

# An Analysis of a Noun Phrase in Ichindali

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**Abstract**—Ichindali is one of the Ethnic Community Languages spoken by an increasing population of the Ndali people in Mbeya region. The Ndali people live in southern Tanzania, Mbeya Region. Ileje District has 124,451 speakers in 2012. Ileje is bordered to the North by Mbeya rural and Rungwe district, to the East by Kyela district. Ndali people live in an area which crosses the Tanzania Malawi border. This paper investigates the way noun phrases are formed in Ichindali and the order of their formation (constituents) in this particular language. Therefore the main objectives of this paper were: i. To find out the Criteria for categorizing noun phrase elements in Ichindali. ii. To examine the various kinds of dependents in Ichindali noun phrase. In arriving at these objectives, the writer posed the following questions as a guide: i. What are the criteria relevant in categorizing the dependents of the noun in Ichindali? ii. What kinds of dependents form a noun phrase in Ichindali? A conclusion has been drawn from this work is that, the structure of a noun phrase in Ichindali is N-Det-Mod. An NP can function as a subject, direct or primary objects which is normally expressed in the accusative case, indirect or secondary object in dative case as well as an object of preposition.

**Index Terms**—noun phrase, Ichindali, determiners, complements and adjuncts

## I. INTRODUCTION

The phrase is a significant unit of analysis in the grammar of any language. It is not only studied at the syntactic level but also at other levels of analysis-phonology, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics. Different types of phrases have been identified and described in the grammar of English and other languages. However, the noun and verb phrases are the most important and widely described phrases given that the structure of many languages revolves around the noun and the verb word (Ondondo, 2015). A noun phrase is a constituent in a sentence having different functions. Murthy (2006) defines a noun phrase as a group of words which does the work of a noun. Kroeger (2005) defines a noun phrase as a phrasal constituent whose head is a noun. It can also be said that a noun phrase is group of related words without a subject and predicate which function as a noun. In this paper we will discuss various kinds of dependents (non-head constituents) which may appear in NPs in Ichindali. The two most important classes of these are complements and adjuncts which can also be called modifiers. We will also look at possessors, which function as a kind of determiner in English, but as complements or adjuncts in Ichindali, functions of a noun phrase and finally we will discuss possession and recursion in an NP.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A structure of noun phrase

A Noun phrase is a group of words which function as a noun and its head word is a noun or pronoun. Noun phrases play an important role in the construction of a sentence. Without knowledge of noun phrases in English, learners could not produce comprehensible sentences. The criteria for establishing the types of elements that can become dependents of the noun in the noun phrase are based on morphological properties, syntactic behaviour, and semantic features. The arrangement of words in a noun phrase differs from one language to another. In most times the language of the same family have a related arrangement. Valin (2004) argues that syntax deals with how sentences are constructed, and users of human language employ a striking variety of possible arrangements of the elements in sentences. One of the most obvious important way in which languages differ is the order of the main elements in a sentence which is made of a subject (noun phrase) and a predicate (verb phrase). Lusekelo (2009) explains that, the two basic techniques used to identify elements in an NP in Nyakyusa and Bantu languages in general include the shape of the noun class prefix of the head noun and the prefix for the concordial agreement in each noun phrase. First, in Bantu languages, noun modifiers reveal somehow the same shape of the affixes of the head noun and show the concordial agreements with head noun. Noun phrase being one of a major part of a sentence its arrangement differs from one language to another. Rijkhoff (2002) supports that, both within and across languages noun phrases vary considerably with respect to their internal organization and complexity.

In English an NP is made of determiners + pre-modifier + head word + post modifier. This is also supported by Lees (1961) that it is customary to describe the English nominal as consisting of sequence of constituents: predeterminers, determiners, adjectives, the noun head, and finally certain postnominal modifiers such as relative clauses. The terms 'dependent', 'element', 'modifier', 'determiner' and 'constituent' are used by the different authors cited in this work. Generally, the words mean the word categories, like adjective, possessive, demonstrative, adverb etc. that co-occur with

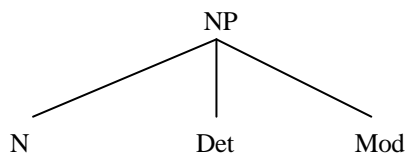


- N Poss Dem Adj Rel clause  
The very beautiful child of mine who took maize
- c) Abhandu bhangu bhoshi bho bhali na maluka  
N Poss quant Rel clause  
My all people who have shops
- d) Umulisha jhula ujhu akulisha ingambo pabhushiku  
N Dem Rel clause  
A boy who sells cigarettes in the night

