A Morphological Analysis of Lexical Categories in Rindre

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Abstract
This paper is an attempt to present a list of vocabularies in the Rindre language by placing them under their respective lexical categories otherwise called part of speech. This was done by using a frame work based on Nida (1946) as cited in Tomori (1977) with a primary methodology for the collection of data. The outcome of the analysis was the representation of Rindre words into different lexical categories.

1.0 Introduction
The fascination with language for all linguistic purposes has always centred on words (albeit as sound systems, sentences, meanings) which could be understood as the building blocks of any language. It is a fact that whether a language is isolating or analytic, agglutinating, inflecting or synthetic, and polysynthetic (Katamba, 30), the material evidence of what linguists are preoccupied with in the study of language is on word or forms of words.

In sharing his experience about words, Crystal states that:

Sixty-two years later, and I know the study of language, and of languages, has no end. Although all the world's 6000 or so languages have fascinated me, it is English with which I have had the most intense love-affair... And within English, it has been the words, words, words, in their thousands, which have most intrigued me. Words, and especially the way they sound. I don't know why that original sense of childish wonderment never left me, but it didn't. I can still stand open-mouthed in delight at a novel use of a word, just as I did all that time ago (viii). (Note: ellipsis mine)

Indeed, the remark by Crystal (above) shows how the interest with language, especially its words is never a boring adventure, but an unending one.

For Katamba (1993), the importance of studying words lies in the fact that in our every day communication, we express our joys, fears, opinions, fantasies, wishes, requests, demands, feelings and even threats or insults. The view here is one of language being a means to communication with the use of words. Katamba strengthens this by stressing that words should not be taken for granted; that they are too important. In every aspect of grammar (i.e. morphology, syntax, phonology/phonetics, semantics) words play crucial role in shaping our understanding of these fields; because they act as the nucleus in terms of being the elements used for any inquisition into knowing language.

This paper examines the words of Rindre language with a view to associating them with their lexical categories. We would begin with a description of the Rindre language, accounting for the phylum; including other basic sociolinguistic and morphological aspects of the language (see Yusuf, 2006; 2008; Ayodabo and Butari, 2013). Moving on, we would review the concepts of language, morphology, lexical category, as well a presentation of the framework of the research among others.

2.0The Rindre Language

The language Rindre, according to Yusuf (2008) is one of over thirty languages found in Nasarawa State; its primary speech community is in Wamba Local Government Area, north-east of Nasarawa State. While there are some other languages in this area arguably, Rindre occupies predominant position as a medium size language in Nigeria going by a number of indices such as size of speakers, spread to other parts of Nasarawa State, and even neighboring states. It is grouped under the Niger Congo (Benue Congo) family of languages (see Crozier and Blench, 1992).

3.0What Is Language?

Accounting for the conception of language, Babatunde and Adeyanju (2007), using a sociolinguistic framework, gave the

description of language based on its communicative significance as the expression of culture, the depository of culture and the crucial mode of culture transmission. This description places language, its significance and centrality as culture bound, and essentially, a vehicle for communication. We are made to understand in the description the relevance of language as a means for the expression of our cultural identity in our every day interaction. According to Yusuf in Akinwumi et al 2008, language which is a vital tool of communication has been given many shades of interpretations either from the philosophical, sociological, psychological or the linguistics. Taking this impression forward, scholars like Atchison defining language as a patterned system of arbitrary sound symbols, whose characteristic features of displacement, cultural transmission, productivity and duality are rare or absent in animal communication.

Barber (1993) sees language as a signaling system with its material being vocal sounds; language is also spoken but with a written form considered to be secondary and derivative (2). He also believes the human language is a signaling system which operates with symbolic vocal sounds and which is used by some group of people for the purpose of communication and social cooperation. He concludes that the about six thousand human languages spoken in the world today fit into the definition albeit they differ widely from one another.

4.0 The Concept of Morphology

An agreed opinion on the description of concepts by scholars has been that it is difficult to have a common definition that would be universally applied, as they often differ due to perhaps differences in approach and experience. For example, it is not uncommon to find that a field like morphology when explored in different languages, there could be likely discovery ofdifferences in the actual features of morphological heritage amongst different languages. The idea here is simply that of

stating that what would represent forms of morphological properties in one language could be different in another.

