

**THE VERB PHRASE OF USẸN DIALECT OF YORUBA**

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**CERTIFICATION**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my loving husband, Mr Osazuwa Jude OGBEIFUN, who is my 'support system' and a driving force to achieving my goals.

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## ABSTRACT

The Verb Phrase (VP) is the domain where events are expressed in the sentence and arguments related to the verb. Extant works on Usen, a dialect of Yoruba spoken in Edo State, have focused on its classification, phonetics and phonology, with little attention paid to the syntax, especially the VP, which is germane to the understanding of the Usen clause. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the Usen VP, with a view to describing the features of the verb, the internal constituents of the VP, and its structural derivation.

Noam Chomsky's Minimalist Program was adopted as the framework, while the ethnographic design was used. Ibadan 400 Wordlist, the Dakubu West Africa Language Data Sheet and Ibadan Syntactic Paradigm were used. Data were elicited from 15 native speakers aged above 40 years (nine males and six females), purposively selected for their proficiency and permanent residence in Usen for over 30 years. Data were subjected to inter-linear glossing and syntactic analysis.

Five features of the Usen verb were identified: monosyllabicity (*hè*) "cook"; initial consonant (*pa*) "kill"; derivation through compounding (*dá+ikú*► *dákú* "faint"); occurrence with object pronoun (*ghan*; *ghan ó jòkó* "they sat down") and negation (negative declarative sentences modified by *èè*: (*Adé èè ghàré* "Ade did not run"/imperative sentences modified by *máá*: *máá yú* "do not go"). Six internal constituents of the VP were identified, the verb; *koró* "stand"; the verb + noun, *kọ + orin =kọrin* "sing"; verb + prepositional phrase, *lọ ghí ulí iwé* "go to school"; verb + adverb, *fò pèlèpèlè* "speak gently"; verb + complementiser phrase, *Aghan ó mò fò kè ódiró* "They knew that he lied"; and verb + noun phrase + prepositional phrase, *iyè ó gbé eghó ghí apò* "mother put money in the bag". The Usen VP is derived by selecting a verb in the lexicon, and merging it with the relevant complement or adjunct. Where features are valued, theta roles are assigned and the lexical verb is raised to the head of the light verb for lexicalization after which the transfer takes place. Two verbal projections are involved in the derivation of the Usen VP: the inner core and the outer shell. The inner core, headed by the lexical verb, functions as the complement of the outer shell, while the outer shell, headed by the light verb, introduces the external argument to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle requirement. The inner core is transferred to the Phonetic Form and Logical Form interface for interpretation. The articulated structure of the Usen Verb Phrase domain is vP>AdvP>VP>DP>AdvP>PP.

The verb phrase of Usen dialect of Yorùbá comprises a monosyllabic modifiable verb with initial consonant, projected as a head, which primarily functions as the predicate of the clause.

**Keywords:** Verb phrase internal constituents, Usen syntax, Yoruba verb features

**Word count:** 451

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*	Ungrammatical
φ	Phi features
α	Alpha
β	Beta
θ	Theta
π	Pie
λ	Gamma
[´]	High tone
[`]	Low tone
[ˌ]	Mid tone
1pl	first person plural
2pl	second person plural
3pl	third person plural
1sg	first person singular
2sg	second person singular
3sg	third person singular
A	Argument
A- position	Argument position
A- bar	Argument bar
AGR	Agreement
AP	Articulatory perception
Asp	Aspect
Asp P	Aspectual phrase
C	Complementiser
C <sub>HL</sub>	Computational system of human language
C-I	Conceptual intentional
CP	Complementiser phrase
CY	Central Yoruba
Det	Determiner
DOC	Double object construction
DP	Determiner phrase
EPP	Extended projection principle
FP	Functional projection

Fut	Future
GB	Government and binding
Gen	genitive
HMC	Head movement constraint
HTS	High tone syllable
L	Lexicon
LA	Lexical subarray
LI	Lexical items
LF	Logical form;
MP	Minimalist program
N	Noun
NEY	North Eastern Yoruba
PF	Phonetic form
PIC	Phase impenetrability condition
Poss	possessive
Pro	pronoun
Prs	Present
Pst	Past0
SD	Structural description
SEY	South Eastern Yoruba
SO	Syntactic object
Spec	specifier
T Agr	Tense agreement
Tns	tense
TP	Tense phrase
UNDA	Usen national development association
V	Verb
v	light verb
vP	light verb phrase
X, Y	Variables

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The verb phrase is an important aspect of the clause and it has received linguists' attention cross-linguistically. Different approaches and theoretical frameworks have been adopted over the years for the analysis of the verb phrase, but no specific approach or theoretical framework is without its shortcomings. Classical grammarians define verb as an action word, a definition which has now been faulted by modern linguists, as it was observed that verbs have a wider horizon beyond being described as just an action word. Hence, in modern linguistics, verb is used to describe an action, state or occurrence of an event and it forms the main part of the predicate of a sentence. According to Ilori (2010:56), verb within the context of the Minimalist Program is the lexical item that assigns or licenses theta roles performed by arguments, that is, noun phrases in the clause structure. The verb in the Minimalist Program (henceforth MP) is assumed to have an argument structure, wherein it primarily assigns theta roles to argument positions that are licensed or allowed in the structure. These theta roles are semantic roles, such as agent, theme/patient, goal, benefactive, experiencer and so on, assigned only to arguments in argument positions, taking active part directly in the event denoted by the verbs.

The verb also holds an important place in grammatical analysis of clauses, hence, Givon (2001) asserts that it is a necessary constituent of a sentence and makes up the main part of a predicate or the verb phrase (VP). The verb phrase is a syntactic unit composed of at least one verb and its dependent object complements, plus other modifiers, excluding the subject. The VP revolves around the head verb, which does not only project the categorial nature of its complement but also by restrictive selection, determines the categorial nature of its complements.

Uṣẹn is a speech form spoken in a linguistic environment where it is mutually unintelligible with other speech forms. Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) establish Uṣẹn as a South Eastern dialect of Yoruba, spoken in Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, which is predominantly Edoid-speaking community, and far away from other communities speaking Yoruba language and its dialects. Thus, it has received minimal attention from scholars working on Yoruba language and its dialects, resulting in Uṣẹn dialect being understudied. Examining the verb phrase of Uṣẹn becomes imperative as it will contribute to the understanding of the Uṣẹn clause structure.

The thrust of this study is to examine the verb phrase in Uṣẹn, using the minimalist approach to account for the argument structure and derivations of its various verb phrases.

## **1.2 Uṣẹn and the people**

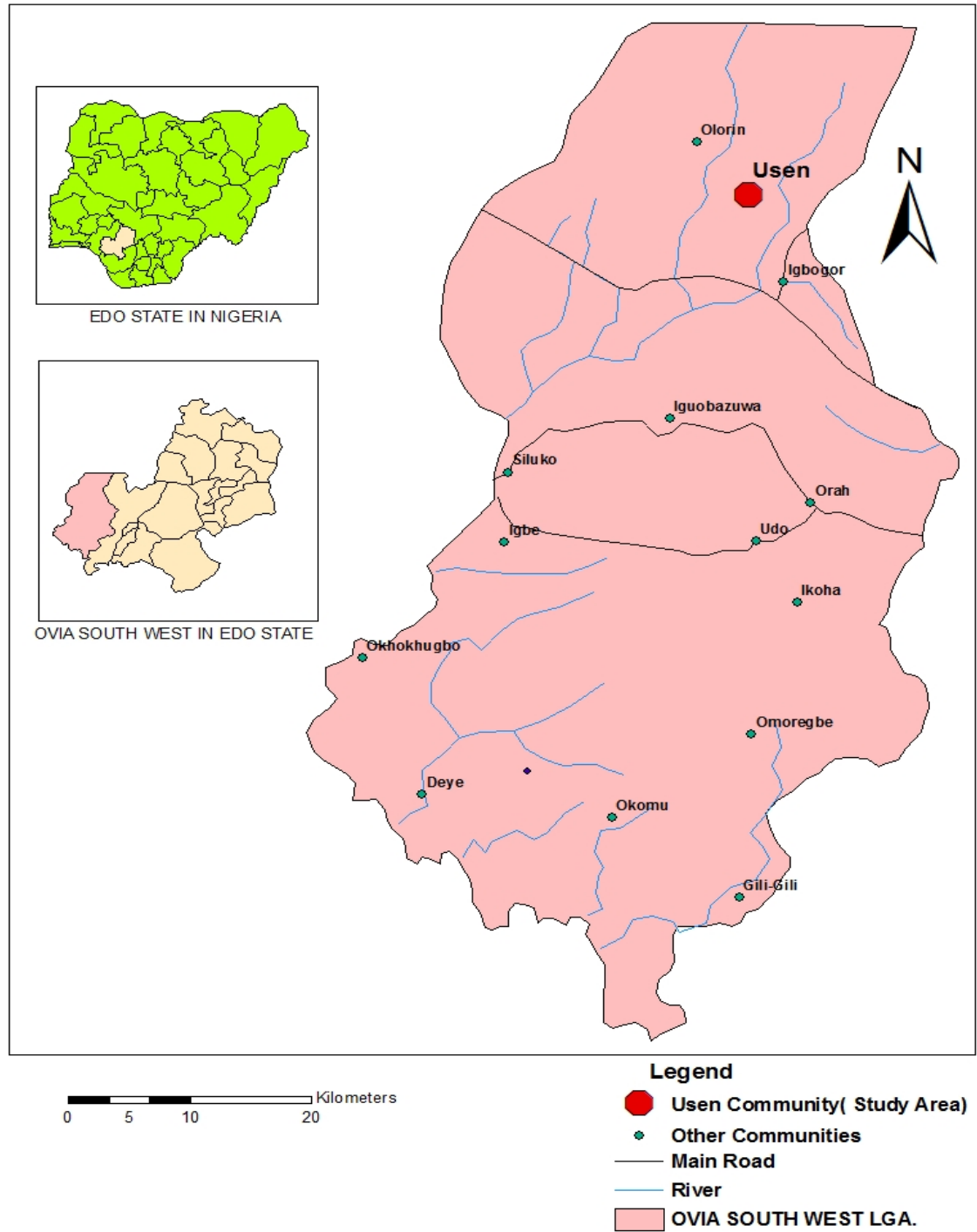
Uṣẹn is spoken in Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, and the name Uṣẹn is used to refer to the speech form, the place and the people. Although Uṣẹn is located in one of the seven Edo-speaking Local Government Areas of Edo State, the speech form is not mutually intelligible with Edo, rather, it is with Yoruba language. Geographically, Uṣẹn lies on the North West of Benin City, and shares boundaries with Okada community. Ifon and Ofusu are the closest Yoruba communities in Ondo State to Uṣẹn. The town covers an area of approximately 16squarekms (sq) expanse of land (Imoagene, 1990, 95-113 and UNDA, 2002:4).

Fig 1.1 on page 3 shows the map of Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, showing the location of Uṣẹn.



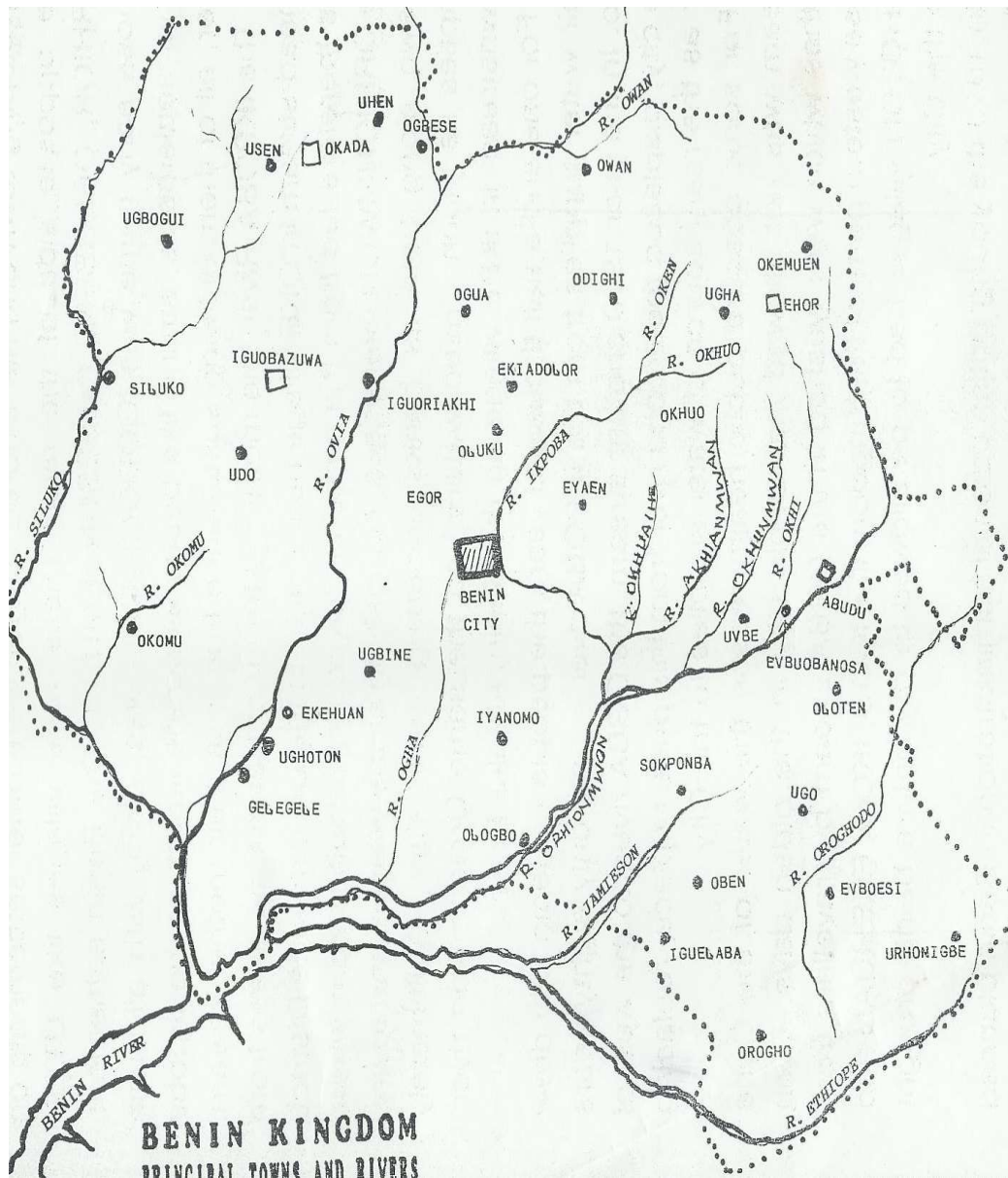
**Fig1.1: Map of Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State.**

(Obtained from ministry of Land and Survey, Edo State, Modified by the author 2016)



SOURCE: MINISTRY OF LAND AND SURVEY, MODIFIED BY THE AUTHOR, 2016

**Fig 1.2: The Map of the great Benin Kingdom (i.e Edo State) showing Usen amidst all the principal towns in Edo State**



**Legends:**

- Local Government Area (LGA)
- State Capital (SC)
- Major Town (MT)

**Culled from Edo State Map 2001**

### 1.2.1 Historical account of the Usen people

Usen town has existed for many centuries and it is believed to have originated since the tenth century A.D, as no records exist to show when exactly it was founded. Four oral traditions exist regarding the historical origin of the people and all have a common account of them originating from Ile-Ifè with the appointment of the son of the Ooni of Ifè as their first traditional ruler (UNDA, 2002:8-13).

The first oral account popularly accepted by the elders is the belief that Usen was founded as a farmstead sometime in the tenth century A.D, by some indigenes of Ilé-Ifè who migrated to the present Odómukpè quarters of the town. Òyébò (a hunter) was the leader of these first settlers. He had strong affinity with Ilé-Ifè and encouraged his co-settlers to adhere strictly to the culture of Ilé-Ifè. It was told that he also discovered a stream he named ÈRI ODE (the hunter's stream), now known as ÈREDE. The stream is believed to have mystical powers and it is worshipped by the people of Usen. The prosperity, peace and comfort which radiated around Òyébò whenever he visited Ifè attracted more indigenes of Ilé-Ifè to Usen. The expansion of Usen made them name it Ufè Kékeré (small Ifè) as it was seen as a microcosm of Ilé-Ifè.

The second oral account asserts that Òyébò requested that the Olófèn (Ooni of Ifè) sends one of his sons to rule over the newfound settlement, as it was a common practice that the princes of Ilé-Ifè were sent out to rule in other settlements. The prince took the title ALÁDÌN and changed the name Ufè Kékeré to “Odé Awùré”, hence, the prince became the first “Olú Awùré” which is now changed to “Eláwùré of Awùré”.

The third account centres on the origin of the name of the people. It was told that during the Republican period in Benin, a delegation was sent to Ilé-Ifè requesting that a prince be sent to rule Benin. In response to their request, two princes (Oròmíyàn and Afèlogíyàn) were sent to rule Benin and Usen, respectively. The two princes were said to have gotten to Ode Awure first, and after spending some time together, prince Oròmíyàn set out for Benin, but promised to return in five days' time. However, he failed to keep his promise. It was said that “Usen” derived its present name from the Benin version of “five days' time” that is “Usienne”. This account is popularly accepted amidst the Edo people (Egharevba, 1967:7; Ebohon, 1972:3).

The fourth oral account also focuses on the origin of the name of the people. It was told that Odé Awùré prospered till the reign of the 7<sup>th</sup> Olú Awùré “Arànmàrhí”. Afterwards, Usẹn fought series of wars with some distant settlements and lost during the reign of “Alákayé”, the survivors went to live in Okèdè which then expanded to the side of a tree called Ushin. They started referring to their new location as Idi Ushin (foot of the Ushin tree). It was gathered that during the reign of His Royal Highness Olúògbé1, the eleventh Olú Awùré, Ushin was represented in the colonial map of the area as “Usẹhin”.

Three facts can be deduced from the above historical accounts of the Usẹn people, and these facts are also generally believed and accepted by the people of Usẹn. They are that;

- a. Usẹn town was founded by some indigenes of Ilé-Ifẹ around the tenth century AD as a farmstead.
- b. The Oṣoni of Ifẹ sent one of his sons to rule over Usẹn. The prince was the first Olú Awùré of Awùré land, and took up the traditional title ALÁDÌN.
- c. The people of Usẹn debunked the account that the name Usẹn originated from Edo translation of “five days’ time” as generally believed by the Edo people. This is because they believe Usẹn has long existed before Benin kingdom, and that their community cannot be named over a failed promise. Hence, they believe that the post-war resettlement of the people around the foot of the Ushin tree (Idi Ushin) is believed to have birthed the present name, Usẹn.

It is important to note that Usẹn and Edo people have a cordial relationship, however, the influence of Edo people is more felt on the Usẹn people, in terms of their names, morning greetings, dances, festivals and so on. Usẹn is also said to have a cordial relationship with Ìdànrè people, and the Ìdànrè people see Usẹn as the only Oṣoni of Ifẹ descendant on their route to Ifẹ. Thus, the saying goes *Tú Usẹn lọ Ufẹ, Ìdànrè nùkàn wén sẹbí Oba*, this means that “from Usẹn to Ifẹ, only Ìdànrè is the descendant of the King”. Orohún festival of Ìdànrè is similar to the *Uwén-Wén Ora* festival of Usẹn. Usẹn and Idanre enjoyed good trade understanding especially because of the treaty for protection of the traders and travellers that frequent Ìdànrè route. Despite the understanding of the Usẹn and Ìdànrè people, Usẹn went to war with the Ìdànrè people over a boundary dispute. It was after the war of Omifúnfún that river Ofósù was agreed

upon as the boundary between Usen and the Idanre people. Presently, it is now the boundary between Edo and Ondo States.

Usen is a multi-lingual speech community, based on the observations of their language use during field trips. Usen and Edo are used as medium of instruction at home. At school, the students are taught Edo as no written texts in Usen exist as teaching materials in their schools. Furthermore, Usen and Edo are used in their churches, but they read Yoruba, Edo and English Bibles (especially in churches with Yoruba pastors) as there are no Usen Bibles. More so, during their festivals, Usen is used as medium of communication. During their market days, they use Edo, pidgin and Usen. When communicating with the Yoruba native speakers, they use Usen and Pidgin, and Edo is used to communicate with the Edo native speakers, while Usen is used to communicate with Usen native speakers. There is a high level of mutual intelligibility between Usen and the Yoruba people, unlike Usen and Edo people. A native speaker of Usen understands and speaks Edo, but a native speaker of Edo does not understand Usen at all, hence communication between them is not mutual.

It was observed that there are more Yoruba indigenes migrating to this community especially from Ondo State, because there is an Institute of Technology and Management in Usen town, and they come to school or trade there. Furthermore, there exists a road called Akure road linking Usen to Akure, although this road is dilapidated now and the people do not want it to be fixed as they feel that, politically, they might be cut off from Edo State, once it is fixed. They seem to enjoy their relationship with Edo State.

The last population census conducted in 2006 asserts that the population of Usen is about a hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) people. However, this figure could not be reconciled with the number of speakers found in the community as the people seem fewer than what the records show. Usen has a number of camps in it, which they refer to as "agó". It is the settlement where their farmers lodged in many years ago because of its proximity to their farmland. This settlement has however grown into smaller communities like Arékpo, Àghàkpó, Aréré, Ògídìgbó, Obòmè, Ilórín and Ukànkàn. These communities have similar speech forms with the Usen community and many

Urhobo migrants. It is crucial to know that Usen is used to refer to the place, the people and their speech form.

### **1.3 Classification of Usen**

Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) group Usen with the dialects classified as South Eastern Yoruba (SEY) by Awobuluyi (1998). Ikhimwin (2015) claimed that Usen is a sister language to Yoruba and should be represented on the Benue-Congo family tree following Williamson's (1989) overview of the Niger Congo. However, Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) refute Ikhimwin's (2015) claim that Usen is a Yoruboid language, rather, they assert that Usen is a dialect of Yoruba. Dialects of Yoruba language are considered in the next section.

#### **1.3.1. Classification of Yoruba dialects**

A number of Yoruba scholars have carried out extensive research on the sub-classification of Yoruba dialects, and some of them are Adétúgbó (1967/1982), Akínkùgbé (1976), Oyèlárà (1976), Awóbùlúyì (1998) and Ajónógólò (2005).

##### **Adétúgbó (1967)**

According to Adétúgbó, Yoruba-speaking areas are categorised into three major dialects, which are listed below:

- i. North West Yoruba (NWY): this group is made up of Ègbá, Òyó, Ìbàdàn, and Òsun areas which he claimed historically to be part of the Òyó Empire.
- ii. South East Yoruba (SEY): comprise of Òwò, Òndó, Òkítípupa and some part of the Ìjèbú, which used to be part of the Benin Empire.
- iii. Central Yoruba (CY): consists of Ìlèshà, Ifè, and Èkítì environs. Adétúgbó claimed these areas are characterised by series of transitional phenomena, and share the ethnographic features of SEY and to a large extent the lexicon of NWY.

##### **Akínkùgbé (1976)**

Akínkùgbé advanced a step further in his research and classified Yoruba into four different groups. These are;

- i. North East Yoruba (NEY): Yàgbà, Ikírí, Gbèdè, Ijùmú
- ii. Central Yoruba (CY): Ilé-Ifè, Èkítì, Ìjèsà
- iii. South East Yoruba (SEY): Ègbá, Òyó, Òsun, Àwòrì, Ibọlọ

- iv. South West Yoruba (SWY): Kétu, Isábèé, Ifè (Togo)

### **Oyèláràn (1976)**

Oyèláràn identified four Yorùbá-speaking areas, these groups are listed below;

- i. West Yorùbá (WY): Ìbàdàn, Ọ̀yọ́, Ègbá, Kétu, Ọ̀hòrí-Ìfòhin, Upper Ọ̀gùn – Şaki, Ijio, Sábèé, Benin and Togo- Ifè (Togo), Manigri and Ìdásà.
- ii. South East Yorùbá (SEY): Ọ̀wò, Ọ̀ndó, Ìjèbú, Ìlàje and Ìkálè.
- iii. Central Yorùbá (CY): Èkìtì and Ìjèsà.
- iv. North East Yorùbá (NEY): Kákàndá, Ìgbómìnà, Ìgbòlò, Bunu, Ijùmù, Ọ̀wòrò, Ègbá and Ọ̀wẹ.

### **Adétúgbó (1982)**

Adétúgbó (1982) re-modified his former 1967 classification, and added more dialects to those of the South East Yoruba.

- i. North West Yoruba (NWY): Ègbá, Ọ̀yọ́, Ìbàdàn, and Ọ̀sun
- ii. South East Yoruba (SEY): Ọ̀ndó, Rémo, Ìkálè Ọ̀wò, Ọ̀kitipupa, Ìkàré, and Ìjèbú.
- iii. Central Yoruba (CY): Ìlèshà, Ifè and Èkìtì areas. He claimed these areas are characterised by series of transitional phenomena, and share the ethnographic features of SEY and to a large extent the lexicon of NWY.

### **Awóbùlúyì (1998)**

Awóbùlúyì did a more encompassing classification of Yoruba dialects by grouping Yoruba dialects into five, and these are

- i. North West Yorùbá (NWY): Àwòrì, Èkó, Ègbádò, Ọ̀yọ́, Ọ̀nkà, Ọ̀sun, Ìbòlò, Ìgbómìnà.
- ii. North East Yorùbá (NEY): Ìyàgbà, Ọ̀wẹ, Ijùmú and Ọ̀wòrò.
- iii. Central Yorùbá (CY): Ifè, Èkìtì, Ìjèsà, and Mòbà.
- iv. South West Yoruba (SWY): Sábèé, Ifè (Togo) and Kétu (Ànágó).
- v. South East Yoruba (SEY): Ìjèbú, Ègba, Ìlàje, Ọ̀ndó, Ìkálè, Ọ̀wò and Ọ̀bà Ìkàré.

Having examined the different classification groups proposed by different scholars, the study adopts the classification of Awóbùlúyì (1998), because of its wider coverage and encompassing study carried out on the dialects of Yorùbá. However, his 1998 submission was later modified by Ajónógólò (2005) who added Ào dialect to SEY group.

Awóbùlúyì (1998:2) identifies some linguistic innovations which characterise SEY, these are summarised below:

- a) The preponderance of “èn”
- b) Apart from Ègbá dialect, all other dialects in this group have “u” at the beginning.
- c) “n” occurs before oral and nasal vowels, unlike the case in other dialects groups, thus making it phonemic.
- d) The use of “rèé”, “òun”, or “rin/in” as the focus marker instead of “li” or “ni”
- e) The use of the following; “yèsí”, “ísí”, “sèé”, “nè”, “lè”, and “iné” as content question word
- f) The use of the following as relative clause markers: “rèé” in Ìjèbú and “iyí” or “yii” for others
- g) The occurrence of high tone syllable
- h) “èé”, two vowels of the same form are used as negative markers.
- i) The use of “fò” and “fi” as complementiser in nominalised sentences rather than “pé”.
- j) The use of two noun phrases side by side without any item occurring between.

We shall examine some features identified in Usen which also manifest in the SEY dialects.

### 1.3.2 Characteristics of Usen

A) Identification of [gʷ] and [ɣ], as seen in the examples below;

1a.	gwà	[gʷà]	“dig”
b.	gwè	[gʷè]	“bath”
c.	gwá	[gʷá]	“search”
d.	gwó	[gʷó]	“break”
e.	ègwá	[ègʷá]	“ten”
f.	həngwà	[həngʷà]	“beauty”
2a.	eghó	[eɣó]	“money”.
b.	ùghò	[ùɣò]	“navel”
c.	gharé	[ɣaré]	“run”
d.	aghán	[aɣá]	“they”



e. hanghó [hã́yó] “pay”

Ikhimwin (2015) does not attest to the existence of [gʷ] in Usen sound inventory. She claims that it is a case of glide formation. Phonemically, she realised two separate sounds /g/ and /u/, which then is realised as a glide, phonetically. In this research however, it was realised as a single consonant [gʷ] a voiced labialised velar plosive sound. This is discussed further under the Usen orthography later in this chapter.

B) Preponderance of [ɛ̃]

The occurrence of “ɛ̃n” is highly accounted for in Usen as shown in the examples below;

- 3a. obirɛ̃n “woman”
- b. ɔkànrɛ̃n “man”
- c. àjɛ̃n “witch”
- d. ifɛ̃nfɛ̃n “mosquito”
- e. ùgbɛ̃n “snail”
- f. rɛ̃n “walk”
- g. kpɛ̃n “divide”
- h. dɛ̃n “fry”

C) The use of “oún” as the focus marker (foc).

- 4a) Omɔ́lará ó subú  
Omɔ́lará HTS fall  
“Omɔ́lará fell”
- b) Omɔ́lará oún ó subú  
Omɔ́lará FOC HTS fall  
“**Omɔ́lará** fell”
- c) Ajá oún ó dí ɔmɔ́lará ó subú.  
Dog FOC HTS cause ɔmɔ́lará HTS fall  
“The **dog** cause Omɔ́lará to fall”
- d) Sisubú oún Omɔ́lara ó subú  
fall-NOM FOC Omɔ́lara HTS fall  
“Omɔ́lara **fell**”
- 5a) Ulí yí ó jó  
house DEM HTS burn  
“This house got burnt”

- b) Ulí yí oún ó jó  
house DEM FOC HTS burn  
“This **house** got burnt”
- c) Ulí oún ó jó é lála.  
House FOC HTS burn prg big  
“The**house** that got burnt is big”
- d) jíjó oún uli ó jó  
burn-NOM FOC house HTS burn  
“The house got **burnt**”
- 6a) Ọmọlayọ ó ká àlimóyì  
Ọmọlayọ HTS pluck orange  
“Ọmọlayọ plucked an orange”
- b) Ọmọlayọ oún ó ká àlimóyì  
Ọmọlayọ FOC HTS pluck orange  
“**Ọmọlayọ** plucked an orange”
- c) Àlimóyì oún Ọmọlayọ ó ká  
Orange FOC Ọmọlayọ HTS pluck  
“Omolayo plucked an **orange**”
- d) kíká oún Ọmọlayọ ó ká àlimóyì  
Pluck-NOM FOC Ọmọlayọ HTS pluck orange  
“Ọmọlayọ **plucked** an orange”

From the above, examples (4b-d), (5b-d) and (6b-d) are all focused sentences, wherein the subject, verb and object were all focused, respectively. It was observed that in Usen, nouns and verbs can be focused, when the verbs are focused, they undergo partial reduplication, while the noun can be focused by fronting it to the left periphery of the clause, immediately followed by the focus marker *oún*, irrespective of their position in the construction. These can be observed in examples (4 – 6).

D) The use of “*u*” word initially in Usen as seen in the examples below;

- 7a. ùgbén “snail”  
b. ugún “vulture”  
c. ùrù “tail”  
d. ùgbòjò “raining season”  
e. ulí “house”
- 8a. ugbó “bush”  
b. usẹ “work”

- c. uná “fire”  
 d. ukù “stomach”  
 e. ùgbà “time”

E) The use of “èyí” as a relative clause marker (rel). Consider the examples below;

- 9a. Ìwé Adé ó nò.  
 book Adé HTS lost  
 “Ade’s book is lost”
- b. Ìwé èyí Adé ó rà nò.  
 book rel Adé HTS buy lost  
 “The book that Ade bought is lost”
- 10a. Tólá ó tí bọ.  
 Tólá HTS perf back  
 “Tola is back”
- b. Tólá èyí ó yú ulí-ébò ó tí bọ.  
 Tólá rel HTS go home-whiteman HTS perf back  
 “Tola that went abroad is back”
- 11a. Igin ó dá ti iba Ọ̀séwà ni  
 stick HTS break1 poss father Ọ̀séwà own  
 “The stick that broke is for Ọ̀séwà’s father”
- b. Igin èyí uwọ́ ó dá ti iba Ọ̀séwà ni  
 stick rel 2sg HTS break poss father Ọ̀séwà own  
 “The stick that you broke is for Ọ̀séwà’s father”

F) The use of fọ́ as verb of “saying” like other dialects in SEY.

- 12a. Adé ó fọ́ kẹ̀ òhún é wa.  
 Adé HTS say that 3sg prg come  
 “Ade said that she is coming.”
- b. Ofọ́ uwọ́ ó fọ́ éè ghan.  
 Word you HTS say neg good  
 “The word you said is bad.”
- c. Kẹ̀ pe ohun èyí uwọ́ ó fọ́ kọ́lá se.  
 WH call thing rel 2sg HTS say Kọ́lá do  
 “What did you say that Kọ́lá do?”
- d. Iba mi ó fọ́ kẹ̀ éè jẹ́ iréhì  
 father poss HTS say that neg eat rice

“My father said he did not eat rice”

G) All the five nasal vowels in Usen are phonemic; [ã], [ũ], [ɛ̃], [ĩ] and [ɔ̃], because they contrast in identical environment with their oral counterpart;

- 13a.            tɔn    “new”  
                  tò     “urinate”
- b.                fun    “white”  
                  fù     “full”
- c.                tán    “finish”  
                  ta     “peppery”
- d.                kpén   “divide”  
                  kpé   “late”
- e.                eyín   “teeth”  
                  èyí   “that”

H) The occurrence of high tone syllable (HTS) “ó” in non-future tense constructions.

- 14a.    Ayò    ó        jín     aṣo    mí  
          Ayò    HTS   steal   cloth   poss  
          “Ayò stole my cloth.”
- b.        Emí    ó        he     ìréhì  
          1sg    HTS   cook   rice  
          “I cooked rice.”
- c.        Ajá    yì        ó        kpa    olódògbóró  
          dog    dem    HTS   kill    lizard  
          “The dog killed the lizard”

H) The use of *éè* and *máá* as negative markers in Usen. *éè* two vowels of the same form with high and low tones is used in negative construction, while *má* is used to negate lexical items.

- 15a.    Àmẹ́    ó        hè     ìréhì.  
          Àmẹ́    HTS   cook   rice  
          “Àmẹ́ cooked rice”.
- b.        Àmẹ́    éè        hè     ìréhì.  
          Àmẹ́    neg    cook   rice  
          “Àmẹ́ did not cook rice”
- 16a.    Dúpẹ́    é        solè.  
          Dupe    be     thief  
          “Dupe is a thief”

b. Dúpé éè solè  
Dupe neg thief  
“Dupe is not a thief.”

17a Ayò ó kawa.  
Ayo HTS come  
“Ayo came.”

b. Ayò éè kawa.  
Ayo neg come  
“Ayo did not come.”

18. Jà “fight”  
Máá jà “don’t fight”

19. ka “pluck”  
Máá ka “don’t pluck”

20. lọ “go”  
Máá lọ “don’t go”

I) The use of two noun phrases side by side without any item occurring between them.

