

DABA GRAMMAR

PHRASE LEVEL SORTING

WORK PAPER

by

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Yaoundé

Cameroun

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- time : the heads are nouns, the second and following are those specifying

pìcè lúmò 'le jour du marché'
jour marché

tèrà dàrà mèdimí 'le mois de mai' (le mois ou les jeunes
lune danse jeune-fille filles dansent)

- specifying: the heads are nouns, again the second specifying

dàwà motà 'de l'essence'
huile voiture

sèla yém 'jarre d'eau'
jarre eau

- possession : In this relationship, the last head is often a possessive pronoun. The last head is the possessor.

wàndéng tík 'ses arachides'
arachide ses

kàkàlǎ máy 'le panier de ma mère'
panier mère

- experience : in this construction one of the heads is a verb

dàlà Tízí 'la maladie de Tizi'
être malade Tizi

sèkémǎ màlàv 'le prix du boeuf'
acheter boeuf

Genitive constructions are very generative. New objects are usually described by using one, for example a lid:

kéng pèkǎ tásaw 'le couvercle' (la chose pour fermer le plat)
chose fermer plat

III Complex Head Phrase

Item-Appositive Phrase

The Item-Appositive phrase has only two heads. Both have the same extralinguistic referent and they are not joined by a connector. As is the case with other nounphrases, the two heads of the construction must fill the same slot in the clause.

Its components are:

an obligatory nucleus filled by a proper name (name) or an emphatic pronoun (empr) and a second nucleus (N) filled by a nounphrase (np) or a clause (cl).

Formula: +N : name +N : np
 empr cl

Examples: Yèsu, hìdì ménèkin, tí bitú
 Jésus homme bien ACC sauver-le
 'Jésus, l'homme bon, l'a sauvé.'

hoh, hìdì njá dàbàrày, hà tí jàn kén tokú.
 toi homme être malin tu ACC trouver chose là
 'Toi, tu est malin, tu l'as trouvé'

B THE ADJECTIVE PHRASE

The adjective phrase fills the modifier slot in a nounphrase. Adjectival phrases can be classed as relator axis phrases, the relator being /ta/ or /ma/

1. with /ma/

In this phrase the relator slot (R) is filled by the relative pronoun /ma/ 'who', and the axis slot (Ax) is usually filled by a verb. There are a few words that appear in the axis that could be classified as real adjectives as they cannot function as a verb in a clause, for example /kédìrek/ 'small' /kpèm/ 'deep'

Formula: +R : /ma/ +Ax : v
 adj

Examples: pày má kédìrek 'un petit arbre'
 arbre qui petit

kàtèf má fòn 'un chemin large'
 chemin qui élargir

In this construction the verb is often repeated, but upto now we could not find a reason for it. Some verbs just seem to do it and others don't.

Example: hìdì má dal dal 'l'homme malade'
 homme qui malade

bùngorì mà búh búh 'le mur percé = le fenêtre'
 mur qui percer

In the context of a story the headnoun of the construction is no more obligatory if it has been mentioned earlear, for example /mà dal dal/ would be all that appears in the nounphrase slot.

2. with /ta/

In this phrase the relator slot(R) is filled by /ta/ and the axis slot is filled by a temporal word or by a local phrase (lp)

Formula: +R : /ta/ +AX : tw
 lp

Examples: ngamà ku tá musukúh tí yà 'ton ami de hier est venu.'
 ami ton de hier ACC venir

kwàyà kwàyà bàw m̀séh ta né wèlà cà.
 hyène prendre corde de dans cou là
 'L'hyène détache la corde de son cou-là'

C THE LOCALPHRASE

The localphrase fills the local slot on clauselevel. Local phrases are relator axis phrases. They can be grouped into two different kinds: one where the axis is filled by a demonstrative local word and the other one where it is filled by a nounphrase.

1. Axis is a demonstrative local word

Formula: +R : /a/ +Ax : demlocw

Examples: à ya a wacàh! 'viens-ici!'
tuIMP venir ici

gèndàwigì à nin 'les chèvres sont dedans.'
chèvres dedans

demonstrative local words are: /nin/ 'inside', /wàcàh/ 'here', /wàtah/ 'there' /wátoku/ 'near by you'

2. Axis is a nounphrase

In this phrase the relator can be filled by the preposition /a/, the directional /àne/ 'in', or /àka/ 'on', or by another relator axis phrase (RAX)

Formula: +R : /a/
/àne/
/àka/
RAX_{lw} +Ax -: np

The RAX_{lw} has as constituents the /a/ as a relator and a localword as an axis. Local words are /zəd/ 'under', /jàkwàrà/ 'beside' /lib/ 'in' (libi=stomac), /dàwən/ 'behind' (dàwən=back), /tálá/ 'on' (tálán=head) etc.

Examples: tâ zimbìr pay à kúhu. 'je jette le bois dans le feu.'
je jette bois dans feu

gàdéd nú àne gèlám kú? 'Combien de flèches
flèche combien dans carquois ton as-tu dans ton carquois?'

bàw bàyà tik kèr kèr aká páy 'Il prend sa piège et l'attache
prendre piège son attache sur arbre sur l'arbre'

bòbóm dá tí zèr à lib yém 'Mon miel est versé dans
miel mon ACC verser dans ventre eau l'eau'.

D THE TEMPORALPHRASE

The temporal phrase fills the temporal slot on clauselevel. It is also a relator-axis phrase, the relator being /a/, the axis being a temporal word.

Temporal words are: /gbém/ 'tomorrow', /musukúh/ 'yesterday', /picah/ 'today', /zlúgúna/ 'this morning', /vúdu/ 'night'

Examples: vàn tí zà à vuú. 'La nuit il a plu'
 pluie ACC pleuvoir nuit

á gbém tá và ka bíz ndìrìmi. 'Demain j'irai cultiver'
 demain je FUT cultiver mil cu mil'

A second kind of temporal phrase is a coordinated phrase with two heads filled by temporal adverbs and the copula /kúlá/ 'upto'

Examples: tâ njà ka njà gbémá kúlá súkúh súkúh
 je HAB rester matin jusqu'au soir
 Je reste du matin jusqu'au soir.'

Temporal adverbs (they usually fill the temporal slot on clause level) are: /kámátakán/ 'a long time ago', /Kéáírék/ 'a little later', /njód/ 'immediatly' /sébatòku/ 'now' etc.

E THE INSTRUMENTAL PHRASE

The instrumental phrase is a relator axis phrase. It's relator slot (R) is filled by the preposition /à/ in the singular and /tété/ in the plural, and the axis slot (Ax) is filled by a nounphrase (np).

Formula: +R: /a/ +Ax : np
 /tété/

Examples: â pèm hèzà à pay 'Il batte le chien avec un
 il battre chien avec baton baton'

â tèlànigì tété ngámìgi. 'Ils se promènent avec leurs
 ils promener avec amis amis.'

F THE INDIRECT OBJECT PHRASE

The indirect object phrase is a relator axis phrase. The relator slot is filled with the preposition /à/ and the axis is filled by a nounphrase (np).

It is to mention that the verb has concordance in this clause, that is, it takes the indirect object affix.

Examples:

tâ velón mázleréc à hoh. 'Je te donne le médicament.'
 je donner-toi médicament à toi

tâ tépén yém à váy. 'J'apporte de l'eau à mon père.'
 je apporter-lui eau au père