Relative and Conditional Clause Constructions in Ìyàgbà Dialect

Oluwole Samuel Akintoye

Ekiti State University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Akintoye Oluwole Samuel, Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts, Ekiti State University, Iworoko road, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, 360213. E-mail: akinwolesam1@gmail.com

Relative Clause has been discussed as a subordinate clause used to qualify a noun. It narrows down the meaning of the noun it qualifies. A relative clause marker tí is inserted to accomplish the noun qualified having coded in the sentence initially in Yoruba language on the one hand. On the other hand, a conditional clause in Yoruba language is introduced with tí-clause by coding it in the sentence initially as well. The paper focuses on relative clause and conditional clause constructions in the Ìyàgbà dialect of Yoruba; a regional dialect in the north-east Yoruba. The author observes that though there are many scholarly works on the relative and conditional clause constructions in the Yoruba language, attention has not been paid to the relative and conditional clause constructions in the dialects of Yoruba. The data were collected from the informants from these dialect communities who reside in these communities and speak the dialects fluently, and the literature materials on these topics. The data presentation shall be based on descriptive analysis. Findings reveal that relative clause markers in the Ìyàgbà dialect are in complementary distribution; they occur in an exclusive environment. Apart from that, conditional clause markers are not attested in the dialect

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Relative Clause Construction in both standard Yoruba and its dialects has attracted the attention of Yoruba scholars. Bamgbose (1967; 1975a; 1975b; 1990) and Awobuluyi (1975; 1978) independently explain that a relative clause is derived from a simple sentence and it is used to qualify a noun. These two scholars accept that a relative clause is introduced by a *tí*-clause which appears immediately after the relativized items as shown below.

Ọmọ tí ẹkùn bí
Child REL tiger bear
The child that tiger gave birth to

The status of **tí**-clause has generated significant arguments among Yoruba scholars. For instance, Bamgbose (1975, pp. 1-16) is of the opinion that not all the clauses introduced by **tí**-clause are relative clauses. Hence, it is not sufficient to use the presence of **tí**- clause as evidence of a structure being a relative clause. He claims that while it is true that a **tí**-clause can introduce a relative clause, it as well introduces nominalization having a factive and a manner meaning.

Lílú tí Olú ń lu ìlù
The fact that Olu beat the drum
The manner at which Olu beat the drum

A **tí**-clause introduces a relative clause when it appears after relativized NPs and also nominalization having a factive and a manner meaning when it occurs after nominalized verbs.

Awobuluyi (1975, pp. 1-11) has a contrary opinion. While Bamgbose argues that **tí**-clause only introduces a relative clause when it occurs after a true noun and nominalization when it occurs after a nominalized verb. According to Awobuluyi (1975, pp. 1-11), **tí**-clause always introduces a relative clause construction when it appears after the relativized items whether the relativzed item is a noun or a nominalized verb and it conveys a relative clause meaning. Akintoye (2015, pp. 40-45) is of the opinion that **tí**-clause performs dual functions; it functions as both a relative marker and a conditional clause marker. It introduces a relative clause when it occurs after the relativized items and a conditional clause when it appears at the initial position of a conditional sentence.

The focus of this paper is to examine relative and conditional clause constructions in the Ìyàgbà dialect and compare them with how the two clauses operate in other dialects of Yoruba. This research work will be a contribution to the existing works on the syntax of Yoruba dialects. The data presentation for this paper shall be based on descriptive analysis. This will enable the author to have a comprehensive explanation on the operation of relative and conditional clause constructions in the dialect under discussion. The data were collected from the native speakers of Ìyàgbà dialect. They reside in the dialect communities and they are fluent in speaking the dialect. Some of the informants are farmers and illiterates. They do not see any value in researching their dialect. Therefore, they did not give the author enough information. Because the author is not a member of the dialect community, some of the informants were suspicious and very careful in their response to the author's interview. The author also makes use of texts and articles in journals on relative and conditional clause constructions in the standard Yoruba and its dialects.

The paper is divided into three parts. Part one is the introduction. Part two contains the conditional clause construction in Ìyàgbà dialect. The focus of part three is the relative clause construction in Ìyàgbà dialect.