21a. Asọ Olá  
Cloth Olá  
“Olá’s cloth.”

b. Ulí uwé  
house book  
“school”

c. Qmọ usẹ  
child work  
“apprentice”

d. Orí Òkè  
top mountain  
“mountain top”

J) Content questions in Usen are marked with Kẹẹ, *kẹẹ* “what”+*ẹnẹ*(person)= “who”, *kẹẹ* + *ùgbà* (time) = “when”, *kẹẹ* +*ibi*(place) “where”, *kẹẹ* + *bẹnẹ* “manner” = “how” and *òlú* “how much/many”

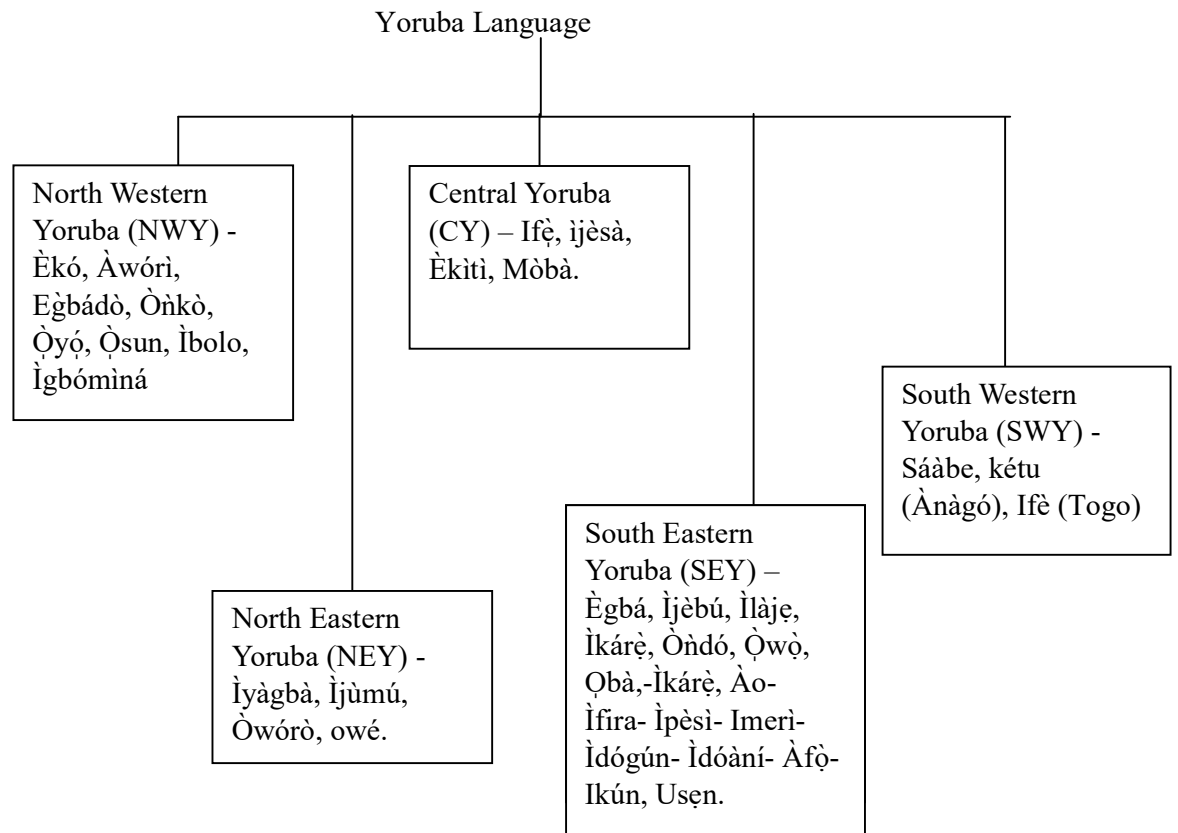
22a. Kẹẹ ẹnẹ uwọ ó rí?  
WH person 2sg HTS see  
“Who did you see?”

b. kẹẹ pe ohun èyí uwó ó fọ?  
WH call thing rel 2sg HTS say  
“What is it that you said?”

- c. kẹ̀ẹ́ ùgbà éyí uwọ́ ó mú wá?  
 WH time rel 2sg HTS bring come  
 “When did you come?”
- d. kẹ̀ẹ́ ibi èyí uwọ́ ó lọ ghí?  
 WH place rel 2sg HTS go to  
 “Where did you go?”
- e. kẹ̀ẹ́ bẹ̀nẹ́ èyí uwọ́ ó mú rí àpò rẹ̀n?  
 WH manner rel 2sg HTS take see bag det  
 “How did you see the bag?”
- f. Òlú eghó èyí uwọ́ ó mú ra usu?  
 How money rel 2sg HTS take buy yam  
 “How much did you buy the yam?”

From the above, we can therefore say that Usen and the SEY dialects have shared features, as eight features of the SEY were attested to in Usen.

**Figure 1.3: Dialects of Yoruba**



Awobuluyi (1998) dialects of Yoruba, with the modified SEY showing Ào, and Usen dialects in the group.

#### 1.4 The Usen orthography

This study adopts the Yoruba orthography, as Usen has been established to be a dialect of Yoruba. However, sounds in Usen which are absent in Yoruba orthography shall be included. According to Owólabí (2011:14-19), Yoruba has 18 consonants and 12 oral and nasal vowels;

Consonants: b d f g gb h j k l m n p r s ṣ t w y

Vowels: a e ẹ i o ọ u an ẹn in ọn un

In addition to the above-listed consonants, the sounds listed below were observed to be present in the consonant inventory of Usen. The presence of these sounds in Usen is owing to the influence of Edo language on Usen, as two of these sounds [gh] and [rh] were found in the Edo sound system. They are

[gw] voiced labialised velar sound,

[gh] voiced velar fricative, and

[rh] voiceless alveolar trill.

Hence, there are twenty one (21) consonants and twelve (12) vowels in Usen sound inventory.

According to Ajongolo (2005), three possible phonemic interpretations can be given to this sound [g<sup>w</sup>v] segment, and they are

- a) /g+w+v/ sequences
- b) /g+u+v/ sequences
- c) /g<sup>w</sup>+v/ sequence

Firstly, he claimed that if the first interpretation /g+w+v/ sequence were to be adopted, an extra syllable structure would have to be set up as CCV, in addition to V, CV and N, which he identified in Ào dialect. If the second interpretation /g+u+v/ sequence were to be adopted, a glide formation rule would have to apply to this sequence only. Finally, if the third interpretation /g<sup>w</sup>+v/ were to be adopted, it would require increasing the consonant inventory by an additional phoneme.

Going by the argument above, if this study were to adopt /g+w+v/ sequence, then it would violate the univalent syllable structure pattern of Usen, thus yielding a CC sequence of consonants. However, since Usen syllable structure does not permit cluster of consonants, this sequence will be unacceptable for this study. Furthermore, the second sequence /g+u+v/, though adopted by Ikhimwin (2015), involves setting up a glide formation process. This derivation is possible through a phonological process of glide formation. Also, it violates economy principle and the process is cumbersome. We shall adopt the third interpretation, /g<sup>w</sup>+v/, into the sound inventory of Usen, as this is considered to be economical, hence, we introduce the voiced labialised sound /g<sup>w</sup>/ into the orthography of Usen. The examples below show the occurrence of /g<sup>w</sup>/ in both word initial and word medial positions:

[g<sup>w</sup>]

- |      |                    |                       |          |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 23a. | /gwò/              | [g <sup>w</sup> ò]    | “break”  |
| b.   | /gwá/              | [gwá]                 | “search” |
| c.   | /g <sup>w</sup> è/ | [g <sup>w</sup> è]    | “bath”   |
| d.   | /ègwá/             | [èg <sup>w</sup> á]   | “ten”    |
| e.   | /həngwà/           | [hɛ̃g <sup>w</sup> à] | “barb”   |

/g<sup>w</sup>/ and /g/ are phonemic because they occur in identical environments as depicted above.

The consonant sound [gh] voiced velar fricative occurs in the following words in Usen;

- |      |         |              |    |         |        |
|------|---------|--------------|----|---------|--------|
| 24a. | /Ugho/  | “navel”      | c. | /oghè/  | “leg”  |
| b.   | /eghó/  | “money”      | d. | /àghan/ | “they” |
| 25a. | /gháre/ | “run”,       | c. | /ghí/   | “bury” |
| b.   | /ghaa/  | “dwell” etc. |    |         |        |

The voiceless alveolar trill [rh] is manifested in the following words in Usen;



- 26a. /urhèn/ “iron”  
 b. /erhùrhù/ “ashes”  
 c. /yerhè/ “remember”  
 d. /urhùrhà/ “room”
- 27a. /arhòn/ “tortoise”  
 b. /èrhán/ “older person”  
 c. /arhó/ “guinea fowl”  
 d. /rhoódò/ “descend”.

### 1.4.1 The distribution of consonant sounds in Usen

There are twenty one (21) consonant sounds in Usen, and from observation, no lexical item ends with a consonant sound, but consonants in Usen can occur at word initial positions for verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, and prepositions, and at word medial positions for all other classes of words. The table below shows the distribution of consonants in Usen.

**Table 1.1: Distribution of consonant sounds in Usen**

Sounds	Word-initial	Gloss	Word medial	Gloss	Word Final
b	bì	vomit	obì	kolanut	-----
d	dèn	fry	odó	mortar	-----
f	fò	fly	ofà	arrow	-----
g	ge	bite	igin	tree	-----
gb	gbẹ	dry	ùgbèn	Snail	-----
gh	ghàré	run	eghó	money	-----
gw	gwẹ	bath	egwà	ten	-----
h	hùn	sleep	ehó	seed	-----
j	jẹ	eat	ojà	market	-----
k	kawa	come	okùn	rope	-----
l	lá	lick	ilá	okro	-----
m	mọ	drink	omi	river	-----
n	nẹ	have	onà	road	-----
p	pèn	divide	epo	palm-oil	-----
r	rò	think	erù	fear	-----
rh	rhoódò	descend	urhen	iron	-----
s	se	make	usẹ	work	-----
ş	şín	open	uşà	water-pot	-----
t	tọ	jump	etù	cap	-----
w	wúwo	heavy	ewé	leaf	-----
y	yú	go	eye	bird	-----

The table below shows the orthographic and phonetic rendition of the sound inventory of Usen and its phonemic consonant and vowel charts.

**Table1.2: Uşen orthographic and phonetic vowels**

Letters	i	e	ɛ	a	u	o	ɔ	in	on	an	un	on
Sounds	[i]	[e]	[ɛ]	[a]	[u]	[o]	[ɔ]	[ĩ]	[õ]	[ã]	[ũ]	[õ]

**Table1.3: Uşen orthographic and phonetic consonants**

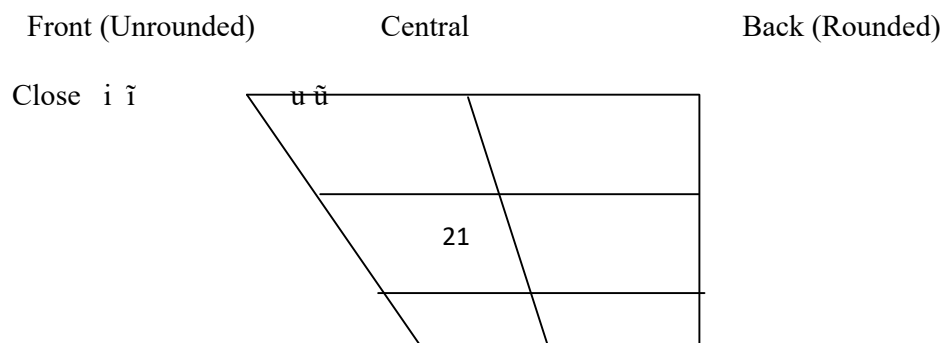
Letters	b	d	f	g	gb	gh	g <sup>w</sup>	h	j	k	l	m	n
Sounds	[b]	[d]	[f]	[g]	[gb]	[ɣ]	[g <sup>w</sup> ]	[h]	dʒ	[k]	[l]	[m]	[n]

p	r	rh	s	ş	t	w	y
[kp]	[ɾ]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t]	[w]	[j]

**Table 1.4: The phonemic consonant chart of Uşen**

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Palatal	Velar	Labiodorsal	Labio-Velar	Glottal	
Stop	b		t d			k g	g <sup>w</sup>	kp gb		
Fricative		f	s	ʃ		ɣ			h	
Affricate				dz						
Trill			ʀ							
Lateral			l							
Nasal	m		n							
Approximant			ɹ		ɟ			w		

**Table 1.5: The phonemic vowel chart of Uşen**



Closed-mid	e	o
Open-mid	ɛ ẽ	ɔ õ
Open	a	ã

Ikhimwin (2015:73)

### 1.5 Tone marking convention in Usen

Pike (1948:43) defines tone as lexically contrastive pitch pattern and tone language as a language in which contrastive pitch levels do not merely form the intonation tune of a sentence but enters as a distinctive factor into the lexical elements of the language. This definition requires that pitch be contrastive on every syllable, and used to distinguish lexical or grammatical meaning. In many tonal African languages, such as Bantu, Edoid, Yoruboid and so on, tones are distinguished by their pitch level relative to each syllable. This is known as register tone system; also, tones perform both lexical and grammatical functions, wherein the lexical tones distinguish the meaning of two forms with the same word structure, while grammatical tones inflect verb for tense and aspect. This is however different in Usen, as only lexical tone is attested in the dialect. Ikhimwin (2015) identified three tonal patterns in Usen and they are

- a) the high tone     /´ /
- b) the low tone     /` /
- c) and the mid tone   /˘/ or / /

Consider the following minimal pairs below;

- 28a. /itò/ “urine”  
      /itó/ “saliva”
- b.    /kọ/ “write”  
      /kó/ “build”
- c.    /oko/ “farm”  
      /okó/ “penis”

- d. /dà/ “pour”  
       /dá/ “break”
- e. /mò/ “know”  
       /mọ/ “drink”

Examples 28a-28e above, show that Usen exhibits lexical tones; they also show the pitch and meaning differences between the same structure with different tonal patterns and their realisations. Hence, we shall adopt this tonal pattern in this work and the mid tones will be unmarked.

### **1.6 Statement of the problem**

The Usen people see themselves as Edo people who speak Edo language, and Usen which they say is a dialect of Yoruba. However, the geographical location of Usen has made it a bit difficult for scholars working on Yoruba language and its dialects to take notice of it. This has limited the scholarly attention that Usen has enjoyed, and those who have worked on it have focused on its phonetics, phonology, as well as its linguistic classification, with little attention paid to its syntax, especially the verb phrase, which is germane to understanding the clause structure of Usen. Although Edigin (2016) worked on the Usen verb, the study was limited to the descriptive aspect of lexical verbs. It is given that verbs hold an important place in the grammatical analysis of the clause of any language, and the VP revolves around the head verb, hence there is a need to go beyond the lexical aspect of the verb and examine the phrasal aspects of the verb phrases. This study therefore takes interest in the verb phrase of Usen and examines the structure of the various types of verb phrases in Usen, the features of the verb, constituents of the VP, and the derivation of the verb phrase in Phase syntax.

### **1.7 Aim and objectives**

This work aims at examining the verb phrase and its derivation in Usen using the verb phrase hypothesis in minimalist phase-based derivation. Thus, the objectives are to:

- a) Determine what a verb is in Usen,
- b) Distinguish the classes of verbs and their features in Usen,
- c) Identify the internal constituents of the verb phrase,
- d) Examine how arguments are licensed and how thematic roles assigned, and

- e) Determine the verbal projection under derivation by phase.

### **1.8 Research questions**

In line with the aim and objectives above, the following research questions were raised.

- a) What is a verb in Usen?
- b) How are the verbs in Usen classified, and what are their features?
- c) What constitutes a verb phrase in Usen?
- d) How are the arguments licensed and how are thematic roles assigned?
- e) How is the VP projected under derivation by phase?

### **1.9 Justification for the study**

A few studies have been carried out on Usen and these include Obahiagbon (2007), Ikhimwin (2013) (2015), Ikhimwin and Osewa (2017), Edigin (2016) and Ogbeifun (2017), but little or no attention has been paid to its verb phrase, as literature on its verb phrase are not available. Hence, this fuelled the motivation to research the Usen verb phrase. A study of this nature will create a documentation of the verbs, verb phrase and other lexical items on Usen. Material text can be extracted and published from this research as study material for use in Usen schools. This study would also promote adequate government policy and planning on Usen so that it does not go into extinction as Usen is highly endangered.

### **1.10 Scope of study**

This research is on the Usen verb phrase, hence, we intend to examine both the lexical and phrasal structures of the verbs, wherein we shall consider the internal constituents of the verb phrase, modifiers, classification of Usen verbs and the derivation of the verb phrase. In examining the derivation of the VP within the Phase Syntax, the TP and the CP will not be examined as this will be working outside the scope of the study.

### **1.11 Organisation of the thesis**

This research is organised into five chapters – chapter one examines the introductory aspect of the study, with its focus on the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aim and objectives, scope of the study, significance of the

study and the chapter summary. Relevant literature (both in Usen and other languages) which the present study seeks to review is discussed in chapter two. The theoretical approach that will guide in the investigation of the data will also be considered in chapter two. Chapter three examines the methods employed in getting the data for the study, and the analytical tools adopted in the interpretation of these data. Data for the study are presented and analysed using the phase syntax in chapter four. Finally, chapter five summarises all the aspects of the work investigated from chapter one to chapter four (1-4), presents the findings arrived at from the discussion of data, proffers recommendations for further studies, and the presents a conclusion to the thesis.

### **1.12 Chapter summary**

This introductory chapter examined some preliminary issues on Usen and the people, alongside their geographical location. The chapter also examined the classification of Usen and Yoruba dialects, characteristics of Usen, the orthography and tone marking convention in Usen. Finally, the statement of the problem, aim and objectives, research questions, justification and the scope of study were presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Preamble**

This chapter presents the review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework adopted for this research. Examining existing body of knowledge provides a bedrock for this study, hence, previous studies in Usen are examined, and works on verb and verb phrase are also reviewed. After these reviews, the theoretical framework adopted for this study is discussed.

#### **2.1 Previous studies on Usen**

Few studies exist on Usen, however, majority of these works are based on some aspects of phonology while others are on some areas of syntax. Obahiangbon (2007), Ikhimwin (2013, 2015), Ikhimwin and Osewa (2017) works are based on the phonological aspect of Usen, Edigin (2016), Ogbeifun and Omoregbe (2018) examined an aspect of Usen syntax, while Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) consider the linguistic status of Usen. These works, though not directly related to the present study, are still reviewed to show the work done so far on Usen.

Obahiangbon (2007) examined the phonological processes in Usen, using the linear and non-linear phonological representation. In the course of the research, the study investigated the structure, nature and functions of the sound segments and different phonological processes. The study proposed an orthography for Usen, wherein twelve (12) vowel sounds, (seven oral and five nasal vowels) and twenty four consonant sounds were identified. However, this study did not adopt this orthography, rather, it adopted Yoruba orthography since it asserts that Usen is a dialect of Yoruba. Obahiangbon (2007) also identified five phonological processes in Usen which are glide formation, vowel elision, vowel harmony, nasalisation and tonal assimilation.



Ikhimwin (2013) also carried out a phonological study on redundancies and morpheme structure conditions in Usen, wherein the syllable structure, tones and sound system of Usen were investigated. The work considered the segment sequence structure constraints in Usen.

Ikhimwin (2015) did an extensive research on the phonology of Usen, using both experimental and acoustic instruments for her analysis. The study focused on the phonetic and phonemic segments in Usen by investigating the general principles governing phonological inventories and order of analysing its sound processes. More so, she examined the phonological processes with the rules governing them. The study further elucidated the linguistic status of Usen, which informed the claim that Usen is a Yoruboid language. However this claim has been refuted with empirical evidence in Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) as they assert that Usen is a dialect of Yoruba.

Ikhimwin and Osewa (2017) examined nasality in Usen, using autosegmental framework. The study found out two nasal segments in Usen and these are the intrinsic nasal sound and the nasalised sound. Ikhimwin and Osewa (2017) made a distinction between the two sounds.

Edigin (2016) worked on the Usen verbs, and focused on the aspect of the lexical verbs. The researcher did a classification of the verb phonologically, then she classified verbs based on the number of syllables. Morphologically, she classified them into simple, compound and complex verbs; syntactically, they were grouped into transitive and intransitive verbs; and semantically, she used Aktionsart. Semantically verbs were classified into stative, activity, achievement, accomplishment, active accomplishment and semelfactive verbs. Derivation of agentives, gerund, syntactic study on valency of the verbs, tense and aspect were examined in this study. However, the following shortcomings were observed in the study;

- a) the definition of the verb in Usen is seen as one of the characteristics of a verb, as the verb was defined as “the crux of a sentence and the grammatical centre of predicate, that signal state, action and event” Edigin (2016:30). The nature of the verb and pertinent features used in identifying a verb in a construction were not examined.

- b) on the classification of verbs in Usen, no criteria was used, rather the researcher chose the core areas of linguistics and selected the verb to fit their features.
- c) on tense and aspect, the work focused on their markers and the description of the event. However, findings on past and present tense markers have been faulted in this study, as our investigation raises questions about her claims.

Below are some of the examples cited;

- 1a.        Ìshádé        ó        jín        ìwé        mi  
               Ishade        pst        steal    book    pro  
               (Ishade stole my book)
- b.        Ọpẹ́    é        jà  
               Ọpẹ́    prs        fight  
               (Ọpẹ́ is fighting)
- c.        Àmèzè        á        kọ        orin  
               Àmèzè        fut        sing    song  
               (Àmèzè will sing a song)

Adapted from Edigin (2016: 68-74)

The researcher claimed that “ó”, “é” and “à” mark past, present and future tense, respectively in Usen. However, the research did not show how tense is marked on stative verbs to ascertain these claims; also, she did not ascertain the grammatical features of these syllables she claims to be tense markers.

Ogbeifun (2017) examined tense and aspect markings in Usen, the study categorised tense using the tripartite distinction on the deictic temporal reference scale, which are the past, present and future. Furthermore, three types of aspects were identified, and these are perfective, habitual and progressive aspects. The research made the following findings: the past, present and future are morphologically marked with the particles “ó”, “é” and “á” respectively, and aspect was marked as follows: perfective aspect “tí”, habitual aspect “kà” and progressive aspect “è”. Though this work is not on the verb phrase, but it is syntactic in nature and thus raises the following questions: do the past and present tense markers function as tense markers or are they high tone syllables? Is the present tense marker actually functioning as a tense marker or a progressive aspect marker? Ogbeifun and Omoregbe (2018) answered the question above.

Ogbeifun and Omoregbe (2018) refute Edigin's (2017) claim that tense in Usen is divided into three, rather, they opined that tense in Usen is categorised into two: the non-future and future tenses. The study marked the non-future tense with a high tone syllable (HTS) *ó* and the future tense was marked with *á*. They argued that what Ogbeifun (2017) claimed to be present tense is seen as a progressive/continuous aspectual marker and what she claimed to be past tense becomes unexplainable when used with stative verb. This distinction distinguishes between event prior to the future and event in the future. Let us consider the examples below;

2a. Ibùkún      ó      dá      igín  
 Ibùkún      HTS      break      stick  
 Ibùkún broke the stick.

b. Ibùkún      é      dá      igín  
 Ibùkún      prg      break      stick  
 Ibùkún is breaking the stick.

c. Ibùkún      á      dá      igín  
 Ibùkún      fut      break      stick  
 Ibùkún will break the stick

3a. Evbàdé      ó      hégwà  
 Evbàdé      HTS      beautiful  
 Evbade is beautiful

\*b. Evbàdé      é      hégwà  
 Evbàdé      prg      beautiful  
 Evbade is beautifuing.

c. Evbàdé      á      hégwà  
 Evbàdé      fut      beautiful  
 Evbade will be beautiful.

4a. Àyò      ó      gùn  
 Àyò      HTS      tall  
 Àyò is tall.

\*b. Àyò      é      gùn  
 Àyò      prg      tall  
 Àyò is talling.

c. Àyò      á      gùn  
 Àyò      fut      tall  
 Àyò will be tall.

Adapted from Ogbeifun and Omoregbe (2018:140-141)

From 18-20 above, they claim that two morphemes differentiate between an event prior to the future and an event expected to take place in the future. When “ó” is used, it depicts the event is not happening in the future, but with “á” it depicts the event will occur in the future. However, “é” depicts an ongoing or a progressive event. Going by what we have in example (3a, c and 4a,c) wherein we have stative verbs such as *hèngwà* “beautiful” and *gùn* “tall”. We cannot call “ó” a past tense marker in the construction since we cannot say beautiful or tall is a past event. Moreso, (3b and 4b) are ungrammatical, “é” does not depict a present tense action neither do we have any word like “talling” or “beautifuling”. Hence, contrary to Ogbeifun’s (2017) claim, Ogbeifun and Omoregbe (2018) assert that Usen tense is polarised into future and non-future tense. Thus, the claim on present tense is seen as a progressive aspectual marker.

The non-future tense in Usen is a high tone syllable (henceforth, HTS), which depicts agreement between the noun and the verb. There are unresolved arguments regarding the status of HTS in Yorùbá language and its dialects. It has been variously termed as agreement marker, concord marker, tense marker and so on by Adésuya (1991), Ajòngòlò (2005), Olúmúyiwa (2009) and some others.

The current study agrees with Ogbeifun and Omoregbe’s (2018) position on the HTS, which is marked on the non-future tense, “ó”, to denote events which occur prior to the point of speech. Hence, we shall depict the non-future tense marker in Usen as a HTS in this work.

Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) examined the linguistic status of Usen, using the lexicostatistics method of analysis. Findings from the study show that Usen is a dialect of Yoruba based on the following. First, from the calculations of cognates between Usen and Yoruba, Edo, and nine other dialects of Yoruba, all from the South Eastern Yoruba show this. Second, the people view their speech form, Usen, as a dialect of Yoruba, and neither a Yoruboid nor an Edoid language. Third, Usen has similar grammatical features with Yoruba, and is more closely related to the grammatical features of the South Eastern Yoruba sub-group. Although the classification of Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) is an interesting one, it is limited, based on the instrument and method employed in calculating cognates.

Although Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) employed the Ibadan 400 wordlist as the instrument used to calculate the cognates in Usen, and the lexico-statistics method was used to analyse the cognates, the use of a different instrument (basic vocabulary) and approach (such as glottochronology) could have given a different or more accurate analysis on the degree of relatedness of cognates in Usen to other dialects of Yoruba. More so, limiting the calculation of cognates in Usen to only South Eastern dialects of Yoruba, may not have given a true result. However, this study adopts Ogbeifun and Taiwo's claim and refers to Usen as a dialect of Yoruba throughout this work.

## **2.2 Previous studies on verbs and verb phrases**

In this section, reviews of existing literature in relation to the verb and verb phrases are examined. In the first aspect of this section, focus is on reviews of the verb and the second aspect will dwell on the review of verb phrases. Review of existing literature give a better insight of what the study aims at.

### **2.2.1 The verb**

According to Bamgbose (1972:13), the unanimously agreed definition of verb in Yoruba by Yoruba scholars at a seminar held on 1-2 April, 1971 is that:

All words that occur in the frame ##NP-(NP)## are verbs. If for any other reasons, there are words which appear to be members of the verb class but do not fit into the frame, such words will be regarded as exceptions.

The agreed definition seems plausible as it captures minimal sentences and agrees with the narrow school of thought on the definition of a verb. It also gives room for exceptions regarding words which do not fit into this frame.

However, there are a few issues identified in the definition;

- i. The proposed frame allows verbs only in simple declarative sentences;
- ii. Complex verb constructions such as serial verb and split verb constructions cannot fit into this frame;
- iii. More so, this frame does not allow modification on the verbs, thereby preventing adverbial modifications on the verbs; and
- iv. According to arguments advanced in Ilori (2010) that Yoruba operates a DP maximally in the nominal domain, and the D heads the nominal projection to mark reference, specificity, definiteness and deictic features, among

others on the NP that it selects as complement, adopting a DP to replace NP in this frame is more plausible and fits into current linguistic approach.

Hence, the definition is too narrow to capture what a verb is, without exceptions.

Awobuluyi (1969) identifies seven criteria for determining the verbal status of Yoruba, which include:

- i) Occurrence in the frame #NP - (NP)#
- ii) Topicalisation by reduplication
- iii) Interrogation by means of the interrogative particle *ki* and pre-verb *se*
- iv) Negation by *kó* “not”
- v) Relativisation
- vi) Selection of subject
- vii) Selection of object

Awobuluyi’s syntactic frame in (i) above depicts verb occurrence in minimal sentences and the ability of verbs to select or not select an object complement. Though some of these criteria manifest in Usen, there are some verbs that do not exhibit such characteristics at all. One may ask if it means that such words are not verbs. These criteria are not binding on all the forms of the verbs, as verbs have specific features peculiar to them which enable the appropriate selection of complements.

Awobuluyi (2008:127) identifies certain features of the verb in Yoruba which help in defining it.

- A) All Yoruba verbs are monosyllabic, that is, any verb that is more than one syllable is either derived through Verb + Noun compounds or through borrowing. Consider the examples below;

5a. gbó òrò → gbórò  
Hear word “hear/adhere”

b. Olú kí gbórò  
Olu neg hear  
“Olu is disobedient”

6a. dá àbò → dábò  
create protection “protect”

b. Olúwa dábòbò mi  
God protect pro  
“God protect me”

- 7a. dọtí “dirty”  
 b. Aso náà dọtí  
 Cloth dem dirty  
 “The cloth is dirty”

B) They are all consonant initial words, that is, no verb in Yoruba begins with a vowel.

- 8a. pa “kill”  
 b. rà “buy”  
 c. jẹ “eat”  
 d. tà “sell”  
 e. lọ “go”  
 f. gbà “take”

C) Verbs cannot be derived through prefixation in Yorùbá. He opines that the best way to add to Yoruba verbs is to borrow from other languages.

D) It is only the verbal class that can co-occur with short pronouns in Yorùbá.

From our data in Useṅ, it was observed that Useṅ tends to manifest three of the features identified above, for example;

- 9a. gbé aya “gbáya”  
 carry wife “marry”  
 b. rò irò “ròrò”  
 stir thought “think”  
 c. dá ikú “dákú”  
 defeat death “faint”

The Verb +Noun compound depicts that the verbs are monosyllabic (*gbé* “carry”, *rò* “stir”, *dá* “defeat”), consonant initial (*gbé* “carry”, *gbáya*, marry”) and cannot be prefixed, but the status of the fourth feature cannot be ascertained in Useṅ. Useṅ data shall be subjected to further investigation to determine its occurrence or not.

Awobuluyi (2013: 90) defines a verb as:

“Orò-ìṣe ni àwọn orò ti ó lè jẹyọ léyọ nínú àwọn gbólóhùn aṣàlàyẹ tí àwọn arópò-orúkọ kúkúru tíjẹ olùwa”

“A verb is a word that can occur in isolation in declarative sentences where the short pronoun is the subject”

Based on this definition, can it be said that words that function as verbs, but do not occur in isolation where the short pronoun is the subject, are not verbs? Let us consider these Yoruba examples below:

10a. Mo sọ ọ̀rọ̀  
1sg speak word  
“I spoke”

b. Ó gbọ̀  
3sg hear  
“He heard”

c. Wọ̀n bèèrẹ̀  
3pl ask  
“They asked”

This definition imposes co-occurrence restriction on some verbs in Yoruba as noted by Taiwo and Abimbola (2014), for example *dà* and *ńkọ* are interrogative verbs. These verbs predicate the various clauses where they occur, for example;

11a Olú dà?  
Olú where  
“Where is Olu?”

b. Ìwé mi ńkọ̀  
book 1sgPoss where  
“Where is my book?”

In (11a and b) *dà* and *ńkọ* have subject selection features identified in Awobuluyi (1978, 2008, 2013), which make them behave like the unaccusative verbs that select theme subject. Hence, *dà* and *ńkọ* cannot be expunged from the list of Yoruba verbs in the group that cannot co-occur with short pronoun. Hence, this definition did not give exception to verbs which do not co-occur with short pronouns.

Taiwo (2018:7) define verb in Yoruba as

“ọ̀rọ̀ tí ó bá lè dá wà tàbí tí ó gba ẹ̀pọ̀n nínú àpólà ị̀ṣe ní ọ̀rọ̀-ị̀ṣe ní èdè Yorùbá.”  
“Any word that can stand alone or take a modifier in a verb phrase is a verb in Yoruba”

This definition is simple and encompassing, as it allows modifications which the generally accepted frame ##NP- (NP)## for defining verb in Yoruba by Yoruba



scholars did not capture. Thus, a verb can stand alone or allow pre- or post-verbal modifier, considering the examples below:

- 12a. Olú kòní *tètèbáomọ* náà **raaṣoní** ojà.  
 Olu NEG quick help child DET buy cloth PREP market  
 “Olu will not quickly help the child buy cloth at the market”
- b. Ọkùnrin náà á ti **dé**.  
 Man DET FUT PERF arrive  
 “The man would have arrived”
- c. Ọpé á **lọ**.  
 Ọpé FUT go  
 “Ọpẹ will go”
- d. Ìyàwó ọkùnrin náà á **dá** àrà.  
 Wife man det FUT perform wonders  
 “The man’s wife will perform wonders”

(Extracted from (Taiwo 2018))

From the examples above, the verbal modifiers are italicised, while the verb heads are bolded. Example (12a) has two pre-verbal modifiers: *tètè* “quick” and *bá omọ náà* “help the child” and two post-verbal modifiers: *asọ* “cloth” and *ní ojà* “at the market”. In example (12b and c) the verb heads *dé* “arrive” and *lọ* “go” occur alone in the construction, respectively. Then example (12d) has post-verbal modifier. Following the discussion above, this study shall adopt this definition as a working definition.

Various approaches have been adopted for the classification of verbs in different languages over the years. Most classifications are based on the aspect of study in the language. When the phonology of verbs is being examined, verbs are classified phonologically, considering the syllabicity. The same thing happens when one is undergoing morphological, syntactic and semantic study.

Awobuluyi (1978) examined the grammar of Yoruba, and adopted a syntactic approach in classifying verbs in Yoruba. Awobuluyi classified Yoruba verbs into the following classes:

serial verbs, splitting verbs, echoing verbs, complex verbs, adjectivisable verbs, nominal-assimilating verbs, particle-selecting verbs, report verbs, impersonal verbs, causative verbs, symmetrical verbs, interrogative verbs, and imperative

verbs. Awobuluyi's classification was based on the construction type in which the verbs can operate. Thus, the verbs can operate in more than one construction type and any of such construction type wherein the verb occurs is grouped as a member of such class.

Omogbe (2013) classified verbs in Edo using their functional and morpho-syntactic properties which are closely associated with their semantic consideration, and the classes are action verbs, planting verbs, harvesting verbs, meteorological verbs, experiential verbs, perceptual verbs and location verbs. Omogbe's work was based on morpho-syntactic analysis of Edo clause, hence the choice of classification.

Taiwo (2018) adopted a different approach for the classification of verbs in Yoruba. Taiwo classified verbs using four main criteria, the criteria served as bases by which the verbs were grouped into their classes. The criteria and the verbs in such classes are listed below:

- a. *Ìtumò* (Meaning Criterion): *Òrò-ìṣe asòṣẹ̀lẹ̀* (action verbs), *òrò-ìṣe ajúwe* (descriptive verbs), and *òrò-ìṣe asoriri* (stative verb)
- b. *Ìlò* (Use Criterion): *Òrò-ìṣe aṣèròyìn* (report verbs), *òrò-ìṣe apàṣe/aṣẹ̀bẹ̀* (imperative verbs), *òrò-ìṣe aṣẹ̀bẹ̀èrè* (interrogative verbs), and *òrò-ìṣe aṣàpèpadà* (echo verbs).
- c. *Ìhun àti Ìrìsì* (Structure or Form Criterion): *Òrò-ìṣe abódé* (simple verbs), and *òrò-ìṣe alákanpò* (compound verbs).
- d. *Òrò-ìṣe nínú Èhun* (Behaviour of Verbs in a Construction): *Òrò-ìṣe ayolùwà* (subject-selecting verbs), *òrò-ìṣe ayànbò* (object-selecting verbs or cognate verbs), *òrò-ìṣe asolùwàdàbò* (verbs that turn subjects to objects or symmetrical verbs), *òrò-ìṣe agbàbò* (transitive verbs), *òrò-ìṣe alaigbàbò* (intransitive verbs), *òrò-ìṣe agbàmúpé* (complement-selecting verbs), *òrò-ìṣe ẹ̀lẹ̀là* (splitting verbs), *òrò-ìṣe àsínpò* (serial verb), and *òrò-ìṣe abá wúnrẹ̀naláinitumọ̀ àdámọ̀ rìn* (functors-selecting verbs).

Taiwo's (2018) classification is well encompassing and detailed, but there seems to be similarities between the verb types identified in Taiwo's classification and Awobuluyi's (1978) classification. The major difference in their classification is the

fact that Taiwo used four major criteria to classify the verbs and covered a wider range of verbs, unlike what we have in Awobuluyi (1978). Since this study is syntactic, it adopts Taiwo's classification of verbs as it will enable a proper classification of the verbs in Usen. The four criteria proposed by Taiwo (2018) serve as the bases to classify the verbs in Usen. However, some modifications have been done based on the types of verbs identified in Usen.

### 2.2.2 The verb phrase

Derivation of SVC in the literature has yielded serious controversies over the years. There are scholars who believe that SVCs are derived from the same underlying structure, which they refer to as the Mono-Source Hypothesis, and some others believe that SVCs are derived from two different underlying structures, which they refer to as the Multi-Source Hypothesis. These two hypotheses involve the derivation of the coordinate and the modifying SVC.

According to Bamgbose (1982:10), the mono-source hypothesis has two versions: the multi-sentence source and the single-sentence source, both of which he criticised.

Drawing from Bamgbose (1982:4), example (2);

13. Ó      sùn    lọ  
      3SG    sleep   go  
      “He fell asleep”

For those who assume the multi-sentence source (for example, Awobuluyi, 1973), the above example will yield the realisation below; “He slept” and “He went” instead of “He slept off”.

