserts that sentences are introduced by "that essentially relative clauses such as "that students were involved in last night's orgy" and "that killed the rat". She gave this sentence, "This is the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that laid in the house that Jack built". The above sentence has four relative clauses embedded in it, each introduced by "that…" Both conjoining and embedding show the recursive property of language. Mbah (2016, p. 125) summarizes the principle of embedding to mean that sentential structures are made so that some get subordinated in others. Every

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grammatical category can be embedded in similar grammatical categories.

3. Result

Relativization in Ikwuano Igbo involves the syntactic processes involved in the formation of relative clauses through the grammatical structure of word order. The combination of constituents in syntactic and semantic analysis for grammaticality are analyzed through the speaker hearer performance.

4. Discussion

4.1 Structure of the Ikwuano Relative Clause

In Ikwuano, a relative clause follows the head noun it modifies. The relative clause marker in Ikwuano are "´ónyé" – "who/ whom", "nkè - that", "nà – which", "mà – whether".

Let us start with the first relative marker, in the order presented above "onye – who".

1) Nkechi   [ónyélùrù   dí] bịàràà   n'ụlò.

Nkechi   who marry- PAST   come PASTPREPhouse

"Nkechi who got married came to the house".

2) Ogbonna[ónyé ísííké zùrù   óhí]   n'áhịá.

Ogbonna   who   headstrong steal – PAST   PREPmarket

Ogbonna who is sturborn stole in the market.

3) Mpama   [ónyé ànyí   màrà]dàrà   ádà.

Mpama   whom we know fall PAST down

"Mpama whom we know fell down".

4) Orji   [ónyé bú   diji] chiri   echichi.

Orji   who copular verb   title   holder   perform – celebration

"Orji who is the title yam holder celebrated".

50 *Nkechi [ònyè lùrù   dí]   bịara n'ụlọ.

*Nkechi which one married? came to the house.

The low tone on "ónyé" changes the clause to question clause which makes it ungrammatical.

Sentences 1, 2 and 4 have the relative clauses as "ónyé" "who" while sentence (3) also is "ónyé"- "whom". The sentences we produced are indicating emphatic analysis on the NP relative clause. Sentence number (1) has two meanings are realized as;

(a)   Nkechi bịara n'ụló. (matrix sentence)

Nkechi come PAST to the house

"Nkechi came to the house."

(b)   Nkechi lụrụ di.   (embedded sentence)

Nkechi   marry – PAST husband

"Nkechi got married."

The emphasis is on "Nkechi who got married". The relative pronoun marker "ónyé", "who" represents

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Nkechi". The "ónyé"- "who" lays emphasis on the subject of the sentence. "ónyé" is the embedded sentence. The second "Nkechi" is deleted in the embedded sentence and was replaced by "ónyé" - "who".

Sentence (5) is ungrammatical because of the low tone on the relative NP "ònyè"- "who" here there is deviation from the sentence because it is interrogating as in "who married"? Since it is clear that Nkechi got married, it is wrong to ask a question "who married"?

The speaker – listener competence understand each other in the use of words and the tone of the voice of the speaker. A tone either low or high can bring a change in the syntactic and semantic analysis of a sentence as we have observed above. The second relative clause marker is "nkè" – "which".

6) Ugboala [nkè   Okeke gbara] ọkụ.

Car   which POS PRON burn PAST fire

"The car which belongs to Okeke was destroyed by fire.

The relative marker in example (6) lays emphasis on possession which means that it is Okeke's car that got burnt not another person's car. The relative marker "her" lays emphasis on Okeke's car.

(7) Nwanyí [nke kwúrú gi ókwu] no ebe a.

        woman   that   talk PAST to you COP,VB. Here

        "The woman that talked to you is here."

The relative marker in example (7) lays emphasis on the particular/known woman that talked to you is here. The sentence knows the particular woman being referred to in the sentence. The speaker/hearer/understands the woman being referred to. Here the syntactic and the semantic analysis are already built in the brain of the speakers using the language.

(8) Eze   [siri   na   nne ya] gara   ahịa.

        Eze   say PAST REL PRO his mother GO PAST to the market.

        "Eze said that his mother went to the market.

  (9) Ada   siri   [ka   anyị gba-egwu] n'úlọ ha.

Ada say PAST REL PRON we should dance in their house.

"Ada said that we should dance in their house".

(10) Mpama   jụrụ [ma nri   agwula]   n'ụlọ.

        Mpama   asked REL PRON food has finished] in the house

        "Mpama asked whether the food has finished in the house".

(11) Ipuomu   jụrụ ma anụ ọ   fọrọ n'ofe.

