

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Ofem Obono is born from Ugep, Yakurr Local Government of Cross River State.

He holds the Bed degree in Education, did a Masters in Theology and he is currently reading Bible Translation at the University of Free State , Bloemfontein in South Africa.

He is the Project Coordinator of the Lokaa Bible Project as well as overseeing the Literacy department of NBTT, Jos. John Obono is a dedicated Christian married with five children and committed to the service of God. His books on Literacy are all over the Lokaa area. He is a house hold name as he goes out every time to reach the unsafe for Christ.

Other books he has written in Lokaa are: Orthography of Lokaa language, Phonology of the Lokaa language, Yeşema ka Lokaa, Lida ka Lokaa etc. A dictionary in Lokaa is in the making.



GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LOKAA LANGUAGE - THE LINGUIST APPROACH



Written by :

Apostle John Ofem Obono

REFERENCES

- Jean Guy, Research in Lokaa Nominal phrase, 1966.
- Elaine Berry (1965) Linguistic Report Summer Institute of Linguistic Zaria, Nigeria.
- Iwara, U. A (1988) Reading and Writing of Lokaa, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Obono, J.O. Linguistics Research and data collected for ICAL 1998, NBTT, Jos, Nigeria.

A compound word in Lokaa are nominals characterized by the presence of two or more smaller stems derioved from components simpl;e nouns. They occur very frequently in the language. It is, therefore, important to know how to write and read them properly.

A compound nominal in Lokaa is taken to be a single word in that the component stems normally merge together to produce a brand new noun. Iwara feels that lepaambe ‘cow milk’ is a good example to this type of compound. This comprise of two stems, the non-basic noun, epaam ‘cow’ and the matrix noun ‘lebe’ breast. The first is merged with the second to produce a totally new noun which is more than the combined meanings of the two original nouns. There is an embedded assimilation and elision that phenomenally occur in the formation of of Lokaa compound that was studied in the phonology of the language in our first book. This elision and assimilation justified the none inclusion of an hyphen in the compound.

CONTENT	
1. Introduction	2
2. The sentence	2
3. The Word	2
4. The clause	3
5. The Phrase	4
References	5
Inside Story	6

Introduction.

This attempt at the analysis of Lokaa grammar is predicated on the assumptions that, the beauty of the language has not yet been properly explored and appreciated. As I translate the Lokaa Bible I take notes of interesting concepts with my little knowledge of grammar. I do hope that this will challenge linguists who are in discourse analysis to show more interest in the study of this language.

Meanwhile feel free to write to me if you have any issue you intend to address with me within the frame work of this study.

similar meaning in context *kā kebee sa*, (when) *da lipaa ja* (where).

Tone on the verb form is left unmarked as suggested by Prof. Iwara, he posited that this is done on the assumption that the native speaker will automatically call the appropriate tones in the presence of these time and place conjunctions. The native speaker is therefore, expected to read all unmarked verb-forms occurring in adverbial clauses or phrases of time and place with the tones appropriate to high-tone verbs. Example:

54. *Kā oḡkoi keblā yanən yakooma ẹ.*

When he went farm people wait him

Liboḡ ja oobeeyi daa ɔnən daa oḡkou.

Where he stood there person there go

Compound word

A word is a speech sound or series of speech sounds that symbolizes and communicates a meaning usually, without being divisible into smaller units capable of independent use (2) **It also** the entire set of linguistic forms produced by combining a single base with various inflectional elements without change in the part of speech element involving or used in a combination.

3 Compound of *a word*: constituting a compound, a compound of *a sentence*: having two or more main clauses

1. Compound word is a word consisting of components that are words (as *rowboat, high school, devil-may-care*) **b** : a word (as *anthropology, kilocycle, builder*) consisting of any of various combinations of words, combining forms, or affixes

2. Compound word is something formed by a union of elements or parts ; *esp*: a distinct substance formed by chemical union of two or more ingredients in definite proportion by weight.

The father of the child will be able to take the name of his fathers.