If SVCs are derived from multi-sentences then, splitting example (13) above into two underlying sentences will yield another construction entirely different from the initial idea of the construction. Owing to the realisation above, multi-sentence cannot account for the derivation of SVCs. The Multi-Source hypothesis assumes that SVCs are derived from at least two different basic underlying sentences. Invariably, the number of verbs in a given SVC structure determines the number of base sentences from which it is derived. This hypothesis claims that the underlying sentences must have identical agentive argument and identical object argument, thus ensuring same internal and external arguments at the surface derivation. Hence, derivation is through Equi-NP

deletion, objects deletion where applicable or through blending of sentences together to derive a surface-transformed sentence (Abimbola and Taiwo, 2016: 25).

Scholars who assume mono-sentence sources of SVCs on the other hand claim that all SVCs are derived from a single-sentence source. Schachter (1974:257) asserts that all SVCs are to be derived from a concatenation of verb phrases in a single sentence of the basic clause. The submissions above are not plausible as modifying verbs do not occur in mono-clausal sentences and modifying SVC is one of the motivations for this hypothesis. If the motivation for this hypothesis is aimed at the derivation of the modifying SVC and coordinate construction, how then do we arrive at the other SVCs type?

Collins (1997) examined argument sharing in the Serial Verb Construction (henceforth SVC) of Ewe. Collins (1997) agreed with earlier claims about argument sharing in SVCs having transitive verbs with identical object, that V1 and V2 must share an internal argument, (Dechaine 1986:90; Foley and Olson, 1985, Baker, 1989; Stewart, 1998; Carsten, 2002, Baker and Stewart, 2002). Collins claimed that the derivation of SVC involves multiple verb movement, which is subject to the same kind of locality constraints as other types of multiple movements. Collins faulted Baker's (1989, 1991) analysis of SVC on the following grounds:

- i. The use of a ternary branching node structure violates the binary branching constraint alongside the endocentricity principle.
- ii. Baker's postulation of two VP with heads require Baker to revise x-bar theory accordingly (the head-licensing condition), but he did not.

Hence, Collins' analysis adopted Chomsky's (1986) VP shell approach to the analysis of SVC and that resolved the ternary branching issues in Baker's analysis.

Now, on internal argument sharing, Collins (1997) postulated the adoption of empty category, identified as *pro*, to enable us make a proper analysis of the internal argument sharing. Firstly, he assumes that the existence of empty category, *pro* – a V2 argument, and co-indexes it with the argument of V1. Carstens (1988), Campbell (1989), Gruber and Collins (1996), Bamgbose (1974, 1982), also postulated empty categories, although the kind they postulated differs in nature. Secondly, one could also assume object sharing is not mediated by empty categories, Lefebvre (1991),

Baker (1989, 1991), Sebba (1987), Law and Veenstra (1992) all supported this second assumption.

Collins, on the adoption of empty category, claimed that Kpele, a dialect of Ewe, possesses a post position *yi* that allows the assignment of case to NPs in certain environments that do not have structural case. This, he referred to as an oblique or default case assigner.

#### **14. Case assigner by *yi* in Ewe**

“Any NP in the government domain of a verb that has not been assigned case can be assigned case by the post position *yi*” Collin (1997:10)

Collins theory predicts that *yi* will not be able to appear in non-nominal XPs, no matter what their function is in the sentence. He assumes that since case is a property of NPs. If *yi* appeared on a non-nominal XP, it would not be able to assign case and the resulting representation would be unacceptable. According to Collins, *yi* can appear in a wide variety of SVCs, from this, he inferred the presence of empty categories. Collins claimed that only analyses of SVCs that admit that internal argument sharing effects are mediated by empty categories are empirically viable. Collins further hypothesises the LF incorporation of SVC, and claimed that SVCs are kinds of LF compounds, wherein the second verb incorporates into the first verb at LF. Collins maintained a strong one-to-one heads and maximal projections by rejecting a VP with two heads, but upheld a one-to-one relation between  $\theta$  roles and arguments, wherein each of the arguments receives one and only one  $\theta$  role. Aboh (2009) critiqued and argued against Collins’ position on Argument Sharing Hypothesis and the claim that the empty category is a *pro*. Aboh claimed Collins’ assumption does not apply to all types of SVCs and thus, is restrictive in nature (this is discussed further on page 41).

In this research, we agree with Collins’ claims on external argument sharing, but not with the issue of empty category which he claims to be a *pro*. This is because we do not have such post position elements in the language under study that allows for such oblique case marking in its serial verb construction. Also, not all languages allow for the occurrence of postposition in their SVCs, which he claimed could be used to mark oblique case in structural position and an evidence for internal argument sharing.

Oduntan (2000) focused on the morphological make-up of the Yoruba verbs, considering the simple, split and complex verbs. The study provided a VP structure

that embraces the different types of verbal constructions in Yoruba and adopted the VP shell hypothesis for analysis. He examined the verb phrase in Yoruba clause structure and adopted the VP – shell hypothesis as the basic structure of the verb phrase following Larson (1988), Hale and Keyser (1993) and Chomsky (1995) submission on the VP shell. Oduntan argued that the morphology of these verb classes provide significant evidence for the structure of the VP. He also argued that the semantic properties, such as agentivity and causativity, play significant roles in determining the structural projections of these three verb types he identified. Hence, a verb projects the VP shell only, if it is agentive and/or causative, while statives and unaccusatives do not project the VP shell since they are generally non-agentive and non-accusative. Furthermore, he claimed that the essential properties of Yoruba complex verbs are best explained if we assume that they entered the derivation as a single verb in the clause, thus generating complex verbs in the head of the lower VP, whereas, the verb is raised to v in agentive/causative structures. Also, no matter the diagnostic test or property taken into consideration in determining the agentive or causative property of verbs in any given language, if a verb does not exhibit either of these two properties, that is agentivity and causativity properties, it would lack the v-projection. With respect to feature checking, Oduntan argues that in Yoruba, subject and object both undergo overt movement, that is, subject to [spec, TP], and object to [spec, AspP2] where the accusative case is checked by the object in [spec, AspP2]. Finally, Oduntan provided evidence to show that AspP is dominated by another functional projection (FP), which is only projected in agentive/causative structures. Positing this functional projection between VP and Asp2 makes it possible to provide a unified analysis for the various structures using “ni” object construction in Yoruba.

It was observed that Oduntan focused mainly on verbs with agentive and causative features, but did not provide alternative analysis on how verbs without agentive and causative features are derived in the VP shell. Moreover, he claimed that in split verb derivation, the first segment of the split verb is generated in the head position of vP while the other segment is generated in the head of the lower VP. If each part of the split verb is generated at the head position of the vP and VP, respectively, it means that the individual parts of the verb are independent verbs on their own and that, it is no longer a split verb but verb in series. That negates the basic tenet of the concept of split

verb. Since split verb is a morphological word with discontinuous form, that is, an item is expected to be sandwiched in between the two parts.

Collins (2002) examined multiple verb movement in Hoan; he identified certain properties of verbal compounds, which are similar to SVC. Hence, he asserts that verbal compounds in Hoan are derived from underlying structures similar to SVC, and this derivation involves multiple verb movement. Collins listed two similarities between verbal compound and SVC. These are given below:

- a. both SVC and verbal compound have the same range of meaning expressed in their construction.
- b. verbs used in a verbal compound can also be used to form an SVC (for example cook, eat, etc).

The similarities above strongly suggest that verbal compound should be derived by verb movement from underlying structures that are similar to SVCs. However, it is difficult to reconcile verb movement analysis of verbal compounds with the following generalisation:

“the order of verbs in a verbal compound is the same as the order of verbs in a corresponding SVC”

Thus, the generalisation above simply means there is no difference in the formation of verbal compounds and SVC. They are equated as same type of construction in Hoan, and not necessarily generalised to Usen or other languages.

#### **15. Serialisation parameter**

The light verb *v* can license multiple verbs.

(Collins, 2002:9)

Collins claimed that *v* is [+multiple] and all verbs must raise overtly and adjoin to *v* in Hoan. Thus, this led to the question of which verb adjoins first? Since V1 is closer to *v* than V2, the Minimal Link Condition (MLC) states that V1 raises and adjoins to *v* before V2.

#### **16. Minimal link condition (MLC)**

“ $\alpha$  can raise to target K only if there is no legitimate operation Move  $\beta$  targeting K, where  $\beta$  is closer to K”

(Collins, 2002:10)

Since all verbs are adjoined to v, it is not surprising that they are adjacent and share one tense (aspect/voice marker). In Collins' (2002) verb movement generalisation, he came up with the following generalisations about verb movement:

- a. Verbs always adjoin to the left
- b. A verb cannot adjoin to another verb, rather, it must adjoin to a functional head (such as v, T or C).
- c. The trace of a verb does not block verb movement.
- d. A verb always adjoins as close as possible to v (local movement).

Now, about object of the transitive verb in SVC, termed object-sharing in the literature, he analysed it as pro and not as PRO. According to Collins, the difference between the big PRO and pro is still unclear, but he decided to use the small pro because of control. The big PRO would need a controller which might be possible with the overt object, but this would require case. The issue with Collins' approach to SVC is that, languages without post-positional PRO/pro are excluded from the analysis in the derivation of SVCs.

Aboh (2009) examined the clause and verb series. He argued against argument sharing hypothesis (henceforth ASH) in SVC, based on the argument that it does not hold for all SVC types. He demonstrated that a VP shell approach to SVC that translates the ASH into obligatory object control cannot be maintained, and that ASH cannot be a defining condition on serialisation or be related to a serialising parameter. He provides empirical evidence that the argument sharing hypothesis is inaccurate, by demonstrating that Collins' (1997) position cannot be substantiated based on the following:

- a. Verbs in series can separately combine with distinct (internal) arguments.
- b. They can co-occur with I (INFL) related markers (e.g aspect).
- c. They can be separated by intervening head-like adverbs.

Following the submission above, the sequences V1- XP- V2 and V1- V2- XP, involve more structure than a simple VP shell can account for. The following are examples extracted from Aboh (2009):

- 17a. Sètù zé kpò ló xò kójó  
 Setu take stick DET hit Kojo

Setu took the stick hit kojo (i.e He hit Kojo with the stick).

- b. Sètù nyàn kòjò yì Kútònù



Sètù chase Kojo go Cotonou

Sètù chased Kojo go to Cotonou (i.e He chased him to Cotonou)

c. Àsíbá dà lésì dù

Asiba cook/prepare/made rice eat

Asiba cooked/prepared/made the rice eat. (i.e She ate the rice)

17a illustrates an instrumental SVC, wherein the instrument of V2 is the theme of V1. (17b) is an example of a resultative SVC in which the internal argument of the unaccusative V2 is the theme of V1. (17c) is a consecutive SVC where V1 and V2 share the same internal argument. Going by this, the consecutive SVC in (17b) can be derived as (17d) below;

17d. [<sub>s</sub>Àsíbá [<sub>I</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>[<sub>v1</sub> [ dà lésì dù <sub>v2</sub>]]]]]

According to Aboh (2002), one could assume the projection principle using Baker's (1989:527) approach and conclude that because the object of V1 is an immediate constituent of a V<sup>1</sup> projection of V2, then V2 must theta mark it just as any other verb must theta mark its object. However, Aboh disagrees with Baker's stand and concluded that this conclusion has far reaching theoretical and empirical consequence. For instance, no internal argument can appear after V2, and in addition, V2 cannot license an overt pronoun object co-referential with the first object. More so, this analysis would imply that universal grammar includes a serialising parameter that sets serialising language like Gungbe apart from non-serialising language like English, which is not so. Aboh argues that these claims are too general and cannot be maintained for all SVCs, therefore, ASH must be rejected.

Aboh proposed a unified analysis for verb series and verbal compounds in Kwa and Khoisan languages. He claimed that in V1- XP - V2 and V1- V2 - XP series, V1 merges in the functional domain of the lexical verb (V2) that introduces the internal argument, and is embedded under an AspP whose head is endowed within an EPP feature. He also proposed that SVC involves a functional verb V1 that merges within the functional domain of the lexical verb V2. With this claim, the internal argument is always introduced within the VP shell associated with V2 where it is licensed. Aboh argues further that cross linguistic variation in SVCs derive from the interaction between the object movement and that may lead to V1 - XP - V2 versus V1 - V2 -XP

sequence in Kwa and Khoisan. This research however disagrees with Aboh's treatment of V1 as a functional verb that merges at the functional domain of the lexical verb, V2, because not all V1 in SVC acts as a functional verb. Secondly, functional category is not part of the vP phase in Phase syntax, how then is one able to account for such structure under Phase Syntax? So, Aboh's approach is not extendable to our analysis.

Ilori (2010), in line with the VP shell analysis, posits that the subjects of causative, instrumental, benefactive, resultative and most sequential/consecutive SVCs in Yoruba and Igala are base generated in spec- vP as agent/causer/performer before they are raised to spec TP for EPP feature checking. For sequential/consecutive SVCs, where subjects are theme arguments, he claimed that such subjects are base-generated in the canonic theme argument position within the inner core VP before they are raised to spec-TP through spec-vP. The claim above is generated in the structure below;

Fig. 2.1: Agent/ causer/ performer subject of SVC

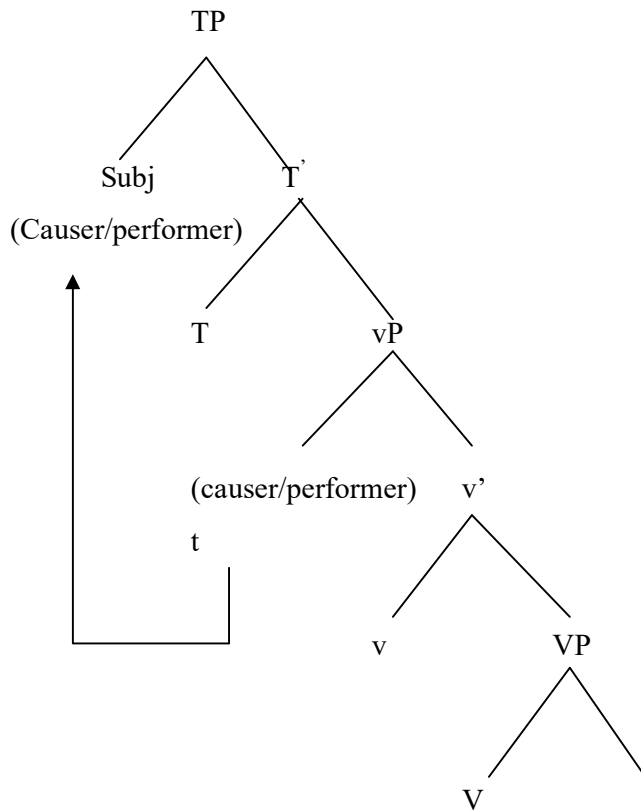
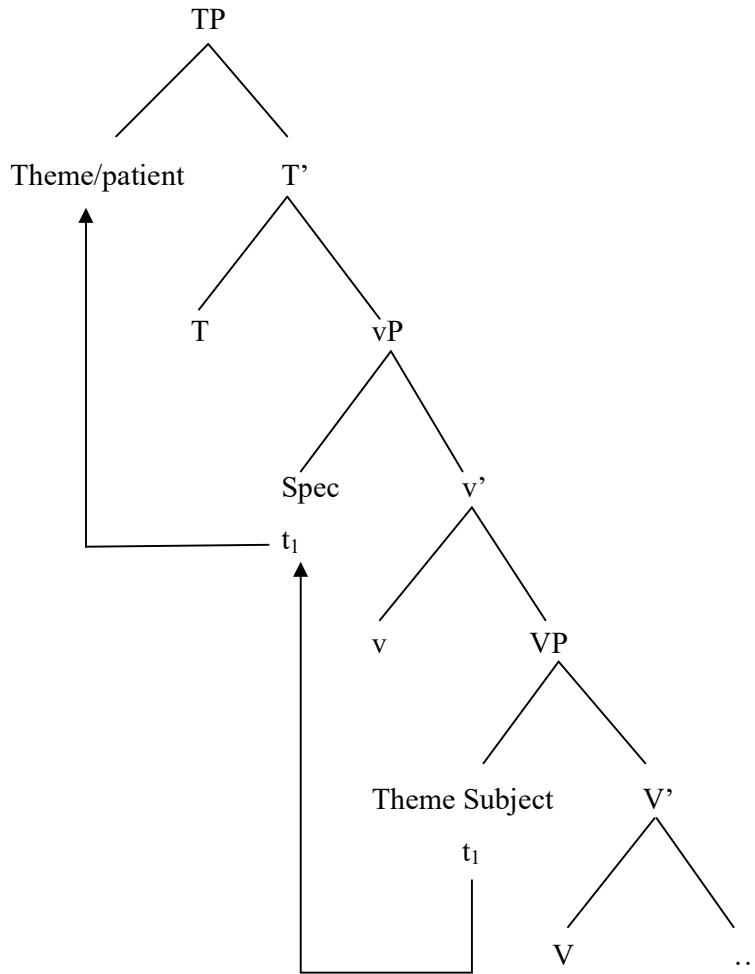


Fig. 2.2: Theme/ patient/ experiencer subject of SVC.



Going by the fact that *v* is a null light causative or performative verb that requires lexicalisation to be interpretable at LF, and in line with Schacter's (1974) insight, Ilori (2010) argues that all the verbs in Yoruba and Igala that string together to form a serial verb projection is base generated as a complex unit within the inner core VP. This follows from the fact that they all have overt lexical realisation. Moreover, the fact that it is the first in the linear order of serial verbs that obligatorily refer to the subject of the VP is an indication that it is that same first lexical verb that gets attracted to *v* by the

strong causative/performative features of *v* to lexicalise *v*. Although Ilori claimed that all verbs that string together to form a serial verb projection are base generated, he did not account for how the internal arguments of the verbs in series are realised in the derivation. If the internal argument of the SVC is overtly realised, does it follow that all the verbs in SVCs in Yoruba share the same argument or the verb in series string up together?

Abimbola (2014) examined the structural architecture of the *vP* in Ìyínnò dialect of Aika, by investigating the derivation of the simple and complex *vP* in the language. The work adopted the Minimalist framework. He asserts that only the complement of the light verb (*vP*) is recursive and expandable to accommodate any class of verb, thus, we can have series of verbs as the complement of the light verb. Also, he claimed that all the verbs in serialisation are merged in the *VP*, but the highest verb in the string is usually raised to adjoin to the null light causative/performative verb for lexicalisation due to its strong features, so that it can be legible/interpretable at LF interface. Hence, the verbs are not merged from different pre-syntactic computation. On the classification of SVC in Ìyínnò, Abimbola identified three SVC types, which are sequential, causative, and complex SVCs. He refuted the class of modifying SVC, because anything modifying is not a verb. He proposed only one clause architecture for the analysis SVCs, and claimed that SVCs have mono-source underlying representation, irrespective of the number of verbs. He also argued that all verbs in SVC are not of the same features in terms of argument selection, and finally introduced LF-residue below for non-overt object in place of *pro* used in Collins' work. This is further discussed in Abimbola and Taiwo (2014) with slight modifications.

Taiwo (2009) adopted the minimalist program in accounting for the derivation of the problematic SVC type in Yoruba (Modifying SVC); he claimed that the deletion and substitution method adopted earlier could not account for the derivation of the complex SVC type. Taiwo adopted the two minimalist operations: select and merge in analysing SVCs in Yoruba. These two operations prompted him to assert that the external DP moves cyclically, checking features, but these features are not overt except when the construction is complex. Taiwo asserts that there is only one clause architecture projected through merger of constituents headed by one functional head, and the projected clause structure has multiple lower projections, because they are assumed to

be from many underlying assumptions, just like what is obtainable in multi-source underlying representation.

Abimbola and Taiwo (2014) identified three SVC in Ìyínnò, and they are sequential, causative and complex SVC. The study further critiqued two existing hypotheses in the derivation of SVC, which are the multi-source hypothesis and the mono-source hypothesis. They argue that the SVC through the lenses of multi-source hypothesis is defective. They claimed that multi-source hypothesis-based the derivation of SVCs on equi-NP deletion, objects deletion where applicable or through blending of sentences together to derive surface transformed sentence. If we are to go by this assumption, verbs will follow one after another without any form of synchronisation. Hence, no sentence serves as the base for generating the other. Likewise, the derivation of SVC from mono-source perspective stems from one underlying sentence. The two hypotheses were faulted as both are derived in D- structure and S-structure, respectively, thus, having underlying and surface representation. However, this is now outdated with the emergence of MP, as derivation in MP is said to proceed in the narrow syntax or through the covert syntax interfaces from the sub-array.

Abimbola and Taiwo (2014) made two proposals for the derivation of serial verbal construction within the minimalist point of view. They are the cyclic movement of the object DP and the containment of LF-residue and visibility condition. The cyclic movement of the object DP holds that the object DP is the same in its entire occurrence, only that it will move for the same purpose, from the lowest verb where it enters the derivation cyclically to the next verb and value the required features on the verb (Acc-case) and move upward in the structure. However, this proposal is faulted as the feature [Acc-case] is available only on the lowest verb valued; hence, it leaves the other instances of Acc- feature to roam, thus violating Activity Condition.

18. Activity Condition

“A goal must bear some uninterpretable features.

(Otherwise it is frozen in place.)”

(Abimbola, 2014:32)

Containment of LF-residue and visibility condition propose that in the sub-array, an abstract element copy of the object DP and the LF residue are selected into the numeration so as to value the case on the verb. The residue contained in the sub-array,

is a lexical item only legible at the LF interface as specified by their v-feature. This led to the revision of the inclusiveness condition, to avoid any violation.

**19. Inclusiveness condition revision (Abimbola and Taiwo, 2014).**

The LF object  $\lambda$  must be built only from the features of the Lexical Item N

[This may include instances of LF-residue, visible at LF but not legible at PF]

The second proposal seems plausible as it makes derivation simple because the LF residue is only visible at the LF interface and thus satisfies the principle of Full interpretation of the verb. This proposal will be adopted for our study, with modifications in Abimbola and Taiwo (2016).

Abimbola and Taiwo (2016) examined the SVC in Ìyínnò. The study identified four properties of SVC in the language which are argument sharing, one tense and aspectual form, scope of negation in SVC and irregular verb selection properties of verbs in serialisation. Hence, they conclude that an adequate SVC structural representation must reflect all these features for a correct structural representation. In as much as the grammatical properties shared by the verbs in series are not separated, and irrespective of the type of SVC in question, the structure is derived unitarily. Thus, any structural representation must take into cognisance, all the identified properties above before representing the clause structure. They expanded further on the derivational proposal advanced in Abimbola and Taiwo (2014) that an LF-residue is required for the discharge of theta and case properties of verbs in serialisation, wherein the DP object and the LF residue are jointly selected into the derivation from the numeration of the clause but the LF-residue is a dummy item required only to satisfy full interpretation of the verbs in serialisation at the LF interface. Hence, LF-residue is not legible at the PF interface.

This approach to the study of SVC is plausible, with the introduction of an LF residue, (LF being the place where the meaning is determined) sharing the same features with the overt NP and allowing a copy of the same object DP to be specified in the numeration, which in turn allows for feature checking and valuation. The LF-residue specified in the numeration does not enter the derivation with the overt DP at the same time so as to guide against the postulations and number of copies of the residue made available in the numeration. Hence, this study adopts this approach in the analysis of the Usen serial verb construction.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

This research adopts the Minimalist Program (hence, MP) for the analysis of our data. MP is the latest development on Chomsky's Generative Grammar whose goal is to explain language acquisition. Following Chomsky (1993, 1995), the program has been expanding and now the current phase is the phase syntax.

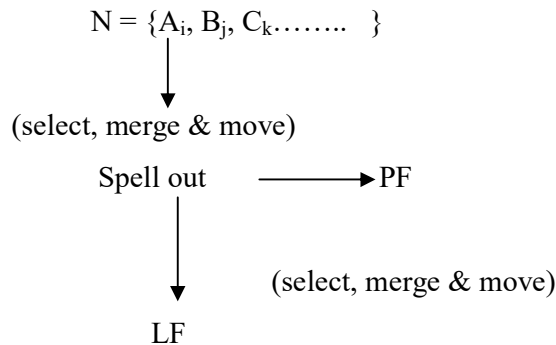
The primary focus of MP is to reduce the descriptive apparatus involved in the computational system and also provide empirical description for the way language is mirrored in the mind of the language speakers. According to Carnie (2007:355), the MP does not only seek to provide an explanatory adequacy to language, but also to create a level of formal simplicity and elegance and view the human cognitive system as a computational system which uses a limited set of mechanism and constraints to provide adequate explanation to language structure. In other words, it is an economic framework which reduces the complexity of the grammar than what is implied by previous generative grammar. Radford (2009:42) asserts that the essential spirit of minimalism is to reduce the theoretical apparatus used in describing syntactic structures to a minimum. Likewise, Cook and Newson (2007) opine that the core idea behind MP is that analysis should proceed on the minimal number of assumptions and make use of the minimal number of grammatical mechanisms. In MP, lexical items are selected from the lexicon into the numeration where computation starts, the lexicon specifies the items that enter the computational system and their idiosyncratic properties excluding whatever is predictable by principles of UG or properties of the language in question. The selected lexical items are merged in pairs  $(\pi, \lambda)$ , while  $\pi$  is a PF object,  $\lambda$  is an LF object, subject to economy conditions: the principle of Full Interpretation, which requires that all features of a relevant pair be legible at the relevant interface. If they are, the derivation converges at PF and LF, but if they are not, the derivation crashes at relevant levels.

#### **2.3.1 Organisation of the Minimalist Program**

The MP opines that the language faculty consists of a cognitive system (a computational system and a lexicon) which is responsible for storing information and performance systems. The external system A-P (articulatory perception and C-P (computation processing) interacts at the cognitive system at two interface levels of PF and LF, respectively, and is responsible for using and accessing information. The MP

organizes grammar into the following; lexicon, the computation, the output component and LF and PF.

**Fig 2.3: A Minimalist T-Model of Grammar**



Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann (2005:73)

### 2.3.2 The lexicon

The lexicon is a mental dictionary that lists all lexical items. It is made up of a lexical pool which specifies those items that enter the numeration with their idiosyncratic properties in UG. It houses lexical items formed from bundles of features. Lexical items (LIs) are fully specified in the lexicon with all the required properties or features needed for the item to project fully into the computation. Collins and Stabler (2016:43) define lexicon as a finite set of lexical items, constructed on the basis of the set of features available in UG to enable them to project fully in the computation process. Computational system of human language accesses features to generate expressions, starting from a subset of the lexicon which is termed numeration. Once lexical items are numerated, no further feature may be introduced in the derivation. This process takes the steps listed below:

- a) Select lexical items from the lexicon
- b) Map lexical items to expressions with no recourse to features for narrow syntax.

Derivation progresses without further access to the lexicon to avoid over-generation or introduction of new features. Olaogun (2016:45) asserts that the features of LIs are



organised on multiple levels. Thus, when the lexical item *Òsásòṅà* (a name) is selected, it has phonological, semantic and syntactic features expressed at different levels. The phonological feature specifies how the word is pronounced, [òsáʃòṅà]; the semantic features which indicates the meaning of the word such as [+Human, +Male] and the syntactic features which indicate word category [+N, -V] etc. We can therefore, say that the lexicon serves as input to the computational system of human language ( $C_{HL}$ ).

### **2.3.3 The computation**

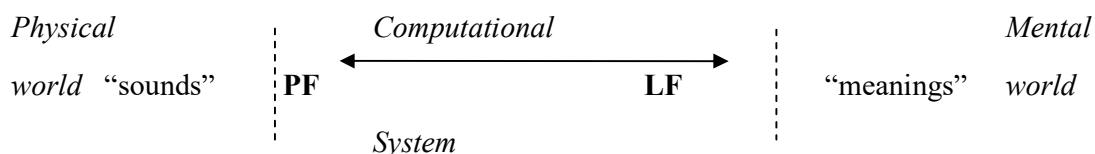
Computation starts when lexical items from the lexicon spill into the working area. Lexical items in this area are completely formed and fully inflected words, which have features such as case, agreement, tense, gender, number and person. In syntactic computation, appropriate features must be selected from the lexicon and be combined together, appropriately, in series of syntactic operations to form a syntactic object (SO). According to Chomsky (2015:154), MP assumes that the cognitive system of language consists of a computational system of the human language faculty ( $C_{HL}$ ) and a lexicon (L) that specifies the elements which  $C_{HL}$  selects and integrates to form a linguistic expression, that is, a Structural Description (SD) which contains a pair  $(\pi, \lambda)$  that satisfies the interface conditions. Certain operations precede computation in the working area: firstly, lexical items relevant for the realisation of a structure are selected. Then, selected items are merged by Operation Merge, and influenced by their individual features, thereby forming a constituent through the merge. Structures formed through this operation can be expanded by a reapplication of merge operation. The nodes merge to form phrases, phrases merge to form clauses and clauses merge to form sentences. After relevant items have been merged, the resulting constituent is moved (through operation move) to LF or PF component for interpretation.

### **2.3.4 Interfaces: the LF and PF interfaces**

The logical form (LF) and phonetic form (PF) are levels of interpretation both in the areas of meaning and production. Hence, all numerated syntactic objects (SOs) must have been added to the structure prior to spell-out because at the instance of transfer or spell-out, the semantic information is sent to PF for full interpretation. The PF is the input level for phonological rules and deals with the semantic realisation of the constituent. It is the level of mapping derivations unto the Articulatory-Perceptual (A-

P) system, where all structural properties that are relevant to interpretation at the phonetic interface are represented. The LF is the input level for semantic rules and deals with semantic realisation of the constituent. At LF, derivations are mapped unto the Conceptual-Intentional (C-I) system, where all structural properties that are relevant to the semantic interpretation are represented (Lasnik, 2002). Both LF and PF are interface levels where a component of grammar feeds into or interacts with another. Napolis (1996:390). The PF and LF serve as a bridge that links sounds and meanings as shown below:

**Fig 2.4: The phonological and logical form interfaces**



Adapted from Cook and Newson (2007:6)

### 2.3.5 Derivational operations of the Minimalist Program

There exists three mechanisms of operations in the MP that carry out computation in grammar, they are i) operation select ii) operation merge iii) operation move. These operations are minimal and economical for syntactic derivations.

#### A. Operation select

Operation select selects the lexical items that are relevant for the realisation of a structure. It considers the combinatorial patterns from available data and picks out the appropriate and relevant lexical items for its computation into meaningful structures. Chomsky (2015: 208) asserts that operation select is an operation of the  $C_{HL}$  and it is a procedure that selects  $L1$  from the numeration, reduces index by 1 and introduces it into the derivation as  $So_{n+1}$ . It chooses from the lexical items (LIs) available in the lexicon into numeration for further computation. A derivation crashes if it fails to exhaustively select lexical items for any syntactic computation.

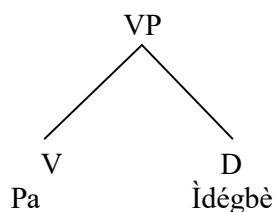
#### B. Operation merge

In the derivation process, the selected items are merged by operation merge, guided by their individual features to form larger structures. Thus, a constituent is formed

through such merging, and such structures are expanded with the reapplication of Operation Merge. Lexical items merge to form phrases, phrases merge to form clauses and clauses merge to form sentences. Chomsky (1995) says that merge applies to two lexical items  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ; it creates the complex syntactic object  $\{\gamma, \{\alpha, \beta\}\}$ , where  $\gamma$  is the label of the resulting structure, informing the computation of its relevant grammatical component. Given the numeration

$\{pa_i$  (kill) and  $\dot{I}d\acute{e}gb\acute{e}_i$  (goat) $\}$  in (20) below:

20.



Merging of two lexical items to form one syntactic object is made by operation merge. Hence, *pa* and *idegbe* are merged to form one syntactic object. Merge is divided into two, namely: internal and external merge. Andreu and Gallego (2009:10) explain the duo as follows:

21. **Internal Merge:** Merge ( $\alpha, \beta$ ) when  $\alpha$  is an outcome of a previous application of merge and  $\beta$  is selected from the domain of  $\alpha$ .

22. **External Merge:** Merge ( $\alpha, \beta$ ) when  $\alpha$  is an outcome of a previous application of merge (or selected from the lexicon) and  $\beta$  is selected from the domain of  $\alpha$ .

Thus, internal merge is concerned with syntactic objects (SO) that enter the derivation but have to undergo scrabbling, that is, this form of merge takes place when an already built structure is joined with another element from the domain of the existing structure. While external merge only targets merger of SO that enters the derivation from the lexicon, these items are selected directly from the numeration and joined together as a single structure. The merging operation of lexical items, for building up phrases, clauses, and sentences, constitute the stages of analysis that the present study sets out to show, using the Usen Verb Phrase as a case structure.

### C. Agree and feature valuation

Agree is an operation that establishes a relation between two distinct elements in the syntactic structure, through which feature values can be exchanged. It is a formal

mechanism for valuation and deletion of other elements (that is, uninterpretable features). According to Pesetsky and Torrego (2004:1), agreement clearly involves features of lexical items (LI) that differ along two dimensions: valued/unvalued and interpretable/uninterpretable. It is assumed in MP that some LIs enter the computation with unvalued features, while others enter the computation with valued features. Interpretable and uninterpretable features depend on whether or not the features of a particular lexical item make a semantic contribution to the interpretation of that item. [Per] and [Num] features on DP may make critical contribution to semantic interpretations but [Num] and [Per] features on verbs do not.

Feature valuation is a process wherein unvalued [Per and Num]  $\phi$ -features are valued by the goal, and the unvalued (Case)  $\phi$ -feature on the goal is valued by the probe. For instance, consider the following example;

23. Àghan ó        pa        idégbè  
       3pl    HTS    kill    goat  
       ‘‘They killed the goat’’

*Àghan* ‘‘they’’, *idégbè* ‘‘goat’’ both enter the derivation with unvalued case feature [-uF] but with an interpretable feature (IF) of [per] and [num], while *pa* ‘‘kill’’ enter the derivation with valued case feature but uninterpretable features of [per] and [num].

Features can either be strong or weak; strong features trigger movement while weak features do not. Weak features are not visible at PF, hence, their presence does not cause derivation to crash. Strong features on the other hand, are interpretable at PF, thus, their presence can cause a derivation to crash because it violates the principle of full interpretation.

**24. Principle of full interpretation:**

Every element in a structure must be interpreted in some way. Chomsky (1986)

In languages where agreement is overt such as English, we shall consider the derivation of a simple passive construction, wherein agreement and feature valuation applies.

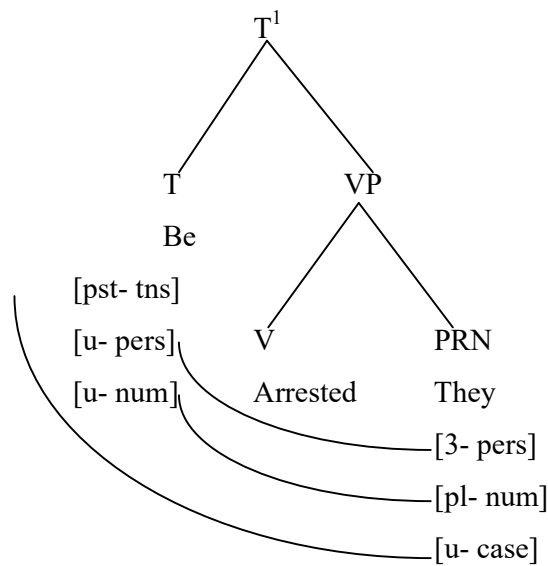
25. They were arrested.

Adapted from (Radford, 2009:284.)

From (25) above, the pronoun (they) entered the derivation with the phi ( $\phi$ ) features valued (3Pers, pl- Num, u-Case) but case is unvalued. Whereas, finite T constituent

entered the derivation with the tense features (Pst- tns, u- Pers, u- Num) which are already valued, but their  $\phi$  features (person and number) remain unvalued.

26.



(Radford, 2009:284)

It is pertinent to note that once T-auxiliary (BE) is introduced into the structure, T-agreement applies as early as possible in the derivation, hence, obeying earliness principle.

27. Earliness Principle states that:

Operation must be applied as early as possible in derivation.

Thus, the auxiliary T “be” at this point probes and searches for a suitable goal in its C-command domain. It locates the pronoun “they” which is the only potential goal. Hence, the unvalued  $\phi$ -features on the probe are then valued by the goal and conversely, the unvalued case feature on the goal is valued by the probe.

Radford (2009:301) asserts that agreement is characterised as involving two feature-valuation sub-operations, wherein a probe (e.g. T) agrees with a goal in the local domain under some circumstances.

