



Adverbial Clauses in Tonga: Morpho-syntax of the subordinators

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Abstract

This research is on adverbial clauses in Tonga. Adverbial clauses in many world languages have been generally analysed to have conjunctions that introduce them. Most of the adverbial clauses in Tonga, however, do contain conjunctions that cannot stand alone but are expressed with elements attached to verbal constituents. Some adverbial clauses do not even contain a syntactic conjunction. Since the elements in verbal forms do not introduce the adverbial clauses, these elements have been viewed as elements signalling adverbial clauses. The study used a descriptive research design. Data was purposively selected. Only adverbial clauses with such phenomenon were selected for analysis.

The study has established that in Tonga, many adverbial clauses that are signalled by subordinate conjunctions require morphemes in the verbal constituent. There are instances also where compound conjunctions are used. The compounded conjunctions can also be used independent of each other. The study recommends further researches on the language and other Zambian languages so as to develop the linguistics of Zambian languages as part of Bantu Linguistics.

Keywords: adverbial, clauses, subordinators, adverbial

Introduction

The study of adverbial clauses in Tonga of Zambia is one of the areas that has not received adequate attention so far. Early accounts on Tonga (Hopgood (1940) [7], Collins (1962) [4], Kenaan (1992) and Carter (2002) [3], have not adequately dealt with adverbial clauses in Tonga at any level of analysis. Taking after languages that have received fairly adequate attention such as English, (Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) [12], O'Brien (2009) [13], (www.whitesmoke.com/clauses-in-english) Retrieved 22.08.16, and <https://folk.uio.no/kjelljs/060AdverbialClauses.pdf>. Retrieved on 06.11.19, adverbial clauses have been generally analysed to have conjunctions that introduce them. These conjunctions are words that do give meaning on their own. Some of the adverbial clauses in Tonga, however, do not contain conjunctions that would give the meaning of the conjunction on their own but essentially require morphemes in the verbal constituent. Because of this, the current study has used a morpho-syntactic approach. Although Lin (2015) has indicated that some languages express adverbial clauses morphologically, what has been discussed are verbal suffixes, a phenomenon that is not found in adverbial clauses in Tonga.

Tonga

This research looked at how adverbial clauses without subordinate conjunctions are determined in Tonga. In this study, Tonga refers to Zambian Tonga (as there are other forms of Tonga such as those spoken in Malawi and Zimbabwe). Guthrie (1971: 57) classifies Tonga as M64 where M is the language zone, 60 is the group and Tonga is the fourth of the languages under this classification. He further classifies it as a cluster under the Lenje-Tonga group, (Guthrie 1970: 15). Like other Bantu languages,

Tonga is typologically an agglutinative language, characterised by numerous morphemes joined together to express complete thought. The nature of this typology is that analysis at syntactic level is so complex and such complexity leads to a morpho-syntactic analysis where breaking clausal constituents in some instances becomes obligatory. In the study, there were forms that were manifested depending on the verb forms and the tone patterns of the constructions. The noun class of the nominal referred to and tense, also have a bearing on the verb form used.

The status of Tonga in Zambia

Tonga is the main language of the majority people of Zambia's Southern Province (Appendix A1). It belongs to the Bantu sub-group which is part of the Niger-Congo family, (Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978:126). Tonga is also spoken in some parts of Central Province such as Kabwe and Mumbwa districts. It is a regional language taught as a subject in some schools; used as language of instruction for initial literacy (Ministry of Education Science Vocational Training and Early Childhood Education, 2013); as lingua franca in church, political gatherings, and as language of mass communication on both national (Radio 1: Tonga Section) and private media (Radio Chikuni, Sky FM and Radio Mazabuka).

There are two major dialects of Tonga of Zambia; 'Plateau' and 'Gwembe Valley' varieties, (Carter, 2002) [3]. Plateau Tonga is spoken in the plateau areas of Mazabuka, Monze, Choma and Kalomo districts while the Valley Tonga is spoken in Gwembe and Sinazongwe districts as the We language (Ciwe). The minor dialects include;

- a. Ila which is spoken in Namwala, Itezhi-tezhi and parts of Mumbwa districts;

- b. Leya spoken in the east of Livingstone in Kazungula district;
- c. Toka in the western area of Kazungula; and
- d. Lenje which is spoken in Chibombo district and some areas in the rural parts of Kabwe in Central Province.