48. yamaṇabeṇ ba oḍam wa yaneṇweṇ maa

The friends of the husband of the girl

Note: the first NP usually has few or no attributives.

Locative recursion is marked by ma, ka, da.

49. yodaali beṇ maa aa beṇ yamoṇ ma eṭonweṇ

We took the children as our children in school

11 Construct

Consists nominal phrase followed by clause Construct, marked by a Relative pronoun which varies according to the class of noun.

Most attributives of the simple NP may occur in the first NP

Example:

50. litaami limi ja ntai ke

My farm which I have tilled

51. lowi jana ja yadei omilata

One water they call omilata

52. onen wanwanaya wa oyau ka epona

Everyone who is engage in oil production

Sometimes the first NP is discontinuous,

Example:

53. bloong ba odei ke maa ebaa

All the things which he has bought.

Note:

3.3 The adverbial phrase

3.3.1 Function

The adverbial phrase functions as time and place. The prefix on the verb is marked with a long vowel, this emphasizes a high tone followed by a low-tone stem. The adverbial verb-form as Iwara(1985) prefers to call it, is conditioned by the presence usually at the beginning of the clause of a conjunction such as 'ka', 'ma' when and 'da' where or a phrase that have

WORD SEPERATION

In Lokaa a word may be defined as a sound or a sequence of sounds that are are significantly capable of independent free in movement within a sentence structure. Professor Alex Iwara in his book "How to read and write Lokaa language stated that, free movements of sequences that are meaningful in a given sentence structure constitutes a word. Note the following example: 'Owoonkekeblaseen' (He has returned farm yesterday) When one places this statement in the negative form, it would become 'Iseenkeblaowooni' (Yesterday he has not returned from farm yesterday. A close look at the sequences show that; ke, iseen, owoon and kebla moves freely as one sequence and since they are meaningful, they should be recognised as separate words.

The word in lokaa phonologically is the unit of potential stress placement. According to Berry (1969) the word consists of a nucleus, and a prenuclear margin. The nucleus consist of one or two syllables except in compounds where they may have more, She stated that syllables that function in the nucleus are those with prenuclear consonant. She went further to opine that syllables consist only of a nuclear vowel or a nasal, or of a nucleus followed by a post nuclear consonant, functioning in the margin of the word. Length normally occurs in nuclear syllables; it is only rarely found in marginally syllables.

She felt that features of the word are stress and vowel harmony. Stress usually goes with high tone; and where there is no high tone, stress is often not prominent.

One can clearly see that vowel harmony which Berry posited as a fgeature in lokaa words, operates in all words though only to a limited extent in compounds. The eight vowels in the lan-

guage are placed in three groups, and in the margin will be of same group as that in the first syllable of the nucleus. Where there is an independent vowel the prefix vowel will be of same group as that of the second nuclear syllable. In compounds the vowels of the two roots do not harmonize, though the vowel of the margin will harmonize with the first root vowel.

Sub-type v

Consists of an attributive alone.

Example:

42. Yadoyado yafuniken 'others are coming'

3.2.2.2 The complex nominal phrase

The Complex NP is divided into two sub-types,, Recursive and Construct.

1 Recursive

This type consists of a nominal phrase followed by recursive nominal phrases, which may be paratactic or hypotactic.

(a) Paratactic.

Paratactic recursion is usually marked by obaa 'and'

Example:

43. bloong bimaa ebaa obaa esaama

All this things and maize

44. otoowa e yatu obaa bloong ba odei ke maa

He carried wine and all the things he has bought

45. mba obaa buusi they and the cat

Note: the article 'a' occurs much more frequently in this type of phrase than in the simple NP.

Occasionally the recursion may be appositional with no marker.

Example:

46. yadambeben yamanabeben ba odamma

Young men, the friends of the husband

(b) Hypotactic

Hypotactic recursion is usually of two kinds, Genitive and locative.

Genitive recursion is usually marked by a genitive marker, which varies according to the class of the previous noun.