            Ipuomu   ask PAST REL PRON meat remain pot of soup.

            "Ipuomu asked whether meat is still remaining in the soup."

Sentences (8 – 11) are complex structures with NP features function as the subject of the matrix clause. Relativization is one of the major strategies in the derivation of complex sentences in Ikwuano Igbo. If the relative marker is removed from the sentences demonstrated above, what remain will be simple sentences. Relative clause helps to form complex sentences in the languages.

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4.2 Complex NPs and Relativization

In Ikwuano Igbo, a complex NP is made up of a head noun and a clausal modifier. This type of structure is generated if any major NP constituent of the simple sentence is relativized.

(12 a.)   Nkita tagburu   nwamba.

            Dog   eat PST   cat.

            "The dog ate the cat".

(b)   Nkita nke   tagburu   nwamba.

        Nkita RCM eat PST   cat

        "The dog that ate the cat."

(c)   "Nwamba   [nkè   nkita tagburu].

        cat   RCM   dog   eat PST.

        "The cat that the dog ate."

The subject constituent of the simple sentence in (12a) is relativized to generate the complex NP in (12 b) while the object constituent is relativized to generate the complex NP in (12c), whereas (12a) is an independent structure as a result of relativzation. The dependent structure depends on the main sentence to make a complete meaning in Ikwuano Igbo.

The word order strategy are selected from the lexicon of the native speaker and combined into simple and complex sentences. Every native speaker of his/her language knows the combinations that can match or go together in syntactic and semantic relations.

4.3 Relativized Sentence Helps in the Formation of Complimentizer Phrase

A complementizer projects into a complementizer phrase. Ejele (2014) describes complement phrase structure as functional clauses that allow clauses to be embedded in other clauses. A complementizer projects a complimentizer phrase CP that takes IP as a complement. This is exemplified below.

(13)   Chioma   chere nà   nne   ya gara n'ubi.

            Chioma   think PST RCM   mother went to the farm.

            "Chioma thought that her mother went to the farm."

The CP in the above sentence is "nà" "that" and it is the complement of "nne ya gara n'ubi", "her mother went to the farm". The PP houses the NP complement of the sentence. We have the main clause and the subordinate clause, the subordinate clause completes the meaning of the main clause. The past suffix of the verb agrees in ATR features (advanced tongue root) in the main and the embedded clauses. There is an agreement between the pronoun "ya" "her" and its antecedent "Chioma" in the above sentence. This is one of the characteristics of a relative pronoun. The semantic property of the verb "gà"- "go" in the subordinate clause is demonstrated on a tree diagram below.