28. Agreement

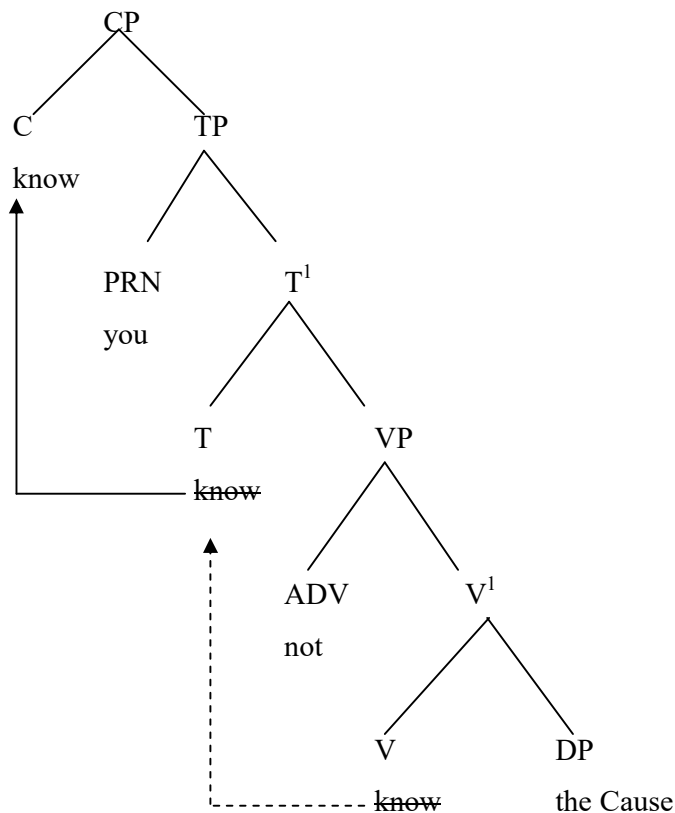
- i) the unvalued (person/number)  $\phi$ -feature on the probe will be valued (i.e. assign a value which is a copy of that on the goal)
- ii) the unvalued case feature on the goal will be valued (i.e. assigned a value dependent on the nature of the probe, e.g. nominative if the probe is finite T)

In MP, lexical items enter the derivation with their features specified, while the generative procedure (GP) determines whether a given expression X is licit in a given derivation by checking the features of X against the features of an appropriate head. Generally, MP assumes that the computational system checks the features of LIs through feature-checking operation in order to ensure compatibility of features borne by LIs. There are two main checking configurations within the Minimalist Program which are Spec-Head and Head-Head relations.

The Spec-Head relation is based on the specifier feature of a head which attracts the feature of another syntactic object from its original theta-marked position into Spec-Head for feature-checking purpose. Hence, the assumption that every type of structural case is checked in a Spec-Head configuration. For example, the subject of a clause is said to be attracted from its VP-internal  $\theta$  position to Spec/I or T where it values Spec-feature of I and T and consequently values the nominative case feature on the moved object. According to Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann (2005:116-121), MP assumes a unified Spec-Head approach to case where the object is not expected to check accusative case in its base position but moves to some Spec-position. Accusative case-checking could be covert or overt object movement to the case-checking position, since covert movement is allowed in minimalist syntax. Hence, the unified analysis asserts that the checking of case feature on the DPs is at a position higher than the one where they overtly establish a probe-goal relationship with some head. Likewise, Head-to-Head configuration does not include specifiers and complements, rather, a lexical or functional head moves to another head position which bears an unvalued feature but attracts the unvalued feature of the former position. Radford (2009:155) asserts that Head movement is possible between a given head and the head of its complement, wherein X of a phrase XP moves from its position into another head of Y, of a phrase YP, in a higher position. This process is referred to as the Head Movement Constraint (HMC). According to Radford (2009:157), Head movement can

only be allowed between a given head and the head of its complement. All movements must be local, else, it renders the construction ungrammatical. For example, in the derivation of a negative construction in Elizabethan English below:

29. Know you not the cause?



From the diagram above, the two important movement operations have to do with local movement of the verb “know” to T, which is from the head V position of a VP and is the complement of T, while the second movement operation entails the local movement of “know” to C. Both movements involve successive application of head movement in a local domain, so the HMC was not violated. However, the movement of V to C is not local, and so, it contravenes the principle of HMC.

### **2.3.6 The principal minimalist assumption**

The MP has five basic assumptions, thus, theoretical assumptions and structural architectures have worn a new look in MP. These assumptions are the DP hypothesis, the Split Infl-hypothesis, the  $vP$  hypothesis and Predicate internal subject hypothesis. We shall discuss these assumptions below.

#### **A. The DP-hypothesis**

Abney (1987) proposed a DP analysis (now referred to as DP hypothesis), wherein a functional category, determiner phrase, is the maximal category projected by the class of determiner elements and heads the noun phrase. Abney's proposal followed Chomsky's (1986a and b) revision of the X-bar theory, where he proposed that not only lexical elements, like nouns and verbs, should project to the phrasal level, but also functional elements, like complementisers and auxiliaries, should project to phrasal level too. Although Chomsky advocated for functional complementiser (CP) and inflectional phrase (IP), he never applied this revision to the nominal domain in his work, this prompted Abney's (1997) proposal.

Bernstein (2001) opines that the DP analysis proposal by Abney resolved the problems proposed for  $X^1$  theory by traditional characterisation of NPs, and unifies the treatment of noun phrases and clauses. The representation of NP as DP restores the parallelism between sentences and noun phrases. The head of a DP is a determiner as opposed to noun  $N^{\circ}$ . Abney (1987) states that the D heads the DP which selects NP as complement. The D is lexicalised by determiners, pronouns, and quantifiers.

The assumption that the determiner is the head of the phrase captures its position perfectly as the determiner precedes the noun, the noun heads its complement and the heads precede their complements.

#### **B. The split infl-hypothesis**

Split Infl sprung from the idea that the Infl houses more functors which could project independently as heads. It began with Pollock (1989) who assumed that elements such as auxiliary, negation, modal, tense and agreement markers among others, occupy the



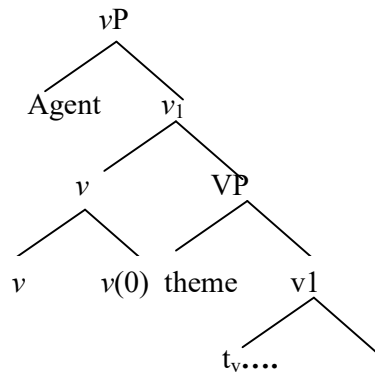
Infl node. However, this violates the Endocentricity Condition which states that every head projects a phrase and all phrases have heads (Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann, 2005). With empirical evidence, Pollock (1989) argued that the INFL should not be considered as one constituent with two different sets of features [+/- Tense, +/- Agr] instead, each set of features is the syntactic head of a maximal projection, AgrP and IP (the latter he called TP in French language). Thus, she suggests that IPs should be split into agreement phrase (AgrP) and tense phrase (TP) and be recognised as two independent functional categories. In light of this new development, Chomsky (1993) took a step further to argue that two more projections be recognised in languages, which are AgrSP and AgrOP. This is known as the Agree-based structure. It is pertinent to know that in the current phase of theory, Agr-based has been discarded, as there are no empirical language justifications for the argument.

### **C. Split vP hypothesis**

The VP shell was first introduced by Larson (1988). Then, he posited that the VP projection involves two verbal shells: a shell headed by the lexical verb and a shell whose head is abstract-performative. From the minimalist perspective, Hale and Keyser (1993) and Chomsky (1995) assume that verbal shell is not projected from an empty head (as previously construed, hence, the light verb is a verb whose meaning is heavily dependent on the meaning of its complement and a projection of a phonetically null *v*. (Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann, 2005). According to Radford (2009), the VP is split into two distinct projections which are an outer shell and an inner core. The latter is borne out of the need to adequately analyse and accommodate verb phrases that are headed by verbs with double complements. There is an inner VP layer headed by the V and is headed by the functional light verb denoted by “*v*”. According to (Chomsky 1995:321), the VP is seen as a complex structure and said to be of two layers or shell, comprising of an inner core VP headed by a lexical verb and an outer *v*P headed by a strong null light verb to which the lexical head of inner/core VP adjoins when raised into *v*P to lexicalise *v*. Chomsky (1995) asserts that each predicate theta role is tied to some structural position, that is, the  $\Theta$  role, like agent, originates from the spec of the inner VP layer. The emergence of Split VP analysis resolved the issue of analysing double object construction (DOC) across various languages. Hence, Split *v*P hypothesis shall be used in analysing the Prepositional dative construction and serial verbal construction in this study. It is assumed that arguments like agent,

originates from within the outer  $vP$  shell, while others like theme, originate within the inner VP shell. The light  $v$  is assumed to be used either in the causative or performative sense when it has the event/action denoted by the inner core. The diagram in (30) shows the structural architecture:

Fig2.5: The  $vP$  Architecture



Radford, A.1997. Syntax: A minimalist introduction.

#### D. The predicate internal subject hypothesis

One standard assumption is that the subject of a clause originates from the specifier of its predicate, following the predicate internal subject hypothesis.

According to Sportiche (1988), the subject is base-generated from VP internal position, that is, spec  $vP$ , where valuation of unvalued features are carried out. This hypothesis was necessitated by two things:

- (a) the need to account for  $\theta$ -role assignment to the external argument, and
- (b) the need for the subject of the sentence to occupy [Spec, TP](Haegeman 1994).

However, it is not possible to assign external  $\theta$ -roles under Head-complement configuration, hence, it was suggested that all  $\theta$ -roles must be assigned within the projections of the Head, that is, external arguments get their  $\theta$ -roles at the Spec of  $vP$  where they are base-generated.

### 2.3.7. Phase Syntax

Phase has played an essential role in the derivational approach of syntax. The major motivations for introducing phase were to solve the problem of “Merge over Move” and locality in movement where some domains are opaque because they do not allow syntactic object (SO) to move out of them. Hence, there is a need for probe goal relationship to be local, in order to minimise search. Chomsky (1995) opines that merge takes priority over move except when move is necessary for convergence.

Chomsky (2000:106) characterises phase as a natural syntactic object that is relatively independent, in terms of interface properties. He argues that phase is the closest syntactic counterpart to a proposition. In other words, either a verb phrase in which all theta roles are assigned or a full clause which includes tense or force can be taken as phase. He also sees Phase as the Lexical Subarrays (LA) whose chunks of the numeration are exhaustible. When a lexical subarray is exhausted, the derivation proceeds with the next, just to minimise the memory in use. Then, it is assumed that the memory may forget some part of the derivation which is said to have undergone transfer. A derivation is complete only after all subarrays have been exhausted, and a phase is complete if and only if the lexical subarray is exhausted.

Richards (2010) asserts that phases are simply heads from projections whose array can be shipped to the interface, also Phases (i.e. C and  $\nu$ ) represent the points where the formed syntactic object is accessed and evaluated by the interface components. Syntactic structures are built up in phases where at the end of each phase, the adjudged propositional domains in a derivation are frozen for any Probe to attract. Any part of an already formed syntactic structure undergoes transfer. This process continues with further derivation until another phase is formed.

Once all operations within a phase are exhausted, the complement of the head, which is the domain of the phase, becomes impenetrable to any other syntactic operation. This restriction is what Chomsky calls Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC), as stated below:

30. Phase impenetrability condition (PIC) (Radford, 2009:380)  
The c command domain of a phase head is impenetrable to an external Probe (i.e. a goal which is c commanded by the head of a phase is impenetrable to any

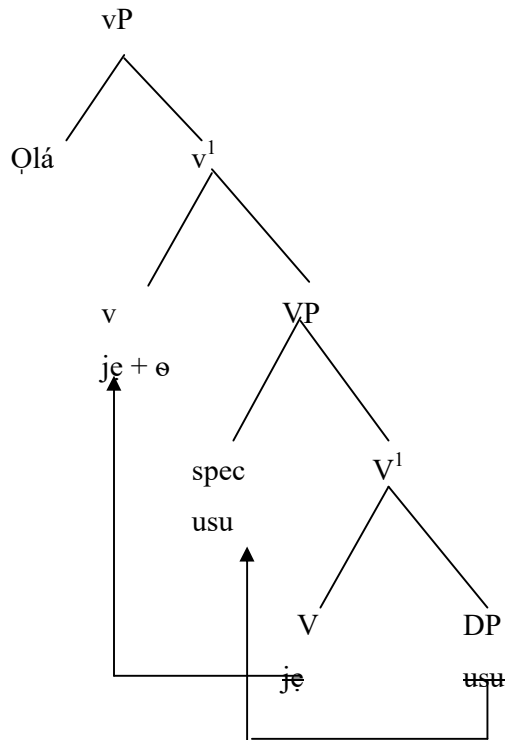
probe c commanding the phase).

Chomsky (2001:5) argues that once a phase is formed, the domain of the phase undergoes transfer operation, through which the relevant structure is simultaneously sent to the phonological component to be assigned an appropriate semantic representation. From that point on, the domain becomes inaccessible to syntactic operation. Let us consider the derivation of the sentence below:

31.    Ọlá    èyí    ó       jẹ     usu  
         Ọlá   rel    HTS   eat   yam  
         “Ọlá that ate yam”

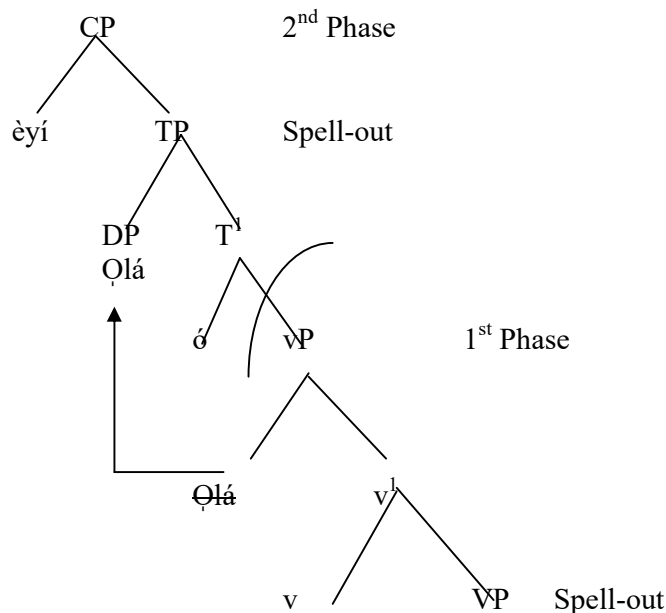
The verb *jẹ* “eat” merges with the DP *usu* “yam” to form  $V^1jẹ\ usu$  “eat yam”, the verb *jẹ* “eat” assigns the  $\theta$  role “theme” to the DP *usu* “yam”. The DP *usu* “yam” moves to spec VP to enter into a checking relationship for case valuation, hence, forming a VP. The VP merges with a causative light *v* to form  $v^1$ . The light verb values the Acc case of the DP *usu* “yam” and its  $vF$  triggers the movement of the lexical verb *jẹ* “eat” from its original position in *V* to *v*. To satisfy the edge feature on *v*, the DP Ọlá is externally merged with the  $v^1$  to form  $vP$ .

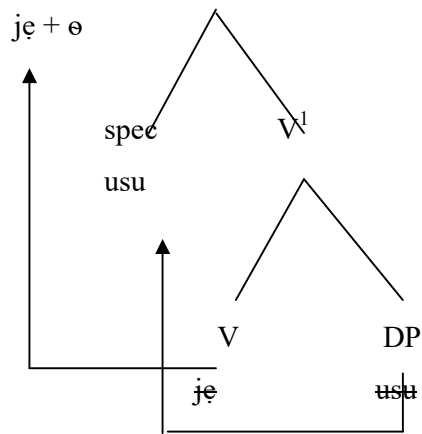
32.



Having formed the vP phase with the thematic external argument, the v being the head of the phase with its complement VP, the domain of the VP constituent undergoes a transfer to the phonological (PF) and Semantic (LF) interfaces, after which it becomes inaccessible to further syntactic operations. Hence, the transfer results in the lower copies of the constituents that were moved, and receives null spell out in the PF component and the uninterpretable features which have been deleted can then be removed from the structure before it is sent to LF component. Consequently, only the DP *Olá* is given overt phonetic spell out by PF, the PF will not spell out the original copy of the verb *je* “eat”. The syntactic operation proceeds with T *ó* which merges with the vP to form T<sup>1</sup>. T *ó* is an active probe, and has uninterpretable and (unvalued) per/num features, therefore, it searches for a local goal to value and delete its unvalued features. It is important to know that once the VP is transferred to phonological and semantic components, it becomes inaccessible to probe. However, the DP *Olá* is accessible to *ó*, because of its uninterpretable case feature. Hence, the tense *ó* agrees with the DP *Olá* and assigns nominative case to it. *Ó* also has an EPP feature that requires the movement of the goal that is closest to (and agrees with) spec T. The DP *Olá* is moved from its original position in spec v to become spec of TP. The resulting TP is merged with a null complement C, and C which has tense feature attracts *ó* to move from its original position in T to adjoin to the null C which is heading CP. Since CP is a phase, TP undergoes transfer to PF and LF interface at this point. As the derivation ends, all the constituents that remain undergo transfer.

33.





## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, previous research on Usen, both on syntax and phonology were examined to help the researcher have a better understanding of Usen. Existing literature on verbs and verb phrases in other languages which are relevant to this study were reviewed to enhance a better understanding of the subject matter, as this would enable a better analysis of the data in this study. Finally, the theoretical framework adopted for this study, which is the minimalist framework, was also discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Preamble**

The methodology employed in every research determines the validity of its findings. Hence, it will be of topmost importance to consider methodological issues, such as: study design, study location and population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, method of data collection and method of data analysis, to enable the researcher achieve valid results at the end of the research. Thus, this chapter examines the methodology employed in the study.

#### **3.1 Study design**

This study adopted an ethnographic approach in the collection of data. It enabled interactive participation of informants in data collection using the interview method. Purposive random sampling method was used in collecting the data needed for this research. This method enabled collection of data from selected informants at different locations in the community; thus, it gave us data on specific aspects of our work. The informants were not gathered together at the same place and time, rather they were sought after at different places and time as occasion demanded in the course of the study. Hence, data were collected for the verbs, verb phrases, declarative sentences, serial verb, split verb constructions, and folklores separately. This was done at different times, which made the data collection process interesting and time-friendly, thereby giving the informants enough time for their other daily activities. The data were critically observed at different contexts to ensure data accuracy. Afterwards, the data were cross-examined by different informants besides those from whom data were elicited, for verification.

### **3.2 Study location and population**

Data for this research were elicited in Usen town, located in Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The last population census conducted in 2006, put the population of Usen at about one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) Ikhimwin (2013:2). Attention was paid to where the informants resided, since Usen is a dialect of Yoruba. Thus, those who grew up in predominant Yoruba communities were excluded from the survey. This was done to avoid Yoruba language interference since Usen is a dialect of Yoruba language. Hence, only those who were born and had lived in Usen or those who had lived in Edo-speaking communities but were now based in Usen, and had resided in Usen community for not less than 30 years were considered fit as informants for this research, as their competence of Usen was considered to have remained intact. Informants who had lived in Edo-speaking communities were considered because Edo and Usen are both used at the home domain, religious centres, market places, social gatherings farmland and their competence in Edo language was observed not to have influenced their competence and performance in Usen.

### **3.3 Method of data analysis**

In analysing the data for this study, examples of the lexical verbs and the verb phrases were analysed first, using the descriptive approach in explaining their features, classification, and the internal constituents so as to give a basic understanding of the verb and its phrases in Usen. Afterwards, the phase theory of the minimalist program was employed to give a theoretical knowledge to the understanding of the verb phrases in Usen.

### **3.4 Sampling procedure**

The study considered some important factors in the selection the people from whom the data were collected from, and these factors are the choice of informants in the study, number of informants, sex, age, education, religious affinity and location of the informants. Data were elicited from fifteen (15) native speakers. Data on lexical verbs, verb phrases, declarative sentences, serial verb constructions, negative constructions, split verb constructions and folklores were elicited from ten (10) informants, while the remaining five informants were used to verify our Usen data.



Data were elicited from informants who were forty (40) years and above, as long as they were mentally fit and alert. The age restriction on the choice of informants was based on the fact that those who were forty years and above are experienced, and had witnessed more than one generation and would have observed the changes that could have occurred in the dialect from one generation to another. Moreover, this age restriction was used based on their level of competence, because of the influence of Yoruba (for those who migrated from Yoruba-speaking communities) and other urban influences associated with migration and civilisation. Data were elicited from both male and female informants, and of the fifteen informants, nine (9) were male while the remaining six (6) were female. The decision on the choice of gender was influenced by the fact that the men were more eager to give us data than the women, coupled with the fact that the traditional leader directed us to the men in the community to give us data for this work. However, to balance the gender participation, we implored some women in the community to also give us data as this would help in documenting Usen and they obliged. Formal or informal education was not considered in the choice of eligible informants, since Usen is not a medium of instruction in their schools, neither do they need formal education to be competent or to perform in the dialect. Data were elicited from those who had formal and informal education: five of the male informants and one of the female informants had formal education, while the remaining nine informants did not have formal education. There were no restrictions regarding the occupation or religious affinity of the informants as long as they were native speakers.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

Ibadan 400 wordlist and SIL (2006) comparative African wordlist were used as our data collection instrument for verbs. Furthermore, structured verb phrases and declarative sentences extracted from Dakubu (1980) West African Language Data Sheet were used to elicit data for the verb phrases in Usen. Finally, Ibadan syntactic paradigm was also used to elicit data on serial and split verb constructions, and negative constructions. Structuring the data in Edo made it easier to elicit data from the informants because they had more in-depth understanding of what was asked in Edo more than in English.

### **3.6 Method of data collection**

Data were collected from the structured wordlist of verbs and the structured interviews – this comprised verb phrases and declarative sentences. Then, we also collected data using the non-participatory method of data collection, where conversations among the native speakers were recorded, and the informants gave their consent (the informants we recorded had to sign a consent form, thereby giving their consent for the researcher to occasionally record their conversation when it is necessary). These sets of data were collected in public places (markets and religious centres), so we did not have to intrude the informants' privacy. The data for this research were collected with the aid of a digital audio recorder during field trips to the community, as this enabled the researcher to re-check the data after field trips to ensure data accuracy. Furthermore, the elicited data were orthographically rendered since this is a syntactic study, and not a phonetic or phonological study. The Leipzig glossing rule of word by word alignment was adopted in glossing the data, and this allowed an interlinear glossing of the data.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter examined methodological issues employed in this study by considering the research design. The study adopted the following methods of data collection: the purposive random sampling, observational and survey approach, which enabled the researcher obtain accurate data for the research. Finally, we discussed about the nature of the data, collection methods and theory adopted for the analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR THE VERB PHRASE OF USẸN

### 4.0 Preamble

This chapter presents data on the verb and verb phrases in Usẹn, alongside the discussion on the data. The research questions raised in chapter one, on page 24 are answered accordingly in the discussions of the data below.

### 4.1 The Verb in Usẹn

In Chapter Two, various scholars' definitions of verbs in Yoruba were examined, but there were inadequacies in the definitions, some of which state that verbs occur only in minimal sentences, and do not occur in complex constructions (like serial verb constructions and split verb construction). However, this study modified Taiwo's (2018) definition of verb in Yoruba, and proposed a working definition for the Usẹn verb, after going through the data for this study. Hence, this study defines verb in Usẹn as follows:

A verb in Usẹn is the head of the verb phrase which can stand alone or be modified.

The following examples below are used to illustrate this definition of the verb.

- 1a. Adé ó **kọ** orin lánà  
Adé HTS sing song yesterday  
"Ade sang a song yesterday"
- b. Adé ó **kọrin** lánà  
Adé HTS sing yesterday  
"Ade sang yesterday"
- c. Adé ó **kọrin** duẹduẹ lánà  
Adé HTS sing sluggish yesterday  
"Ade sang sluggishly yesterday"
- 2a. Iye mí ó tí **wa**  
mother poss HTS PERF arrive  
"My mother has arrived"
- 2b. Egúngún rẹn ó díya **gháré** gùdá  
masquerade DET HTS quick run out  
"The masquerade ran outside quickly"

The emboldened words in examples (1-2) are examples of verbs in Usen which allow pre- and post-verbal modifications, appropriately. In examples (1a), the verb *kò* “sing” which is a transitive verb, takes an object complement *orin* “song”, and then it is realised as *kòrin* “sing”. Example (1b), the verb *kòrin* “sing” is used as a compound verb, with the incorporation in the verb. However, in example (1c) the verb *kòrin* is modified by *duèduè* “sluggish”. The verb in example (1) above takes a complement because it is transitive; it also takes an adverbial modifier. The verb *wa* “arrive” in example (2a) stands alone without any modification because it is an intransitive verb. In example (2b), the verb *ghàré* “run” has a pre-verbal modification *diya* “quick”, which shows the manner in which the subject entity ran. Hence, any word which is the head of the verb phrase and which can stand alone or can be modified, is referred to as a verb in Usen.

#### 4.1.1 Lexical function of tones on Usen Verb

Tone plays a crucial role in differentiating verbs that have the same form, but different meanings in Usen. Usen operates three level tones which are low, mid and high tones; see chapter one for more explanation on tones in Usen. The following sets of verbs show the function of tones in distinguishing lexical verbs in Usen:

- 3a. *kò* “build”  
*kò* “sing”
- b. *dà* “pour”  
*dá* “break”
- c. *mò* “know”  
*mò* “drink”
- d. *lò* “grind”  
*lò* “go”

Example (3a) above denotes *kò* “build”, and *kò* “sing”, these two sets of verbs have every thing in common except the tonal pattern which resulted in a difference in meaning. While one denotes “build”, the other denotes “sing”. Also, *dà* “pour” and *dá* “break” are verb forms with low tone in one, and high tone in the other, respectively. The presence of these tones on these verbs helps in differentiating the events denoted by the verbs, just as one depicts the event of pouring, the other denotes the event of breaking something. The same applies to the verbs *mò* “know” and *mò* “drink”, as well as, *lò* “grind” and *lò* “go” in Usen.

## 4.2 Classification of verbs in Useñ

The verbs in Useñ are classified using four criteria, namely: meaning, use, structure or form, and behaviour of the verb in a construction. These criteria are encompassing and enable a detailed classification of verbs in Useñ.

### 4.2.1 Meaning criterion

This criterion builds on the meaning of the verb to determine the class it belongs to. Verbs that denote activity are classified as one, those that are used in describing events are also classified together, while those that depict a state of event are grouped separately away from the others. Hence, meaning criterion sub-categorised verbs into the following sub-groups: action verbs, descriptive verbs and stative verbs.

- a. **Action verbs:** These verbs depict actions/activities denoted by the subject of a clause in a construction. Physical force is expended in carrying out the activity/event denoted by these verbs. For example, verbs like *pa* “kill”, *ghàré* “run”, *jó* “dance”, *lù* “beat”, *kó* “build”, *gwè* “bath”, *jà* “fight”, *judìn* “wrestle”, *fò* “wash”. These examples are illustrated in the constructions below:

- 4a) Adé      ó      pa      idégbè  
Ade    HTS    kill    goat  
Ade killed a goat.
- b) Àghan              ó      je      ọkà  
2pl                    HTS    eat      corn  
“They ate corn”
- c) Akóṅẹ              é      jó  
teacher              prg    dance  
The teacher is dancing.
- d) iye                    mi      é      gwè  
mother                poss    prg      bath  
My mother is bathing.

In the data above, the verbs *pa* “kill”, *je* “eat”, *jó* “dance” and *gwè* “bath” in (16a-d) depict what the subject argument (the agent) is doing. *pa* “kill” in (4a) portrays action of the agent, and the object is the recipient of the action denoted by the verb. In (4b), the verb denotes the activity carried out by the subject entity, that is, “eating” and “corn” which is the object eaten. However, the verbs *jó* and *gwè* in (4c and d) depict the action of the verbs without an object argument.

In (4a), the verb denote an event of killing a goat and *Adeis* the doer of the action, while *idègbè* “goat” is the sufferer of the action depicted in the verb. In (4b), the subject “they” ate the “corn”, the corn is the object that is being eaten, thereby receiving the action of the verb directly. More so, (4c) shows that “the teacher” which is the subject in the construction was dancing; the verb does not take any object because the subject is the doer of the action denoted by the verb and does not need any action recipient. In (4d), the verb depicts that the “mother” which is the subject of the construction is bathing. “Mother” is the doer of the action denoted in the verb, however, this action does not require an object to receive it. It is important to note that all the verbs in this group depict action, but while some of them need an object argument as the sufferer/reipient of the action, the others do not, because the subject itself acts as the doer of the action without anyone suffering its consequence.

- b. ***Descriptive verbs***: These verbs portray the subject entity in a construction, that is, the subject argument is described. These forms of verbs also function as adjectives in the language as it can be used to modify nouns, however, it functions as a verb in these examples as it is used to predicate the constructions below.

- 5a) Osàsónà      ó      hẹngwá  
 Òsàsónà      HTS      beauty  
 Osàsónà is beautiful.
- b) Iba      mí      ó      gù  
 father      poss      HTS      tall  
 My father is tall.
- c) Ìdègbè      ren      ó      lálá  
 goat      det      HTS      big  
 The goat is big.
- d) Ijijẹ      ren      ó      yàn  
 food      det      HTS      sweet  
 The food is tasty.

In the data above, the verbs *hẹngwá* “beauty”, *lálá* (big), *gù* (tall), and *yàn* (sweet) are verbs that describe the subject arguments in these constructions. In (5a), the verb *hẹngwá* shows that the subject, *Osàsónà*, is beautiful, thus, depicting the state of her beauty; in (5b), *gù* “tall” describes the height of “my father”; likewise, *lálá* “big” in (5c) describes how big the subject argument is, which is *idègbé* “goat”; *yàn* “sweet”, describes the sweetness of the food. The general feature of this verb is that it describes

its argument; it is important to also note that all these verbs described do not take any object argument, rather, they only take the subject which they describe.

- c. **Stative verbs:** these verbs describe the experience of the subject in a construction. For example, *rùn* “smell”, *gbó* “hear”, *rò* “think”, *fẹ́* “love”, *mò* “know”, *rẹ̀* “like”.

6a) Adé ó fẹ̀ràn iye mí  
 Ade HTS love mother poss  
 Ade loves my mother.

b.) Ọpẹ́ ó mò ìwé  
 Ọpẹ́ HTS know book  
 Ọpẹ́ is intelligent.

c.) Aso ẹn ó rẹ̀ mí  
 cloth det HTS like me  
 I like the cloth.

*fẹ̀ràn* “love”, *mò* “know”, and *rẹ̀* “like” depict the state of experience of the subject of the verb. *fẹ̀ràn* “love” is a verb that denotes a state of love and love can only be experienced. *Ade fẹ̀ràn* “love” *iye mi* “my mother”, the verb *fẹ̀ràn* “love”, denotes the experience of Adé, which is love. Also, the verb *fẹ̀ràn* “love” cannot be seen, it can only be experienced. These forms of verbs do not denote action, instead they represent the experience from the feeling of love or being loved. *mò* “know” depicts that Ọpẹ́ is intelligent and *rẹ̀* “like” was used to portray the cloth I like. This verb classification differs from the action verbs which show a physical activity or event as portrayed by the verb. They are also different from the descriptive verbs that describe the features or qualities of the subject entity itself. Rather, stative verbs denote the experience of the subject or object.

#### 4.2.2. Use criterion

This criterion builds on the use of verbs for its classification. These verbs can be used to report an event, or for imperative and interrogative purposes. They can also be used in echo constructions. For example:

- A. **Report verbs:** these verbs recount details of an event, for example; *fọ̀* “say”, *lerì* “brag”, *ẹ̀yì* “reply”, *jẹ́wọ̀* “confess”, *dáhùn* “respond” etc.

7a) O ó fọ̀ kẹ̀ ọ̀jọ̀ é rọ̀  
 Pro HTS say compl rain prg fall  
 “He/She said it is raining.”

b) Adé ó fò kẹ de ghan kawa  
 Ade HTS say that mod 3pl come  
 “Ade said that they should come.”

c) Qlá ó jéwó ghí iba è  
 Qlá HTS confess prep father pro  
 “Qlá confessed to his father.”

In (7a-c) the verbs *fò* “say” and *jéwó* “confess” were used to report events in the constructions. In (7a), the verb *fò* was used to report that it was raining. This verb did not denote any activity taking place, but was used in reporting an event that was taking place. Likewise in (7b), *fò* “say” was used in reporting that Ade “name” will come. While *jéwó* “confess” in (7c) was used in recounting what the subject *Qla* “name” did. It is important to note that these verbs do not depict or describe the action of the subject, rather, they only report the event denoted in the construction.

B. *Imperative verbs*: these verbs are used to give orders and instructions; they are also used for greetings and making pleas. For example:

- 8a. kawa “come”
- b. yú/lọ “go”
- c. jòkó “sit”
- d. koró “stand”
- e. jòó “plea”
  
- 9a. lẹ́ẹ́ “greeting”
- b. dèláhè “family morning greeting”
- c. lájẹ́wá “family morning greeting”
- d. lábo “family morning greeting”
- e. láhè “family morning greeting”

Examples (8a-e) depict imperative verbs used to order, instruct, interrogate and plead. These verbs do not need subject or object complements, because they are imperatives. For instance, when a native speaker says *kàwá* “come” or *koró* “stand”, the listener does not need further information to decode what the speaker is saying. Examples (9a-e) are imperative verbs that depict different types of greetings. In Useñ, every family line has their morning greetings, the way you greet in the morning shows the family you belong to. These greetings are verbs which do not need any subject or object arguments.



C. *Echo verbs*: these verbs are repeated twice in a construction, and the second is said to echo the first verb. These verbs differ from split verbs in which a verb splits into two in a construction and the object is sandwiched in between the split verb, or a serial verb which allows for more than one verb in a construction. Let us consider the examples:

- 10a) Olùku mí ó rò mi rò ìré  
 Friend poss HTS think me think well  
 “My friend thinks well of me.”
- b) Ọkọ mí má yí mí nà yí hun  
 husband poss neg leave poss alone prep it  
 “My husband don’t leave me to it”
- c) Àpò kan oun a mò ọ mò  
 bag one Foc 3pl know 2sg know  
 “It is only one bag that we know him/her with.”
- d) Ayé èè fẹ ẹnẹ fẹ ire  
 human beings neg love person love good  
 “Humans do not like others’ progress.”
- e) Ọlórún lukà òún ó bọ mí bọ  
 God only Foc HTS remain 1sg remain  
 “It is only God that I am left with.”

From the above, the second verb echoes or emphasises the event denoted in the first verb. In as much as these verbs *ró*, *yí*, *mó*, *fẹ*, are used twice in the construction above, they can also be used once in a construction.

- 11a) Omadé rẹn ó rò ara è pin  
 Child det HTS think body 2SG finish  
 “The child gave up on himself.”
- b) Rò ire ghí mí  
 think well prep me  
 “Think well of me.”
- c) Àpò kan òún mo mò fọ o né  
 bag one foc 1SG know say 2SG has  
 “I know he has one bag.”
- d) Ayé èè fẹ ẹnẹ  
 world neg love person

- “Humans do not love.”
- e)    Ọlórún      lukà    òún    ó      bò      ghí      mí  
       God            only    foc    HTS    remain   for    poss  
       “Only God is left for me”

D. *Interrogative verbs*: Interrogative verbs are used in inquiring or investigating a subject matter in a construction. In the course of this research, we observed that Useṅ does not manifest interrogative verbs. Let us consider the examples below;

- 12a) kẹ́ẹ́    Ọlá  
       WH    Ọlá  
       “Where is Ọlá?”
- b)    kẹ́ẹ́    ibe    uwó    ó      yú  
       WH    place    you    HTS    go  
       “Where did you go?”
- c)    kẹ́ẹ́    ẹnẹ    é      họnkún  
       WH    person    prg    cry  
       “Who is crying?”
- d)    Òlú    èyí    ibàtà    yí  
       how    much    shoe    dem  
       “How much is this shoe?”
- \*e)    Ọlá    kẹ́ẹ́  
       Ọlá    WH  
       “Where is Ọlá?”

From the above, *kẹ́ẹ́* and *òlú* do not predicate the constructions above, when they do, it yields an ungrammatical construction just like what we have in (12e). Hence, they do not function as verbs but as question markers only. This is unlike what we have in Yoruba, where *dà* and *nkọ* are used to predicate the clause where these verbs are used.