Example:

47. yaate wa aweben maa na obanga odaali jeen ja aba yaate .

Those four masquerades

35. bloong bimaa ebəə

Thing those all

All those things

36. awi anaa ebəə

Day four all

All four days

Notes:

Adjectives: a small class of descriptive words. Most description is done by relative clause and verb.

Ebəə: means 'all'. In a class on its own.

Sub-type 11

Consists of Head; Pronoun instead of noun

Margin : attributives

Examples:

37. Mbə bimaa yapoo those two

38. yayani fe ebəə they energize it all

Sub-type 111

Consists of a pronoun without attributes. Usually found in the 'subject' position.

Example:

39. Ami oḍa onikala m 'I use to fear.'

Subtype iv

Consists of a pronoun without a noun,

Example:

40. abaa beḅen eṭonweṅa yanangi bḅong o. You school children
what are you doing?

Or of two nouns.

Example:

41. yata yatooyi yamaḅbeḅen

They use it to throw at Ugep children

1. The sentence

1.1. Function

Earlier studies of the lokaḅ language grammar patterns created doubts as to whether a larger element e.g the paragraph can be usefully set up (Elaine 1965) thus saw the sentence as the largest self-contained grammatical unit. Contemporaneous studies as proved this wrong and saw the sentence as the The sentence can however function as at a lower level e.g as an element of the clause or nominal phrase, and recursively at its own level (e.g in reported speech).

1.2. Structure

1.2.1 Elements: The sentence may be tentatively analysed as consisting of a nucleus and margin, the nucleus normally consisting of a single independent clause, the margin of one or two (or possibly more) dependent clauses. The nucleus is obligatory, and the margin optional.

By far the larger sub-class of dependent clauses occurs in pre-nuclear position. There is however a small sub-class occurring in post nuclear- position.

1.2.2. Markers: Both independent and dependent clauses are characterized by certain features.

1.2.3 Nuclear markers:

Two classes of nuclear markers (i.e. items characterizing the independent clause) have so far been discovered.

(i) Introducers.

eḍo 'then' In work done in the past EḌO was suspected as a connector between sentences. In her words she said, "This may function as a connective between sentences. There may be evidence here for setting up a paragraph level" and suggested further investigation. Investigation as proved that Eḍo is definitely a connector of two sentences and functions exactly as then in

the English language. Let us look at some examples.

1. Adà yayeni ndolàti mà nkànti imaa, ẹdọ ajai ọnẹn
As they have passages in streets that, then you say person
kaa nna oomle o.
there not enter?

2. Ẹdọ yadẹẹ mọọn yaboọli kẹ eti
Then they-love us pass road
We love them very much

Ọkaama ‘so’

3. Ọkaama yodaali beẹn maa aa beẹn yamọọn mà ẹtonwẹnẹ
So we-took children the as children ours in school
So we take the children in the school as our children.

(ii) Question markers

Nwẹ

Example:

4. Nwẹ ọyi kẹ ọnẹn etieti tẹ otẹ ẹkpa otẹ okpe ọnen
Is it good person real to use cane use teach person
nwẹnẹ mma omung oyima ọnẹn wẹ oobi ẹtẹn ooda.
Book in order to know person who isn't animal isn't.

(FT) Is it good for a human being to use s cane to teach some-
one so that he will learn, in asmuch as he is not an animal.

Note that the presence of nwẹ to mark a question is optional. A
question is always marked by a distinctive intonation pattern
(Elaine Berry 1965) But in recent times a question marker ‘o’
has been identified at the end of each question.

There are no doubt further classes of nuclear markers, and fur-
ther examples in each class.

1.2. 4 Marginal marker.

Markers in a dependent clause may consist of a morpheme, a
word or a phrase. Length and tone may also be relevant, and so
too in some kinds of sentence may the form of the verb, For in-
stance, verbs are marked for aspects in a five fold Aspect sys-

The simple NP may be divided into five sub-types on the basis
of the occurrence of the above elements.