In the above NP, the head noun occurs at the far most left position hence it precedes its dependents except in few circumstances where a noun is preceded by a distributor. Both the possessive and demonstrative immediately follow the head noun. If there are all in an NP the demonstrative is preceded by a possessive then an Adjective. The associative/connective and relative clauses are in the final position. In Ichindali determiners like demonstratives and possessive are overt except articles. However, we observe that each Bantu language reveals a somehow distinct. For example in Kiswahili, a demonstrative can precede a noun in an NP like:

- 3 a) yule mtoto mzuri  
b) \*Jhula umwana umwisa  
c) umwana jhula umwisa  
That beautiful child

While in Ichindali you can not compose a phrase like in 1.3 b). This helps to come up with a structure of NP in Ichindali with the constituents which occur as N-Det-Mod.



In Ichindali there are no articles but there are prefixes which mark the numbers. For example 2.

<b>Singular</b>			<b>plural</b>		
U-	mulindu	u-mutali	-	a-bhalindu	a-bhatali
pre	N	Adj	-	pre	N Adj
A	tall	girl	-	the	tall girls
U-	mukolo	u-mwolo	-	a-bhakolo	a-bholo
pre	N	Adj	-	pre	N Adj
A	lazy	woman	-	The	lazy women
U-	mulisha	umwisa	jhujho kwisa	-	a-bhalisha a-bhisa a-bho bhakwisa
pre	N	Adj	Rel clause	pre	N Adj Mod
The	handsome	man	who is coming	-	the handsome boys who are coming
U-	mukolo	u-mwolo		-	a- bhakolo a-bholo
pre	N	Adj		-	pre N Adj
A	lazy	woman		-	The lazy women
U-	mulumyana	umwisa	ughwa pachijhijhi	panu	
pre	N	Adj	P	N	Mod/Adv
A	handsome	boy	in this	village	
A-	bhalumyana	abhisa	abha pachijhijhi	panu	
Pre	N	Adj	P	N	Mod/Adv
The	handsome	boys	in this	village	

The constituent above shows that prefix ‘**umu**’ marks singular and ‘**abha**’ marks plural when affixed to the noun stem (head noun). Also there is no pre-modifier which usually precedes the head noun but there are post-modifiers. Its constituents occur as N-MOD. In the phrase there is concord agreement among the elements which form the constituents.

To have a noun phrase there are word categories that appear around a head noun: which are Determiners (possessives and demonstratives), Modifiers (adjectives, quantifiers, numerals, intensifiers and relative clause). Also, there are relative clauses, distributive as well as associative /genitives

### **Determiners**

A determiner is a modifying word that determines the kind of reference a noun or noun group has, for example *a*, *the*, *an* and *every*. Determiners occur close to the head in Ichindali language. Two sets of word categories are under determiner position: (a) possessives and (b) demonstratives. There are loose restrictions on the co-occurrence of the possessive and demonstrative but the two word categories are restricted in the co-occurrences with modifiers like adjectives and numerals as it is explained in 1.1.3. In Ichindali the possessives are likely to occur immediately after the head nouns. This is different from what is happening in English where the possessives must occur before a noun (head). Demonstratives are characterized with a feature that they are used to indicate proximity and non-proximity of location

of the referent in relation to the speaker and hearer's position. Another function of the demonstrative is to indicate the referentiality in the language. Generally, demonstratives change morphologically depending on the noun class of the head noun. For example:

- a) abhana    bha-bho    bha-la  
Children    3<sup>rd</sup>ppl-their    pl-dem-those
- b) umwana    gwabho    jhula  
a child    3<sup>rd</sup>psg    sg-dem-that
- c) umundu    gwangu    ujhu  
person    1<sup>st</sup>psg-my    sg-dem-this

In the example 1.1 the demonstratives change depending to the noun, when the noun is plural it is **bhala** but when is singular it is **jhula** to make the agreement to the noun.

