

TYPES OF VERBAL PHRASES IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Annotation

This article examines the systematic behavior of the *İdómà* verb and verb phrase. It studies the internal structure of the verb. The motivation for this study is due to the fact that, there is paucity of research in the syntax, and particularly the verb structure of the language. The analysis is basically done using the descriptive method. The data were elicited from daily utterance of speakers of the language as well as the intuitive knowledge of two of the researchers. The study establishes that *İdómà* verbs are largely monosyllabic in structures: CV, CVCV, CCV and CVV, but the most common is the CV structure.

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Verbs in English can be distinguished by the kinds of marking they can take and by what they can co-occur with. English verbs all function inside verb phrases (VPs). A simple VP consists of a lexical verb acting as the main verb of the VP and anywhere from zero to four auxiliary verbs which are used to mark modality, aspect, and voice. (A compound VP consists of the conjunction of two or more simple VPs. Compound VPs will be discussed in Chapter 6 which deals with Coordination.)

A verb phrase is a phrase headed by a verb. The distinction between a verb head and verb phrase is quite clearly made in traditional grammar, though in different terminology: simple predicate and complete predicate. A simple predicate in traditional grammar is a verb head, and a complete predicate is a verb phrase.

In linguistics, a verb phrase (VP) is a syntactic unit composed of a verb and its arguments except the subject of an independent clause or coordinate clause. Thus, in the sentence A fat man quickly put the money into the box, the words quickly put the money into the box constitute a verb phrase; it consists of the verb put and its arguments, but not the subject a fat man. A verb phrase is similar to what is considered a predicate in traditional grammars.

Verb phrases generally are divided among two types: finite, of which the head of the phrase is a finite verb; and nonfinite, where the head is a nonfinite verb, such as an infinitive, participle or gerund. Phrase structure grammars acknowledge both types,

but dependency grammars treat the subject as just another verbal dependent, and they do not recognize the finite verbal phrase constituent. Understanding verb phrase analysis depends on knowing which theory applies in context.

A verb phrase consists of a verb plus another word that further illustrates the verb tense, action, and tone. The other word or words tied to a verb in a verb phrase are its dependents, which can be adverbs, prepositional phrases, helping verbs, or other modifiers. Together, this group of words defines the intention and timing of the action of the verb.

When a verb phrase consists of a single word it is called a simple verb. Many verbs in English are made by combining an auxiliary verb and a main verb; this is called a compound verb. When we want to talk about everything to do with a verb, we use the term verb phrase.

A simple verb phrase consists of a main verb. The verb in a simple verb phrase shows the type of clause (e.g. declarative, imperative):

Your camera takes fantastic pictures. (Present simple, declarative clause)

Dress smartly. Arrive on time. (Imperative clauses)

A complex verb phrase may include one modal verb and one or more auxiliary verbs before the main verb. A modal verb always comes before any auxiliary verbs:

(Mo = modal verb; aux = auxiliary verb; Mv = main verb)

House prices [MO] could [MV] fall during the next six months. (Modal verb + main verb)

You [MO] may [AUX] have [MV] played this game before. (Modal verb + one auxiliary verb)

The work [MO] should [AUX] have [AUX] been [MV] finished by 30 January. (Modal verb + two auxiliary verbs)

Verbs are words that demonstrate an action, such as sing, dance, smell, talk, and eat. When combined with linking verbs, such as is, must, will, and has, they form verb phrases. Verb phrases can consist of one to three linking verbs, and action verbs, and sometimes any complements (such as objects or direct objects).

She smells the pizza. (Verb is smells)

She can smell the pizza. (Verb phrase is can smell)

He appears on screen as an actor. (Verb is appears)

He has appeared on screen as an actor. (Verb phrase is has appeared)

I study Italian. (Verb is study)

I will have been studying Italian for three years. (Verb phrase is will have been studying)

Verb phrases form tenses besides present and past tense, including progressive tenses and perfect tenses. They also demonstrate the sentence's mood, intention and other information.

Verb phrases help to make your text more informative and meaningful. They are essential to clear writing and letting your reader know exactly what you're trying to say.

Structurally, the verb phrase is the largest expansion of maximal projection of the verb (cf. Ndimele, 1999). In other words, a verb phrase is a grammatical or syntactic unit where the verb serves as head. The head of the verb phrase, which is the verb, is an element that the phrase is centered on, and everything depends on it. In the light of the above, Lamidi (2008:81), points out that the structure of the verb phrase is determined by the verb type (s) that exists in the constituent. Since the verb phrase is headed by a verb, the verb type is determined by the subcategorisation features of the verb stem or head. For example, transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, ditransitive verbs among others.

When verb phrases function as anything other than verbs, they're verbal phrases. Verbal phrases can act like adverbs or adjectives. The phrase would include the verbal (participle, gerund or infinitive) and any modifiers, complements or objects.

Examples of verb phrases versus verbal phrases include:

The man was texting on his phone. (Verb phrase was texting functions as the action)

Texting on his phone, the man swerved into a ditch. (Verbal phrase texting on his phone functions as an adjective; swerved is the verb)

The cat watched as the two puppies fought over a bone. (Verb phrase watched functions as the action)

As the cat watched, the two puppies fought over a bone. (Verbal phrase as the cat watched functions as an adverb; fought is the verb)

All of these different verbal phrases provide important useful information for the reader about the action in the sentence. However, they do not function as the action in your sentence. That's the verb and verb phrase's job!

Ìdómà verbs possess some features that are exclusive to their formation as they are classified on the basis of certain criteria. They are tonal, morphological and syntactic criteria.

Tonal Criterion

Ìdómà operates the three register tone of high, mid and low which are realizable in the verbal class as in other lexical class. It is important to note that meaning differences of words in the language (verb inclusive) can be attributed to tone differences.

Morphological Criteria

Aside the phonology of Ìdómà verbs, verbs in Ìdómà morphologically are characterized by roots which occur in association with affixes. Majorly two types of stems are recognized in Ìdómà. These are simple and compound verbs. In what follows, these verb forms shall be discussed as they operate in Idoma.

The Simple Verb

The simple verb forms comprise only the basic stem otherwise known as verb. In the data as presented in example (8a) below, it illustrates two basic verb forms – the CV and CCV forms which are interpreted as monosyllabic.

In conclusion, another type of verb + NP structure was identified in the language known as inherent complement verb and a peculiar verb phrase known as serial verb construction. Due to the lack of scholarly linguistic description of the language, this attempt intends to contribute to the existing literatures in Linguistics and document an aspect of the syntax of idioms. Attention of linguists is drawn to the fact that several minority languages, like Idioms, has not been given the needed attention it deserves, thus we suggest that other levels of the language should be studied for proper documentation as such works will reveal some interesting facts about the language and help to preserve the language from endangerment. Finally, it is hoped that this attempt will add to the existing knowledge in linguistics, and create awareness for further research in Ìdìómà.

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