IP

NP   I¹

I   VP

V   CP

PST   C   IP

N NP   I¹

N
PRO I   VP

V   PP

P NP

N

Chioma   -re   che   na   nne
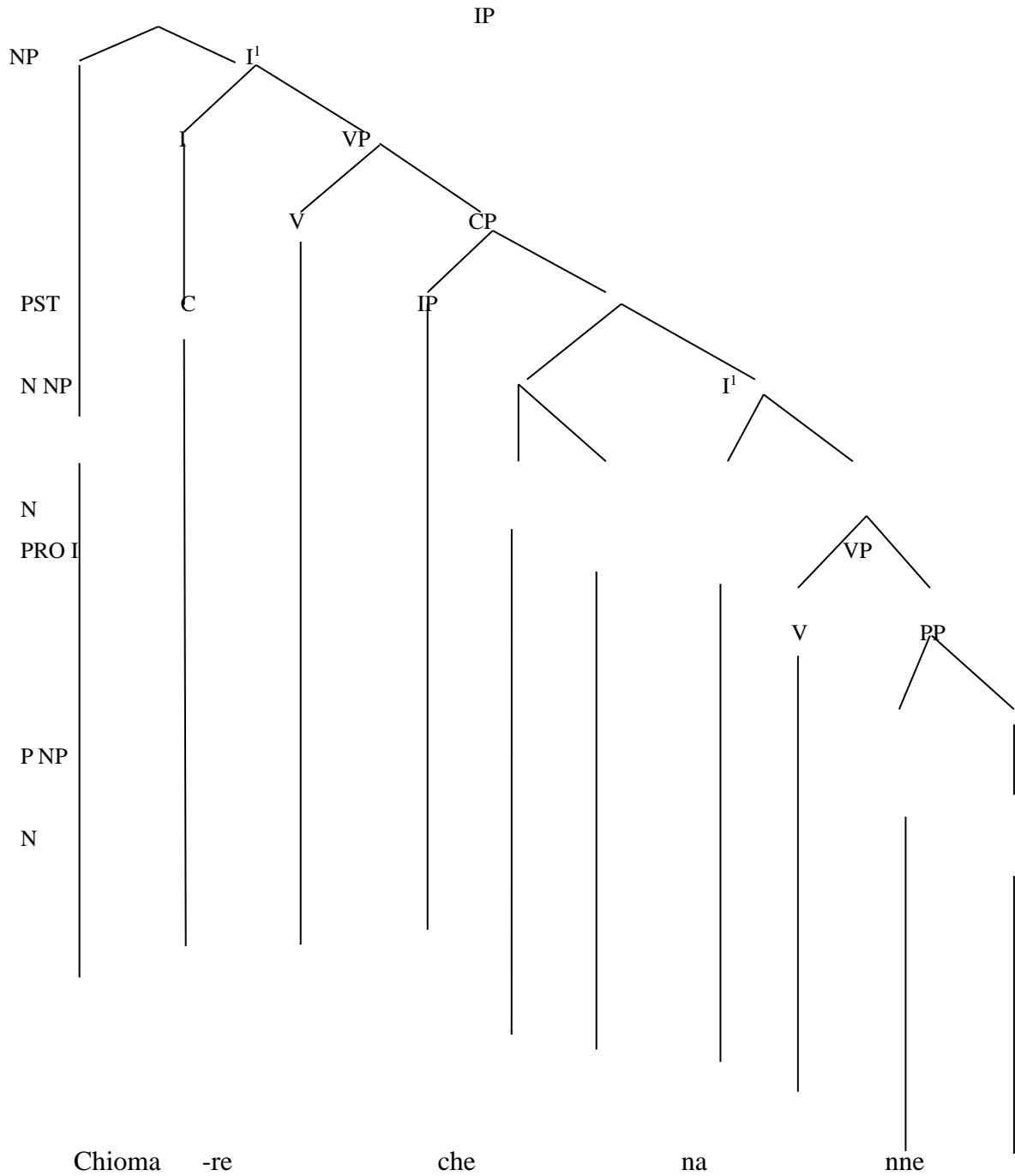
Figure 1. Tree Diagram with a Complementizer Phrase

Chioma thought that the mother went to the farm.

The IP-inflection phrase represents the sentence. The IP performs a functional duty of providing scaffold structure for sentences. According to Fasold & Connor – Linton (2011) shows its functions as a "scaffolding" structure for meaningful words to be attached. The IP links the subject (the specifier) with the functional category called inflection. Inflections are abstract elements such as tense (past and present) aspects and modal auxiliaries.
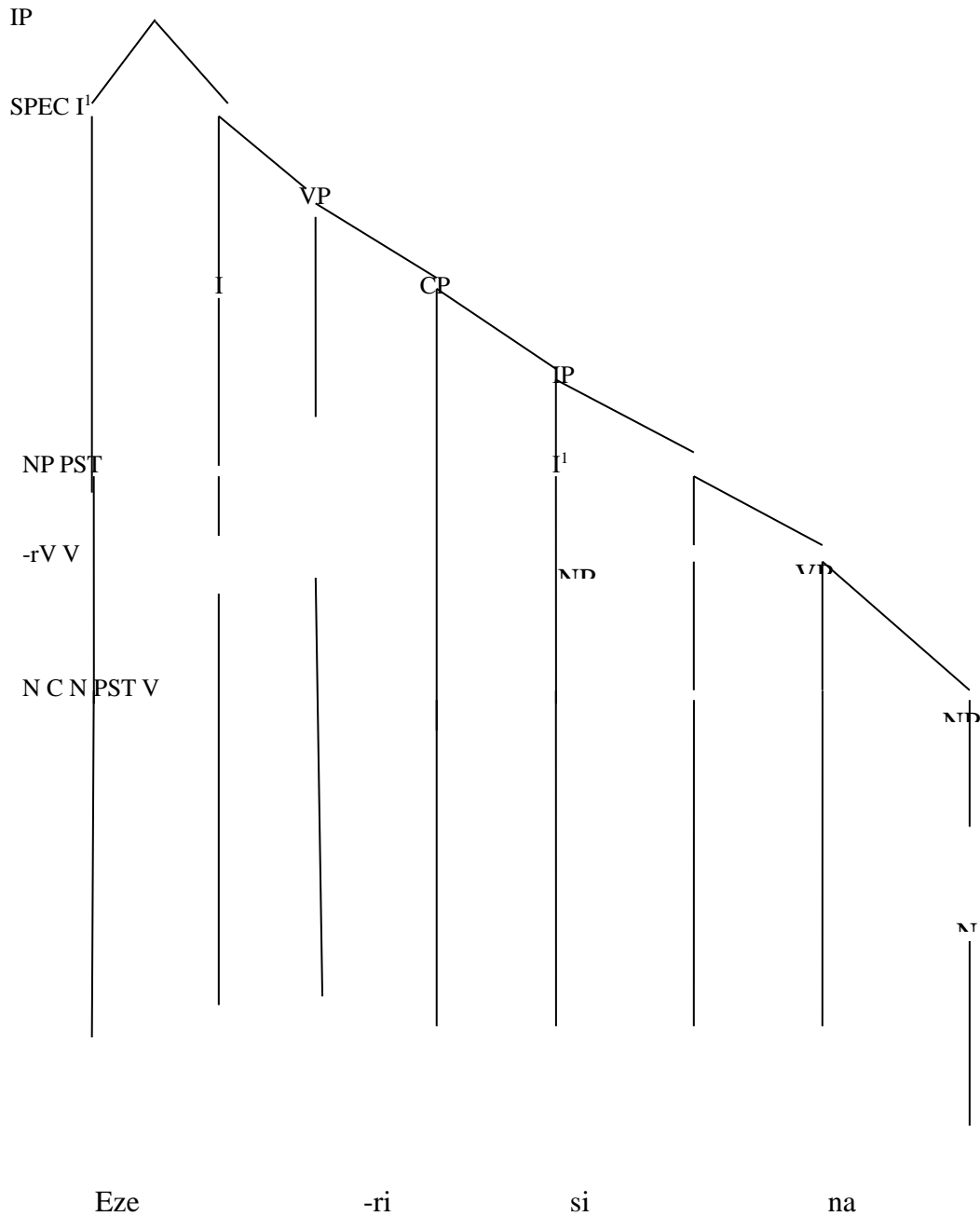
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IP