#### Complements and adjuncts of a noun (Modifiers)

Nouns can take complements and adjuncts of various categories. Adjuncts to an NP are often referred to as modifiers which are adjectives and PP modifiers. Adjectives describe the quality of nouns. The proper sense of the usage of the term adjective here should be semantic adjective as it is explained by Dryer (2007) who states that semantic adjectives denote a set of words on the basis of their meaning, regardless of their grammatical properties in a particular language. He states that such words denote properties like size and colour and meanings that corresponding to e.g. big, red, long, good and fast. Radford (1992) argues that terms like complement and adjunct denote grammatical functions or relations, and thus have the same status as terms like subject and object. Some semantic adjectives exhibit nominal properties and they occur with a noun class prefix. The following phrases are examples of adjuncts in an NP:

- 1) umulongoshi ugwa chisa  
a leader with sympathy
- b) abhapina abha maghauni amelu  
the orphans with white dresses

The prepositional phrase **ugwa chisa** and **abha maghauni amelu** are examples 'a' and 'b' respectively, function as adjuncts; they are not selected by the head noun, but may be freely added to any number of NPs, subject to semantic and pragmatic plausibility. As shown in the following constituent:

- 2. a) umughanga ugwa chisa  
a doctor with sympathy
- b) abhakilisiti abha maghauni amelu  
Christians with white addresses

In English and in Ichindali a PP may also function as a complement within NP whereby it is lexically specified. It only occurs with certain specific head nouns and not with others. For example,

- 3 a) ugwasukulu ijha mikota  
a student of medicine

This NP contains the PP '**ijha mikota**' '**of medicine**' which has been determined by the noun. This is because the noun **student** can take a complement of this type, while other head nouns like a girl 'umulindu', mother 'umama', cannot. For the case of grammar one can say '**umama ugwa mikota**' but semantically it will bring a different concept from the origin meaning which meant one who learns medicine and comes to be a mother who like traditional medicine. When a given NP contains both a complement PP and an adjunct PP, the complement must always precede the adjunct. For example:

- 4 a) ugwasukulu ijha mikota ugwa lighauni ilyelu  
a student of medicine with a white dress

The constituent shows that an adjunct may not separate the complement PP from its head N, as shown above.

#### Other modifiers

Other modifiers found in Ichindali NP are categories that occur beyond determiners. Those modifiers are quantifiers, numerals, intensifiers and relative clauses. Three lexical words functioning as quantifier found in Ichindali are **-oshi** 'all' **-nandi** 'few/little' **-ingi** 'many/a lot of' Quantifiers are made distinct from numerals in that quantifiers are indefinite and functions to indicate indefiniteness. The noun prefix is copied by the quantifiers; therefore, it is the noun prefix that determines the shape of the quantifier's prefix. For example, some shapes of the Ichindali quantifier – **oosa** 'all' are in

- 1 a) **abhana bhoshi** 'all children'
- b) **ingumbe shoshi** 'all ports'
- c) **ifitengu fyoshi** 'all chairs'
- d) **umupunga ghoshi** 'all rice'
- e) **ichisu choshi** 'all countries'

Numerals that are cardinals and ordinals carry noun class prefixes of the head noun they co-occur with in a construction. They display freedom of co-occurrence in Ichindali. For example:

- 2 a) abhoshigwa bhabhili abha bhakwimba mwa tembeli  
Christians two who sing in the church
- b) Injuni shibhili sho shili mukakokwe

- birds two which are on a tree  
 c) abhoshigwa abhakwanda bhabhili abha **bhakwimba** mwa tembeli  
 Christians the first two who sing in the church  
 d) Umwana ugwa bhutatu ujhu aghite akapombo  
 A child third who taken basket

In (1.2) both the numeral **bhabili** and **ishibhili** 'two', ordinal **abhakwanda** 'first' and **ugwabhutatu** 'third' occur immediately after the head noun **abhoshigwa** 'christians', 'Injuni' and 'umwana'. Intensifiers are adverbs that denote degree. An Adverb may premodify an adjective and most commonly, the modifying adverb is an intensifier Quirk & Greenbaum (2005). In English the common intensifiers is 'very', other words are extremely, really, unbelievably, quite, etc. In Ichindali are words like:

- 3 a) **ngani** 'very'  
 b) **lukulu** 'very'  
 c) **leka** 'very'  
 b) **panandi** 'little / somehow'