Sub-type 1

This is the most frequently occurring type of NP. It consists of
a noun with or without attributives. No example of a simple
phrase with more than three attributives has been recorded.
The following chart shows the order in which attributives occur
in recorded examples.

Article	noun	Posses,	adjective	De-	numeral
				monstrat	ebaa
				ive	
*	*	*			
*	*				

Examples:

31. abusi nwẹ yonaning wẹ yodei

The cat him work he not like

32. ukwa omoon maa otoowa ẹ mblami nnaa

ukwa our the carries it masquerades four

Our ukwa has four masquerades

33. Onen ododo nwẹ onigawai yisoowa maa

Person another him use to carry pot th

Another person use to carry the pot

34. mblami imaa nnaa

verbal phrase contain only the verb.

Examples of expanded form:

27. ja nna legbonga ke awu okoowa

Which will satisfy you, the teacher

28. ofi otum awu ta ayini m

It would please me very much for you to tell me

(two auxiliaries)

29. ablema ke kaa

You have got it right

30. nnyi mbi na among abi ada omanawam

I did not know that you were likely to be my friend

3.2 The Nominal Phrase

3.2.1 Function

The Nominal phrase functions:

(a) as the inner expansion of the clause nucleus (object),

(b) As the inner margin of the clause (subject).

Sometimes also the Nominal phrase may function as one sub-type of adverbial, Phrase, i.e locative phrase. In this case it usually, though not always occurs with special markers.

The Nominal Phrase may also function recursively at phrase level.

3.2.2 Structure

The Nominal Phrase is divided into two types, Simple and Complex.

The simple Nominal Phrase consists obligatorily of a Noun, and optionally of an 'article' and one or more attributives.

The basic structure may be diagrammed as:

Pre-Nuclear Margin	Nucleus	Post-Nuclear Margin
Article a	Noun x 2 And/or pronoun	Attributives

tem, the 'Actual' aspect occurring when the verb has a past reference, the 'Non-actual' when it has a future reference; but in conditional and temporal clauses that have a future reference the verb is still 'Actual in aspect.

Reason: ogena 'for, because'
(Relative: relative pronouns)

Subjective: ta

Manner: da

Temporal: mma 'before'

Ma, da, ka, in, where, when

Past:

Future: All verbs occur with prefix high-low, stem low-high

Conditional: ooda aa 'if' Tone changes as temporal.

Purpose: mma abla maa

1.3 Sentence types

Two main sentence types have been distinguished: Simple and complex. A simple sentence consists of an independent clause only.

A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and one or more dependent clause.

Complex sentences are divided into subtypes according to position of the independent clauses, the way are marked, etc. Some of the sub-types distinguished are as follows:

(i) Subjunctive.

Examples:

Bong maa opan o ta anang yonang yowu yomeem

What the help you to do work your easy

(ii) Relative: Relative clauses function as part of the nominal phrase. Example

6. Yakou yakaa ke yeti ba nna yaba maa

They-go see tree that will cut the

They go and see the tree they will cut

(iii) Temporal

Example:

7. Ooyiyi onen ta ota ekpa ota oduu onen mma omung

It is not good person to use cane beat person in order

oyima boong

Know something.

Itr is notv good for a person to beat someone with a cane before he learns something.

(iv) Purpose

Example:

8. Mma obla maa been yamoon yabi yayeni

So that children our may also

yayinni yayena moon.

Tell about us.

(v) Manner

Example:

9. Boong onangi e da nna osenga oyin o ooyima.

Thing happen him how pass tell you not-know.

If anything happens he will not know how to tell you.

(vi) Reason

Example: Wool linina e ogena mkpa ya yaduu e

Body pain him because cane that they beat him

He is in pain because they flogged him with a cane.

(vii) Reported speech

Example:

11. Ajiyi abi etonwene ya ayimaa eyiyi etake ya ijaani.

You say that education of today is good it pass of old.

