

Personal Inflection in Eleme

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0 Introduction

Eleme (Ogonoid, Niger-Congo)

Census: 58,000 (UBS 1990), 51,228 (Nigerian Congress Online).

Status: Stable.

Location: Eleme Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Economy: Agricultural: Small scale sustenance farming: yams, cassava, palm fruit etc. Increasing numbers are employed in the industrial industries, based on Eleme land.

1 Subject Marking

(1)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| a) àmi n-dé òdza
1SG 1SG-eat food
'I eat.' | b) à?o dé òdza
2SG eat food
'You eat.' | c) èbai r?-dé òdza
1PL 1PL-eat food
'We eat.' |
|--|--|---|

(2)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) àmi n-gá-dzódzo
1SG 1SG-MOD-swim.swim
'I should have swum.' | (b) à?o o-ká-dzo-dzódzo
2SG 2SG-MOD-REDPL-swim.swim
'You should have swum.' |
|---|---|

- (c) èbai r?-ká-dzo-dzódzo
1PL 1PL-MOD-REDPL-swim.swim
'We should have swum.'

(3)

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) àmi ma-dzódzo
1SG 1SG.DEF-swim
'I did swim.' | (b) èbai r?-wa-dzódzo
1PL 1PL-DEF-swim
'We did swim.' |
| (c) à?o wa-dzódzo
2SG DEF-swim
'You did swim.' | (d) òbàù n?-wa-dzódzo
2PL 2PL-DEF-swim
'You did swim.' |
| (e) à?nè a-dzódzo
3SG 3SG.DEF-swim
'He did swim.' | (f) àbà ba-dzódzo
3PL 3PL.DEF-swim
'They did swim.' |

2 Various Syncretisms

(4)

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) à?o ka-dé-dé òdza
2SG MOD-REDPL-eat food
'You are still eating.' | (b) à?nè ka-dé-dé òd
3SG MOD-REDPL-eat foc
'He is still eating.' |
| (c) òbàù ka-dé-dé-i òdza
2PL MOD-REDPL-eat food
'You are still eating.' | (d) àmi n-ga-dé-dé
1SG 1SG-MOD-REDPL-
'I am still eating.' |

3 Primary Object Pattern (Dryer 1986)

(5)

- (a) àmĩ nɛ: òsǎ no (b) òbàù ka-nɛ-nɛ-í-ye òsǎ
 2SG give-3SG book DEM 2PL MOD-REDPL-give-2PL-3SG book
 ‘You gave me the book.’ ‘You will still give him the book.’

- (c) è-olá:-ba nò:
 3-sell.HAB-3PL oil
 ‘He sells them oil.’

- (d) ònɛ kpā: bòrɛ ònɛ lǒi òkpa-i-ye
 person drum lend person tell.stories drum-EPEN-3SG.POSS
 ‘The drummer lent the story teller his drum.’

4 Inflection in Auxiliary Verb Constructions

4.1 Basic Pattern

(5)

- (a) àbà ba-bere de àdʒɔ̀ òndʒa (b) àmĩ ma-bere de àdʒɔ̀ òndʒa
 3PL 3PL.DEF-PERF eat much food 1SG 1SG.DEF-PERF eat much food
 ‘They have eaten a lot of food.’ ‘I have eaten a lot of food.’

(6)

- (a) ò-bo-í-ru e-bui òsǎ (b) è-bo-rí-ru e-bui òsǎ
 2-should-2PL-PRCL DEP-read book 3-should-3PL-PRCL DEP-read book
 ‘You should read the book’ ‘They should read the book.’

(7)

- (a) ò-tǒ-í-r-é-fɔ̀-ɛ òsógũ
 2-be.PAST-2PL-PRCL-DEP-plant-PRCL pumpkin.leaf
 ‘You were planting pumpkin.’

- (b) è-tǒ-rí-r-é-fɔ̀-ɛ òsógũ
 3-be.PAST-3PL-PROG-PRCL-plant-PRCL pumpkin.leaf
 ‘They were planting pumpkin.’

(8)

- (a) òbàù ndʒɛ-í-ru e-gbòì ètʃũ
 2PL be.NEG-2PL-PRCL DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘You are not stitching clothes.’

- (b) àbà ndʒɛ-rí-ru e-gbòì ètʃũ
 3PL be.NEG-3PL-PRCL DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘They are not stitching clothes.’

4.2 Split Pattern

(9)

- (a) èbai rɛ-do-do-rõ né-e òsǎ
 1PL 1PL-REDPL-be.PRES-PRCL give-3SG book
 ‘We are still giving him books.’