Note that the intensifier modifies a word category (specifically an adjective) that immediately precedes it. For example, using 1.3.a) above the intensifier ngani 'very' gives intensification feature to the adjective umwisa 'beautiful' and 'poor' in the following phrase:

- 4.a) umulindu umwisa ngani  
 N Adj Int  
 A very beautiful girl  
 b) umunyambala umupina ngani  
 N Adj Int  
 a very poor man

While the intensifier 'lukulu' gives intensification feature to the adjective mung'wamu 'big' in the following phrase:

5. a) umupiki umung'wamu lukulu  
 N Adj Int  
 A big very

Relative Clauses are also found in Ichindali NP. Quirk & greenbaum (2005) explains that relative clause shows the agreement with the head and indicates its status as an element in the relative clause structure. In Ichindali the agreement is on the basis of two terms personal and non- personal. For example:

- 6 a) ichisu **ichi** tukwikala  
 the country in **which** we leave  
 b) imyende **gyo** bhimbite  
 the clothes **which** were stolen  
 a) ung'ina **ujhu** ishile  
 her mother **who** has come  
 b) abhano **bho** bhakwelite  
 the children **who** have passed

### Functions of a noun phrase

A noun phrase is a very important part in a sentence as it can show the grammatical relation as a subject, primary or direct object, secondary or indirect object, and objects of prepositions and it carries different semantic roles too. For example:

- 1 a) [Umughanga] amupile [[ umunung'una] [gwangu]] [[imikota] [imisa]]  
 S V N Adj N Adj  
 NP NP NP NP  
 Umughanga / amupile / umunung'una gwangu / imikota imisa  
 S Oi Od  
 Actor Undergoer  
 Agent Recipient Theme  
 Ergative case Dative case Accusative case  
 A doctor has given my young sister / brother good medicine  
 b) [[ Umulume] [gwangu]] amwulile [ ighauni] [[ung'ina] [ usongo]]  
 NP NP NP NP  
 N Adj V N N Adj  
 Umulume gwangu / amwulile / ighauni / ung'ina usongo  
 S V Od Oi  
 Actor Undergoer Recipient  
 Agent Theme Dative case  
 Ergative case Accusative case  
 My husband has bought his elder mother a dress



In English pre-modifiers are arranged according to the characteristics which determine their position in an NP while in Ichindali post modifiers are arranged with regard to the characteristics. In Ichindali there are post modifiers and determiners preceded by a noun. The table below shows modifiers arrangement to form an NP in Ichindali.

Noun (head)	Adjective						Origin	Material
	subjectal	size	weight	shape	age	colour		
umwana child	umwisa beautiful	-	-	-	umukeke young	umwelu white	umundali ndali	-
ighaini dress	-	itali long	ilipepe light	-	ilipya new	ilikeseifu red	ilya tanzania tanzanian	ilya pamba
umupiki tree	umupimba short	umugw'am u big	-	um ubh ulu nge rou nd	ugwalijholo ancient	-	umulingoti tree	-
ichipale gourd	ichisa beautiful	iching'wamu big	ichishito heavy			ichititu black		
umulisha man	umwisa handsome			um ubh ulu nge rou nd	usongo elder	umwelu white	umunyachusa nyakusa	

## V. CONCLUSION

Therefore the structure of a noun phrase in Ichindali is N-Det-Mod. An NP can function as a subject, direct or primary objects which is normally expressed in the accusative case, indirect or secondary object in dative case as well as an object of preposition. It is recursive and very important in the language as it carries different grammatical relations and semantic roles. Since its arrangement is not random, It would appear that the relative clause normally comes last of all modifiers on account of its syntactic complexity, which lends support to the principle of end weight.

## APPENDIX

### List of Abbreviations

N.....	Noun
P.....	Phrase
NP.....	Noun phrase
Dem.....	Demonstrative
Det.....	Determiner
Adj.....	Adjectives
Poss.....	Possession
Num.....	Number
Quant.....	Quantity
Distr.....	Distributor
Int.....	Intensifier
Ass/ Gen.....	Associative genitive
Mod.....	Modifier
PP.....	Preposition
S.....	Subject
Oi.....	Indirect object
Od.....	Direct object
3 <sup>rd</sup> psg.....	Third person singular
3 <sup>rd</sup> ppl.....	Third person plural
1 <sup>st</sup> psg.....	Second person plural

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