Materials and Methods

Conditional Clause in Ìyàgbà Dialect

Ìyàgbà dialect is one of the regional dialects spoken in the Northeast Yoruba according to Oyelaran (1977) and Awobuluyi (1998). Ìyàgbà speakers occupy the Northeast of Kogi-State and comprise three Local Government Areas. They are; Ìyàgbà West with the headquarters at Ìgbáruku, Ìyàgbà East with the headquarters at Ìsánlu and Mòpàmuró Local Government with the headquarters at Mòpà. Each Local Government Area has many dialect communities under it which may not be possible to cover in a work like this. Therefore, the discussion and analysis shall be based on the sub-dialect of Mòpà. It is a good representative of other sub-dialects because all the sub-dialects of Ìyàgbà are mutually intelligible.

Like the standard Yoruba and its dialects, Conditional Clauses are attested in Ìyàgbà dialect of Yoruba. According to Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 52), a conditional clause is an adverbial clause that indicates a possible situation and its consequence. What Kirkpatrick's definition implies is that there are two events in a conditional clause in which one event gives rise to the other. This claim is similar to the claim in Awobuluyi (2013, pp. 254-294) who views a conditional clause as two events in which one occurs before the other and the second event modifies the first one.

Awobuluyi (1978, pp. 111-135) had earlier defined a conditional clause as a sentential modifier, modifying another sentence. Bamgbose (1967, p. 28; 1990, p. 197) views the conditional clause as an event that has never occurred. Both Awobuluyi (1978, pp. 111-135) and Bamgbose (1990, p. 97) are of the opinion that a conditional clause in Yoruba language is marked with the introducers **bí** and **tí** and the adverb **bá** as shown below.

1 a. tí Olú bá dé kí ó jẹun
         COMP Olu be come COMP 3sg eat
         If Olu comes let him eat.

    b. tí òjò bá rò, Olú máa lọ oko
         COMP ojo be fall, Olú PREV go farm
         If it rains, we shall go to farm.

    c. bí Òjó bá lówó, ẹ máa gbádùn
         COMP Ojo be have money, 2pl PREV enjoy
         If Ojo has money, you will enjoy.

A look at the examples above shows that conditional clause markers **tí** and **bi** occupy the sentence initial position while the preverb **bá** 'be' preposes the verb **dé** 'come', **rò** 'rain' and **ní** 'have' respectively. Conditional clauses are transposable in the standard Yoruba. That is, the two structures that form a conditional sentence can be displaced such that the conditional markers will appear in the middle position as demonstrated below

2 ai. tí Olú bá dé kí ó jẹun
         COMP Olu be come COMP 3sg eat
         If Olu comes let him eat.

    ii. kí Olú jẹun tí ó bá dé
         COMP Olu eat COM 2sg be come
         Let Olu eat if he comes.

    bi. bí Tólá bá lówó, ẹ máa gbádùn
         COMP Tola be have money, 2pl PREV enjoy
         If Tola has money, you will enjoy.

    ii. ẹ máa gbádùn bí Tólá bá lówó
         2pl PREV enjoy COMP Tola be have money
         You will enjoy if Tola has money.

In examples (aii and bii) the subordinate conditional clauses **tí ó bá dé** 'if he comes' and **bí Tólá bá lówó** 'if Tola has money' occupy the middle position respectively.

Like the standard Yoruba, conditional sentences are present in the dialects of Yoruba. For instance, although the conditional clause markers appear at the sentence initial position, they vary form one dialect to the other. For instance, Ondó dialect employs **di** while Èkìtì dialect employs **kí** to mention a few as demonstrated below.

3. **Ondó dialect**
    Di Olú bá wa, á ka jẹun
    COMP Olu be come PREVs eat
    If Olu comes, he will eat

    Di iba i bá nówó ẹ ka gbádùn
    COMP father be have money 2sg PREVs enjoy
    If father is rich, you will enjoy.

4. **Ọ̀mùọ̀ dialect**

a. Ki Olú bá á, aá jẹun
COMP Olu be come PREV eat
If Olu comes, he will eat.

b. Ki bàbá bá léó, ẹ̀ ka gbádùn
COMP father be have money 2sg PREV enjoy
If father is rich, you will enjoy.