#### 4.2.3 Structure or form criterion

Another criterion identified in classifying verbs in a construction is the structure or form criterion. This is used to examine the structural make-up of the verbs, and the number of syllables present in the verbs. Thus, the verbs could be simple or compound verbs; they could also be mono-syllabic or di-syllabic verbs. This section is sub divided into two parts – simple and compound verbs.

i) *Simple verbs*

Verbs in this class are basic lexical items which are not derived and are basically mono-syllabic. These verbs include *gbèn* “write”, *jín* “steal”, *rà* “buy”, *jà* “fight”, *kó* “build”, *gwẹ̀* “bath”, *he* “cook”, *pè* “read”, *ká* “pluck”. Although there are simple verbs which have more than one syllable, for example, *dìró* “lie”, *jòkó* “sit” and so on, it is important to note that when such verbs are broken down into smaller syllables, they do not make meaningful sense. Thus, these verbs are considered exceptions to Usen simple verbs. Consider the examples below:

13a. *gbèn* “write”

Akọṅẹ́      é      **gbèn**    ìwé  
 Teacher      PRG    write    book  
 “The teacher is writing.”

b. *jín* “steal”

kẹ̀ẹ́    ẹṅ    ó      **jín**    Idegbe Iyeye      mi  
 WH    person    HTS    steal    goat    mother’s mother      poss  
 “Who stole my grandmother’s goat?”

c. *rà* “buy”

Òlọyè Èró    **ra**    àkón    méjì  
 Chief Èró    buy    bead    two  
 “Chief Ero bought two beads.”

d. *jà* “fight”

Adé    ó      **jà**    lí      ojà  
 Adé    HTS    fight    prep    market  
 “Ade fought at the market”

e. *kó* “build”

Ọba Elawurẹ́    ó      **kó**    uli      megwa  
 king Elawurẹ́    HTS    build    house    ten  
 “King Elawure built ten houses.”

The simple verbs above cannot be morphologically broken down into smaller meaningful components, rather, they remain the single units that they are. This is because if they are broken down, they become meaningless. *gbèn* ‘write’, *jín* ‘steal’, *rà* ‘buy’, *jà* ‘fight’, and *kó* ‘build’ from (13a-e) all remain single units in the constructions.

ii) *Compound verbs*

These verbs are made up of two or more simple verbs or a verb and a noun. They basically have more than one syllable, which can be di-syllabic or tri-syllabic. Though these forms of verbs are made up of two simple verbs or a verb and a noun, it is important to know that the semantic output of these compound verbs often differs from the morphological components that make up the verb, and also some of these verbs have metaphorical meaning. Let us consider the examples below:

- 14a.            **Verb**            **Noun**  
 rò                    irò =            ròrò  
 stir    thought            think
- Òlòyè Èró      é      **ròrò**    ọfọ    Ọba  
 Chief Ero      PRG    think    word    King  
 “Chief Ero is thinking about the words of the king.”
- b.                kó                    ara    =            kára  
 pack    body                    dress/prepare
- Adé    ó      **kára**    lukà    yú      ọjà  
 Adé    HTS    dress    good    go      market  
 “Ade dressed elegantly to the market.”
- c.                dá                    ikú    =            dákú  
 defeat    death                    faint
- Omaderen ó **dákú**lugbaegungun    ren ó guda  
 Child    det    HTSfaintwhenmasquerade    det    HTS    come-outside  
 “The child fainted when the masquerade came outside.”
- 15a.            gbe                    áya    =            gbáya  
 carry                    wife                    marry
- Osàsónà            ó      **gbáya**    lana  
 Osàsónà            HTS    marry    yesterday  
 “Osàsónà married yesterday.”
- 15b.            jọ                    ara    =            jọra  
 like                    body                    resemble
- Aghán Ọma    meji    yi      ó      **jọra**            araghan  
 2PL    child    two    dem    HTS    resemble            themselves  
 “These two children resembled themselves.”

15c.            sé            ojú    =    séjú  
                   wink          eye            wink

                  Adé    ó        **séjú**    ghí    mí  
                   Adé    HTS    wink    prep    me  
                   “Adé winked at me”

Examples (14) and (15) above show the incorporation of nouns into the verbs in the sentential constructions. These compound verbs which are two separate morphological words when decomposed into smaller units are used as single words in the contexts above.

16a)            **Verb**            **Verb**  
                   bà            jé        =    bàjé  
                   show    rot            spoil

                  Ijijẹ    rẹn    ó        tí        **bàjé**  
                   food    det    HTS    perf    spoil  
                   “The food is spoil”

b)                gbé            wá        =    gbéwá  
                   carry          come            bring

                  Ukpònmwàn    ó        tí        **gbéwá**  
                   Ukpònmwàn    HTS    perf    bring  
                   “Ukpònmwàn has brought it”

c)                jù            ò        =    jùò  
                   throw          blow            wrestle

                  Ibùkun        ó        **jùò**    lí        ààfin  
                   Ibùkun        HTS    wrestle    prep    palace  
                   “Ibukun wrestled at the market”

Examples 16a-c above denote verb-verb compounds and their use in sentential constructions. These verbs are derived from two simple verbs which can also be used separately.

#### 4.2.4 Behavioural criterion

Verbs in this category are classified based on the type of argument the verb selects in a construction. Every verb is unique and acts differently in a sentence. Most verbs select subjects but not all nouns can be selected as subject because it selects specific arguments that can only co-occur with it. Other verbs in this group are cognate, symmetrical, transitive, intransitive, split and serial verbs. The question that comes to mind is do verbs in Usen behave similarly? Let us consider the sub-groups below.

#### 4.2.4.1 Subject-selecting verbs

There are verbs that are individually used with specific subject arguments; these verbs have selectional restrictions regarding the type of nouns they select. Verbs in this category select arguments that agree with their meaning. If these verbs do not select based on meaning, they yield ungrammatical realisations, because not all nouns can be selected to occur with these verbs. For example:

- 17a. Òjò é rọ  
rain PRG fall  
“It is raining.”
- b. Òjò é gwẹgwẹ  
rain PRG drisle  
“Rain is drizzling.”
- \*c. ẹmọ e rọ  
palmwine PRG pour  
“Palm wine is raining.”
- d. Àpàrà ó ghen  
thunder HTS strike  
“Thunder struck.”
- \*e Adé ó ghen àgá  
Adé HTS strike chair  
“Ade struck the table.”

From the above constructions, the verb *rọ* “rain” and *gwẹgwẹ* “drizzle” can only select nouns that denote water “flowing/pouring from the sky without an artificial force enhancing it”. *Òjò* “rain” is the subject argument, and depicts the event of raining and drizzling. It also acts as the theme in both (17a and b); the verb *rọ* and *gwẹgwẹ* select a subject argument, but do not select an object argument. In (17c), ẹmọ “palm wine” is tapped from a tree, and it involves someone tapping the wine from the palm tree, unlike rain that does not involve anyone tapping, thus, the ungrammaticality of

example (17c). The verb in example (17d) *ghen* “strike” occur with thunder, the use of *ghen* “strike” with any other subject will render the construction unacceptable, except when used in a homophonic manner. For example, *ghen* “strike” cannot be used to denote Ade’s striking of the chair in example (17e), instead *gba* “hit” is used.

#### 4.2.4.2. Object-selecting verbs

Object-selecting verbs are also referred to as Cognate verbs. These verbs are structurally derived from the nouns they select. In Usen, these forms of verbs often select object arguments, depending on the context and structural make-up of the sentence; however, the noun from which these verbs are derived are not necessarily derived from the structure of the verb.

18. Èmí ó mọ ẹmọ  
 1SG HTS drink wine  
 “I drank wine.”
19. Idúpẹ́ ó lí àlá  
 Idupẹ́ HTS dream dream  
 “Idupẹ́ dreamt.”
20. Àwá ó jẹ ijíjẹ  
 1PL HTS eat food  
 “We ate food.”

The verbs *mọ* “drink”, *lí* “dream” and *jẹ* “eat” in examples (18-20), select *ẹmọ* “wine”, *àlá* “dream” and *ijíjẹ* “food”, respectively. The object nouns selected by the verbs in the above constructions, are structurally derived from the verb. These verbs do not just select their objects randomly, rather, the object selected must be structurally compatible with the verb in the construction. In example (18) above, *mọ* “drink” and *ẹmọ* “wine” are structurally related because the noun *ẹmọ* “wine” is underlyingly derived from the root morpheme *mọ* “drink”. The same thing applies to *lí* “dream” and *àlá* “dream”, and *jẹ* “eat” and *ijíjẹ* “food” in (19) and (20). While *ẹmọ* “wine” and *lí* “dream” are derived through prefixation process, *ijíjẹ* “food” is derived by partial reduplication.

#### 4.2.4.3. Symmetrical verbs

Symmetrical verbs allow subject-object inversion. In this class of verbs, an argument in a subject position can in turn become an argument in object position and, the object

argument can also become the subject argument. This can happen with or without difference in their meaning, depending on the structure of the sentence, but with minimal difference. For example:

- 21a. akóṅẹ            ó        bí        iná  
 teacherHTS    born    stomach  
 The teacher was angry.
- b.     Iná                ó        bí        àkóṅẹ  
 stomach            HTS    born    teacher  
 The teacher was angry.
- 22a. Obìrẹ̀n            rẹ̀n        ó        je        ùyà  
 Woman            det        HTS    eat        suffering  
 The woman suffered
- b.     Ùyà                ó        je        Obìrẹ̀n        rẹ̀n  
 Suffering            HTS    eat        woman        det  
 The woman suffered.
- 23a. Àánú    ẹ        se        mí  
 Mercy pro    do        pro  
 I pity you.
- b.     Mo    se        àánú    ẹ  
 Pro    do        mercy pro  
 I pity you

The verbs in examples (21) and (22) are compound verbs (V#N), and are broken down morphologically in these constructions. It is only the noun that the verb selects that can occur in the subject position, in (21a and b) above, *bíná* “anger” which is broken down into *bí # iná* is lexically translated as “born stomach”, the object *iná* “stomach” can be turned to the subject of the construction, and *akóṅẹ* “teacher” can be turned to the object in the construction without altering the meaning of the construction. Examples (22a and b) show a little difference in their realisations. *Jùyà* “suffer” is derived from the verb *jé* “eat” and the object argument *ùyà* “suffering”. When *obìrẹ̀n* “woman”, which is the subject argument in the construction, is made the object and the object, *uya* “suffering” becomes the subject. The realisation shows that though the woman suffered, the process involved was not the same. In example (22a), the woman’s suffering was inflicted on her, while (22b) shows that the woman’s suffering was not inflicted on her by anyone, but was probably caused by her own actions or something else. In (23a), *se* “do is not a compound verb but it allows subject-object inversion. While example (23a) shows that you pity someone without having any help to offer,



(23b) denotes that you show mercy by offering assistance, support or help. It is important to note that it is not all verbs that allow subject-object inversion, or else the output would become unacceptable. For example, the verb in (23c) will not allow subject-object inversion, hence, the unacceptability of (23d) below.

23c. Akóṅẹ            ó        jẹ        irehi  
Teacher            HTS    eat        rice  
“The teacher ate rice.”

\*23d. Irehi    ó        jẹ        akóṅẹ  
Rice    HTS    eat        teacher  
“The rice ate the teacher.”

#### 4.2.4.4. Transitive verbs

Transitive verbs take one or two object arguments in a construction because they have obligatory subject and object arguments. Examples are *jìn* “stir”, *pò* “mix”, *hí* “shut”, *hon* “roast”, *ká* “pluck”, *jẹ* “eat”, *gbe* “give”, *tà* “sell”, *pa* “kill” and *kọ* “build”.

24a. Osàhon            ó        jìn        ẹ̀kọ  
Osàhon            HTS    mix        pap  
“Osàhon mixed the pap.”

b. Adé    ó        hí        ẹ̀kùn  
Adé    HTS    shut    door  
“Adé shut the door.”

c. Ẹ̀fẹ    ó        hon    ọ̀kà  
Efe    HTS    roast    corn  
Ẹ̀fẹ roasted the corn

d. Mo    ó        ká        alimóyì  
1SG    HTS    pluck    orange  
I plucked an orange

\*e. Osàhon            ó        jìn  
Osàhon            HTS    mix  
“Osàhon mixed”

The verbs above take an obligatory object argument because the absence of an object argument will make the construction incomplete and ungrammatical. In order to be grammatical, *jìn* “mix” selects the object *ẹ̀kọ* “pap” and the subject *Osàhon* “name” in 24a. The verb *jìn* mix must also select the object that is semantically compatible with it for it to be grammatical. *hí* “shut” in (24b) selects an object that can be closed; *hon*

“roast” in (24c) selects a noun that can be roasted, and *ká* “pluck” selects an item that can be plucked. The absence of an object argument in transitive construction will result in the ungrammaticality of the construction as seen in example (24e) because the construction does not tell us what *Osàhọ́n* mixed.

#### 4.2.4.5. Intransitive verbs

Intransitive verbs in *Usẹ̀n* take single obligatory subject arguments but do not have any object argument. For example, *hùn* “sleep”, *wá* “arrive”, *fẹ̀* “belch”, *kú* “death”, *su* “defecate”, *kawa* “come”, and *wú* “swell”.

- 25a. Ọma    rẹn    é        hùn  
       Child det    prg    sleep  
       “The child is sleeping.”
- b.      Àghan tí        wa  
       3pl    perf    arrive  
       “They have arrived.”
- c.      Osàzẹ            ó        fẹ̀  
       Osazẹ        HTS    belch  
       “Osazẹ belched.”
- e)      Me        é        kawa  
       1sg    prg    come  
       “I am coming.”

From examples (25a-e) above, *hùn* “sleep”, *wa* “arrive”, *fẹ̀* “belch”, and *kawa* “come” are verbs which do not take objects, unlike transitive verbs that select object complements. Intransitive verbs do not take object complements.

#### 4.2.4.6. Split verbs

These are verbs which split into two in a construction, one half occurs before the object and the other occurs after the object. Split verbs are mainly verbs that have object complements and are known to have more than one syllable. Thus, they are not monosyllabic. Split verbs in *Usẹ̀n* include *mú...le* “believe”, *yí...ká* “turn around”, *ba...wí* “rebuke”, *mú...hàn* “show”, *bà...jẹ̀* “spoil”, *tàn...jẹ̀* “deceive”, *fà...ya* “tear”, *tú...ká* “scatter” and so on. Split verbs are exemplified in the construction below:

- 26a. Adé    ó        tàn                    Olú    jẹ̀  
       Ade    HTS    deceive            Olú    eat  
       “Ade deceived Olú”

b. Olá ó fà asọ yá  
 Olá HTS draw cloth tear  
 “Olá tore the cloth”

c. Evbàde ó bà asọ rẹn jẹ  
 Evbàde HTS cloth det eat  
 “Evbade spoilt the cloth”

From the examples above, the verbs *tànjẹ* “deceive”, *fà yá* “tear” and *bàjẹ* “spoil” split in the above constructions. For this class of verbs, there is no difference between the verb form when used as a whole (*tànjẹ* “deceive”, *fà yá* “tear”, *bàjẹ* “spoil”), and when it is split in construction (*tàn...jẹ* “deceive”, *fà.....yá* “tear”, *bà...jẹ* “spoil”). It is not possible to use the different parts of a split verb separately, if this happens, both constructions will be meaningless compared to the meaning in a split verb construction. For instance, *\*Evbàde ó bà asọ rẹn* and *\*Evbàde ó jẹ asọ* are meaningless in relation to *Evbàde ó bà asọ rẹn jẹ* “Evbade spoilt the cloth”. As mentioned earlier, split verbs can be used as a single verb in some instances, and when it is, it does not create any meaning difference. There are instances where split verbs are used without obligatory overt objects, hence, the two parts will be together. Let us consider the example below:

26d. Ijẹ rẹn ó tí bàjẹ  
 Food det HTS perf spoil  
 “The food is spoilt”

*Bàjẹ* “spoil” in (26b) above is not split but is used as a single verb form, and the meaning of *bàjẹ* “spoil” in (26b) is not different from the meaning of *bà...jẹ* in (26c). It is important to note that not all split verbs can be used in a single form, for example, *tàn...jẹ* “deceive”.

#### 4.2.4.7. Serial verbs

These are verbs that occur in a string or series of two or more in sentential constructions. Ilori (2010:215) defines “[a] serial verb construction as a string of at least two verbs and their relevant complements, where applicable, with the verbs sharing just one subject without any sign of coordination.” One major difference between serial and split verbs is that, while more than one verb is allowed in serial verb construction (henceforth, SVC), split verb construction allows only one verb

which is split into two. SVC manifests in the grammatical structure of Usen, just as seen in many other dialects of Yoruba classified with Usen. Examples below are evidence of SVC in Usen:

- 28a. Adé ó he usu je  
Ade HTS cook yam eat  
“Ade cooked yam and ate”
- b. Iye Dúpé ó há aso gbẹ  
mother Dupe HTS spread cloth dry  
“Dupe’s mother sun-dried the clothes”
- c. Èsè ó ghàré yú ulí  
Èse HTS run go home  
“Èse ran home”
- d. Ajá ó pa adiyẹ je  
dog HTS kill fowl eat  
“The dog killed and ate the fowl”
- e. Àghán ó ra idégbè pa je  
3plu HTS buy goat kill eat  
“They bought a goat, killed and ate it.”

From the construction above, the verbs occurring in each sentence are more than one, thus, when a construction has more than a verb in series, we refer to it as serial verb construction (SVC). There are however different sub-classes of serial verbs identified by various Yoruba scholars like Oyelaran (1982), Bamgbose (1974, 1983, 1986), Dechaine (1993), Ilori (2010), Abimbola and Taiwo (2014, 2016). However, not all these sub-classes of SVC manifest in Usen. In what follows, we examine the SVC sub-classes that this study has observed in Usen in the next section, and we examine the types of SVCs that this study has observed in Usen;

- a. Sequential SVC
- b. Consequential SVC
- c. Durative SVC
- d. Causative SVC.

#### **A. Sequential SVC**

This class of verbs occurs in a particular order, that is, the events denoted by the verbs occur next to each other, following a particular pattern. The first verb in the sequence propels the action of the verb coming after it, thus, the event encoded in the first verb

precedes the event encoded by the second verb in the construction. In other words, there is a verbal/event ordering in this SVC type. Bamgbose (1974: 23) opines that verbs in this series results in meaning difference, meaninglessness and ungrammaticality once the ordered sequence is reversed. In Usen, reversing the order of a sequential SVC is not permitted, hence, its ungrammaticality.

Consider the examples below:

- 29a. Adé ó he irèhi jẹ  
 Ade HTS cook rice eat  
 “Ade cooked rice and ate.”
- b. Iba mí ó rà alẹ kọ ulí  
 father poss HTS buy land build house  
 “My father bought a land and built a house.”
- c. Èkòṅ ó pa ajá jẹ  
 lion HTS kill dog eat  
 “The lion killed the dog and ate.”
- \*d. Adé ó jẹ irèhi he  
 Adé HTS eat rice cook  
 “Ade ate rice cooked.”

In (29a), V1 *he* “cook” precedes V2, *jẹ* “eat”, because the object argument *irèhi* “rice” needs to undergo a process that transforms it with heat from its initial state to a new state before consumption can happen. One cannot eat *irèhi* “rice” raw without cooking it. Hence, the event denoted in *he* “cook” precedes the event denoted in *jẹ* “eat”. If this order is violated, the realisation becomes unacceptable in the grammatical structure of Usen. Likewise in (29b), *rà* “buy” must come before *kọ* “build” as one cannot build before buying or owning a land one intends to build on. Also, for the event denoted in (29c), *pa* “kill” must take place first before the event denoted in *jẹ* “eat”. *Èkòṅ* “lion” cannot *jẹ* “eat” the *ajá* “dog” before killing it. Example (29d) is not an acceptable order in sequential SVC or to an Usen native speaker, as one cannot eat rice before cooking it. However, these verbs do not behave like this when used in isolation, they only behave this way when used in sequential serial verbal constructions.

## B. Consequential SVC

In consequential SVC, the event denoted in the second verb is as a result of the event denoted by the verb preceding it, that is, the action denoted in the first verb in the construction resulted in the consequence or state of the second verb. For example:

- 30a. Ibùkún          ó          sẹ́          oyún          kú  
 Ibukun          HTS          abort          pregnancy          die  
 “Ibukun aborted the pregnancy and died.”
- b.      Ọḍẹ          ó          gún          òlè          kú  
 hunter          HTS          stab          thief          die  
 “The hunter stabbed the thief to death.”
- c.      Akóṅẹ          ó          lù          àkékò          ó          họnhún  
 teacher          HTS          beat          student          HTS          cry  
 “The teacher beat the student till s/he cry.”
- d.      Adé      ó      je      uyà      kú  
 Adé      HTS      eat      suffering      die  
 “Ade suffered to death.”

In (30a), the event denoted in the verb *sẹ́* “abort” resulted in the event denoted in the second verb *ku* “die”, thus, *Ibukun* died as a result of the pregnancy she aborted. If she had not aborted the pregnancy she would not have died, but the action in V1 (abortion) which was done in the past has resulted in the consequence of V2, (death), in the present time. In (30b), the stabbing of the *òlè* “thief” resulted in his death. The thief would not have died if he had not been stabbed. The student cried as a result of being flogged by the teacher in (30c), and the suffering of Adé in (30d) resulted in his death. In this type of SVC, the action of the first verb always results in the consequences of the second verb, and usually has a negative undertone. Thus, if the first event did not take place, it would not result in the event denoted in the second verb.

### C. Durative SVC

Durative SVC denotes the interval specified in the verb, that is, the event denoted in the first verb does not come to an end, rather, it continues into the second verb until the event of the first verb is achieved. Bamgbose (1986: 33) asserts that the durational SVC is one in which the action or state of event of the first verb continues until the action or state of the second verb is attained. In this construction, the first verb is denoted as ongoing or progressive till the event of the first verb is achieved. Let us consider the examples below:

- 31a. Mo      ó      lù      ìlù      tú      ulí  
 1sg      HTS      beat      drum      reach      house  
 “I drummed till I got to the house.”
- b.      Adé      ó      ghàré      tú      omi

Ade HTS run reach river  
 “Ade ran till he got to the river.”

c. Mo ó họnkún hùn  
 1sg HTS cry sleep  
 “I cried till I slept”

d. Aghán ó jó tú afín  
 3plu HTS dance reach palace  
 “They danced till they got to the palace.”

In (31a), the two verbs *lú* “beat” and *tú* “reach or until” denotes that the drum was being beaten while the subject entity was going home, and the event did not come to an end till he got home (that is, the action came to an end when he got home). In (31b) also, the verb *gharé* “run” depicts that *Adé* “name” ran to the river and did not stop till he got there. The event of crying did not stop till he arrived at the river. Likewise in (31c), *họnkún* “cry” did not stop till he slept off. Example (31d) denotes that they were dancing till they arrived the palace, dancing to the palace was their goal, and they did not stop till they got there.

#### D. Causative SVC

In these SVC constructions, the event of the second verb is always caused by the first verb which is a causative verb this means that the event or action denoted by the first verb results in or leads to the event denoted in the second verb. Hence, the first verb is the cause of the second verb. This study identified three causative verbs in Usen based on their thematic structure. They are *dé/fà/mú* “cause”, let us consider the examples below:

32a. Mo ó dé uwòwò gwò  
 1sg HTS cause calabash break  
 “I made the chinaplate break.”

b. Olùku mí ó dé mí hẹ́ úsú  
 friend my HTS cause me cook yam  
 “My friend made me cook yam.”

c. Adé ó dé mí rẹ̀rìn  
 Ade HTS cause me laugh  
 “Ade made me to laugh”

33a. Idúpé ó fà ukọ̀ ràn mí  
 Idupẹ HTS cause cough contract 1SG (OBJ)

“Idúpé cause to contract the cough”

- b. Ó      mú              ùyà    jẹ      mí  
 3SG   made/cause    suffer   eat      me  
 “S/he made me to suffer”
- c.    Qlá    ó      mú    mi    ja  
 Qlá    HTS   made   1SG   fight  
 “Ola made me fought.”

In (32 and 33) above, the constructions have three causative verb forms –*dé*, *mú*, and *fà*. These are each followed by a second verb, as seen in each of the examples in the constructions (32 and 33) above. In causative SVC, the first verb always causes the action denoted in the second verb. In example (32a), the causative verb *de* refers to the agent/causer that caused the calabash to break, while in (32b), the causative verb made the subject perform the act of cooking *usu* “yam”. In (32c), the theme argument made the experiencer undergo the event denoted in the verb. Meanwhile, in (33a), the agent’s action caused the experiencer to contract cough (probably by coughing without covering his mouth or by making him use the spoon or cup he had used earlier without washing). The agent made the theme undergo suffering in (33b). In (33c), the agent/causer made the theme to fight.

#### 4.2.2.1. Features of the Useṣen verb

Verbs in Useṣen exhibit peculiar features which distinguish them from other grammatical categories in the dialect. Hence, we shall examine these features below.

##### A. Verbs in Useṣen are monosyllabic.

All verbs in Useṣen are underlyingly monosyllabic. This is a phonological feature of the verb. There are verbs that are disyllabic, but morphologically, such verbs are combinations of a verb and other elements, such as nouns or another verb. Hence, the underlying representation of a verb in Useṣen is a CV, any verb which has more than a monosyllabic form in the dialect is derived. Consider the examples below:

##### Monosyllabic Verbs

- |      |       |         |               |
|------|-------|---------|---------------|
| 34a. | dá    | [dá]    | “break”       |
| b.   | hí    | [hí]    | “close”       |
| c.   | gbá   | [gbá]   | “hit”         |
| d.   | yú/lọ | [yú/lọ] | “go”          |
| e.   | bò    | [bò]    | “fill”        |
| f.   | pẹn   | [pẹ́]   | “divide”      |
| g.   | gwá   | [gwá]   | “search/want” |



h. ghò [ghò] “see”

Actual usage examples are;

35a. Adé ó **bò** uwò èyí ó **gbén**  
 Adé HTS fill hole rel pro dig  
 “Adé filled the hole that he dug.”

b. Uwó ó **hí** ẹkù  
 2SG HTS close door  
 “You shut the door.”

c. Awá á **yú** omi lóla  
 1pl fut go river tomorrow  
 “We will go to the river tomorrow.”

#### Non-Monosyllabic Structured Verbs

This class of verbs is derived from the combination of two monosyllabic verbs or a monosyllabic verb and a noun or other forms. This form of verbs could be derived through compounding, verb-noun incorporation. Consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel (hence, CVCV) syllabic-structured verbs may be a combination of two monosyllabic verbs or a monosyllabic verb and noun. Consider the examples below:

36a.	<b>Verb</b> gé cut	<b>Verb</b> jẹ eat	“géjẹ” “bite”	[géjẹ]
b.	gé cut	le chase	“géle” “follow”	[géle]
c.	mú take	hàn expose/legible	múhàn [muhàn] “show”	
d.	mú take	le strong	“múle” “believe”	[múle]

The verbs in (36a-d) above are derived through verbal compound. The class of verbs tends to have a similar meaning as the individual parts. For example, in (36a), *gé* “cut” and *jẹ* “eat” have something in common with *géjẹ* “bite” because the process of biting involves cutting, and most times when people bite, they intend to eat whatever it is they have bitten off. Although it is also important to note that some people bite to inflict bodily injury or pain. Likewise *gé* “cut”, *le* “chase” have something to do with

*géle* “follow”. You can stop chasing someone and just follow the person instead, and the same thing applies to (36c and d).

	<b>Verb</b>		<b>Noun</b>		
37a.	gbá hit		etín ear	“gbátín” “slap”	[gbátí]
b.	jù throw	blow	udìn	“jùdìn” “wrestle”	[jùdĩ]
c.	han share		eghó money	“hanghó” “pay”	[hãghó]
d.	dá defeat		ikú death	“dákú” “faint”	[dákú]
e.	gbé carry		áya wife	“gbáya” “marry”	[gbaya]

The verbs in examples (37a-d) are derived through compounding (verb-noun incorporation). The nouns are incorporated into the meaning of the verb to derive another verb. Verbs in this class also have similar meanings when broken down morphologically, just as seen in example (36) above. Also, this is in addition to a metaphoric meaning. Like what we see in example (37d), the literal translation of *dá* is “break”; however, the fact death is metaphysical and cannot be broken, explains the use of “defeat” as the gloss.

Non-monosyllabic verbs are used in the constructions below, both in minimal and non-minimal clauses.

- 38a    Àghan            ó    **géle**    iye            ghan  
           3pl                HTS   follow mother            pro  
           “They followed their mother.”
- b.        Olá    ó        **dákú**  
           Olá    HTS   faint  
           “Olá fainted.”
- c.        Omádé            yí    ó        **gé**    ẹrán    **jẹ**  
           child            dem   HTS   cut    meat    eat  
           “That child bites the meat.”
- d.        Iba    mí    èé    **gbátín**   mí  
           father   poss   neg    slap    poss

“My father did not slap me.”

The verbal compound depicts the CVCV forms of verbs without any elision of vowel or consonant. However, the verb-noun incorporation depicts elision of vowel either at V1 or V2 across word boundary.

**B. Verbs in Usen are consonant initial.**

All verbs in Usen exhibit this feature. This feature is very significant as it is an important feature that helps distinguish verbs from nouns in the dialect, since all nouns in Usen are vowel initial. This feature may not be exclusively distinctive for verbs in Usen, as there are adjectives, adverbs and prepositions that begin with consonants. However, the fact that the verbs do not permit vowel feature is important in determining what a verb is in Usen. Let us consider the examples below:

- 39a. pa “kill”
- b. hè “cook”
- c. tà “sell”
- d. honkún “cry”
- e. jùdìn “wrestle”
- f. họn “roast”
- g. yú/ lọ “go”

**C. Verbs in Usen can be derived through verbal compounds of two verbs or through verbal incorporation of a noun, but never through prefixation. For example:**

- 40a kọ # orin = “kọrin”  
sing song sing
- b. gbá # etín = “gbátín”  
hit ear slap
- c. pa # ọwọ = “pawọ”  
kill hand clap
- d. sé # ojú = “séjú”  
blink eye wink
- e. kọ # ulí = “kọlí”  
build house build
- f. jẹ # ùyà = “jùyà”  
eat suffer suffer
- g. mú # le = múle

take                      strong =                      believe

41a. Adé    ó            gbátín            iba            rẹ̀n  
 Adé    HTS    slap            father            pro  
 Ade slapped his father.

b.    Mo    ó            kọ    ulí    ghí    iye            mí  
 1sg    HTS    build    house    prep    mother            poss  
 I built a house for my mother.

Verbs in Usen also permit prefixing of certain oral vowels to it, to derive nouns. Gerunds can also be derived in Usen through partial reduplication. In deriving gerunds in Usen, the first consonant is reduplicated, followed by a high tone [í] sound. We can therefore say that verbs in Usen serve as root words from which noun and gerunds can be derived. For example:

	Prefix	+	Verb	derived Noun
42a.	i-		kú (die)	ikú “death”
b.	i-		lù (beat)	ilù “drum”
c.	u-		jà (fight)	ujà “act of fighting”
d.	u-		jó (dance)	ujò “act of dancing”

	Verb	Reduplicated form	Gerund
43a.	ká	kká	kíká “plucking”
b..	jẹ	jjẹ	jíjẹ “eating”
c..	hùn	hhùn	híhùn “sleeping”
d..	hè	hhè	híhè “cooking”

Although verbs in Usen allow prefixation of certain vowels and consonants to derive nominals, verbs in Usen can never be derived through prefixation.

D. Verbs in Usen can occur with object pronoun.

Verbs in Usen occur with short pronouns, although Taiwo and Abimbola (2014) refute this claim in Yoruba as interrogative verbs do not occur with short pronouns, (see discussion in chapter two). These verbs occur with short pronouns with no exceptions since Usen does not have interrogative verbs.

44a. Mo                      ó            jẹ            ìrẹ̀hì  
 1sg(obj)                      HTS    eat            rice

“I ate rice”

b. Ghan ó jòkó  
3pl(obj) HTS sit  
“They sat down.”

c. Wọ ó géle Ayò  
2sg HTS follow Ayò  
“You followed Ayo.”

45a. Mo ó pè ìwé  
1sg HTS read book  
“I read a book”

b. Mo ó tí wa  
1sg HTS perf arrive  
“I have arrived.”

E. They can be negated by “*éè*” and “*máá*”, *éè* negates the verb in declarative sentences, and “*máá*” is used to negate verbs in negative imperative constructions.

46a. Adé éè gháré  
Àdé neg run  
Àdé did not run.

b. Mé éè yù  
1sg neg go  
I did not go.

c. Aghán éè kọrin  
3PL neg sing  
They did not sing.

d. Uwọ éè gwè  
2sg neg bath  
You did not bath.

47. Mé éè fọ iye mí  
1sg neg say mother poss  
I did not tell my mother.

48a. jà “fight”  
máá jà “do not fight”

b. /họnkún/ “cry”  
/máá họnkún/ “do not cry”

c. /ká/ “pluck”  
/máá ká/ “do not pluck it”

d. /gwè/ “bath”

/máá gwè/ “do not bath”

- e. /yú/ “go”  
/máá yú/ “do not go”

The features considered above are predominant features of the verbs in Usen which commonly distinguish them from other syntactic categories. In the following section, there is an examination of the internal constituents of the Usen verb phrase.

### 4.3 The internal constituents of Usen verb phrase

The verb phrase in Usen is a syntactic unit which consists of an obligatory element (that is, the head verb) and optional dependent elements which are phrasal complements and adjunct functions denoted by phrasal categories like noun phrase (NP), preposition phrase (PP), adverbial phrase (AdvP) and other modifiers excluding the subject. In this section, we shall examine the various internal constituents of the verb phrase in Usen.

#### 4.3.1 A verb constituting a verb phrase

The verb as the only obligatory element may constitute a verb phrase in Usen when it is used intransitively or imperatively as seen below:

49a O ó *hín*  
Pro HTS sneeze  
“He/She sneezed.”

b. Ijíjẹ́ ó *yàn*  
food HTS sweet  
“The food is sweet.”

c. Àghan ó *wa*  
They HTS came  
“They came.”

50a. *Koró* “stand”

b. *Kawa* “come”

c. *Jòkó* “sit (down)”

A verb, being an obligatory element of a verb phrase, can form a verb phrase when used in intransitive constructions as seen in example (49a-c), and when used in imperative constructions as seen in *koró* “stand”, *kawa* “come” and *jòkó* “sit” in

examples (50a-c). Hence, the italicised verbs above, which are both in (49a-c) and (50a-c), are verb phrases in this dialect and do not need any object, complement or modifier.

#### 4.3.2 Verb + Noun constituting the verb phrase.

The verb and the noun can also constitute the verb phrase in Usen. These verbal constituents are evident in transitive constructions. For example:

- 51a. Adé ó *kọ* *orin*  
 Adé HTS sing song  
 “Adé sang a song.”
- b. Iye mi é *tà* *asọ*  
 mother poss PRG sell cloth  
 “My mother is selling clothes”
- c. Ùwọ́ ó *gwò* *uwòwò*  
 2sg HTS break calabash  
 You broke the calabash.
- d. Me é *jẹ* *ọkà*  
 1sg PRG eat corn  
 “I am eating corn”
- e. Àghan ó *gbén* *usu*  
 3pl HTS plant yam  
 “They planted yam.”

Some verbs in Usen take only object arguments without a modifier or a complement, especially transitive verbs. This form of construction also makes up for a verb phrase in Usen. *kọ* “sing” in (51a) obligatorily selects the object complement *orin* “song”. Likewise in example (51b-e), *tà* “sell”, *gwò* “break”, *jẹ* “eat” and *gbén* “plant” all select *asọ* “cloth”, *uwòwò* “calabash”, *ọkà* “corn” and *usu* “yam”, respectively.

#### 4.3.3 Verb + prepositional phrase constituting a verb phrase

The verb and the prepositional phrase can also constitute the verb phrase in Usen. The prepositional phrase comprises of the preposition and a noun/determiner phrase. For example:

- 52a. Adé ó *lọ* *ghí* *ulí* *ìwé*  
 Adé HTS go prep house book  
 “Adé went to school.”

- b. Àghan ó *kòrin* *ghí* *oma* *rẹn*  
 3pl HTS sing prep child the  
 “They sang for the child.”
- c. Olé rẹn ó *hùn* *ghí* *orí* *òrè*  
 thief det HTS sleep prep head mat  
 “The thief slept on the mat.”
- d. Uwó ó *wá* *ghí* *ulí* *mí* *lanà*  
 2sg HTS come prep house poss yesterday  
 “You came to my house yesterday.”