The orthography

The study used the approved Government Republic of

Zambia Orthography (Ministry of Education, 1977). The orthography follows the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The consonants used are: b [β], bb [b] and b [b] after a homorganic nasal; cc [tʃ], c [j], d [d], f [f], g [g], h [h], h (hard) [hh], j [dʒ], kk [k], k [ɣ] except after a nasal where it is pronounced as [k]; l [l], m [m], n [n], [ŋ], ny [ɲ], p [p], s [s], t [t], v [v], w [w], y [j] and z [z]; w and y being the two semivowels. This is clearly presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Tonga consonants and semi-vowels

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palato	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m		n	ny		ŋ	
Stop	p bb		t d			kk g	
Fricative	b	f v	s z		c	k	h
Affricate					cc j		
Lateral			l				
Glide	w				y		

The graphemes ‘f’ and ‘v’ are always followed by ‘w’. The homorganic nasal is considered to be one and the same phoneme but the convention dictates that it be ‘m’ before ‘b’, ‘f’ or ‘v’ and ‘n’ elsewhere. This, as already stated, is motivated by the point of articulation of the phoneme preceded by the nasal, (ILCAA, 1987). The consonants ‘z’ and ‘s’ may be blended with ‘y’. There are also variants with ‘k’ where it is used as [k], a voiceless velar plosive after a nasal and as [ɣ] a voiced velar fricative.

There are five vowels and the double vowels represent long vowels. These are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Tonga vowels

	Front		Back	
	Short	Long	Short	Long
High	i	ii	u	uu
Mid	e	ee	o	oo
Low			a	aa

(Following Banda et al, 2001)

Under the tonal section, an acute accent (´) is marked on vowels with high tone and no marking is indicated for low tones. For rising tones, the first vowel has low tone while the second next vowel has a high tone. For falling tones, the opposite prevails; the first vowel is high while the second next vowel is low.

Statement of the problem

The presentation of literature on adverbial clauses in Tonga has been approached as clauses that are introduced by subordinate conjunctions. What is common, however, is that most adverbial clauses in Tonga do not contain subordinate conjunctions. The few conjunctions that are present in Tonga would require a verbal morpheme to complete the meaning of the conjunction. Expressed as a statement, ‘We do not know which categories of adverbial clause types have a conjunction and another element for the completion of the meaning of that conjunction’.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to account for adverbial clauses with conjunctions in Tonga.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to

1. identify adverbial clause types that require a conjunction and another element for the completion of the meaning of the conjunction in Tonga.
2. Establish the morpho-syntax of adverbial conjunctions in Tonga.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study may contribute to the study of the language in Zambia. The method of data collection may be used as a classroom methodology where learners are given data by the teacher to analyse so as to draw observable generalisations and note behavioural patterns of adverbial clauses in the language. It may also act as a reference to scholars of Linguistics of Bantu Languages and Linguistics and African Languages in some colleges and universities respectively, thus benefiting scholars and linguists in general.

Literature review

According to Webster (2007:7), an adverbial clause is “a subordinate clause that modifies the main or principal clause by adding information about time, place, concession, condition, manner, purpose, and result...” A subordinate clause is included in or connected to the main clause and may be optional. Although adverbial clauses may be optional, it does not mean that they are of less importance in a grammar of a language for they respond to the unforeseen questions. Their modifying effect plays a great role in explicating both meaning and attitude.

Asher (1994: 41) clearly states that, “adverbials that are not adverbs are either adverbial phrases or clauses.” This means that adverbial clauses have their own rank which has not been well explored in Tonga, just as in some of the Zambian languages. Asher (ibid) further says that, “...the adverbial clause is a subtype of the subordinate clause”. This is because subordination includes complementation, relativisation and modification as exemplified below.

- (1) a. *umwaambile mwana kuti ndiyoooola cifwumo.*
‘tell the child **that** I will come tomorrow’, (complementation).
- b. *mwana wakandaambila wasika.*
‘the child **who** told me has arrived’, (relativisation).

c. ***kuti umwaambile mwana, ndilakuuma.***

'if you tell the child, I will beat you', (modification).