Examples 3 (a, b) and 3 (a, b) above indicate that as it is found in the standard Yoruba, the preverb **bá** 'be' also accomplishes the function of a conditional clause marker in the dialects of Yoruba.

A question we should ask is whether the presence of conditional clause markers and the preverb **bá** in the conditional sentence are enough to identify a conditional construction in the standard Yoruba and its dialects. The reason both conditional markers and **bá** can sometimes be deleted in the construction without altering meaning as shown below.

5. **Standard Yoruba**

a. Bí o bá fẹ́ bí o bá kọ̀, ó maá tẹ̀lé ẹ
COMP 2sg be like COMP 2sg be refuse 3sgPREV follow you
Whether you like it or not, he will follow you

b. Bí o fẹ́ bí o kọ̀, ó maá tẹ̀lé é
COMP 2sg like COMP 2sg refuse, 3sgPREV follow you
Whether you like it or not, he will follow you

c. O fẹ́ o kọ̀, ó maá tẹ̀lé ẹ
2sg like 2sg refuse, 3sg PREV follow you
Whether you like it or not, he will follow you.

6a. Bí ọjọ̀ bá rọ bí ọjọ̀ kò bá rọ, iṣu á ta
COMP rain be fall COMP rain NEG be fall, yam PREV germinate.
Whether it rains or not, the yam will germinate

b. Bí ọjọ́ rọ̀ bí ọjọ̀ kò rọ, iṣu á ta
COMP rain fall COMP rain NEG fall, yam PREV germinate
Whether it rains or not, yam will germinate

c. Ọjọ́ rọ̀, ọjọ̀ kò rọ, iṣu á ta
Rain fall, rain NEG fall, yam PREV germinate
Whether it rains or not, yam will germinate

There are some dialects of Yoruba, especially the regional dialect under study, where a conditional clause marker is not attested. For instance, unlike the standard Yoruba and some other dialects of Yoruba where conditional clause markers are attested as demonstrated in examples (2), (3) and (4) above, a conditional clause marker is not obtainable in the Ìyàgbà dialect as shown below.

7. **Mọ̀pà dialect**

a. Olú bá rè, ghọ̀n á ghá
Olu be go, 3plPREV come
If Olu goes, they will come

b. Ghọn bá jẹun alẹ́ tán, ẹ gha retí gha
3pl be eat night finish, 2pl PREV expect 1pl
If they finish lunch, be expecting us.

c. Olu bá máà jìyà, ẹ ra rè
Olu be NEG punish, NEG go
If Olu is not discipline, he will not go.

In examples 6 (b) and 7 (b) above, the preverb **bá** 'be' is deleted and in examples 4 (c) and 6 (c), both the conditional clause marker and the preverb **bá** are deleted. Whereas, a conditional clause marker is absent in the examples (7) above, but the preverb **bá** 'be' which always occurs with the conditional clause marker in the standard Yoruba and in some dialects of Yoruba is present. Even when the two conditional structures are transposed, the conditional marker is still absent as demonstrated below.

8ai. Olú bá rè, ghọ̀n á ghá
Olu be go, 3pl PREV come
If Olu goes, they will come

ii. Ghọ̀n á ghá Olú bá rè
3pl PREV come Olu be go
They will come if Olu goes

bi. Olú bá jẹun alẹ́ tán, ẹ gha retí rẹ̀
Olu be eat night finish, 2pl PREV expect 3sg
If Olu finish lunch, be expecting him.

ii. Ẹ ghá retí Tolú ó bá jẹun alẹ́ tán
2pl PREV expect Tolu 3sg be eat night finish
Be expecting Tolu if he finishes lunch

It is evident, according to the examples (8) above that conditional marker is not observable in the Ìyàgbà dialect. One can now say that the occurrence of both the conditional clause marker and the preverb **bá** is obligatory in both standard Yoruba and its dialects on the one hand. On the other hand, the realization of a conditional sentence depends on the discretion of the native speaker At times, if one compares the occurrence of the conditional markers and **bá** with the occurrence of the relative clause **tí** and the focus clause **ni** in the sentence, it may be evident that these two markers are also obligatorily deleted as demonstrated below.

