

ANAPHORS IN URHOBO

Abstract

Anaphors which are subtypes of noun phrases (NPs) have received a great deal of attention in the study of the syntax of languages the world over. Attempts made to study the Urhobo anaphors as evident in Ken Safir and Naga Selvanathan (2016), Eric Reuland and Dagmar Schadler (2011) attest to this. However, such studies have not given detailed descriptions of anaphors in Urhobo as a distinct language. They have rather treated Urhobo as a unit of the African group of languages. This broad approach to the study of Urhobo creates a gap since the language is not specifically focused. The present study aims to fill this gap by giving a detailed investigation of Anaphors with particular focus on properties and derivation in the language. In doing this, the study will attempt to modify Ken Safir and Naga Selvanathan's listing of Urhobo as one of the many languages of Africa (many represented in Afranaph, including Babanki, Bafut, Ga, Ibibio, Limbum, Saari and **Urhobo**) that have transitive reciprocal polysemy - that is, transitive constructions that are ambiguous between reciprocal and reflexive readings. The data for the study which were collected through oral interviews would be analysed using the descriptive approach and supplemented with Binding Theory. The study will reveal that reflexives and reciprocals have distinct markers in the language by using movement test which shows that reflexives can be preposed while the reciprocal marker cannot undergo such movement. The study will also show that Urhobo reciprocal marker has a single form which translates into English 'each other' or 'one another'. A detailed account of Urhobo anaphors and their binding behaviour will be provided for vivid illustration.

Keywords: Urhobo, anaphors, reflexives, reciprocals.