Aside the object argument that depends on the verb to make up its internal constituent, the prepositional phrase also depends on the verb and this forms its internal constituent. In example (52a), *lọ* “go” is a verb with a dependent element “*ghí ulí iwé*” to school” a prepositional phrase. This verb and this dependent element constitute the internal constituent of the verb. This also occurs in (52b-d).

#### 4.3.4 Verb + adverb constituting a verb phrase

The verb + adverb can also constitute a verb phrase in Usen. These adverbs are realised in reduplicated forms, but when they are not reduplicated, they occur in pre-verbal positions and function as pre-verbal modifiers. Consider the examples below:

- 53a. Imèrí é *jeun* *duèduè*  
 Mary prg eat sluggish-sluggish  
 “Mary is eating sluggishly.”
- b. Iye mí ó *rẹn* *diyadiya*  
 mother poss HTS walk quick-quick  
 “My mother walked quickly.”
- c. Àghan ó *fọ* *pèlèpèlè*  
 3pl HTS speak gentle-gentle  
 “They spoke gently.”
- d. Àghan *oma* rẹn ó *jùdìn* *lanà*  
 3pl children det HTS wrestle yesterday  
 “Those children wrestled yesterday”

Verb phrase in this section constitute the verb and the adverbial modifier, and these make up the internal constituent of the verb phrase in Usen. The verb *jeun* “eat”, *rẹn* “walk”, *fọ* “speak” and *jùdìn* “wrestle”, select the adverb *duèduè* “sluggishly”, *diyadiya* “quickly”, *pèlèpèlè* “gently” and *lanà* “yesterday”, respectively.



### 4.3.5 Verb + complementiser phrase (CP)

Verb + Complementiser Phrase (CP) can also constitute a verb phrase in Usen. There are different types of CP, they include: Finite CP, Infinitival CP, Relative CP, Focused CP, etc. For examples:

- 54a. Àghan ó mọ̀ fọ̀ kẹ̀ ó díro  
 3pl HTS know say compl 3SG lie  
 “They knew that he lied.”
- b. Ikáyọ̀dé èè gbọ́ fọ̀ kẹ̀ ara è èè yá.  
 Ikáyọ̀dé neg hear say compl body PRN neg well  
 “Ikáyọ̀dé did not hear that he was sick.”
- c. Mo ó múlẹ́ fọ̀ kẹ̀ Ijésù ó kú o gheyin jí  
 1SG HTS believe say compl Jesus HTS die 3SG later rise  
 “I believe that Jesus died and he rose again.”
- d. Àghan ó fọ̀ kẹ̀ ebi pa ghán.  
 3PL HTS say compl hunger kill pro  
 “They said they are hungry.”
- e. Adé ó lílà fọ̀ kẹ̀ àwá ó yú ulí ghán  
 Adé HTS dream say compl 1PL HTS go house 3PL  
 “Ade dreamt that we went to their house.”

The verb phrase constitutes the verb and its dependent preposition. The complementiser phrase *fọ̀ kẹ̀ ó díro* “that he lied” is dependent on the verb *mọ̀* “know” and this forms a constituent also. Examples (54b-d) also denote the verbs and the complements they select.

### 4.3.6 Verb + noun phrase + prepositional phrase

The verb phrase in Usen can consist of a noun phrase and a prepositional phrase, thereby yielding a complex verb phrase. The following examples illustrate this:

- 55a. iye mí ó rà usu lí ojà  
 Mother poss HTS buy yam prep market  
 “My mother bought yam at the market.”
- b. Mo ó gwò ùwòwò lí ọ̀mi  
 1sg HTS break calabash prep river  
 “I broke the calabash at the river.”
- c. Iba mí ó pa eku lí urhúrhà mí  
 father poss HTS kill rat prep room poss

“My father killed a rat in my room.”

- d.    Àghan            á       fò       asọ   lí       omi  
      3pl               FUT   wash   cloth   prep   water  
      “They will wash the clothes at the river.”

In section (4.3.2), we discussed that some verbs in Usen select object argument (noun) and this forms a constituent. In this section, the verb selects the object argument and the prepositional phrase and these constitute a verb phrase. Usen does not manifest ditransitive verb construction or double object construction. Rather, what we have in Usen is the prepositional dative construction, and this manifested here. In example (55), the object noun *usu* “yam” (which is a direct object) and a preposition phrase *lí ojà* “at the market” are dependent on the verb *rà* “buy”. Also, the verb in Usen cannot select a direct object and an indirect object without introducing the prepositional phrase, else it renders the construction ungrammatical.

Sequel to the discussion on the internal constitute of the verb phrase in Usen, verbal modifiers in Usen are examined in the section below.

#### 4.3.7.1 Verbal modifiers in Usen

Modifier is a word or group of words used in a verbal construction to modify the head verb. These modifiers give additional information about the head verb. When the modifier gives additional information about the head verb, it is referred to as adjunct but when it completes the meaning of the head verb, it is referred to as complement because without it, the meaning of the head verb is incomplete. When a modifier precedes the head verb, it is technically referred to as a pre-verbal modifier but when a modifier comes after the head verb, it is called post-verbal modifier. In the following section, discussion is on the pre- and post-verbal modifiers in Usen.

#### 4.3.7.2 Pre-verbal modifiers

Pre-verbal modifiers are words that precede the head verb and these words are called *adverbs*. Adverbs modify the manner in which the verbs are denoted. The following are examples of these adverbs: *tètè* “early”, *sepèlẹ* “gently”, *díya* “quick”, *yẹ* “eventually”, *gheyìn* “later”, *dijó* “together”, *tisẹ* “finally”, *sáà* “anyway” or “for no reason”, *dèdè* “suddenly”, *yà* “had better”, *tí* “already/completed”, *gbèdò* “must”, *sisẹ*

“just now”, *túbò* “again”, *á* “will”, *yó* “may”, *kaa* “before”, *ó* non-future tense marker, *é* progressive. We shall consider their use in the examples below:

- 56a Àghan **ó** **tètè** jín  
 3pl HTS early wake  
 “They woke up early.”
- b. Iba mí **é** **díya** rèn  
 father poss prg quick walk  
 “My father walked quickly.”
- c. Mo **ó** **sepèlè** kòrin  
 1sg HTS gently sing  
 “I sang gently.”
- d. O **yè** yú  
 3sg eventually went  
 “He still went.”
- e. Adé **ó** **yọ** họnkún  
 Adé HTS may cry  
 “Adé may cry.”
- 57a. Ibùkún **yè** **á** ghéyìn yú  
 Ibukun eventually fut later go  
 “Ibukun will later eventually go.”
- b. Ibùkún **yè** **á** yú  
 Ibukun eventually fut go  
 “Ibukun will eventually go.”
- c. Àghan **ó** **sàà** **dèdè** bíná  
 3pl HTS (for no reason) suddenly angry  
 “They suddenly became angry for no reason.”
- d. Awá **á** **dijọ** jọ  
 1pl will together dance  
 “We will dance together.”

In example (56a), *tètè* “early” modifies the head verb *jín* “wake” and not the whole phrase, it gives additional information about the manner in which they woke up and without it, the verb meaning is still complete in itself, that is, “they woke up”. Without the verb in the construction, the meaning of the sentence becomes “they were early”, but will not state what they were doing early. Likewise, *díya* “quick” modifies *rèn*

“walk”, *sepèlé* “gently” modifies *kòrin* “sing”, *yè* “eventually” modifies *yú* “go”, and *yo* “may” modifies *hònkún* “cry”. Hence, the pre-verbal modifier modifies the head verb in Useñ. We can also have more than one modifier in a verbal construction, as seen in examples (57a-d). In (57a), three adverbs *yè* “eventually”, *á* “will” and *gheyin* “later” modify *yu* “go”. The same thing occurs all through the other examples. *ó, á, é, tí* and so on are tense and aspectual markers and they also modify the verbs.

#### 4.3.7.3 Post-verbal modifiers

Post-verbal modifiers are words that follow the verb, while performing a modifying function. Post-verbal modifiers are not as many in Useñ as the pre-verbal modifiers. It is also important to note that some of these post-verbal modifiers, which have a pre-verbal modifier form occur in reduplicated forms like *duèduè* “sluggish-sluggish”, *díyadíya* “quick-quick”, *pèlépèlé* “gentle-gentle” and so on. These post-verbal modifiers are exemplified below:

- 58a. Imèrí é rèn duèduè  
 Mary prg walk sluggish-sluggish  
 “Mary is walking sluggishly.”
- b. Me èé kòrin duèduè  
 1sg neg sing sluggish-sluggish  
 “I did not sing sluggish.”
- 59a. Iba mí ó rèn díyadíya  
 father poss HTS walk quick-quick  
 “My father walked quickly.”
- b. Oma rən ó koró díyadíya  
 child det HTS stand quick-quick  
 “The child stood quickly.”
- 60a. Àghan ó kòrin làná  
 3pl HTS sing yesterday  
 “They sang yesterday.”
- b. Àghan ó yú oko làjéta  
 3pl HTS go farm three days ago  
 “They went to the farm three days ago”

The post-verbal modifiers cannot occur in the pre-verbal position, if it does, it renders the construction ungrammatical, as can be seen in the examples below:

- \*61a. Imèrí é duèduè rèn  
 Mary prg sluggishsluggish walk

“Mary is sluggishsluggish walk”.

- \*b. Iba mí ó díyadíya rẹ̀n  
 father poss HTS quick-quick walk  
 “My father quickly quickly walked.”

#### 4.4 Derivation of the Verb Phrase of Usèn

In determining how arguments are licensed and thematic roles assigned, the derivation of verb phrase construction in Usèn is considered using the minimalist phase derivation as the springboard for analysis. In order to achieve this, the vP structure in simple transitive, intransitive, prepositional dative, serial verb and split verb constructions are considered.

##### 4.4.1 Derivation of transitive construction

Transitive constructions in Usèn are constructions in which the verb takes both the external and internal nominal arguments – the external argument serves as the subject and the internal argument serves as the object complement of the verb. Transitive constructions mean verbs that take object complements that complete the meaning, state, event or action expressed by the verb. For instance, in (62a) below, the verb *pa* “kill” requires its action to be transferred to an object before the meaning expressed in it can be completed, hence the need for an object DP in the construction. The question thus is, how is the vP in transitive construction projected in Usèn under derivation by phase? This question is answered in the analysis of the following examples of transitive constructions in Usèn:

- 62a. [TP Adé ó pa ìdégbè]  
 [TP Ade HTS kill goat]  
 “Adé killed the goat”
- b. [TP Àghan ó ri Olú]  
 [TP they HTS see Olu]  
 “They saw Olu”
- c. [TP Èmí á yú ulí]  
 [TP 1sg Fut go home]  
 “I will go home”
- d. [TP Iba mí ó jẹ usu]  
 [TP father poss HTS eat yam]

“My father ate yam”

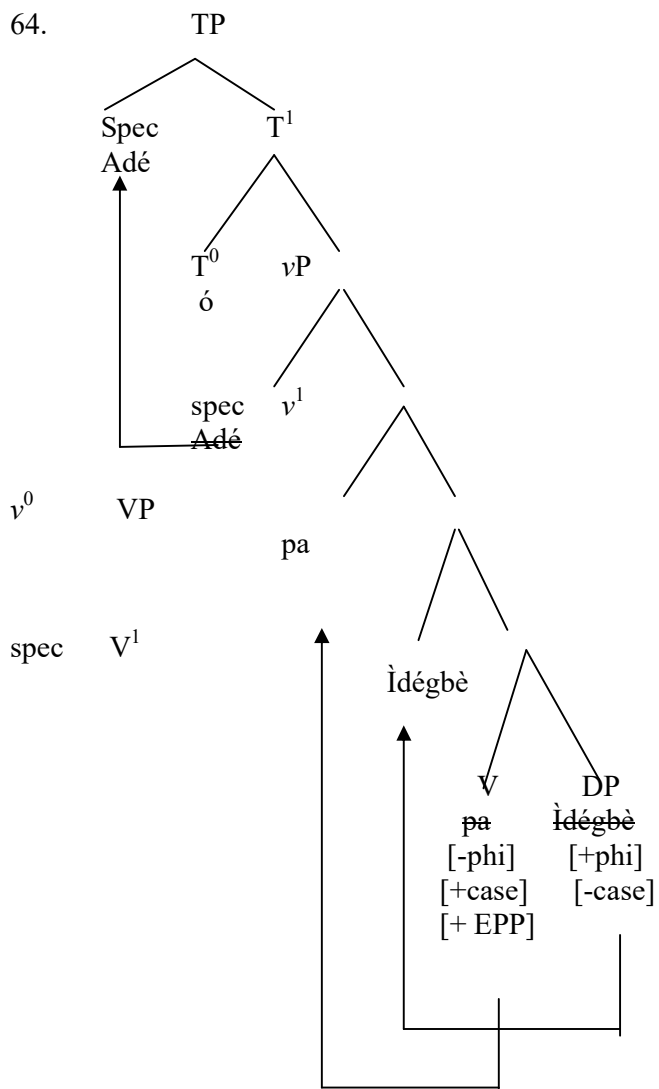
In (62a-d) above, *pa* “kill”, *ri* “see”, *yú* “go” and *jé* “eat” are two-way argument verbs with external and internal arguments. These verbs select the DP internal complements, that is, *idégbè* “goat”, *Olú* “name”, *ùlì* “house” and *ùsú* “yam”, respectively. The DP external arguments are *Ade* “name”, *àghan* “they”, *èmi* “I” and *Iba mí* “my father”, respectively. They are merged at spec vP as subjects DP. The derivation of (62a) can be explained as being derived through merge operations.

The lexical items needed for computation is selected by operation select from the lexicon into the numeration, which is the working area:

63. N = {Adé<sub>1</sub>, ó<sub>1</sub>, pa<sub>1</sub>, idegbe<sub>1</sub>}

Using (62a) above, the lexical items enter the derivation with their idiosyncratic properties and the derivation begins as follows: the lexical verb *pa* “kill” merges with the DP internal argument *idégbè* “goat” to derive the V<sup>1</sup>. With respect to theta role assignment principle (TRAP) which specifies that theta is valued under merge as soon as it enters the derivation, the verb *pa* “kill” assigns patient theta role to the internal argument DP *idegbe* “goat”, thus, the two lexical items become a product of merge. This assumption respects economy condition, that is, earliness principle that requires an operation to apply as soon as possible in the derivation. Hence, the verb assigns theta role on the DP “*idégbè*” as the theme, while the merged V and DP produce the V<sup>1</sup>. The V entered the derivation with a valued case feature and an EPP, that is, the EPP requires that the spec-V<sup>1</sup> be occupied. The derivation continues through the probing of the unvalued phi-features. The verb *pa* “kill” is a probe requiring a DP to satisfy its spec feature, the DP *idégbè* “goat” is a goal which also has unvalued accusative case feature (*u-acc*) to check. The probe searches through its domain and finds a goal, that is, *idégbè* “goat” with a matching feature, therefore AGREE is established. The DP also has some unvalued case features [uF]. For the goal to satisfy the probe’s spec requirement, that is, its EPP strong feature, and for it to value its unvalued accusative case feature, it must be attracted to the spec-V<sup>1</sup> so that the derivation yields VP architecture, so that a local configuration of Spec-Head relation is created for valuation to take place. The EPP strong feature attracts the DP to spec-VP, therefore, the EPP is valued. Consequent upon this, the case is also valued. This follows the assumption that case cannot be valued in the merge position, rather, it has to move and create a local configuration with the head for the domain to converge. The DP values the phi-

features of the verb and the verb in turn values the case feature of the DP, and then the VP is formed. The projection continues by merging the light verb “v” with the VP to project the light v<sup>1</sup>, the verb *pa* “kill” raises from the lower VP domain and adjoins in head to head adjunction to the light verb, in order to lexicalise the light verb. The DP external subject “Adé” merges with the projection and the whole of the light vP is formed, thereby projecting the light vP. The spec is licensed because the external argument is licensed at the spec position of the light vP, thus, the whole domain of the VP is now formed. The lower VP which is the domain of the light verb, head is ready for transfer to the interfaces. Therefore, phase impenetrability condition is activated. Hence, the lower VP is frozen and inactivity condition is set in motion. Inactivity condition specifies that when a constituent does not have any unvalued feature, it can no longer be active for computational purpose (Radford 2009:461). After the vP phase has been derived, computation continues and the tense marker [ó] merges with the derived light verb phrase (vP) to form the T<sup>1</sup>. Since [T ó] has uninterpretable (and unvalued) person and number features, it probes for a local goal that will value and delete its unvalued features. The items in the VP domain are inaccessible to probe since it has been transferred to the PF and LF interface. However, the DP in the spec-vP remains accessible to the probe and active by virtue of its unvalued case feature. Hence, ó agrees with DP *Adé* “name” and assigns nominative case to it. The tense marker also has an EPP feature that requires the movement of the closest goal which it agrees with, to spec-TP accordingly. The DP *Adé* “nominative agent” moves from its original position in spec-vP to spec-TP. Hence, the whole TP is formed. The above derivation is diagrammatically represented below:





#### 4.4.2 Derivation of prepositional dative construction in Uṣen

Uṣen does not have ditransitive verbs; verbal constructions in Uṣen do not take a subject and two objects without introducing a preposition in between the two objects. Rather, Uṣen manifests preposition dative verbal construction. Uṣen manifests prepositional dative construction where there is an external argument, an internal argument and a prepositional complement in the VP structure. In prepositional dative construction, the verb takes the direct object complement and the prepositional phrase (PP) to complete the meaning of the event denoted by the verb. The following are examples of prepositional dative construction in Uṣen.

- 65a. [TP Iye            ó        díya gbe eghó ghí apò]  
       [TP mother     HTS    quick put money prep bag]  
       “Mother quickly put money in the bag”
- b.     [TP Ìkáyọdé    ó        tá        àsó     lí        ojà]  
       [TP Ìkáyọdé    HTS    sell    cloth prep market]  
       “Ìkáyọdé sold the cloth at the market”
- c.     [TP Àkọ̀nẹ̀        ó        pá        àlọ     ghi      mí]  
       [TP teacher    HTS    tell    story prep 1SG]  
       “The teacher told me a story”
- d.     [TP Ìbá            ó        gbe     àgá     ghi      mí]  
       [TP father      HTS    give    chair to    1SG]  
       “Father gave a chair to me”
- e.     [TP Àghán        à        rá        àpò     ghi     iye     ghàn]  
       [TP 3PPL       fut     buy    bag    prep    mother 3PPL]  
       “They bought a bag for their mother”

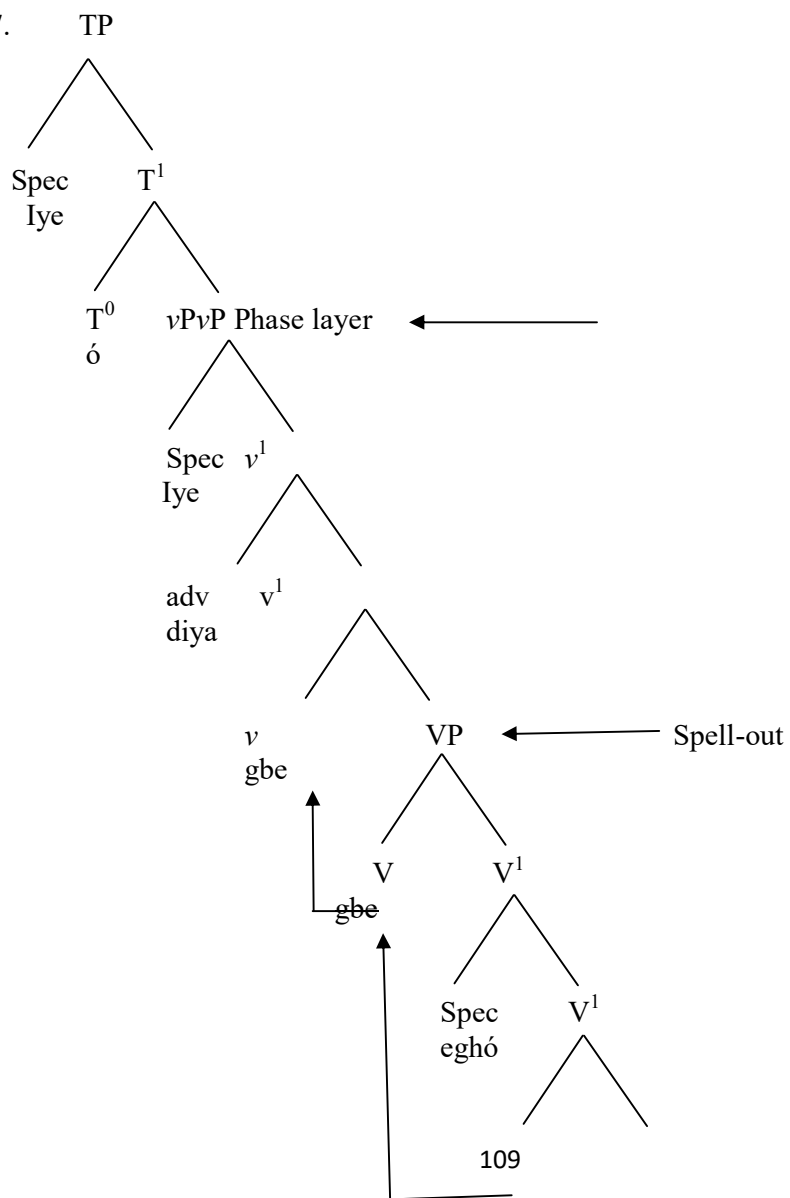
From (65a) above, computation of the PP dative constructions starts from the numeration, and it consists of the necessary lexical items selected from the lexicon for computation.

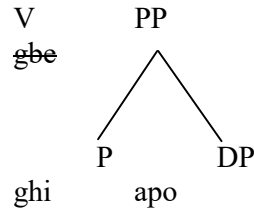
$$66. N = \{iye_1, ó_1, díya_1, gbe_1, eghó_1, ghí_1, apò_1\}$$

The lexical items above enter the numeration with their idiosyncratic properties, and the derivation proceeds by merging a pair of lexical items *ghí* “in” and *apò* “bag” to derive a prepositional phrase (PP). Also,  $\theta$  role (theme) is assigned to the DP *apò* “bag” in line with TRAP. For the unvalued case feature of the DP to be valued, it

covertly moves to spec PP which is the checking domain, where it enters AGREE relationship with P, after which its case is valued as Oblique (OBL). The derivation proceeds with the merging of the derived PP with the lexical verb *gbe* “put” to yield  $V^1$ ; the derivation proceeds further by merging the direct object *eghò* “money” to yield another  $V^1$ . The derivation continues as  $V^1$  is internally merged again with the lexical verb *gbe* “put” to yield VP, thereafter the lexical verb assigns  $\theta$  role to the object DP *eghó* “money” with respect to TRAP. The multiple  $V^1$  projection helps in the introduction of PP adjuncts in the structure. The projection continues by merging the light verb “v” with the VP to project the light  $v^1$ ; the verb *gbe* “give” raises from the lower VP domain so as to serve as an escape hatch for the head of the VP projection once the VP is frozen in the interface, and adjoins in head to head adjunction to the light verb, in order to lexicalise the light verb. The derived light verb phrase  $v^1$  merges with the adverb *diya* “quick” to derive another  $v^1$ , and the DP external subject *Iye* “name” merges with the projection and the whole of the light  $vP$  is formed, thereby projecting the light  $vP$ . The spec is licensed because the external argument is also licensed at the spec position of the light  $vP$ . Afterwards, the whole domain of the VP is formed, that is, the lower VP which is the domain of the light verb head. Next, it is ready for transfer to the interfaces, therefore, phase impenetrability condition is activated, and the lower VP is frozen and inactivity condition is set in motion. Computation continues with the phase head, that is, the light verb and its spec, since the other complement position of the light verb, that is, the VP, has been shipped to the interfaces and the phase is well formed. The tense marker [ó] merges with the derived  $vP$  to form the  $T^1$  then the tense marker probes for a local goal to value and delete its unvalued features. Since the tense marker has uninterpretable (and valued) person and number features, it becomes accessible to the DP *Iye* “nominative agent” at the spec of  $vP$  with interpretable (and unvalued) case feature. The tense marker ó agrees (in place) with the DP *Iye* “nominative agent” and nominative case is assigned to it. The tense marker [ $T$  ó] has an EPP feature that requires movement of the goal which it agrees with (and which is available through unvalued features) to spec-T. Hence, *Iye* “nominative agent” is attracted from spec- $vP$  to spec-TP, thereby forming the TP layer. The diagram below represents the prepositional dative construction in Usen:

67.





#### 4.4.3 Derivation of intransitive constructions in Uşen

Intransitive verbs are mono-argument verbs and do not select DP internal arguments in their derivation. Perlmutter (1978) asserts that with respect to their syntactic behaviour, intransitive verbs fall into two different categories, namely: Unergative and Unaccusative verbs. Unergative argument behaves like the external argument of a transitive verb, while unaccusatives behave like the internal argument of a transitive verb.

The distinction between the two classes of verbs can be accounted for in terms of the structural position where their only argument is generated, and the thematic roles assigned to the argument. Unergative structures involve a shell headed by a light verb and the DP external argument is generated as spec vP, while the external argument of unaccusative verb is generated as the complement of the VP.

Unaccusative verbs assign theme or patient to the internal position, and unergative verbs have only agents. This section considers the derivation of unergative and unaccusative construction using the examples below:

##### 4.4.3.1 Unergative construction

- 69a. Osàzè ó fè  
 Òsázè HTS belch  
 “Òsázè belched”

- b. Tòlá ó hin  
Tòlá HTS sneeze  
“Tòlá sneezed”
- c. Òmá rẹn é sú  
child det prg defecate  
“The child is defecating”
- d. Mò ó gbàn  
I HTS shiver  
“I shivered”

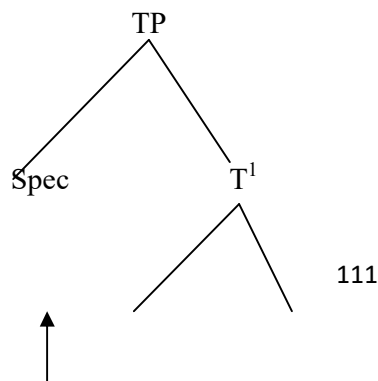
Computation of the unergative verb proceeds from the lexicon where the necessary lexical items needed for computation are selected from, into the numeration.

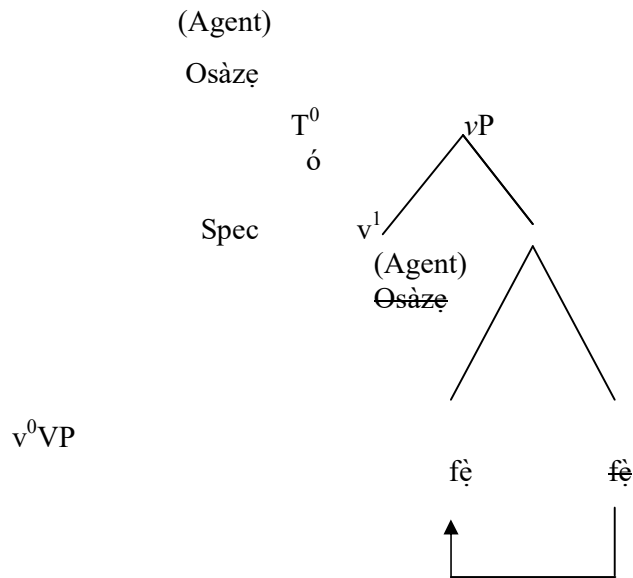
70)  $N = \{Osàzẹ_1, ó_1, fẹ_1\}$

From the numeration, the verb  $fẹ$  “belch” is selected, the verb appears in-situ in the VP, and the VP merges with the light verb to yield the  $v^1$ . Thus, the head of the light verb “ $v^0$ ” needs to be lexicalised because the light verb presumably has a strong EPP feature, hence, the verb  $fẹ$  “belch” which appears in-situ is being raised from its in-situ position to the inner shell and adjoins to the head of the light verb. The DP *Osàzẹ* “nominative agent” is thus merged as the spec vP, which has a complement that is headed by a lexical verb. In line with TRAP, the verb values the theta role on the DP as AGENT, however, accusative case is not assigned to the DP in unergative construction. Hence, the external argument is generated in [spec vP].

Computation continues and the tense marker “ó” merges with the derived vP phase to derive the  $T^1$ ; the  $[_T ó]$  has an active probe and searches for a matching local goal to value and delete its unvalued features. Since the items in VP have been transferred to the interface, it is no longer accessible to the probe  $ó$ . However, the DP *Osàzẹ* “nominative agent” remains accessible to  $[_T ó]$  by virtue of its uninterpretable case feature. Hence,  $ó$  invisibly agrees with the *Osàzẹ* “nominative agent” and invisible nominative case is assigned to it. The EPP feature on the tense marker triggers movement of *Osàzẹ* “house” to spec-TP from spec vP, thereby forming the TP layer. The derivation above is represented below:

71.





#### 4.4.3.2 Unaccusative construction

- 72a) Ulí ó jó  
house HTS burn  
“The house burnt”
- b. Igin ó dá  
tree HTS break  
“The tree broke”
- c) Oma ɾen ó subú  
child det HTS fall  
“The child fell”
- d) Iba mí ó tí wa  
father my HTS perf arrive  
“My father has arrived.”

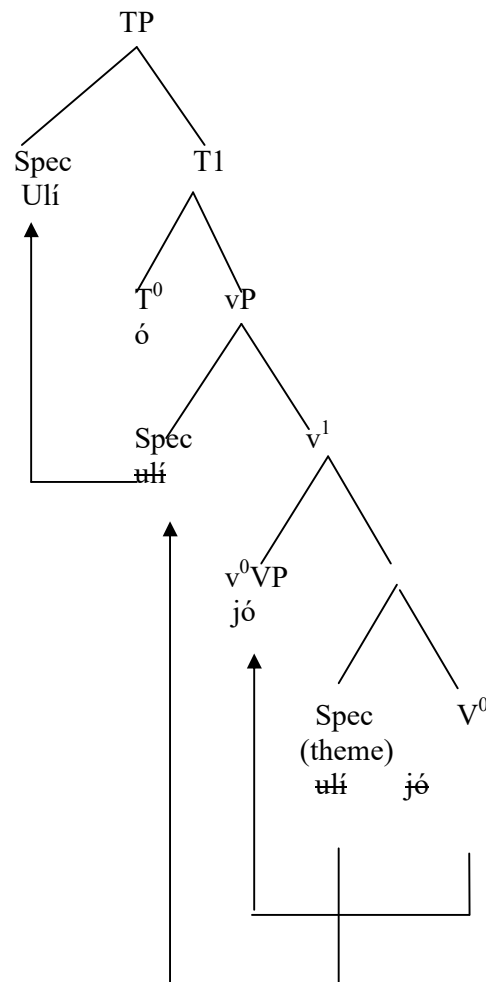
Considering unaccusative construction in example (72a) above, operation select selects lexical items from the lexicon into the working area, which is the numeration.

$$73) N = \{Ulí_1, ó_1, jó_1\}$$

The DP *Uli* “house” merges with the verb *jó* “burn” at spec VP, and with respect to TRAP, theta role “theme” is assigned to the DP *Uli* “house”, thus, satisfying earliness condition. The VP merges with the light verb to derive the  $v^1$ , the light verb attracts the lexical verb *jó* “burn” to lexicalise the light verb head, the  $v^1$  merges with the spec vP,

the DP *Uli* “house” raises and adjoins itself to spec vP, thus, the verb values the accusative case on the DP. The computation continues with the merging of the tense marker to  $[_T \acute{o}]$  with the derived light verb phrase to derive the  $T^1$ . This has uninterpretable phi feature and then probes for a goal to value and delete its unvalued features. It finds the DP *Uli* “house” which is part of the light verb to be accessible. The tense  $[_T \acute{o}]$  agrees with the DP *Uli* “house” and assigns nominative case to it. Tense has a strong EPP feature which triggers the movement of the goal with which it agrees. Hence, the DP *Uli* “house” which agrees with the tense adjoins to the spec-TP, thus, the whole TP layer is derived. The derivation above is diagrammatically represented in the structure below;

74)



#### 4.4.4 Serial verb construction in Uṣẹn

This section discusses the derivation of serial verb construction in Uṣẹn. Attention is given to the controversial derivational issue like argument-sharing in Uṣẹn SVC, and the syntactic tests that differentiate SVCs in Uṣẹn from other construction types, after which we shall discuss the derivation of SVCs in Uṣẹn.

##### 4.4.4.1 Argument-sharing

Argument-sharing is an important feature of verb series across languages in which all verbs in an SVC construction share one and only one agentive argument irrespective of the number of verbs in the string and their subject-licensing properties. Just as the external DP is shared in SVC construction, the internal argument can also be shared in an SVC construction with one internal argument, but when there is more than one object argument in an SVC construction, the internal argument is not shared. Hence, the external argument is obligatorily shared in Uṣẹn, while the internal argument is shared only when the construction involves a transitive verb which takes only one object complement. This study also refutes the assertion that SVC has multiple underlying base sentences, as this might create instances of multiple external DP, which is contrary to the claim here that SVC in Uṣẹn has only one external DP. Let us consider the examples below for illustration:

75a) Adé ó he ìréhì jẹ  
Ade HTS cook rice eat  
Ade cooked and ate rice.

b) Adé ó lù ìlù yú ulí  
Ade HTS beat drum go house  
Ade beat the drum till he got to the house.

In (75a), the verbs *he* “cook” and *jẹ* “eat” share the same external DP – *Adé*. The underlying structure is such that the agent performed both actions of cooking and eating denoted in the verb. Likewise in (75b), same thing can be said of *Ade lù* “beat” the drum and *yú* “went” to the house. Both share one external argument, *Adé* “nominative agentive”. However, same thing cannot be said of their internal argument in (75b), as the first and second verbs have different object arguments. The object of the first verb is *ìlù* “drum” and the object of the second verb is *ulí* “house”. This shows



that it is the structure of the SVC that determines if the internal argument can be shared or not. It is also important to know that the presence of a coordinator in SVC changes such structure to a coordinating construction. For example:

76a) Adé ó he ìréhì, o ya jẹ é  
 Adé HTS cook rice 3SG and eat pro  
 “Adé cooked and he ate it”

From (76a), Ade cooked the rice but one cannot assert that it was Ade who ate the rice because of the coordinating conjunction and the presence of a pronoun. Hence, the presence of *ya* “and” makes it an overt coordinating construction since SVCs do not allow such.

#### 4.4.4.2 Syntactic tests for SVCs in Usen

Three parameters for identifying SVC structures will be applied to SVC in Usen to differentiate them from other coordinate constructions. These parameters are:

- a) Negation
- b) Adverbial modification
- c) Tense

##### 4.4.4.2.1. Negation test in Usen SVCs

Languages differ regarding how verbs in series are marked for negation. For example, in Akan, each verb in series is marked overtly for negation (Dolphyne, 1987), while in Likpe, negation is marked only on the first verb (Ameka, 2004). This session examines how the verbs in Usen SVCs are negated. Different tests are conducted to assert if the verbs in each of SVCs is negated independently or not. It is important to know that negation in Usen is morphologically marked as “èè. We shall apply the structures below to test which one is acceptable in Usen, and determine the negative counterpart of the SVC.

- 77a. NEG V1 OBJ V2
- b. NEG V1 OBJ NEG V2

c. V1 OBJ NEG V2

### A. Negation in Usen sequential SVC

The first verb in sequential SVC propels the action of the verb coming after it, thus, the event encoded in the first verb precedes the event encoded in the second verb in the construction. The structure above is applied to test which is acceptable in Usen.

78a. Adé ó he usu jẹ (Sequential SVC)  
Adé HTS cook yam eat  
“Ade cooked and ate yam”

b. Adé èè he usu jẹ  
Adé NEG cook yam eat  
“Ade did not cook and eat yam”

c. Adé èè he usu èè jẹ  
Adé NEG cook yam NEG eat  
“Ade did not cooked yam, and did not eat”

d. Adé ó he usu èè jẹ  
Adé HTS cook yam NEG eat  
“Ade cooked yam and did not eat”

(78a) above is an example of an SVC structure without the negative marker while in (78b), the negative marker precedes V1, and has two readings by implication.

- a. Ade did not cook the yam and did not eat the yam
- b. Ade did not cook the yam, but Ade ate the yam.