9. **Standard Yoruba**

ai. Èyí tí ó bá wù ọ́ ni kí o wi
This REL RSP be like 2sg FOC COMP 2sg say
Say whatever you like.

ii. Èyí wù ọ́ kí o wí
This like 2sg COMP 2sg say
Say whatever you like

bi. Ẹni tí o rí ni o bá lọ
Person REL 2sg see FOC 2sg be go
You follow whosoever You see,

ii. Ẹni wọ́n rí wọ́n bá lọ
Person 3pl see 3pl follow
They follow whosoever they see

In examples 7 (aii) and 9 (bii) above, both relative and focus markers are deleted without altering the meaning of the expressions. This shows that in the standard Yoruba and its dialects, the occurrence of relative, focus and conditional markers is obligatory as earlier noted and their realization depends on the discretion of interlocutors.

In addition to this, **bí** and **bá** can also appear in expressions without giving conditional clause

meaning as shown below.

10. **Standard Yoruba**

ai. Olu bá gba kámú ní tìrẹ̀ nigba tí ó sún un
Olu be accept fate PART his when RSP feed up 3sg
Olu then accept fate when he was fed up.

ii. Olú bá jókòó rẹ̀ jẹ́ẹ́jẹ́ nígbà tí kò mọ èyí tí ì bá ṣe
Olu be sit his gently when NEG know this REL PREV be do
Olu then sat down gently when he did not know what he could do

iii. Ò bá kúkú gbà fún Ọlọrun ní órí ọ̀rọ̀ yìí
2sg be ADV accept PREP God PREP head word this
You had better accept for God on this matter.

bi. Bí wọ́n ṣe jí owó náà kò yé e
Be 3pl do steal money DET NEG understand 3sg
He did not understand the way they stole the money

ii. Bí Olú ṣe gbọ́ ọ̀rọ̀ náà ni ó bú sẹ́kún
Be Olu do hear word DET FOC 3sg burst to tear
As Olu heard the matter, he was crying

In examples 10 (i-iii) and 9 (i, ii), both **bá** and **bí** function as adverbs. If one compares the examples above with examples in (7), one can easily say that **bá** in the conditional sentence in the Ìyàgbà dialect cannot be an introducer of a conditional sentence. A critical look at these examples shows that in both examples 6 and 8 (ai-iii), the preverb **bá** 'be' preposes verbs. What we are trying to put forward is that if **bá** 'be' performs the same function in examples 7 and 9 (i-iii) above, it cannot be said that **bá** is a recoverability of the conditional clause marker in the Ìyàgbà dialect unless there is evidence that **bá** performs dual function. The observation is that although the Ìyàgbà dialect does not have a conditional clause marker, a conditional sentence is realized by discretion of the native speaker.

Results and Discussion

Relative Clause Construction in the Ìyàgbà Dialect

Scholars like Awobuluyi (1978, pp. 35-37) and Bamgbose (1990, p. 123) have explained that a relative clause construction is derived by movement transformation. A simple sentence is reduced to a relative clause by moving the relativized items outside the higher clause to the initial position of the relative clause construction. According to Hastings (2004, pp. 54-60), Mureili (2008, pp. 1-4) and Andreea (2010, p. 7), a relative clause is an attribute which qualifies the head of the noun phrase. It narrows down the potential reference of an NP by specifying the role of the reference of that NP.

Following the definition of the scholars above, a relative clause is a subordinate clause that qualifies and narrows down the meaning of a noun. Although Kayne (1994), Borsly (1997, p. 629) and Bianchi (2000, p. 145) mention the different types of relative clauses; Restrictive, Unrestrictive and Free or Zero relative

clauses, in this paper, we shall limit our discussion to the restrictive relative clause. The reason is that the restrictive relative clause is more prominent in the standard Yoruba and its dialects.