The bolded words in (1) above are subordinating conjunctions.

Adverbial Clauses in Tonga

Collins (1962) ^[4] has attempted to write on adverbial clauses which he classifies under 'Other Subordinate Clauses'. Such presentation of adverbial clauses, separate from 'Subordinate Clauses' (where relative clauses have been discussed), poses a problem to whether relative clauses are superior or more important than adverbial clauses. For adverbial clauses presented under 'Other Subordinate Clauses', Collins has on a scratchy note discussed only temporal ('when', 'before' and 'until'), purpose and participial clauses. Further, conditional clauses are presented in a separate chapter. As indicated, of all the various adverbial types, he discusses temporal, purpose and conditional clauses only. Furthermore, his overall presentation carries the notion that adverbial clauses are introduced by subordinate conjunctions as is the case in most accounts on adverbial clauses in Tonga.

On temporal clauses, Collins only deals with the Tonga equivalents of the English conjunctions; 'when', 'before' and 'until'. He says that the word for 'when' in Tonga is got from a stem *na-* which is treated as an objective relative, and that it can have an antecedent *-li*, such as found in expressions (2a) and the interrogative as in (2b) which carries the meaning of time.

- (2) a. *lya Pasika*
li- a Pasika
 'during Paschal season'
- b. *lili?*
 'which time?' that is, 'when?'

Collins also states that the conjunction *na-* is formed by compounding with the singular pronominals; *e* for 1st person singular, *o* for 2nd person singular and *a* for 3rd person singular while *o* is used for all plurals. The term 'conjunction' however, is inappropriate because a conjunction is essentially a syntactic element whereas *na-* is a morphological element. From the examples that Collins gives, it is evident that the morpheme *ni-* (as this study terms it) has in most cases variants that are constrained by morphological rules although in some cases, it is a matter of preference. For instance, *ni+e = ne*; *ni+o = no*; and *ni+a = na*. These variants are all used in present tense for 1st singular, 2nd singular and plural, and 3rd person singular respectively. However, *ni-* can be used with 1st and 2nd person singular in both present and past tenses.

Collins (1984) has given other ways of expressing 'when'. One way is by the use of the hodiernal past in the present and proximate future time.

(4) *Timoti waboola (or aboola) balaseka.*

'when Timothy arrives, they laugh'.

However, example (4) need to be glossed differently from Collins' as, 'when Timothy comes, they will laugh'.

The other way of expressing 'when' is by use of the hodiernal past of "telescoped" form of *ya-* plus infinitive used in remote future time only.

(5) *Timoti waakuboola (or aakuboola) bayakuseka.*

'when Timothy arrived they laughed' (Ibid).

The constructions in (4) and (5) have two problems; the subject marker in the verbal constituent of the adverbial clause is implied for 3rd pers. sg. and not an explicit *wa-* (*u-a*). The verb is in the hodiernal future tense of a temporal while the main clause verb is in the hodiernal future tense of the indicative. Looking at the English gloss, it would be realised that the time references in both clauses are wrong and the concept of the verb root *-bool-* 'come' is different from 'arrive' as indicated above.

Collins says that another way of expressing 'when' is where the proximate subjunctive is used in present and past time.

(6) *Timoti aboole, bakaseka.*

'when Timothy arrived they laughed' (Ibid).

The examples above focus on the temporal 'when'. For other types of adverbial clauses, what has been expressed in literature are very few clauses with subordinate conjunctions. This study looked at adverbial clauses without subordinate conjunctions. Kenaan (1992) wrote following Collins (1962) ^[4] where as Hopgood (1940) ^[7] wrote a prescriptive grammar and Carter 2002) ^[3] focused on types of verb forms.

Methodology

This study basically used the descriptive research design. In-depth data was collected through corpus obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The data was obtained from contexts set in novels as well as from natural speech. The study also involved description of the findings in the analysis stage. The researcher, being a native speaker, was part of the source of information and used intuition in both data collection and the analysis stage. A number of adverbial clauses were analysed through the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon, regardless of the frequency.