Given this background, morphology as a concept is believed to have various descriptions. The term 'Morphology' is widely attributed, according to Aronoff and Fudeman (2005) to a German Poet, novelist, playwright, and philosopher Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749 – 1832). It was established that the German first coined the term in a biological context in the nineteenth century. Basically, according to this finding, the etymology of the term 'Morphology' is traceable to the Greek word *morph* which means 'shape' with a precise meaning giving to it (morphology) as the study of form or form . For example, the term Morphology is expressed severally thus:

In biology Morphology refers to the study of the form and structure of organisms, and in geology it refers to the study of the configuration and evolution of land forms.

However, in linguistics Aronoff and Fudeman go on to describe the term as "the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deal with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed . The point being made here is that the concept has been used earlier in the natural sciences before its linguistic adaptation to suit the purpose of the area of language that provides its material.

Syal and Jindal (2007) assert that grammatical description is largely based on two units, i.e. the word and the sentence. And that, these two units account for the basis of different writing system in any language. They go on to describe Morphology as a systematic study of morphemes or how morphemes join to form words. The implication of this definition is that words and sentences are key factors in any study of human language, the attempt of which can begin with a deliberate understanding of morphemes and how they operate in the formation of words in a language.

Lyons (1981), on his part perceives the concept of Morphology as relatively recent in origin, and asserts that the term inflection

has preceded Morphology in being associated with the study of word forms in traditional grammar:

Contrary to what is implied in many textbooks of linguistics, it is inflection, not Morphology that opposes 'syntax' in traditional grammar. Not only is the term 'Morphology' of relatively recent origin, but when it is put in contrast with 'syntax'- especially if it is defined in terms of the even more recent term 'morpheme'- its use implies a very untraditional view of the grammatical structure of languages.

In fact, Lyons believes that the current meaning and use of the term Morphology is not any different from the traditional conceptual approach with the term inflection:

Properly explained and precisely formulated, the traditional view is at least as satisfactory as any alternative that has yet been proposed by linguists (100).

5.0 Lexical Category

Lexical category is essentially a linguistic means of analyzing language in relation to how words are classified or given grammatical names. O'Grady et al (1996) assert that it is a fundamental fact about words in human languages to be grouped into relatively small number of classes called syntactic categories. Thus, the notion of different names of words, phrase, clause and sentence comes to mind as each is the means through which syntactic categorisation and others are achieved. They also explain that syntactic categories as a means of classification comes with a number of factors which include the type of meaning words express, the type of affixes words take, and the type of structure in which they can occur . In addition, O'Grady et al subcategorise syntactic categories to include lexical categories and non-lexical categories. These two form what they termed word-level categories with the lexical categories having entries such as noun, verb, adjective, preposition, adverb and non-lexical categories containing entries as determiner, degree word, qualifier, auxiliary and conjunction. These can be seen below:

Lexical Categories	Example
Noun (N)	Harry, boy, wheat, policy, mosstue, bravery
Verb (V)	Arrive, discuss, melt, hear, remain, dislike
Adjective (A)	Good, tall, old, intelligent, beautiful, fond
Preposition (P)	To, in, on, near, at, by
Adverb (Adv)	Silently, slowly, quietly, quickly, now

Non-Lexical Categories	Example
Determiner (D)	the, a, this, these
Degree word (Deg)	too, so, very, more, quite
Qualifier (Qual)	always, perhaps, often, never, almost
Auxiliary (Aux)	will, can, may, must, should, could
Conjunction (Conj)	and, or, but

(The examples above are culled from O'Grady et al,)

According to O'Grady et al, since there is a potential source of confusion in the area of word classification stemming from some items (words) belonging to more than one category, certain criteria would apply in assigning a word into a category. The criteria are meaning, inflection and distribution.