The structures of a relative clause construction in both the standard Yoruba and its dialects are identical in the sense that there is movement transformation as earlier noted and the relative marker comes after the relativized items. The only difference is that a relative marker manifests itself in different forms in the dialects of Yoruba. For instance, it takes **tí** form in the standard Yoruba and in some Northwest Yoruba such as Ìbàdàn, Òṣogbo, Ṣakí and Ìgbòho to mention a few. A relative marker takes two forms; **ghin** and **n** in the Ìyàgbà dialect as demonstrated below.

11. **Mọ̀pà dialect**

ai. Ọmọ jé iṣu
Child eat yam
The child ate Yam

ii. Ọmọ n ó jẹ iṣu
Child REL RSP eat yam
The child that ate yam

bi. Ó kọ́ ilé
3sg build house
He built a house

ii. Òun n ó kọ́ ilé
3sg REL RSP build house
He that built a house

12ai. Ọmọ jé iṣu
Child eat yam
The child ate Yam

ii. Iṣu ghin ọmọ jẹ
Yam REL child eat
The yam that the child ate

bi. Ghọ́n kọ́ ilé
3pl build house
They built a house

ii. Ilé ghin ghọ́n kọ́
House REL 3pl build
The house that they built

In examples 11 (aii), 11 (bii) above, the relative clause marker **n** co-occurs with **ó** whereas the relative clause marker **ghin** co-occurs with ọmọ 'child', the 3sg **ghọ́n** 'they' in examples 12 (aii), 12 (bii). This indicates that each of the relative clause markers **n** and **ghin** is restricted to a particular domain; **n** occurs with a resumptive pronoun whereas **ghin** occurs with NPs. If one considers the Ìkàlẹ̀ dialect, there is a tendency for one to view **n** as the proform of the relativized items or a reduced form of **òun** as manifested below.

13. **Ìkálẹ̀ dialect**

a. Udàbó n/òun ó mú pa ejò
Cutlass pro 3sg take kill snake
The cutlass that he took to kill the snake.

b. Òkúta n/òun Olú jù
Stone pro Olu throw
The stone that Olu threw.

A critical look at the examples above shows that **n/òun** are allomorphs and they refer to the relativized NPs; **udàbó** 'cutlass' and **òkúta** 'stone' respectively. This type of proform is common in Yoruba literature as demonstrated below.

12a. A-ṣápẹ́-fún-wèrè-jó òun pẹlú wèrè ẹgbèra ni
A person that beats bell for a mad man to dance, he and the mad are equal.

b. A-lù-fún-wèrè-jó òun wèrè jọ lòkanùn kanùn
A person that beats drum for a man to dance, he and the mad   man are the same thing

(Olatubosun, 1973, p. 83)

In the examples above, the 3sg **òun** 'he' is referring to the subject NPs **A-ṣápẹ́-fún-wèrè-jó** 'he that beats bell for a mad man' and **A-lù-fún-wèrè-jó** 'he that beats drum for a mad man'. But if one considers the example below, one may argue that **n** cannot be the reduced form of **òun** because if it is so, **òun** and **n** could not have co-occurred.

15. **Ìyàgbà dialect**
Òun n ó mú òdùn lu ọmọ
3sg REL RSP take cane beat child
The one that took cane to beat the child.

Conclusion

Conditional and relative clause constructions in the dialect of Ìyàgbà, a regional dialect in Northeast Yoruba, have been examined. Unlike the standard Yoruba and some dialects of Yoruba, a conditional clause marker is not attested in the Ìyàgbà dialect. The author also argued in this paper that the presence of **bá** 'be' is not enough to determine a conditional clause construction in the Ìyàgbà dialect and that the realization of a conditional clause depends on the understanding of the native speakers through intonation. The author explained further that a relative clause marker takes two forms in the Ìyàgbà dialect; **n** and **ghin,** which occur in different domains. For instance, **n** co-occurs with a resumptive pronoun and **ghin** co-occurs with noun phrases. Further research on relative clause and conditional clause constructions will need to focus on comparative analysis of relative clause and conditional clause constructions in Ìyàgbà and the other dialects of Yoruba. This will enable the author to see if what is discussed in the paper is obtainable in other dialects of Yoruba.

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