2. The clause

2.1 Function

The classes of clause; independent, functioning as sentence nucleus, and dependent, functioning as sentence margin. There is no basic structure distinction - they are distinguished by their markers. Dependent clause are divided into sub-classes accord-

3.1.1 Structure

The verbal phrase consists obligatorily of a verb and optionally of various other elements.

The structure may be diagrammed as follows:

Pre-nuclear Margin		Nucleus			Post-Nuclear Margin
Outer	Inner	Head	Exp.2	Exp.2	Locative maa daa kaa
Tense marker na ta	Auxiliary (x2)	verb	Obj. Pron.	Aspect marker ke	

The elements functioning in the pronuclear margin position are absent in certain constructions:

(a) Neither tense-marker nor auxiliary occurs in clause to the first in a clause comple

(b) In a negative construction the tense-maker and one sub-class of auxiliary do not occur.

The class of word functioning in port-nuclear margin position may also occur as sole element of a locative phrase.

The nuclear element are inseparable. They are phonologically linked the object-pronoun and aspect-maker having clitic relationship to the verb .

The Auxiliary is distinguished from the verb for two reasons:

(a) The stem -ī e. The part remaining when the personal prefix is removed - is invariable , whereas the stem of the verb is marked for aspect.

(b) It is never found independently of the verbal phrase.

No example of the full expansion of thye verbal phrase been recorded. The largest number of places occurring in any recorded verbal phrase is four. The majority of examples of the

body his never it then I wii not see
I have not been seeing him personally.

24. jang oba yanɛn ooyoom
never with woman not sleep
He never sleeps with a woman

Note: jang is optional, but occurs in the majority of negative Clauses as a kind of ‘intensifier’ of the negative.

2.2.4 Clause Type iv - Inverted.

In this type NP object occurs at the beginning, possibly for emphasis.

Examples:

25. yamle bima oɔn wanwanaya wa
oil that person any who
oɔyau ka eponna na oɔana kaa

Is engage oil production will put in
That oil everyone who is engaged in oil production will put in.

26. bloong ba mba bikin yanikpe mba
things which those others used to teach those
ayima amoon kpekpe maa
nowadays we teaching the

What those poelpe use to teach are what we are teaching now.
Note: A feature of the clause is the Concord system. This will be described in detail at word level.

3. The Phrase

There are three classes of phrase: Verbal phrase, Nominal phrase and adverbial phrase.

3.1 The verbal phrase

3.1.1 Function

The verbal phrase functions as head of the clause.

ing to whether they function in pre-marginal or post-marginal position, or elsewhere.

2.2 Structure

The great majority of clauses in yaka contain a verbal phrase. Only one special type has been recorded without a verbal phrase:

eto ewu ki o.

House you where (is)?

Where is your house?

Nwa ki o.

He where (is)?

Unelicited utterances, not in text)

Therefore for the purpose of this description the presence of verbal phrase will be regarded as obligatory for the clause. It is the only obligatory element.

On the basis of difference in structure, at least four main clause types have so far been distinguished—

I – simple, II – Complex, III – Negative, IV - Inverted.

2.2.1. Clause Tpye 1 - Simple.

This is the most frequently occurring clause type and its structure is basic to the majority of clauses. It consists obligatorily of simple verbal phrase (VP) and optionally of one or more nominal phrase (NP) and one or more Adverbial Phrase (AP). The structure may be diagrammed as follows:

Outer	Inner	Head	Expansion	
Time Phrase	NP subject	VP	Inner NP	Outer AP
			Object	x2

Margin

Nuclear

The division between nucleus and margin has been made on the basis of the obligatory absence of the NP subject in certain types of sentence e.g Direct Command. In addition, there is the possibility of discontinuity between NP subject and VP; other elements may occasionally occur between them, particularly some sentence introducers.

The nucleus is divided into Head and Expansion, the former being obligatory and the latter optional.

The nominal phrase functioning as inner margin is labeled 'subject' (NPs) that functioning as inner expansion of the nucleus is labeled 'object' (NPo). When the NPo occurs twice the first usually corresponds with the 'indirect object'; there is no formal distinction between the two. Neither is there between the NP's functioning as subject and object, except that one subclass of pronouns occurs only in the former position.