The criterion of meaning entails that a word should name entities like noun (e.g. book, desk), designate action (e.g. run, jump), designate attribute of an entity like adjective (e.g. tall. Good), etc. The criterion of inflection would be based on the morphological properties of words (lexemes) which render them inflectable with the use of inflectional items that still retain or sustain these words as nouns, verbs, adjectives. For example, nouns in English would always be inflected from singular to plural with the use of the morpheme *–s* as in these examples:

Books → hunt + ed
Watched → watch + ed
Judged → judge + ed
Hunting → hunt + ing
Watching → watch + ing
Judging → judge + ing

Adjectives would allow for the criterion of being inflected in order to form the comparative and superlative respectively. Thus, in English, this could be seen in the following examples with the comparative *–er* and the superlative *-est:*

Comparative
Taller → tall + er
Faster → fast + er
Smarter → smart + er
Superlative
Tallest → tall + est
Fastest → fast + est
Smartest → smart + est

6.0 Theoretical Framework

The approach to this study is based on the principles profounded by Nida (1946) as discussed in Tomori (1977). Specifically, the sixth principle which considers a morpheme isolatable if it occurs under any or either of the conditions being: in isolation, in multiple combinations in at least one of which the unit with which it is combined occurs in isolation or in other combinations; or in a single combination provided the element with which it is combined occurs in isolation or in other combinations with non-unique constituent (29). Although this principle including the others are said to be heavily criticized, we considered them viable to this study.

7.0 Methodology

Basically, the method used in the collection of data for this study was primary. A defense of this stems from the awareness that there is an almost non existence of any linguistically available literature except few by the writer and a couple of others like Baju (1986). Similarly, the primary method is considered viable since this is a study that requires the natural available data that the speakers of the language use; and this was informed by the fact that it was only what was spoken by

the speech community of the Rindre language that give the appropriate data needed in a discourse of this kind.

8.0 Data Presentation

Basically, the data collected were entirely and specific to the Rindre language in terms of its words which range in different kinds, but easily grouped into nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on. Of course, the reason for the grouping is not far-fetched because the study is meant to get vocabulary items of the Rindre language on which the morphological analyses would be made. It is also important to note at this juncture that while the data collected were purely in the Rindre language there was conscious and deliberate effort by the researcher to transcribe the entire data and equally, to translate into English. Some of the data were in form of excerpts as these were recorded materials either in form of the individual conversation or collective discussion that went on during some of the given situations in which the recordings were done. However, while the data collected were quite enormous, not everything was used as only the ones considered useful were used. Below are some samples of the data collected:

Word	**Gloss**
Bi (verb)	agree
Kla (verb)	teach
Dhor (verb)	to weed
Yi (verb)	know
Fe (verb)	got
Ya ni (verb)	go see
Rango (verb)	refused
Krinya (verb)	run, escape
Usheru (noun)	grain
Uye (pronoun)	us
Ruku (adjective)	elder
Nana (adverb)	how
Bu hu mi n' ruku	you saw me as an adult
Na yi kpi (verbal expression)	if we are (were)

Uko udinddi (statement) the same town, one village
Ngi bi Kareemu ka Wude? what took Kareemu to Wude? (interrogative)
Uka hu Amina (statement) he went to see Amina
Uya ta Wude kenan that was why he went to Wude (statement)
Uye udindi ko uye aha (statement) one year or two years
Mula bo uri sabo fa (statement) I will (surely) leave home; to abscond

9.0 Analysis

As would be noticed in the sampled data shown above, the various lexical categories of Rindre words are given in bracket for most of the data. The words *usheru*, *bi, uye, ruku*, and *nana* are classified as noun, verb, pronoun, adjective and adverb respectively. The other forms of the data are, as would be seen, samples of expressions or sentences in Rindre. The expressions *Bu hu mi n' ruku; Na yi kpi; Uko udindi; Ngi bi Kareemu ka Wude?U ka hu Amina* are examples of declarative, verbal expression, statement, interrogative and statement respectively showcasing the structural forms of the Rindre language at the syntactic level. Taken together, we could easily note Rindre as a language with words which are identifiable as free forms within different lexical categories that are equally analyzable morphologically. The sentences as would be seen are made of individual words of different word classes and not conjoined as a one word sentence structure which is the case with a language like Swahili. As it were in Swahili, Yule (2006; 2008) presented the example of the expression 'nitakupenda' transcribe into English means 'I will love you' typifying the case of agglutination. However, the case with Rindre, based on the sampled words and expressions given, would be that of an isolating or fusional language (see Barber)

10.0 Conclusion

What we have attempted in this paper is to morphologically analyse words of the Rindre language in order to categorise them into their lexical categories. There is also the analysis of the Rindre as a language with words which are identifiable as free forms, which demonstrates it typologically as an isolating language.

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