- (b) àbà ba-bere tʃũ òsǎ no né-e
 3PL 3PL.DEF-PERF take book DEM give-3SG
 ‘They have picked up the book and given it to him.’

4.3 Inverted Pattern

(10)

(a) òbàù bo-r-e-né-í-e òsǎ
2PL should-PRITCL-DEP-give-2PL-3SG book
'You should give him a book.'

(b) àbà bo-r-e-ne-e òsǎ
3PL should-PRITCL-DEP-give-3SG book
'They should give him a book.'

4.4 Basic (3PL) and Inverted (2PL) in the Same Paradigm

(11)

(a) òbàù ka-kpǎnǎ-í be dé énu
2PL MOD-want-2PL COP eat something
'You want to/are about to eat something.'

(b) àbà ka-ra-kpǎnǎ be dé énu
3PL MOD-3PL-want COP eat something
'They want to/are about to eat something.'

(12)

(a) ò-ʔoto tʃá-í epó
2-AUX run-2PL afraid
'You became very afraid.'

(b) è-ʔoto-rí tʃá epó
3-AUX-3PL run afraid
'You became very afraid.'

(c) ò-bere ke-á-í m̀bó
2-PERF slaughter-HAB-2PL goat
'You used to slaughter goats.'

(d) è-bere-rí ke-á m̀bó
3-PERF-3PL slaughter-HAB goat
'They used to slaughter goats.'

(13)

(a) àmí bere fò-énu
1SG PERF plant-something
'I used to plant something.'

(b) òbàù bere fò-áí-
2PL PERF plant-2
'You used to plant'

(c) àʔo bere fò-énu
2SG PERF plant-something
'You used to plant something.'

(d) àbà bere-ri fò-é
3PL PERF-3PL plant
'They used to plant'

(e) ànè bere fò-énu
3SG PERF plant-something
'He used to plant something.'

(f) èbǎi re-bere f
1PL 1PL-PERF
'We used to plant'

(14)

(a) rí-m-bere fò tʃátʃa:ma
NEG.1SG-1SG-PERF plant beans
'I didn't used to plant beans.'

(b) rè-bere fò
NEG.1PL-PERF plant
'We didn't used t'

(c) ró-bere fò tʃátʃa:ma
NEG.2SG-PERF plant beans
'You didn't used to plant beans.'

(d) ró-bere fò-á
NEG.2PL-PERF plant
'You didn't used'

(e) ré-bere fò tʃátʃa:ma
NEG.3SG-PERF plant beans
'He didn't used to plant beans.'

(f) ré-bere-ri
NEG.3PL-PERF-3PL
'They used to pla'

(15)

(a) n̄dzēsē b-òbà e-bò-e-í odʒídʒi n̄o
must.NEG COP-2PL DEP-tie-PRITCL-2PL rope DEM
'You must not tie the rope.'

(b) $\bar{n}d\bar{z}\bar{e}s\bar{e}-r\bar{i}$ b-àbà e-bò-e odzídzi no
 must.NEG-3PL COP-3PL DEP-tie-PRTPCLP rope DEM
 ‘They must not tie the rope.’

- bere ‘already’ kporo ‘succeed in’
- ʔoto ‘quite/well’ bábá ‘ever, able to can’
- kára ‘merely, just’ tere ‘again’
- tótó ‘ever, able to can’

4.5 Split/Doubled Pattern: One ‘category’ is split-marked, one is double marked

(16)

(a) $\bar{n}-do-r-e-gb\bar{o}i$ ètʃí
 1SG-be.PRES-PRTPCL-DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘I am stitching clothes.’

(b) $\bar{o}-do-r-e-gb\bar{o}i$ ètʃí
 2-be.PRES-PRTPCL-DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘You are stitching clothes.’

(c) $\bar{e}-do-r-e-gb\bar{o}i$ ètʃí
 3-be.PRES-PRTPCL-DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘He is stitching clothes.’

(d) $r\bar{e}-do-r-e-gb\bar{o}i$ ètʃí
 1PL-be.PRES-PRTPCL-DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘We are stitching clothes.’

(e) $\bar{o}-do-\bar{i}-r\bar{u}$ e-gbò-i ètʃí
 2-be.PRES-2PL-PRTPCL DEP-stitch-2PL clothes
 ‘You are stitching clothes.’

(f) $\bar{e}-do-r\bar{i}-r-e-gb\bar{o}i$ ètʃí
 3-be.PRES-3PL-PRTPCL-DEP-stitch clothes
 ‘They are stitching clothes.’

(17)

(a) $\bar{o}-bo-\bar{i}-ru$ e-ma:-í àdádzi ònène
 2-should-2PL-PRTPCL DEP-bring-2PL Adaji gift
 ‘You should bring Adaji a gift.’