Where two phrases occur in the 'outer expansion' position, the first is likely to be an adverb or phrase of manner, the second to be a locative phrase. The phrase occurring in the outer margin usually has a temporal meaning, hence the label. There are, however, exceptions to these rules, and the positions of the phrases may occasionally be interchanged.

No significant limitations have so far been discovered in the occurrence of the elements of the clause. No example of the full expansion has been recorded. A chart is given below of the various combinations of elements in the examples which follow.

19. yanən maa yato nti yaduuyi bə.

People the use canes they-beat them
People beat them with canes

20. koowa na ntoowa nkou nkoowa o libo
tomorrow I will take-you I go I show you place
Tomorrow I will take you to see the place

21. ota okou osenga ka lophon.
he carried he went he walked in town
He went walking in the town.

2.2.3 Clause Type 111-Negative.

In this clause –type the Verbal Phrase occurs last, following the object NP, and all other phrases.

The usual order is:

NP subj. Adv/Time NPobj. Loc. Phr. VP.
(jang)

Note that the verb is obligatorily marked for negation, by the lengthening of the person prefix, and by distinctive tone. In the non-future, High Tone verbs occur with prefix LL, stem H, Low Tone verbs with prefix LH, stem L. In the future, both high and low tone verbs occur with prefix HL, stem H,

Restrictions:

- (1) Instead of the five aspects, verbs in Negative clauses occur in only two, future and non-future.
- (2)(ii) No instance of a recursive clause construction in the negative has been recorded.

Examples:

22. onen jang lemle ooyengi
person never noise will not make
No one will make a noise

23. wool liwe jang je edo mmung nkaa

G. Yakpe nwene mbe doo

They learn book theirs quietly

They learn their lesson quietly.

2.2.2 Clause Type 11 - Complex.

A clause Complex consists of a succession of two or more clauses in a recursive construction, having the same function in the sentence as a single clause.

Feature:

(i) The first verb in the series is frequently, though not always, one of a limited sub-class of verbs:

To 'take, use' (When this occurs the clause usually has an instrumental meaning). (See example 19)

Ta 'carry' (though the actual meaning 'carry' is frequently neutralized)

Kou 'go'

(ii) In cases where two verbs refer to the same NP object, the NP object occurs following the first verb in the series, with the subsequent one(s) after it. (see example 18)

(iii) The verb in the second and subsequent clause is marked for the 'non-actual' aspect, and is distinguished in the singular by a prefix with low tone. This distinction is neutralized in the plural.

Restrictions:

(i) No instance of locative phrase occurring in the first clause of a serial construction has been recorded.

(ii) The verbal phrase in second and subsequent clauses consists of nuclear elements only. (3.1.2)

Examples

18. yase yeti maa yapaa

They felled tree the they cut

They felled trees and cut them up.

Example	TP	NPs	VP	NPo1	NPo2	AP1 (adv)	AP2 (ioc)
12.*	*	*	*		*		
13.		*	*	(*)	*		*
14.		*	*		*		*
15.			*	*	*		
16.		*	*			*	*
17.			*			*	*

Examples:

a. Ma kebee simaa aa obool wa odaami aajaa ka lagoon
In time that like chief who big like that in town

B. Oyeni bloong bimaa ebaa ba atongai maa
Had things those all that you speak.
At that time a chief who was big like that in the town had all those things which you mention.

C. Boong imaa okai e yogaga ka etem kaa
Thing that gave him trouble in heart there.
That thing gave him trouble in his heart.

D. Yabool ba yamama mma yade yabool ba yakpankpani ikpe
Chiefs of Ugep then called chiefs of mkpani case
The Ugep chiefs called the Mkpani chief case.

E. Na oka ween wa onen ododo jeen
Will give child of person other name.
He will give another person child a name.

F. Ami nkaa aajaa ma apaa imaa.
I saw like that in place that.
I saw such a thing in that place.