With the first reading, one can deduce that Ade did not cook the yam, hence, he did not eat the yam, but the second reading depicts that Ade did not cook the yam, but he ate the yam. The first reading synchronises with the proposition conveyed in the sequential SVC, wherein the event occurs in sequence, that is, the cooking of yam will have to take place first before the event of eating can take place. However, the second reading contravenes the proposition conveyed in Sequential SVC, because if the event of cooking does not take place, then the event of eating cannot take place. The reading in (78c) depicts the idea of sequential verb serialisation, where the two verbs share one negative idea, and show a single reading.

Example, (78c) has one reading:

- i) Ade did not cook and did not eat the yam.

From the above readings, both events of cooking and eating share the same negative idea without any form of ambiguity, thereby conveying the negative proposition of the sequential SVC. First, the yam was not cooked, hence, the event of eating did not take place. Thus, in Usen, the two verbs in sequential SVC can be negated independently. However, it is important to note that the structure in (78c) is ungrammatical to the native speaker of Usen, except he adds the third person object pronoun to the construction, thus we have the construction below:

- 79) Adé èè he úsú èè jẹ ún  
 Ade NEG cook yam NEG eat 3SG  
 Ade did not cook yam and did not eat it.

One would wonder why the structure needs the pronoun. One obvious reason is the fact that the verb in this SVC structure is transitive; therefore, it is obligatory that it is followed by an object complement with a copy of the object shared with the first verb. In (78d), we have one reading:

- i) Ade cooked the yam but he did not eat.

The reading above depicts that “Ade cooked the yam”, but it is clear that he did not eat from the yam he cooked, because only V2 was negated. This reading does not contravene the proposition of sequential SVC, since the event in V1 occurs but the event in V2 did not. However, it becomes unacceptable if the event in V1 is negated and the event in V2 is not, because the event in V1 must precede the event in V2. Just like the structure in (78c) above is incomplete and ungrammatical without introducing the third person object pronoun, same thing applies here, which results in the introduction of *un* “3SG” in the construction in (78d) shown in (80) below:

80. Adé ó he úsú èè jẹ ún  
 Adé HTS cook yam NEG eat 3SG(OBJ)  
 “Ade cook yam and did not eat it”

From the discussion above, the three structures in (78b), (78c) and (78d) are acceptable in Usen Sequential SVC. Hence, when the negative morpheme precedes V1, the event denoted in V1 and V2 can be negated or only the event denoted in V1 is negated. The negative morpheme can also precede V1 and V2 independently, to negate the verbs in the construction as long as the object pronoun is introduced after V2. More so, the negative morpheme can also precede V2 to negate only V2; this also allows the

introduction of the object pronoun. Thus, in sequential SVC in Usen, the verbs can be negated independently or together, without changing the structure of the sequential SVC. However, this emphasises the subject matter.

### B. Negation in Usen consequential SVC

Consequential SVC denotes that the event in the second verb, (V2), is as a result of the event denoted in the first verb, V1. The structure in (77a-c) above is used to test the nature of negation in consequential SVC, so as to assert if it differs from other SVC types in Usen. Let us consider the examples below for illustration:

- 81a. Ibùkún            ó        sẹ́        oyún            kú        (Consequential SVC)  
 Ibùkún            HTS    abort    pregnancy    die  
 “Ibukun aborted the pregnancy and died.”
- b.     Ibùkún            èè        sẹ́        oyún            kú  
 Ibukun            NEG    abort    pregnancy    die  
 “Ibukun did not abort pregnancy and die.”
- c.     Ibukun            èè        sẹ́        oyún            èè        kú  
 Ibukun            NEG    abort    pregnancy    NEG    die  
 “Ibukun did not abort pregnancy and did not die”
- d.     Ibukun            ó        sẹ́        oyún            èè        kú  
 Ibukun            HTS    abort    pregnancy    NEG    die  
 “Ibukun aborted her pregnancy and did not die”

The structure in (81a) above shows a consequential SVC, while the structures in (81b-d) are used to test negation. In (81b), the structure has a single reading as shown below:

- i)        Ibukun did not abort her pregnancy hence she did not die.

In (81b), consequential SVC has a single reading unlike its counterpart in sequential SVC with two readings. One possible reason for this could be the fact that V2 is expected to be the outcome of V1. Therefore, once the event in V1 is negated, it automatically affects the outcome of V2, resulting in a negative event too.

Example (81c) has two readings, which are shown below:

- i)        Ibukun did not abort her pregnancy
- ii)      She did not die

The first reading depicts that the abortion was not carried out, while the second shows that Ibukun did not die. Unlike in sequential SVC where the third person singular object pronoun was introduced after V2, consequential SVC does not permit such.

(81d) also has a single reading shown below:

- i) Ibukun aborted the pregnancy and did not die

It is important to know that consequential SVC has a negative cause-effect response, and since Ibukun’s abortion did not lead to her death, it could have resulted in other complications but she survived.

We therefore conclude that the structures in (81b), (81c) and (81d) are permissible structures in negating consequential SVC in Useñ, and the structures do not permit the introduction of third person singular object pronoun.

#### D. Negation in Useñ durative SVC

Durative SVC denotes that the event in the first verb does not come to an end, but continues into the second verb until the event of the first verb is achieved. The examples below are used to test for negation in Durative SVC:

- 82a. Qlá ó lù ilù tú ulí (Durative SVC)  
 Qlá HTS beat drum reach house  
 “Ola did not drum till he got home”
- b. Qlá éè lù ilù tú ulí  
 Qlá NEG beat drum reach house  
 “Ola did not drum till he got home”
- c. Qlá éè lù ilù éè tú ulí  
 Qlá NEG beat drum NEG reach house  
 “Ola did not drum till he got home”
- d. Qlá ó lù ilù éè tú ulí  
 Qlá HTS beat drum NEG reach house  
 “Ola drummed but did not reach the house”

From (82b) above, we can deduce a single reading from the construction as seen below:

- i) Ola did not drum till he got home.

The occurrence of the negative morpheme before the first verb negates the first verb but not the second verb. The construction implies that “Ola did not drum till he got home” that is, as of when he reached the house, he was not drumming. It does not denote that he did not get home. The negative morpheme does not negate the second verb, unlike what we have in sequential and consequential SVC, where the first and

second verbs are negated when the negative morpheme precedes the first verb. Thus, when the negative morpheme precedes the first verb in durative SVC in Usen, only the first verb is negated, thus, the negative counterpart of the event denoted in first verb was not achieved in the second verb.

However, (82c) has two readings which are shown below:

- i) Ola did not drum
- ii) Ola did not reach the house.

When the negative morpheme precedes the first and second verbs independently, it allows both events to be negated separately and does not allow the introduction of a third person singular pronoun, like what we have in sequential SVC. Example (82c) above denotes the negative proposition of the idea of a negative durative SVC, because the event denoted in the first verb does not continue into the second verb, and the second verb also was not also achieved.

(82d) has one reading represented below:

- i) Ola drummed but did not get to the house

The above does not depict the negative counterpart of the durative SVC. In durative SVC, the event denoted in the first verb is expected to continue into the second verb, so when it is negated, it is also expected that the negative counterpart continues into the second verb that is also not achieved.

#### **D. Negation in Usen causative SVC**

Causative SVCs are structures where the event or action denoted by the first verb causes or leads to the event denoted in the second verb. Hence, the first verb is a causative verb that causes the event denoted in the second verb. The constructions below are considered using the syntactic test above.

83a. Olùku mí ó dé mí hè úsú (Causative SVC)  
 friend Poss HTS cause 1SG cook yam  
 “My friend made me cook yam”.

b. Olùku mí èè dé mí hè úsú  
 friend Poss NEG cause me cook yam  
 “My friend did not make me cook the yam”.

\*c. Olùku mí èè dé mí èè hè úsú  
 friend Poss NEG cause poss NEG cook yam  
 My friend did not make me, did not cook yam.

\*d. Olùku mí ó dé mí èè hè úsú  
 friend Poss HTS cause me NEG cook yam

My friend made me not cook yam.

Example (83b) has a single reading:

- i) My friend did not make me cook yam

From the above, the negative morpheme that precedes the first verb, negates both the first and second verbs in the construction, that is, the causative verb in the first verb did not cause the event denoted in the second verb, thus only a single event is negated. (83c) and (83d) however, have an unacceptable reading, as negating either the first verb or the second verb independently, results in unacceptable structures. For instance, (83c) has two readings:

- i. My friend did not cause me
- ii. He did not cook the yam.

The first reading shows that the construction is ungrammatical because the first verb is a causative verb and needs the second verb to depict what the event denoted in the first verb caused. However, only the first reading is allowed in the construction. Although the second reading is acceptable, it does not represent the idea of causative SVC because of the absence of the first verb, which is the causative verb. The same thing is applicable in (83d), as V2 cannot be the only negated structure, it will only engender an unacceptable structure. The only structure wherein the negative test is plausible in causative SVC in Usen is the structure in (83b), where the negative morpheme precedes the first verb and negates both the first and the second verbs.

Having considered the negation test in the SVC type identified in Usen, it was observed that in sequential SVC, the three test structures are acceptable where the negative morpheme precedes V1, V1 and V2, and only V2. However, in the second and third test structures, the structure allows an introduction of a third person singular short pronoun. Consequential SVC accepts the three test structures and does not need to introduce the third person singular short pronoun in the second and third structure. In Durative SVC, only the second test structure where the negative morpheme precedes V1 and V2, is acceptable. In Causative SVC, only the first test structure where the negative morpheme precedes V1, is acceptable. We have represented the results of the negation test in the table below:

**Table 4.1: Negation test in Usen SVC**

	SEQUENTIAL SVC	CONSEQUENTIAL SVC	DURATIVE SVC	CAUSATIVE SVC
NEG V1 OBJ V2	+	+	-	+
NEG V1 OBJ NEG V2	+	+	+	-
V1 OBJ NEG V2	+	+	-	-

#### 4.4.4.2.2. Adverbial modification in Uşen SVCs

Adverbs are words that modify the manner in which verbs are denoted. Stewart (1998:24) assumes that the presence of an adverb indicates that there is an event it modifies in the verb. The licensing of manner adverb in Uşen SVCs, using the syntactic test below is examined.

- 84a. ADV V1 OBJ V2  
b. V1 ADV OBJ V2
- 85a. ADV V1 OBJ ADV V2  
b. V1 ADV OBJ V2 ADV
- 86a. V1 OBJ ADV V2  
b. V1 OBJ V2 ADV

In this section, the test in (84-86) above are used to examine the licensing of adverbs in Uşen SVCs. Manner adverb, *diya* “quick” which is a pre-verb adverb and *diyadiya* “quickquick”, a post-verb adverb in Uşen are used for the test. It is important to note that when *diya* occurs in post-verbal position, it is reduplicated to depict emphasis, thus, the reason for the reduplicated form at the post-verbal position. Let us consider the examples below, using the different SVC types in Uşen:

- 87a. Adé ó díya he usu jẹ (Sequential Construction)  
Adé HTS quick cook yam eat  
“Ade quickly cooked and ate the yam”



- \*b. Adé ó he díyadiya usu je  
 Ade HTS cook quickquick yam eat  
 Ade cooked quickly and ate the yam.
- 88a. Adé ó díya he usu díya je  
 Adé HTS quick cook yam quick eat  
 “Ade quickly cooked and quickly ate the yam”
- \*b. Adé ó he díyadiya usu je diyadiya  
 Adé HTS cook quickquick yam eat quickquick  
 “Ade cooked quickly and ate the yam quickly”
- 89a. Adé ó he usu díya je  
 Adé HTS cook yam quick eat  
 “Ade cooked yam and quickly ate”
- b. Adé ó he usu je diyadiya  
 Adé HTS cook yam eat quickquick  
 “Ade cooked yam and ate quickly quickly”

Examples (87-89) above depict both pre-verb and post-verbal adverbial modifications. The pre-verb adverb is licensed as a left adjunct to the verb head, while post-verbal adverbs adjoins to the right VP, hence, the acceptability of the right adjunction on phrases but not on heads. When the post-verb adverb *díyadiya* (quickquick) occurs after the first verb in SVC construction in Usen, it renders the construction ungrammatical and unacceptable, but when it occurs after the second verb, it is grammatical and acceptable. This explains the reason for the ungrammaticality of (87b) (88b), but not (89b). The implication of the pre-verb adverb before the first verb in (87a) is that both actions denoted by the two verbs *he* “cook” and *je* “eat” were quick. The reading does not permit only one of the events denoted by the verb to be quick, rather both verbs were modified. By implication, it shows that even though the adverb occurs to the left, it must be the case that both verbs express a single event, which the pre-verbal adverb is a predicate of. (88b) depicts that both V1 and V2 have distinct pre-verb adverb, thus, the structure involves the introduction of the third person singular object pronoun to it. Hence, we have the construction below:

- 88c. Adé ó díya he usu díya je un  
 Adé HTS quick cook yam quick eat 3SG  
 “Ade quickly cooked the yam and quickly ate it”

The structure in (88c) does not change the structure of the sequential SVC in Usen, rather, the adverbial modification allows the object pronoun in the construction. Hence

both V1 and V2 are modified independently. Example (89a) also shows the same structure wherein the third person singular object pronoun is introduced, thus, it is possible to modify only the second verb in consequential SVC in Usen and still have an acceptable and grammatical SVC structure. In (89b) however, the post-verbal adverb *díyadíya* after the second verb is acceptable, as it modifies the whole VP structure. Thus, both the first and second verbs are modified by the post-verbal adverb. Therefore, in Sequential SVC, the pre-verb *díya* “quick” can precede the first verb only, the first and the second verb both, and only the second verb, while the post-verb adverb *díyadíya* cannot follow the first verb or the first and the second verb together, but it can follow the second verb, which allows it to modify both the first and the second verb. The other SVCs types below are considered below.

90a. Akóṅe            ó        díya    lù        àkékò            pa (Consequential SVC)  
 teacher            HTS    quick   beat    student            kill  
 “The teacher quickly beat the student to death”

\*b. Akóṅe            ó        lu        díyadíya        àkékò            pa  
 teacher            HTS    beat    quickquick    student            kill  
 “The teacher beat quickly the student to death”

91a. Akóṅe            ó        díya    lù        àkékò            díya    pa  
 teacher            HTS    quick   beat    student            quick   kill  
 “The teacher quickly beat the student, and quickly killed him”

\*b. Akóṅe            ó        lù        díyadiya        àkékò            pa        diyadiya  
 teacher            HTS    beat    quickquick    student            kill        quickquick  
 “The teacher beat quickly the student to death quickly”

92a. Akóṅe            ó        lù        àkékò            díya    pa  
 teacher            HTS    beat    student            quick   kill  
 “The teacher beat the student quickly die”

b. Akóṅe            ó        lù        àkékò            pa        díyadíya  
 teacher            HTS    beat    student            kill        quickquick  
 “The teacher beat the student to death quickly”

Based on the reason stated above regarding licensing of post-adverbial modifications, (90b) and (91b) are ungrammatical in Usen. (90a) is grammatical because the pre-verbal adverb before V1 modifies the event denoted in both the first and the second verbs. Therefore, the event of beating was done quickly, and so was the event of killing. Consequential SVC in Usen also allows the occurrence of adverbs before the first and the second verbs independently, as seen in (91a). The first and the second verbs are modified independently in Usen; however, there is an introduction of a third



second verbs were modified independently, and that resulted into two different readings given below:

- i) the running was quick
- ii) arriving at the river was also quick.

However, the post-adverbial modification of V1 and V2 is unacceptable, although it would seem that it should be acceptable, since (93b) is, however, it is not acceptable. One can infer from the constructions in (93b) and (94b) that the post-adverbial modification becomes unacceptable when an object argument follows immediately after the verb it wants to modify. Also, in (95a), the pre-verbal adverb precedes and modifies the second verb, thus, the running made Ade arrive the river quickly. However, (95b) is unacceptable, since the post-adverbial modification results in an ungrammatical construction, that is, when an object complement follows the verb it wants to modify, it renders the structure ungrammatical.

96a. Iyeyè mí ó díya dé mí rẹ̀rìn (Causative SVC)  
 Grandmother poss HTS quick cause poss laugh  
 “My grandmother quickly made me laugh”

\*b. Iyeyè mí ó dé díyadíya mí rẹ̀rìn  
 Grandmother poss HTS cause quickquick poss laugh  
 “My grandmother made quickly me laugh”

\*97a. Iyeyè mí ó díya dé mí díya rẹ̀rìn  
 Grandmother poss HTS quick cause poss quick laugh  
 “My grandmother quickly made me quickly laugh”

\*b. Iyeyè mí ó dé díyadíya mí rẹ̀rìn díyadíya  
 Grandmother poss HTS cause quickquick poss laugh quickquick  
 “My grandmother made quickly me laugh quickly”

98a. Iyeyè mí ó dé mí díya rẹ̀rìn  
 Grandmother poss HTS cause poss quick laugh  
 “My grandmother made me quickly laugh”

b. Iyeyè mí ó dé mí rẹ̀rìn díyadíya  
 Grandmother poss HTS cause poss laugh quickquick  
 “My grandmother made me laugh quickly”

From structures (96-98), only (96a) and (98a and b) are acceptable in Usen. When the adverb precedes the causative verb, it modifies both the first and the second verbs, thus, the cause of the event was quick and the laughter was also quick. When the adverb follows the first verb, the structure is not acceptable as the object complement follows immediately after the first verb. Causative SVC does not allow an independent

modification of the first verb and the second verb, because only the causative verb cannot be modified without the resulting event that is caused, hence the ungrammaticality of (97a and b). However, in example (98), the adverb modified the second verb, both in pre- and post-verbal positions and resulted in a grammatical construction, hence, the resulting event of the first verb was quick.

From the above, we observe that the adverbial modifications of *Uşen* SVCs are not all the same, the fact that one allows a particular modification does not imply that the others will accept it. The test results of the adverbial modifications in *Uşen* SVCs are diagrammatically represented below.

**Table 4.2: Adverbial modification test in *Uşen* SVCs**

	Sequential SVC	Consequential SVC	Durative SVC	Causative SVC
ADV V1 OBJ V2	+	+	+	+
V1 ADV OBJ V2	-	-	+	-
ADV V1 OBJ ADV V2	+	+	+	-
V1 ADV OBJ V2 ADV	-	-	-	-
V1 OBJ ADV V2	+	+	+	+
V1 OBJ V2 ADV	+	+	-	+

#### 4.4.4.2.3. Tense and aspects in Usen SVC

Languages vary regarding agreement in the marking of tense and aspects in SVC. While some permit a single tense or aspect marked on V1 to agree or be the same with V2 or V3 depending on the number of verbs in series, others consider it to be non-obligatory as tense and aspect may vary on V1 and V2. Bendor-Samuel (1968:121) cited in Bamgbose (1974:27) claimed that in Izi, a dialect of Igbo spoken in Nigeria, it is not obligatory for tense and aspect to agree in the verbs in serial verb construction, where the verb of the first clause can be any independent or non-subordinate aspect, but the verbs in successive clauses are restricted in certain aspects. Kari (2003:279) also claimed that in Degema, agreement, tense and aspect do not hold in all SVC types in the language. Abimbola and Taiwo (2016:22) assert that in Ìyínnó, SVCs have one tense and one aspectual specification; hence, all the verbs in serialisation share a single tense property and one single aspectual system. In this section, the SVCs in Usen are tested to ascertain if verbs in serialisation share one tense and aspectual specification or not, using the tests below:

- 99a. TNS V1 OBJ V2
- c. TNS V1 OBJ TNS V2

- 100a. ASP V1 OBJ V2
- b. ASP V1 OBJ ASP V2

Tense in Usen is divided into two – the non-future tense and the future tense. The non-future tense is marked with the high tone syllable “HTS” *ó* and the future tense is marked with *á* (Ogbeifun and Omoregbe, 2018). Likewise, Usen has three aspectual markers which are listed as follows: perfective aspect *tí*, habitual aspect *ka* and the progressive aspect *é*. In the course of this research however, we have focused only on the perfective aspect.

- 101a. Èkòṅ ó pa ajá jẹ  
lion HTS kill dog eat  
“The lion killed and ate the dog”

- \*b. Èkòṅ ó pa ajá ó jẹ  
lion HTS kill dog HTS eat  
“The lion killed and ate the dog”

- 102a. Ẹkòṅ á pa ajá jẹ  
 lion FUT kill dog eat  
 “The lion will kill and eat the dog”
- \*b. Ẹkòṅ á pa ajá á jẹ  
 lion FUT kill dog HTS eat  
 “The lion will kill and will eat the dog”
- \*103a. Ẹkòṅ ó pa ajá á jẹ  
 lion HTS kill dog FUT eat  
 “The lion killed and will eat the dog”
- \*b. Ẹkòṅ á pa ajá ó jẹ  
 lion FUT kill dog HTS eat  
 “The lion will kill and ate the dog”

From the above SVCs, we can deduce that *Usen* shares a single tense specification; it is either the construction is in future tense or not, it cannot have the two tenses at the same time. The tense marker in *Usen* SVC is marked before the first verb in the construction, if it appears in any other position in the construction, it renders it ungrammatical. This can be seen in (101b) and (102b). Likewise, both the non-future tense and the future tense cannot co-occur in the same SVC structure, like what is in (103a and b), otherwise, it renders the construction ungrammatical too. We shall consider the aspectual test below:

- 104a. Ọḍẹ ó tí gún olè kú  
 Hunter HTS PERF stab thief die  
 “The hunter have stabbed the thief to death”
- \*b. Ọḍẹ ó tí gún olè tí kú  
 Hunter HTS PERF stab thief PERF die  
 “The hunter have stabbed the thief have died”
- 105a. Iba mí ó tí rà alẹ kọ ulí  
 father poss HTS perf buy land build house  
 ‘My father has bought a land and built a house’
- \*b. Iba mí ó tí rà alẹ ti kọ ulí  
 father poss HTS perf buy land PERF build house  
 ‘My father has bought a land and has built a house’

*Usen* exhibits one aspectual specification in its SVC, just like what we have with the tense system in *Usen* SVC. The aspect precedes the first verb and both the first verb and the second verb have the same aspectual specification. Each of the verbs does not have a separate aspectual marker; it obligatorily has one, and must precede the first

verb just as shown in examples (104a) and (105a). However, when the aspectual marker precedes V1 and V2 independently, the construction is realised as ungrammatical, this is seen in examples (104b) and (105b) above. The test results for tense and aspect in Usen SVC is shown in the table below:

**Table 4.3: Tense and aspects test in Usen SVC**

	Usen SVC
TNS V1 OBJ V2	+
TNS V1 OBJ TNS V2	-
ASP V1 OBJ V2	+
ASP V1 OBJ ASP V2	-

#### 4.4.4.3 Focus construction in Usen SVC

According to Radford (2003), focus is defined as a process by which a constituent is made the topic of a sentence, by being in a more prominent position at the front of the sentence. Matthew (2007) describes focus as the element or part of a sentence given prominence by intonation or other means. This process allows the movement of the focused element to the sentence initial position. This position is referred to as the left periphery in the minimalist program (MP). While focus is often marked with intonation in English language, most African languages mark focus with focus marker which often precedes the constituent or element to be focused. Although this may be preponderant in languages of the world, it is by no means a generalisation. The subject NP, object NP and verb can be focused in a sentence and when they are focused they move to the sentence initial position. Focus construction is overtly marked in Usen by



*oún*. Different constituents of a sentence which can be focused in Usen include the internal argument, the external argument and the verb. The derivation of focus construction in Usen is such that the element to be focused is merged to the left periphery of a focus phrase, followed by a focus marker. When the external argument is focused in Usen, it appears as though it maintains the same position, because it is still at the subject position. However, the presence of the focus marker after the subject NP shows that movement has taken place, and the original position of the subject NP is actually empty when it is focused. On the other hand, when the internal argument is focused, the internal argument is fronted (moved) to sentence initial position, which is immediately followed by the focus marker *oún*. However, these two processes are quite different from the way the verb in Usen is focused. When the verb in Usen is focused, it undergoes partial reduplication process, bearing the first consonant of the verb, followed by *i* sound with a high tone [i], before the focus marker. The primary area of concern in this work is on the verb focus. Hence, verb focus with regards to SVC is examined in this section. The question then is how are verbs in Usen SVCs focused? Can V1 and V2 be focused independently or can the two VPs be focused jointly? The following discussions and analyses provide the answers to the questions above.

- 106a. Adé ó he usu jẹ (Sequential SVC)  
 Adé HTS cook yam eat  
 “Ade cooked and ate yam.”
- b. Híhe oún Adé ó he usu jẹ  
 cook-NOM FOC Ade HTS cook yam eat  
 “Ade **cooked** the yam and ate”
- c. Híhe jẹ oún Adé ó he usu jẹ  
 cook -NOM eat FOC Ade HTS cook yam eat  
 “Ade **cooked** the yam and **ate**”
- d. híhe usu jẹ oún Adé o he usu jẹ  
 cook-NOM yam eat FOC Adé HTS cook yam eat  
 “Ade **cooked** and **ate the yam**”
- \*e jíjẹ oún Adé ó he usu jẹ  
 eat-NOM FOC Ade HTS cook yam eat  
 “Ade cooked and **ate** the yam”

In the focused sequential SVC example in (106b) above, V1 is focused, making it go through a nominalisation process through partial reduplication [*he* becomes *híhe*]. The

first verb that is nominalised is then fronted to the leftmost side of the sentence, which is immediately followed by the focus marker *óún*, and then the whole construction is repeated. Thus, focusing of the first verb is acceptable in Usen. Example (106c) also shows a grammatical structure, where the first verb is reduplicated and the second verb adjoins to it, thereby yielding a compound structure, after which it is focused. Example (106d) is also grammatical, as both the verb phrase and the second verb in (106d) are focused, unlike what we have in (106c) where only the verb heads (the first verb and the second verb) are focused. In (106d), the verb phrase *he usu* “cook yam” is focused followed by the second verb *jẹ* “eat”, before fronting it, thus resulting also in a grammatical structure. In (106e) above, only V2 is focused and it yields an ungrammatical structure. Hence, focusing of only V2 is not allowed in Usen as it yields ungrammatical structures.

Lawal (1993:90) cited in Ameka (2004:18) claims that in Yoruba, both the first verb and the second verb can be focused using these two strategies: (i) reduplicating the first verb and adjoining the second to it, (ii) the first VP is made up of just a verb which is nominalised by reduplication and the second VP as a whole is adjoined, the derived structure is placed in clause initial position and marked for focus. Although Usen is a dialect of Yoruba, only the first strategy is acceptable in focusing both V1 and V2, while the second strategy involves nominalisation of VP1 followed by V2. Focusing in other SVC types is examined below to ascertain if the same structure can be obtained in all SVC.

107a. Akóne            ó        lù        akékò            pa        (Consequential SVC)  
 Teacher        HTS    beat    student        die  
 “The teacher beat the student to death”

b.     Lílù            óún    akóne            ó        lù        akékò            pa  
 beat-NOM    FOC    teacher        HTS    beat    student        kill  
 “The teacher **beat** the student to death”

c.     Lílù            pa        óún    akóne            ó        lù        akékò            pa  
 beat-NOM    die     FOC    teacher        HTS    beat    student        kill  
 “The teacher **beat** the student to **death**”

d.     Lílù            akóne    pa        óún    akékò    ó        lù        akóne    pa  
 beat-NOM    teacher   die     FOC    teacher   HTS    beat    student   kill  
 “The teacher **beat** the student to **death**”

\*e.    Pípa            óún    akóne            ó        lù        akékò            pa  
 kill-NOM    FOC    teacher        HTS    beat    student        kill  
 “The teacher beat the student to **death**”



\*c. dídé mi he usu oún olùkù mí ó dé mí he usu  
Cause-NOM poss cook yam FOC friend poss HTS cause 1SG(OBJ) cook yam  
“My friend **mademe to cook yam**”

\*d. híhé usu oún olùkù mí ó dé mí he usu  
Cook-NOM yam FOC friend poss HTS cause 1SG(OBJ) cook yam  
“My friend **made me to cook yam**”

111a. Iba mí ó mú Adé gbáya meji (Causative SVC)  
father poss HTS cause Adé marry two  
“My father made Ade marry two wives”

\*b. Mimu oun Iba mi ó mú Adé gbaya meji  
Cause-NOM FOC father poss HTS cause Adé marry two  
“My father **made** Ade marry two wives”

\*c. Mimu Ade gbayameji oun iba mi ó mú Adé gbaya meji  
Cause-NOM Adé marry two FOC father poss HTS cause Adé marry two  
“My father **madeAde marry two wives**”

\*d. gbigbaya oun Iba mi ó mú Adé gbaya meji  
Marry-NOM FOC father poss HTS cause Adé marry two  
“My father made Ade **marry** two wives”

Focusing of consequential and durative SVC in Usen follows the same pattern as sequential SVC in (106a-e) above where the first verb, both the first and the second verbs, the first verb phrase (VP1) and the second verb are be focused. This can be seen in example (107-109) above. In both consequential and durative SVC, only V2 cannot be focused as also observed in sequential SVC. However, examples (110) and (111) which are examples of causative SVC, result in an ungrammatical structure when the first verb, both the first verb and the second verb and only the second verb are focused, thus, making it impossible for a causative verb in Usen to be focused. We therefore conclude that focusing in Usen Causative SVC is impossible as it results in ungrammatical structures.

#### 4.4.4.4. Derivation of SVC in Usen

In the derivation of the SVC in Usen, all the verbs in series are merged in the VP internal, while the first verb which we refer to as V1 is raised to adjoin to the null causative light verb for lexicalisation. In other words, there is verbal/event ordering of the SVC, and this justifies Abimbola and Taiwo (2014) and Abimbola (2016) on the derivation of SVC where the assumption is that the highest verb raises to lexicalise the light verb in the construction and that the verbs are stalked one by one in the same

construction. The lexicalisation of the light verb will ensure that the vP phase is complete, and the verbs merge to form a unitary vP structure, but not from a different pre-syntactic computation.

Let us consider the derivation of the following SVC structure in Usen:

- 112a. Adé ó he usu jẹ  
 Adé HTS cook yam eat  
 “Ade cooked and ate the yam”
- b. Iba ó ra alè kó ulí  
 father HTS buy land build house  
 “Father bought a land and built a house”
- c. Ode ó gún olè kú  
 hunter HTS stab thief die  
 “The hunter stabbed the thief to death”
- d. Mo ó lù ilù tú ulí  
 `1SG HTS beat drum reach house  
 “I drummed till I got to the house”

The SVCs above have different structures. In (112a), we have one external argument, two verbs and one internal argument. The two verbs are both transitive verbs, hence the need for both internal and external arguments on each verb. One can conclude and argue for an internal argument sharing for both verbs. In (112b and d), we have only one external argument, two transitive verbs and two internal arguments, thus, only the external argument will be shared by the two verbs in the series. (112c) has only one external argument, two verbs (one transitive and the other intransitive), and one internal argument. Thus, only the external argument will be shared between the two verbs, because only the transitive verb needs an internal argument.

Having established these facts, let us consider how the SVCs in Usen are derived.

In the derivation of example (112a) above, *he* “cook” and *jẹ* “eat” are both transitive verbs which require both external and internal arguments. The two verbs *he* “cook” and *jẹ* “eat” share the same object complement. However, the direct object of *jẹ* “eat” is not available in the clause. How then do we account for the internal argument with two verbs in Usen?

Collins (1997) establishes that in Ewe, object argument-sharing could help account for the issue of verbs in series, as he claims that it is a case of PRO which is necessitated with a post prepositional element “yi” in Ewe. This however, cannot be used to

account for the two transitive verbs with one internal argument in Usen, since we do not have any post-prepositional element in such position in Usen. The LF residue proposed by Abimbola and Taiwo (2016) is adopted in this work in accounting for distribution of internal argument of transitive verbs in Usen SVC which share one internal argument.

LF residue is an abstract element, bearing similar properties with the object DP, and a copy of the same object DP, which is listed in the numeration as dummy DP. The LF residue is only visible at the LF interface and not at the PF interface. Abimbola and Taiwo (2014) revised inclusiveness condition so as to be able to capture the LF in the numeration.

113. Inclusiveness Condition (Revised) (Abimbola and Taiwo 2014)

The LF object  $\lambda$  must be built only from the features of the lexical item N

[Which may include instances of LF- residue at LF: not legible at PF]

In analysing the structure in (112a) above, derivation starts at the numeration, with operation select and operation merge which select and merge the lexical items from the lexicon for computation into the working area.

114.  $N = \{\text{Adé}_1, \text{ó}_1, \text{he}_1, \text{usu}_1, \text{je}_1, \mathbf{usu}_1\}$

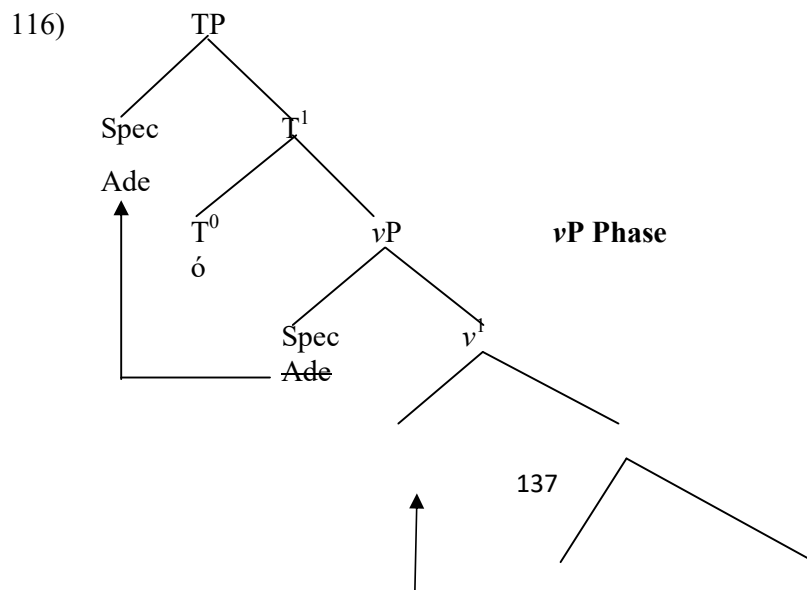
The second *usu* “yam” is the LF residue listed in the numeration. The verb *je* “eat” which is stranded clause-finally, merges with the external DP ***usu*** “yam” (the dummy DP, which is the LF residue is bolded to differentiate it from the lexical DP) to derive  $V^1$ . Theta features were assigned to the DP and the case features checked and frozen in place. Consequently, the verb *he* “cook” merges with the lexical verb to derive  $V^1$ . Theta role is assigned in line with theta role assignment principle (TRAP) and the verb values the theta on the DP *usu* “yam” as patient. The DP *usu* “yam” is attracted to Spec $V^1$  for it to be valued. Hence, the lexical DP is adjoined to Spec  $V^1$ . The verb *he* “cook” is a probe requiring a DP to satisfy its spec features, the lexical DP *usu* “yam” is the goal, which has an accusative case feature to check. The probe searches through its domain and finds a goal *usu* “yam” with a matching feature, therefore, AGREE is established. The DP values the phi-features of the verb and the verb in turn values the case feature of the DP. The two syntactic objects formed merge to derive the VP. The derivation continues and the light verb “v” merges with the VP to derive the light verb bar  $v^1$ ; the verb *he* “cook” adjoins from the lower VP domain and adjoins to the light verb, so as to lexicalise the light verb. The DP external “Adé” merges with the projection at the spec of the light verb, and the whole  $vP$  phase is formed. At this point,

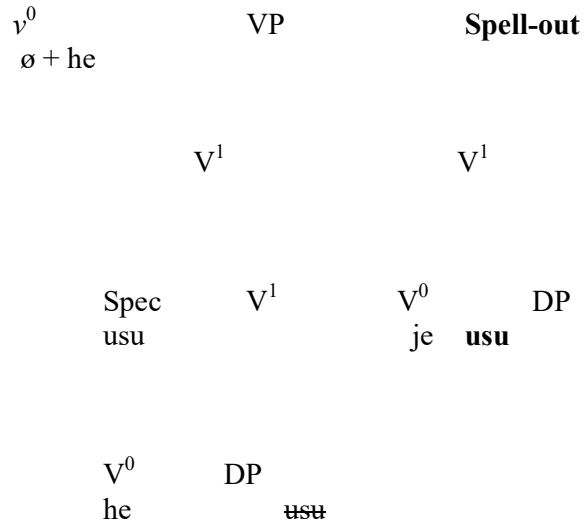
all the features have been valued and the domain of the light verb will undergo transfer to the interfaces and thereafter cease to be accessible to any other syntactic operations. The LF residue can only be visible at the LF interface, thus, satisfying the principle of full interpretation of the verb.