Target and sample size population

The study used a purposive sampling technique where adverbial clauses were collected from three novels written in Tonga as well as from spoken sources. Adverbial clauses with subordinate conjunctions that require a morpheme in the verbal constituent were further purposively selected for analysis. These did not require statistical frequencies but focused on the availability of the phenomenon. Being a native speaker of the language, some adverbial clauses were intuitively devised.

discussions and findings

Adverbial clauses in Tonga just as in any natural language have conjunctions that introduce them. However, these conjunctions do operate differently. This study has found that adverbial conjunctions in Tonga are not homogeneous. There are adverbial conjunctions that can stand alone to give a meaning while others need the isolating element with a bound element.

Adverbial Clauses with Conjunctions

The adverbial clauses in Tonga that have conjunctions

include adverbial clauses of time expressing the ‘when’ temporal with the notion of ‘the time when’ as in;
 (7) *Ciindi naakasika amunzi, wakajana bana boonse boona* ‘The time when she arrived home, she found all the children had already slept’.

As can be seen in the example above, the notion of *ciindi* ‘when’ is completed with the element *na-* in the verbal constituent. Equally, the notion of *kumwi* ‘while’ in (8) below is complete with the element *ka-* in the verbal *kajala* ‘while closing’. This therefore, entails that the operation of *ciindi* and *kumwi* obligatorily require a morphological means.

(8) *wakamanizya kukanana Haatimba kumwi kajala cijazyo*
u- -aka- manizya kukanana aatimba kumwi ka--a-
-jala he (TM) finish to talk Haatimba
while (2nd sg.) close *cijazyo...*
 door...
 ‘Haatimba completed speaking **while** closing the door’.
 (Sikota, 2017).

In the construction above, the morpheme *ka-* in the verbal *kajala* ‘while closing’ is essential in the completion of the meaning of the temporal subordinating conjunction *kumwi* ‘while’. The conditional adverbial type also posit the same phenomenon as can be seen in example (9) below.
 (9) *kuti kabayanda balaunka* ‘If they want they will go’

The following are other adverbial clause types in Tonga that

are introduced with a conjunction and another essential element for the completion of the meaning of the conjunction:

- Purpose; *kutegwa ka-* ‘so that’
- Manner; *mbuli mbu-* ‘like’
- Reason; *akaambo ka-* ‘because of’

naa kuti kakuli utujisi mumunzi, tulalya busu
 ‘if there is one who has them in the village, they eat mealie meal’.

The morpho-syntax of adverbial clause conjunctions

Adverbial clause conjunction in Tonga is not homogenous. There is a variety of morpho-syntactic categories that range from a single conjunction to a compound one. In this section, only adverbial clause conjunctions with a morphological means will be discussed.

Some adverbial clauses in Tonga have conjunctions that have the syntactic as well as morphological aspect. The combination of the two levels of linguistic analysis entails that clausal elements do not operate independently. In a temporal clause as in example (10) below, the conjunction has a syntactic element *mbuli* ‘as’ and morphological element *mbu* ‘

(10) *Mbuli mbubakasika kusyokwe, ...* ‘As they reached the bush...’

As can be seen in Table 3 below, the conjunction is composed of a mopho-syntactic constituent.

Table 3: Adverbial Morpheme Sequence

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conjunction	Subject marker	Tense marker	Verb root	Ending	Verb complement	
mbuli mbu-	-ba-	-aka-	-sik-	-a	ku-	syokwe,
as	they	prehodiernal past	reach-	(indicative)	at (the)	bush

Conclusion

This study has indicated that adverbial clauses in Tonga may contain a subordinator and another element to complete the meaning of the conjunction. A number of adverbial clause types operate at a morpho-syntactic level where there is a combination of both a syntactic and morphological element in the verbal constituent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Both lexical and grammatical tone effect should be studied in the language as well as other Zambian languages;
2. A detailed study of adverbial clauses should be done in other Zambian languages so as to develop the linguistics of Zambian languages. This will in turn make a tangible contribution to the field of theoretical linguistics.
3. Corpus should be used for classroom methodology so as to make discoveries of some rare but salient phenomena of particular expressions or language usage.
4. Adverbial clauses in Tonga should be computed in databases. This will enhance quick reference and access whenever need arises.

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