SPEC I¹

VP

I

CP

IP

NP PST

I¹

-rV V

NP

N C N PST V

VP

NP

N

Eze   -ri   si   na

Figure 2. A sentence with a complementizer phrase Eze said that Ngozi has not swept the house.

4.3 Explanations about the Tree Diagrams

The words in the above sentences are selected according to the word order of the language and combined according to the selectional rule of the language. The semantic affinities are in order otherwise the sentences will be declared ungrammatical. These elements project into an inflection phrase. The IP links the subject and VP that completes its meaning. The complement phrase branches from the inflection bar (1).

In addition to all the functional categories we have demonstrated that a comlpementizer projects a

complementizer phrase CP that takes an IP as its complement. Ejele (2014, pp. 137-141) documents that complementizers are words such as if, for, and relative clause markers in English such as that, who, whether, whom, and when. She posits that the relative clause markers in English describe features of the embedded sentence with the complement. CP's provide scaffolding structure for embedded clauses.

4.4 Conclusion

This study presented the phenomenon of relativization in Ikwuano Igbo. We found that the relativization in Ikwuano includes; "ónyé- who, whom" with high tone (HH) not (LH), other relative pronouns are "nkè – which", "nà – that", "mà – whether" and "kà – that". It is clear that word order strategy is selected from the lexicon of the native speaker and combined into a simple and complex sentence from being competent in the language. The study observes that relativization accepts embedded clause which generates the complementizer phrase in a complex sentence. Languages of the world have relativization in their own strategic characteristics of grammaticality and the word order arrangement. Relativization in Ikwuano is not only a strategy used to express complex but it is also a strategy used to express complex clause but it is also a strategy used to give emphases to a particular NP constituents of the sentence. The research filled the gap in Igbo grammar by introducing the principle of embedding of the Principles and parameters of Chomsky (1981). This shows that the module used for language analysis can be applied to any natural language of the world. Some of the Igbo scholars who worked on relativization did not use any module in their analysis of language as a means of communication. Chomsky and other scholars of syntax and semantics have set the standard for every other language to fit into and apply their own strategy for language descriptions and grammaticality.

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Notes

Note 1

Abbreviations

ADJPs	Adjective Phrases
ADVPs	Adverb Phrases
ATR	Advanced tongue root
AUX	Auxiliary
COP	copular
COMP	compementizer
CP	complementizer phrase
FUT	future tense
GB	government and binding
HT	high tone
I (INFL)	Inflectional phrase
IP	Inflection phrase
LT	low tone
NP	Noun phrase
P	preposition
PERF	perfective verb form
PP	prepositional phrase
P&P	principles and parameters
PRO	pronoun
PST	past tense
SPEC	specifier
RCM	relative clause marker
TNS	tense
V	verb
VP	verb phrase
1SG	first person singular
1PL	first person plural
3SG	third person singular
3PL	third person plural

Note 2

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