115. Principle of Full Interpretation (Abimbola and Taiwo 2014:401)

The principle of full interpretation holds that a lexical item is projected with all the required features necessary for its interpretation.

However, the LF residue is not linearised at PF interface, because it has no legibility at the PF. It has no phonetic content like every other non-residual lexical item. Hence, it is opaque to PF but visible to LF. The syntactic computation then proceeds with the non-future tense marker [ɾó] being merged with the *v*P to form the T-bar ( $T^1$ ). The tense marker “ó” has an uninterpretable (and unvalued) person and number feature and it is an active probe. Hence, it searches for a local goal to value and delete its unvalued features; the domain of the light verb is no longer accessible to the probe since it has already been transferred to the interfaces, it then leaves the DP *Ade* as the only goal which is accessible to “ó” and active by virtue of its uninterpretable case features. Hence, “ó” agrees with the DP *Ade* and assigns nominative case to it. The EPP feature on the tense marker triggers movement of the goal that is closest to it, with which it agrees, to Spec-T accordingly. The DP *Ade* then moves from its original position in Spec-*v*, and becomes the specifier of “ó”. Below is the diagrammatic representation of the derivation above.





Having derived the above SVC structure with two transitive verbs, we shall consider the structure with a transitive verb and an intransitive verb in example (112c)

112c. Ode            ó        gún    olè    kú  
 Hunter            HTS    stab    thief   die  
 “The hunter stabbed the thief to death”

Unlike what we have in (112a), where the two verbs are transitive with one direct object, (112c) has two verbs (V1 is an intransitive verb while V2 is a transitive). Hence, only the V2 needs a direct object as the complement and only V2 can be attracted by the strong causative features of the light verb to lexicalise *v*. The derivation of example (112c) below is considered.

The lexical items needed for computation is listed in the numeration below;

117.  $N = \{Ode_1, \acute{o}_1, g\acute{u}n_1, ol\grave{e}_1, k\acute{u}_1\}$

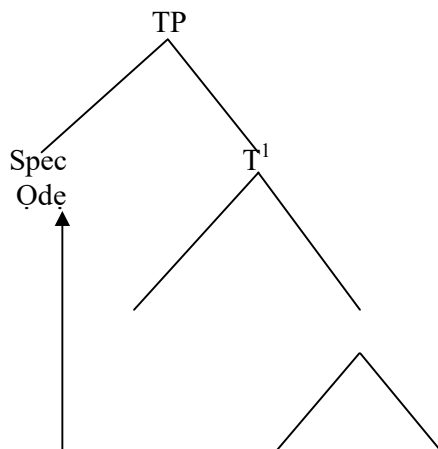
The two lexical verbs *gún* “stab” and *kú* “die” and the direct object of V2 project to derive the V-bars, the two derived V-bars project to form the VP. Since V1 *kú* “die” is intransitive, it does not require any complement with an accusative case; hence, it remains in-situ. However, V2 *gún* “stab” assigns accusative case and value the theta on the DP as patient. The strong EPP features on the verb triggers the movement of the DP *olè* “thief” to spec  $V^1$  for it to be valued. The verb which has an uninterpretable and unvalued person and number features has a probe that is active, and searches for a

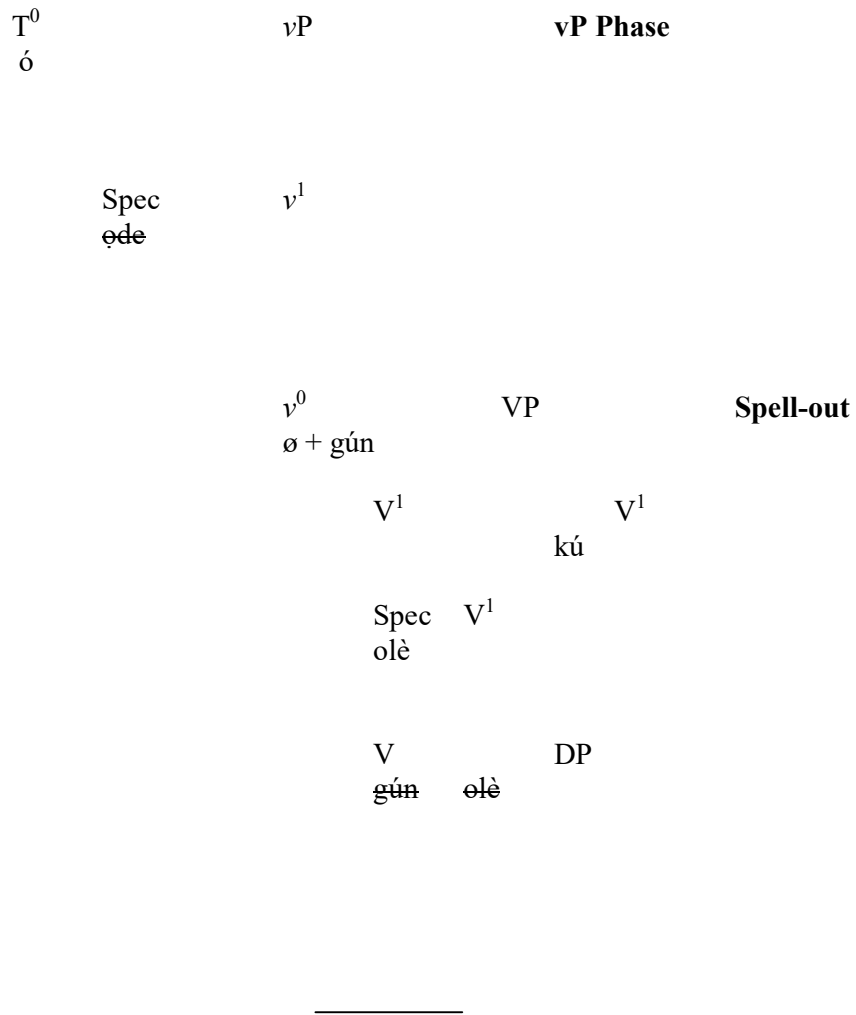


local goal to value and delete its unvalued features. The probe finds the DP goal *olè* “thief” with interpretable phi-features but unvalued case. Thus, the verb *gun* “stab” agrees with the DP *olè* “thief” and the case features are valued. The formed inner core VP merges with the light verb to derive the light verb  $v^1$ , and V2 *gún* “stab” raises to lexicalise the light verb. The external DP *Qde* “hunter” merges with the projection at the spec of the light verb, thus, the entire vP phase is derived. Since the transitive vP is a phase and has thematic external argument, *Qde* “hunter”, the VP constituent (which is the domain of the light verb and the head of the phase) undergoes transfer to the phonological and semantic interfaces, and thereafter ceases to be accessible to further syntactic operations.

The syntactic computation proceeds with merging of the non-future tense marker “ó” with vP to derive T-bar ( $T^1$ ). Since  $[_T \acute{O}]$  has uninterpretable (and unvalued) person and number features, its active probe searches for a local goal to value and delete its unvalued features. It finds the DP *Qde* “hunter” accessible since it is part of the domain of the light verb that undergoes transfer and has uninterpretable case features. Hence, “ó” agrees with the DP *Qde* “hunter” and nominative case is assigned to it. The strong EPP feature on the tense triggers the movement of the goal to which it agrees with, to spec-T, thus *Qde* “hunter” is moved out of its original position in spec-v to become the specifier of “ó”, thus, deriving the TP. The diagram below in (118) shows the tree representation.

118.





From the above, we have derived SVCs with two transitive verbs and one direct object; we have also derived the structure with a transitive verb and an intransitive verb with one direct object. However, we shall discuss the derivation of an SVC structure with two transitive verbs and two direct objects, using example (112b) for illustration.

The computation for the derivation of an SVC with two transitive verbs and two direct objects also start from the numeration, where the needed lexical items for computation are selected.

119.  $N = \{\text{Iba}_1, \acute{o}_1, \text{rà}_1, \text{alè}_1, \text{kó}_1, \text{ulí}_1\}$

The two lexical verbs in the numeration merge with their direct objects to derive the inner core VP. The V1 *kó* “build” merges with its direct object *ulì* “house” and V2 *rà* “buy” merges with its direct object *alè* “land”.

However, V1 *kó* “build” assigns accusative case and values the theta on the DP as theme, V2 *rà* “buy” merges with its direct object *alè* “land”, and the verb *rà* “buy” assigns accusative case and values theta on the DP *alè* “land” as goal. Both DPs in this construction are valued in-situ, and this is so because of the word order constraint in this construction type in Usen.

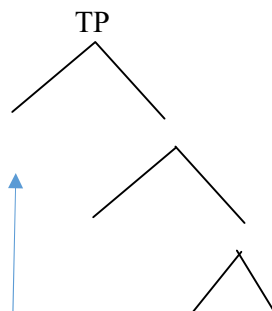
The verb *rà* “buy” has an uninterpretable and unvalued person and number features, and then probes for a local goal to value and delete its unvalued features. The probe finds a matching goal DP *alè* “land” with interpretable phi-features and unvalued case features. Thus, the verb *ra* “buy” agrees with the DP *alè* “land” and its case features valued, thus, establishing a probe goal relationship.

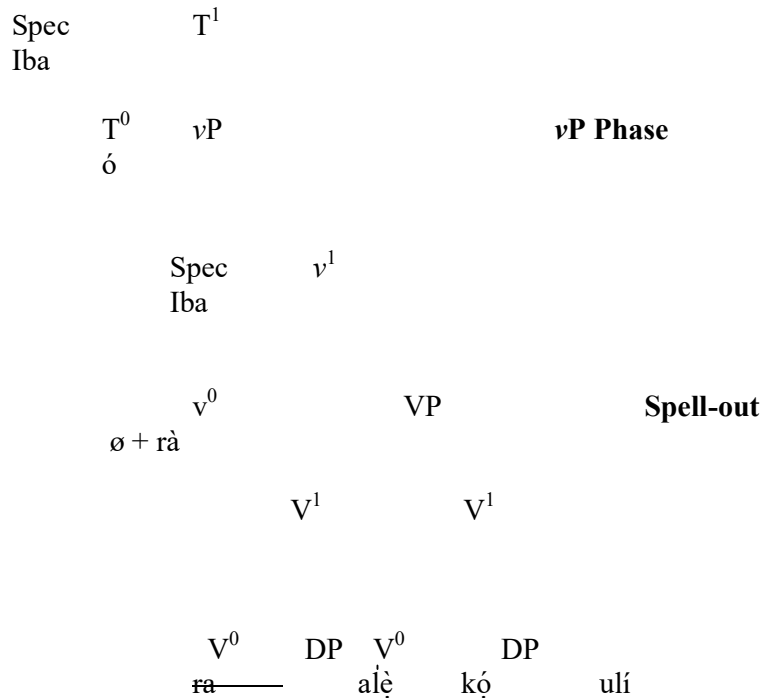
The derivation continues and the light verb merges with the VP to derive the light verb bar  $v^1$ . The light verb needs to be lexicalised, hence, V2 *rà* “buy” adjoins to the light verb to lexicalise it. The external DP *Iba* “father” merges with the projection at the spec of the light verb, thereby, deriving the entire  $vP$  phase. Since the  $vP$  phase is formed, the domain of the light verb which is the VP, undergoes transfer to the phonological and semantic interfaces and become inaccessible to further syntactic operations.

The derivation continues with merging of the tense marker [ó] with  $vP$  to derive the T-bar [ $T^1$ ]. Tense has uninterpretable phi-features, hence, the probe searches for a goal which it can value and delete its unvalued features. It finds the DP *Iba* “father” which is part of the domain of the light verb, accessible. The tense “ó” agrees with the DP *Iba* “father” and assigns nominative case to it. The strong EPP feature on the tense triggers movement of the DP to spec-T, thus *Iba* “father” moves out of spec- $vP$  position to spec-TP, thereby deriving the whole TP.

The derivation above is represented in the diagram below:

120.





#### 4.4.5. Derivation of split verb

Unlike simple verbs, the derivation of the split verb differs from derivation of the transitive verb in Usen. These verbs enter the derivation as a single unit but split into two in the cause of derivation, and the split halves have different unrelated semantic representations. The question then is at what point do the verbs split in the derivation?

Let us consider the example from (40a) below for illustration:

121. Adé ó tan Olú jẹ  
 Adé HTS deceive Olú eat  
 “Ade deceived Olu”

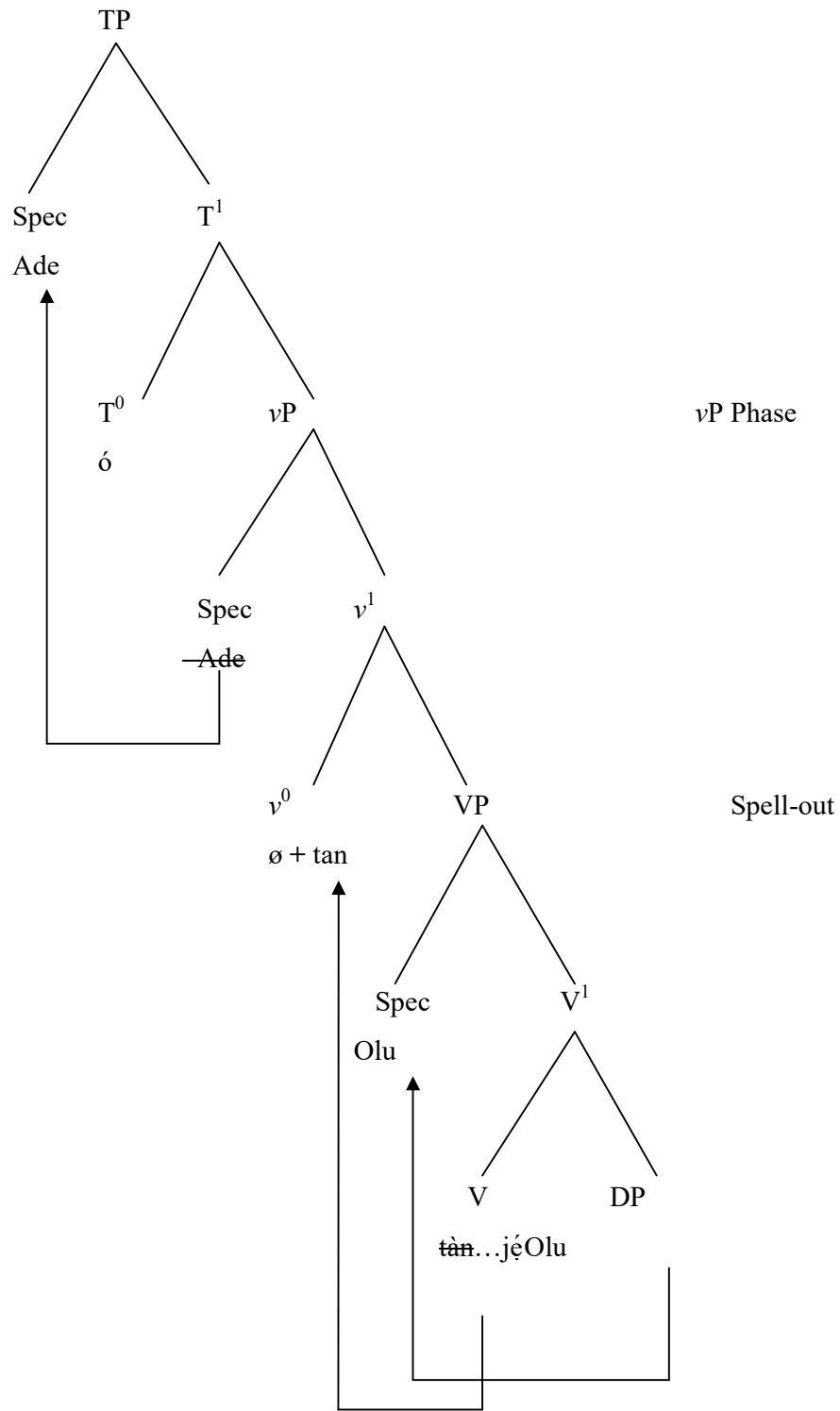
The computation starts at the numeration, the lexical items needed for computations are selected from the lexicon.

122. N = {Adé<sub>1</sub>, ó<sub>1</sub>, tàn...jẹ<sub>1</sub>, Olú<sub>1</sub>}

The verb *tàn...jẹ* “deceive” enters the derivation as a whole. Syntactically, the structure of the verb is the same as it discharges its accusative feature on the object complement, but when it enters the derivation as two separate halves, the split verb will have two different places in discharging its accusative features. The problem of where each half of the split verb discharges its accusative features becomes a problem and makes the derivation cumbersome and uneconomical.

The verb *tàn..jé* “deceive” merges with the internal DP *Olú* “name” to derive the  $V^1$ ; “*tàn..jé Olú*” the verb satisfies TRAP by valuing theta on the DP *Olú* as theme. The EPP feature on the verb requires that the derived spec  $V^1$  position be filled; hence, the verb *tàn..jé* “deceive” probes its goal *Olú* “name” which has unvalued case features and finds a matching feature, thus, AGREE is established. The goal *Olú* “name” is then attracted to spec- $V^1$  by the EPP feature on the verb, thereby, resulting in VP architecture and a local configuration of spec head relationship is formed for valuation to take place.

The EPP is valued by attracting the DP to spec – VP, thus the case is also valued. The DP values the phi-features on the verb and the verb also values the case feature of the DP. The derivation continues and the light verb is merged with the VP to derive the light verb bar  $v^1$ . At this point, the first half of the split verb, which was split at the narrow syntax before the LF interface, is attracted from the lower VP domain and adjoins to the light verb, so as to lexicalise the light verb. The DP external argument *Adé* “name” merges with the projection at the spec of the light verb, and the whole  $vP$  phase is formed. It is important to note that the domain of the light verb is ready for transfer to the interfaces, since all the features have been valued. The derivation continues, and  $[_T \acute{o}]$  is merged with the  $vP$  to derive the  $[T^1]$ , tense has uninterpretable phi-features, thus, it probes for a goal to value and delete its unvalued features. It finds *Adé* “name” accessible in the domain of the light verb, thus, the tense  $[\acute{o}]$  agrees with *Adé* “name” thereby, assigning nominative case to it. The strong EPP feature on the tense triggers the movement of the DP to spec TP, thereby, moving *Ade* “name” from its original position at spec- $vP$  to spec-TP, thus, deriving the whole TP. The discussion is diagrammatically represented in the tree diagram below:



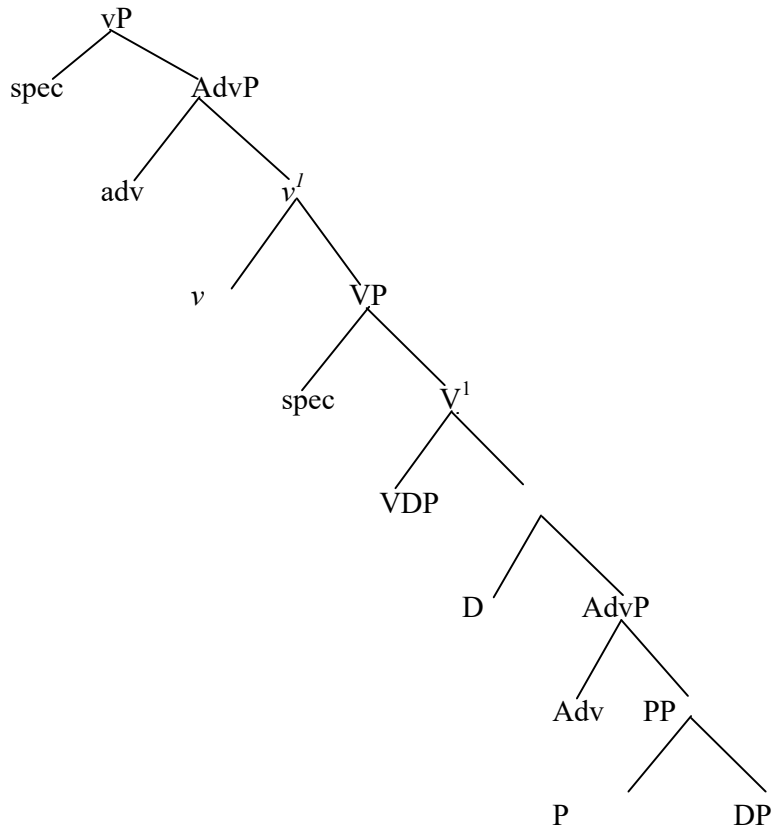
#### 4.5 The vP architecture in Usen

Following the discussion on the derivation of the Uşen verb phrase, we propose the vP structural architecture in Uşen, which accommodates all the structures of the different verb phrases examined in this research;

124a. vP>AdvP>VP>DP>AdvP>PP.

The structural architecture of Uşen vP is represented in the tree diagram below.

124b.



#### 4.6 Summary

In this chapter, we defined a verb and also used the definition as the basis for our discussion. Verb features were identified and that enabled the researcher to identify the verbs in Uşen. Furthermore, Taiwo's (2018) criteria for classifying verbs were adopted and used to classify Uşen verbs. These criteria were grouped into four, and they are meaning, usage, structure and behaviour. This chapter further considered the internal constituents of the VP, that is, other constituents that co-occur with a verb to form the VP, and they are the verb constituting the verb phrase, Verb + Noun, Verb + Prepositional Phrase(PP), Verb + Adverbial Phrase, Verb + Complementiser Phrase(CP), and Verb + Noun Phrase(NP) + Prepositional Phrase(PP). Verbal

modifiers were also discussed, with focus on the pre-verbal and post-verbal modifiers. Furthermore, the derivation of various verb phrases in Uşen was also discussed using the minimalist phase syntax program. The derivation of the transitive verb construction in Uşen was discussed, the prepositional dative construction was also discussed, and it was observed that in Uşen, transitive construction can have more than one object complement, but the second complement is preceded by a preposition. This shows that there are no double object constructions in the dialect, what exists are prepositional datives, thus, the discussion on the derivation of the preposition dative in Uşen. In addition, the derivation of intransitive construction in Uşen was also examined, this section was divided into two: the unergative and unaccusative intransitive verbal constructions. One major difference between both intransitive constructions is the structural position where their only argument is generated, while the DP external argument is generated as spec *v*P, the external argument of the unaccusative verb construction is generated as the complement of the VP. SVC structures in Uşen were also examined and the following were discussed: argument-sharing in Uşen SVC, syntactic test for Uşen SVCs using negation, adverbial modification, tense and aspect, focusing in Uşen SVC and the derivation of SVC in Uşen. Finally, derivation of split verb construction in Uşen was examined, considering the point at which the verb split in the derivation.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Summary

This Chapter entails the summary of the research on the Usen verb phrase. It is a syntactic study that explored the different verb phrases in Usen with their derivations using the phase syntax in Chomsky's Minimalist Program.

Chapter one started with a general introduction to the study; it focused on Usen dialect and the people, the geographical location and the historical account of the people. Usen was classified as a dialect of Yoruba, following Ogbeifun and Taiwo (2019) who claim that Usen is a dialect of Yoruba.

The Yoruba orthography was adopted for this research since Usen is a dialect of Yoruba, but in addition, the voiced labiolised velar *gw*, voiced velar fricative *gh*, and the voiceless alveolar trill *rh* were introduced into the sound inventory of Usen. Research questions, aim and objectives, significance and scope of the study were also discussed in Chapter One.

In Chapter Two, the theoretical framework was examined and relevant literature was reviewed. The phase syntax of the Minimalist Program was adopted for the analysis of data because of its descriptive apparatus involved in the computational system and the empirical description for the way language is mirrored in the mind of the speakers.

Furthermore, works on the verb, verb phrase in Yoruba and other languages were examined to give insight on the theoretical application on the verb phrase. Phonological and syntactic works in Usen were also examined, and this served as foundation on which this study was built.

The methodology employed for this study was examined in Chapter Three, and the methodological issues discussed were study design, study location, method of data analysis, sampling procedure, instrumentation, method of data collection, and the theoretical design of the study. The primary method of data collection was used to elicit data from the informants; the descriptive research design was used in the analysis of our data, while the purposive random sampling method was used for collection

of data in this research. Data was elicited from fifteen (15) informants, who were mentally fit and were forty (40) years of age and above. The following instruments were used to elicit data from them: Ibadan four hundred (400) wordlist, structured verb phrases extracted from Dakubu (1980), West African Language data sheet, Ibadan syntactic paradigm and structured interviews.

Chapter Four focused on the descriptive analysis and the derivation of the verb phrases. First, the definition of verb was proposed for Usen verb, and their features were identified. Usen verbs were classified using Taiwo's (2018) criteria, which are meaning, use, structure or form and behaviour. Thereafter, the internal constituents of the verb phrase, that is, the verb, the verb + noun, the verb + prepositional phrase, verb + adverb, the verb + complementiser phrase (CP), and the verb + noun phrase + prepositional phrase, were examined, the pre-verbal and post-verbal modifiers in Usen were also identified.

Furthermore, the derivation of the transitive VP, intransitive VP, prepositional VP, Serial Verb Construction and the split VP in Usen were examined using the phase syntax of the minimalist program. In the analysis of the SVC in Usen, three parameters (negation, adverbial modifications and tense and aspects) were employed in testing the Usen SVC which differentiates it from other coordinate structures. Furthermore, this chapter considered focusing in SVC, wherein the verbs that can be focused in Usen SVC were discussed.

Chapter Five entails the summary and conclusion of the study.

## **5.2 Summary of findings**

Based on the research objectives and questions, this section presents the findings of the study conducted on the verb phrase in Usen. These findings will enhance a better understanding of Usen vP layer which is central to the derivation and interpretation of event and its argument structure. These findings are presented based on the outlined objectives stated in Chapter One of this work.

In line with the first objective, which is to determine what a verb is in Usen, the following were the findings based on observation:

- Verb in Usen was defined as a word which is the head of the verb phrase and which can stand alone or be modified.

The second objective focused on distinguishing the classes of verbs in Usen and their features. In doing this, the verbs in Usen were classified using four criteria which are meaning, use, structure and behaviour. Based on these criteria the following types of verbs were observed in Usen

- Meaning: action, descriptive and stative verbs,
- Use: reportative, imperative and echo verbs,
- Structure: simple verbs and compound verbs,
- Behavioural: subject-selecting verbs, object-selecting verbs, verbs that turn subject to object, transitive verbs, intransitive verb, split verbs and serial verbs.

Moreso, the following verb features were identified in Usen as findings to the second objective:

- Verbs in Usen are monosyllabic,
- Usen verbs are consonant-initial,
- Usen verbs are derived through compounding and not prefixation,
- Usen verbs occur with short pronouns,
- Usen verbs can be negated by *éè*.

Regarding the third objective for this study, the internal constituents of the Usen verb phrase were identified as:

- the verb constitutes a verb phrase in Usen,
- the verb + noun constitute a verb phrase in Usen,
- the verb + prepositional Phrase constitute a verb phrase in Usen,
- the verb + the adverb constitute a verb phrase in Usen,
- the verb + complimentiser constitute a verb phrase in Usen,
- and the verb + noun phrase + prepositional phrase constitute a verb phrase in Usen.

Based on the fourth objective on how arguments are licensed and thematic roles assigned, it was observed that:

- The arguments were licensed in the derivation of Usen vP when the interpretable phi- features have been valued and the unvalued features deleted. While thematic roles are assigned under merge, this could be observed in the derivation of the transitive, intransitive, prepositional dative, serial verb construction and the split verb phrases.

Finally, the fifth objective was realised by proposing vP architecture for Usen. Based on the discussion on the derivation of the verb phrases in Usen, the vP architecture is presented below;

- vP>AdvP>VP>DP> AdvP>PP

More findings were discovered in the course of this research and they are given below:

1. Usen does not have ditransitive verbs because verbs in Usen do not take a subject and two objects without introducing a preposition in between the two objects. Rather, Usen manifests prepositional dative verbal construction.
2. There are no interrogative verbs in Usen, unlike what we have in Yoruba. What we have in Usen are content questions and question markers.
3. The Voiced Labiolised Velar Sound [gw], the voiceless velar fricative [gh] and the voiceless alveolar trill [rh] were introduced into the Usen sound inventory.
4. Usen SVC obligatorily allows the sharing of external argument, while the internal argument of an SVC with a direct object is accounted for with the LF residue.
5. There exist four SVC types in Usen and they are
  - a. Sequential SVC
  - b. Consequential SVC
  - c. Durative SVC
  - d. Causative SVC
6. The first verb (V1), both the first verb and the second verb (V1 and V2) and the first verb phrase and the the second verb (VP1 and V2), can be focused in Usen SVC, except causative SVC which does not permit focusing of any verb.
7. In the derivation of the split verb in Usen, the verb enters the derivation as a whole but split at the narrow syntax.

### **5.3 Contributions to knowledge**

- a. The understanding of Usen vP phase layer is central to the derivation and interpretation of events and argument structure.
- b. The study on the verb phrase will help in producing pedagogical materials for the teaching of verbs as a syntactic category in the schools.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

This study focused on the study of the Verb phrase in Uṣẹn. It is important to note that though the verb phrase is very important in the analysis of a clause, other aspects of the clause should not be left unstudied. Since this study did not go beyond the verb phrase, I recommend that:

- a. Efforts should be made in further studies to study the tense phrase (TP) and the complementiser phrase (CP) in Uṣẹn to enable a proper understanding of the clause structure of Uṣẹn.
- b. This work should be recommended for those who are into the study of the syntax of verb phrases in African languages.
- c. More teaching materials should be provided in this language for documentation and teaching of the younger generation in Uṣẹn.

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

This research examined the verb phrase of Uṣẹn dialect of Yoruba spoken in Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The study was able to define the Uṣẹn verb, classify the verbs using four criteria of meaning, use, structure and behaviour of the verbs. The features of the verbs were identified and the derivation of the various verb phrases (transitive, pre-positional dative, intransitive, serial verb and split verb phrase) were all examined, which is important to the derivation and interpretation of events and the structure of arguments in Uṣẹn.

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## APPENDIX I

### Consent and Background Information Form

Good day Sir/Ma,

I am a Postgraduate student of the University of Ibadan, currently undergoing a research on the Verb Phrase of Usen dialect of Yoruba. Due to the nature of this research, I intend to take data in form of recording, and the recording done will be used for research purposes and thereafter the results published. Hence, I request your consent to record data elicited by interviews and random conversations from you. It is important to note that your consent can be withdrawn at any time.

### Risk and Benefits

- The results of this study will be archived in an open access database and published in academic research, this research will put attention on you; however, this attention is often not negative.
- The data collected will contribute to our understanding of the Structure of the Verb Phrase of Usen dialect. We therefore predict that your contributions will have both personal and community wide benefits.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.
- Your consent can also be verbal, which can be recorded at the beginning or the end of the interview.

Signature of consultant/ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Where else have you lived? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIXII: DATA

### 1. Lexical Verbs

jẹ “eat”, mọ “drink”, mì “swallow”, ge “bite”, lá “lick”, dàn “taste”, tutọ “spit”, bì “vomit”, tọ “urinate”, su “defecate”, bímọ “give birth” kú “die”, koró “stand”, jòkó “sit”, kunálẹ, “kneel”, hùn “sleep”, lílà “dream”, yú “go”, kawa “come”, hẹyìn “return”, wá “arrive”, wọ “enter”, gùn “climb”, rọdò “descend”, subú “fall”, rẹn “walk”, gharé “run”, tọ “jump”, fọ “fly”, dúwà “pass”, yí “turn”, géle “follow”, ghò “see”, gbọ “hear”, kàn “touch”, mà “know”, yerhè “remember”, gbàgbé “forget”, rò “think”, kọ “learn”, pè “read”, rín “laugh”, họnkún “cry”, kọrin “sing”, jó “dance”, siré “play”, kín “greet”, jà “fight”, pè “call”, rán “send”, fọ “say”, bèrè “ask”, fèyì “reply”, gwá “search”, nọ “lose”, né “get”, jín “steal”, gbà “take”, gbe “give”, tà “sell”, yàn “choose”, rà “buy”, kà “count”, pẹn “divide”, mú “catch”, ta “shot”, pa “kill”, hẹ “cook”, dén “fry”, họn “roast”, gún “pound”, lò “grind”, dà “pour”, họ “throw”, gbá “sweep”, jó “burn”, pọkú “extinguish”, dìn “plait”, họn “weave”, rán “sew”, wọ “put on”, fọ “wash” (things), gwè “wash” (body), fọn “wring”, fà “pull”, tìn “push”, lù “beat”, gwó “break”, da “break”(stick), ya “tear”, pẹn “split”, gún “pierce”, gwò “dig”, gbén “plant”, ghi “bury”, kọ “build”, ma “mould”, gbé “carve”, se “make”, dìn “tie”, tú “untie”, dè “cover”, sín “open”.

## 2. Selected verb phrases in Usen

- a. kọ + orin = kọrin  
sing song sing
- b. gbá + etín = gbátín  
hit ear slap
- c. gbé + aya = gbáya  
carry wife marry
- d. ge + jẹ = gejẹ  
cut eat bite
- e. dá + ikú = dákú  
defeat death faint

## 3. Simple Declarative Sentences in Usen

- a. Ọlá ó rà ibata                      Ola bought a shoe.  
Ọlá èè rà ibàtà                      Ola did not buy a shoe.  
Ọlá ó yú                                  Ola went.  
Ọlá èè yú                                Ola did not go.
- b. Aghán Ọkànṛen ó wá                Those men came.  
Aghán Ọkànṛen èè wa                Those men did not come.  
Aghán Ọkànṛen á wa                Those men will come.
- c. Itúndé á wá                            Tunde will come.  
Itúndé èè ni wa                        Tunde will not come.  
Itunde èè yọ wa                        Tunde will not come.
- d. Ayọ à pe iwé                            Ayọ will read.  
Ayọ èè à pe iwé                        Ayọ will not read.  
Ayọ èè pe iwé                            Ayọ did not read.
- e. Ayọ o gbẹn iwe                        Ayọ wrote.  
Ayọ èè yọ gbẹn iwe                    Ayọ did not write.  
Ayọ á gbẹn iwé                        Ayọ will write.  
Ayọ èè yo gbẹn iwe                    Ayọ will not write.  
Ayọ èè gbẹn iwé kakaka              Ayọ did not write at all.  
Ayọ èè fẹ gbẹn iwé                    Ayọ did not want to write.
- f. Mo ó pi ibólù                            I played ball.  
Me é pi ibólù                            I am playing ball.  
Me èè fẹ pi ibólù                        I do not want to play ball.
- g. Mo ó jẹ irẹhì                            I ate rice.  
Èè jẹ irẹhì                                S/he will eat rice.  
Uwọ nẹ ó jẹ irẹhì                      it was you that ate the rice.



- |    |                                                                                     |                                                                                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| h. | Me èè jẹ irẹhì<br>Me èè fẹ jẹ irẹhì kákáká<br>Mo ó fẹran irẹhì<br>Me èè fẹràn irẹhì | I did not eat rice.<br>I do not want to eat rice at all.<br>I love rice.<br>I do not like rice.     |
| i. | Mo ó ra ohun<br>Me èè ra ohun<br>Mo ó fẹ ra ohun<br>Ma á ra ohun                    | I bought something.<br>I did not buy something.<br>I want to buy something<br>I will buy something. |

#### 4. Complex Verb Phrases

- a. Olá ó ya ọkà họn jẹ lí oko  
Ola unwrapped the corn, roasted and ate it, at the farm.
- b. Olá èè ya ọkà họn jẹ lí oko  
Ola did not unwrap the corn, roast and eat it, at the farm.
- c. Yíya oún Olá o ya ọkà họn jẹ lí oko  
Ola **unwrapped** the corn, roasted and ate it at the farm.
- d. Olá ó rán asọ ta  
Ola sewed and sold the cloth.
- e. Ríran oún Olá ó ran asọ ta  
Ola **sewed** and sold the cloth
- f. Olá ó he usu jẹ  
Ola cooked yam and ate it.
- g. Híhe oún Olá ó he usu jẹ  
Olá **cooked** the yam.
- h. Olá họn ẹja tà  
Ola roasted and sold the fish
- i. O ó họnkún hun  
S/he cried and slept off.
- j. Adé ó ọmomi ta  
Adé fetched water and sold it.
- k. Ọde á díya ghare ra ẹran pa tà  
The hunter will run quickly, buy an animal, kill and sell it.
- l. Ghíghare oun ọde a díya ghare ra ẹran pa ta  
The hunter will **run** quickly, buy an animal, kill and sell it,

- m. Qlopa a lu ole ren pa  
The Policeman will beat the man to death.
- n. Lilu oun qlopa a lu ole ren pa  
The policeman will**beat** the thief to death.