(b) $\bar{e}-bo-r\bar{i}-ru$ e-ma: àdádzi ònène
 3-should-3PL-PRTPCL DEP-bring Adaji gift
 ‘They should bring Adaji a gift.’

(18)

(a) $\bar{o}b\bar{a}u$ tʃú-í òsǎ no ne-í-e
 2PL take-2PL book DEM give-2PL-3SG
 ‘You delivered the books to him.’

(b) $\bar{a}b\bar{a}$ tʃú-rí òsǎ no ne:
 3PL take-3PL book DEM give.3SG
 ‘They delivered the books to him.’

(19)

(a) $\bar{o}-dose$ dé òdza
 2-must eat food
 ‘You (SG) must eat food.’

(b) $\bar{o}b\bar{a}u$ dose dé-í
 2PL must eat-2PL
 ‘You (PL) must eat food.’

(c) $\bar{a}b\bar{a}$ dose-ri dé òdza
 3PL must-3PL eat food
 ‘They must eat food.’

5 Comparative Ogoni/Kegboid (Gokana, Kana)

(20) Gokana

- (a) *aè tú ííra kùùmà nùtɔ*
3-PAST take.SV key key open-INSTR door
'he opened the door with the key'
(Roberts 1985: 262)
- (b) *m̀m̀ tú kpègè zamá gíòrò*
1-PAST take.SV money buy-INSTR slave
'I bought a slave with the money'

(21) Gokana

- (a) *m̀ tú-ù gíma kpɔɔmá nɔm*
1 take-1/2AGR knife cut-INSTR animal
'I cut the meat with the knife'
(Roberts 1985: 263)
- (b) *ò tú-ù ìpkpè bùmà múúró*
you take-1/2AGR spoon cook-INSTR soup
'you cook the soup with a spoon'

(22) Gokana

- (a) *oò tu-i gíma kpɔɔma-i nɔm*
2PL-past take-2PL knife cut-2PL animal
'you cut the meat with a knife'
(Roberts 1985: 263)
- (b) *aè kɔ aè túè gíma kpɔɔmaè nɔm*
he.PAST say he.PAST take-SS knife cut-SS animal
'he_i said he_i cut the meat with a knife'

(23) Kana

m̀-wèè *b̀ỳỳ* *kpá*
1-PAST read book
'I read a book/books'
(Ikoro 1995: 89)

(24) Kana

- (a) *māā fā nám*
1.PROG weed farmland
'I am weeding farmland'
(Ikoro 1995: 165)
- (b) *m̀-líù wíí*
1-come:FACT farm
'I came to the farm'
(Ikoro 1995: 169)

(25) Kana

- (a) *m̀-sá m̀-dzīgē*
1DF-AUX 1OPT-s snatch
'I may snatch her'
(Ikoro 1995: 196)
- (b) *Legbo é-sá à-lú*
L. 3DF-AUX 3.OPT-come
'Legbo may join us later'

(26) Kana

- (a) *m-wèè ā-kūē*
1-PAST 2-call
'I called you'
- (b) *m-wèè ā-dáb mùè*
1-PAST 2-MOD see
'I was able to see you'
- (c) *m-dāc̄*
1-MOE
'I can'

6 References

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Roberts, Ian. 1985. Serial Verbs and Government Binding I
African Linguistics supplement 9, pp. 262-68.

Abbreviations Used

A		AGR	agreement
ANT	anterior	ASP	aspect
AUGM	augmentative	AUX	auxiliary
BEN	benefactive	CL.I	Class I
COMP	complementizer	CONSEC	consecutive
CONT	continuative	COP	copula
DAT	dative	DEF	definite past
DEM	demonstrative	DEP	dependent
EP(EN)	epenthetic	FACT	factual
HAB	habitual	HYP	hypothetical
IM	immediative	IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfect	INDIC	indicative
INF	infinitive	INSTR	instrumental
INTR	intransitive	IPFV	Imperfective
JUNCT	juncture	MOD	modal
NEG	negative	P(E)RF	perfect(ive)
PFV	perfective	PL	plural
PLUP	pluperfect	POSS	possessive
POT	potential	PROG	progressive
PRES	present	PROX	proximate
PRTCL	particle	REDPL	reduplication
REL	relativ[iz]e[r]	REM	remote
SG	singular	SPF	specific
SS	same subject	STAT	stative
STBLZR	stabilizer	SV	serial verb
T/A	tense/aspect	TNS	tense
V	verb	VE	valency external
VENT	ventitive	VN	verbal noun
1	first person	2	second person
3	third person		