

INTRODUCTION

1.0 GENERAL BACKGROUND

This is a long essay on the noun phrase of kurama language. It is aimed at describing the structure of noun phrase of the language under Government and Binding syntax. Kurama language is a language spoken in Lere local government Area of Kaduna State. The tribe known generally as the Kurama, but who themselves the Akurmi (Sing. Bukurmi), or forest people, are situated to the north and north-west of the Katab in the Zaria province. They number between 11,000 and 12,000 persons and are administered by the Emir of Zaria.

The study opens with an introduction and focuses on the Historical background of Kurama, its social grouping and emblems, its socio-cultural profile, geographical location and genetic classification. It also covers the scope and organization of study, theoretical framework, data collection, procedures data analysis and the brief review of the chosen framework.

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

According to Meek (1931), the kurama speakers claim a traditional connection with Kano, and in proof of this claim assert that the Kurmi market at Kano derived its name from them (viz. the Akurmi). The more learned among them, i.e. those most influenced by contact with Muslims, profess to be able to trace the wandering on the tribe back to the time when they dwell at Medina.

In later days, they were subject to ancient kingdom of Zaria, and during the days when Zaria fell under the influence of Kebbi and Songhai, the Kurama suffered at the hands of the Kebbawa who raided the district annually for slaves. They are also raided frequently by the Ningi in the nineteenth century. The Kurama are "playmates" with the people of Kano, and with the Kanuri, but whether this is due to any close association in the past cannot now be determined. What is certain is that the Kurama belong linguistically to the classifying group of The Sudanic division i.e. to the so-called Semi Bantu speaking group of the Nigerian middle belt zone.

1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE

The Kurama people or speakers are found in Lere local government area of Kaduna State of Nigeria. The kurama people are located at the Garu-Kurama district. The line is Southeastern part of Kaduna state, North of Damakasuwa and South from Kumana.

According to Crozier (1976), Kurama language belong to Benue Congo, eastern Kainji and Northern Jos. 220 (NAT 1949), 2,000 (STL 1973). Kurama is along Kaduna/Jos road. From Jos, it is 140 km and from Kaduna, it is 250 km.

1.2.1 SOCIAL GROUPINGS AND EMBLEMS

According to oral history, the Kurama consist of a number of exogenous divisions wholly or partially localized. Thus the small clan of the Kamau is wholly localized at the village – area of Guru, whereas sections of the Abisi clan are to be found at a number of different village areas. Viz Garu, Srubu, Damakasuwa, and Kudaru. It appeared that in some instances a number of exogamous units share a common title and a common emblem, but that intermarriage between the units is permissible.

The Har Asre, for example consist of the following sub-divisions, all of which respect the crocodile

- (1) Koranga
- (2) Kipiri
- (3) Tamto
- (4) Tasabo
- (5) Gama
- (6) Tigena
- (7) Tungzu
- (8) Bundi

A Koranga man may not marry a Koranga woman, but he may marry a woman of any of the other subdivisions with the exception of Kipiri, the koranga and kipiri consider themselves to

be related through a common forefather, a relationship which cannot now be demonstrated genealogically. It would seem, therefore, that the Asare at one time constituted a single exogamous clan, but that with the increase or spread of the clan exogamy was replaced by a local exogamy.

There are numerous other kurama clans (e.g. the Asa, Asana, Bisawa, Awai, Akurgi, Nargi, Gurya, etc)

1.2.2 Culture and Tradition

The Kurama people are largely enriched with traditional practices, which are often reflected in their various exogamous groups.

Firstly, the Areru appear to respect the cock (Bugwara). It was stated according to my informant that, if the husband of an Areru woman had a cock cooked in the compound, he had subsequently to purify the place where it had been cooked by sweeping it with the leaves of the locust bean and shea trees. Secondly, an Asare can play fearlessly with a crocodile; it is regarded as a relative to the Asare. If an Asare man sees the corpse of a crocodile he must dig a grave for it and bury it reverently, pushing the corpse into the grave with sticks.

1.2.3 MARRIAGE

The normal mode of obtaining a wife was, and is, by agricultural service plus cash and other payment to the girl's parents or guardians. The scale of payment of service of obtaining a wife was as follows:

An initial service extending over ten years, equal to the amount of work performable by three men for three days each year on the farm of the girl's father, and for one day on that of the girl's mother.

A bride-price of 40,000 – 60,000 cowries.

2,000 cowries, one basket of rice, guinea corn, one goat, four chickens and one pot of honey. These gifts were given during the concluding rites.

1.2.4 RELIGION

Few inquiries were made on the subject of religion. Muhammadanism is spreading, and those who have not embraced it practice a lackadaisical form of ancestor worship in which, as often among the semi-Bantu speaking tribes, the bull roarer (Makili) plays a prominent part. Noteworthy points are that, although women never resort to the ancestral graves, men perform their rites at the graves of female ancestors as well as of male.

1.2.5 Mode of Dressing

According to oral history, the Kurama people dress like the Hausa people. In the olden days, wools were woven to make strapless tops for the men who cover their private parts with animal skin. Wools are also woven for the women to make a long but not wide piece to cover their breasts. The females also cover with leaves from a tree, which looks like palm trees.

1.2.6 POLITICAL SYSTEM

Governance of Kurama

They practice traditional system of governance, where there is an exogamous and social group which is recognized as the chieftain whose duties are religious and social rather than political (the political chieftainship being purely a local matter), it is his business to settle individual and family disputes and allay ill-feeling within the kindred or clan. In addition to the clan or extended families who exercise a social authority not merely over their own households but over those of all younger brothers, cousins, and children.

1.2.7 SOCIO-LINGUISTIC PROFILE

Olaoye (2002: 98) defines socio-linguistic as "the study of various social, political, cultural and linguistic situations within a given speech community that give how language choice and use reveal the values, cultural beliefs and practices of the community". This shows that cultural beliefs, way of life etc cannot be separated from language. In other words, language and culture are inseparable bound.

Most Kurama speakers including the younger generation are bilingual. The older generations are not quite fluent in Hausa as the younger generation who through education hold position in administration and public services including the police. Through education, the

younger generations speak two or more languages i.e. Kurama, Hausa and English language making them bilingual.

1.3 GENETIC CLASSIFICATION OF KURAMA LANGUAGE

According to Comrie(1990), genetic classification is a sub-grouping of all relevant languages into genetic nodes. Kurama is under the Benue-Congo language family.

AFRICA

Afro Asiatic			Niger Kordofonian		Nilo Sahara			Khoisan
Niger Congo								Niger Kordofonian
Mande	Gur	Kwa		Benue-Congo	Adamawa			West
Eastern		Atlantic						
Isam	Kumana		Biron		Junkun			Kurama

1.4 SCOPE OF STUDY

This particular work focuses its attention on the formation of noun phrase in the Kurama language. The description will also delve on some of the peculiar features of the language. This research is expected to add to the linguistic finding on Kurama language.

1.5 ORGANISATION OF STUDY

This research work has five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction covering the historical background, socio-cultural and socio-linguistic profile of Kurama language and its speakers as well as the genetic classification, scope and organization of study, including theoretical framework, data collection, data analysis and a brief review of the chosen framework. Chapter two focuses on the basic syntactic concepts which include phrase structure rules, lexical categories basic word order and the sentences Types. Chapter three focuses on the aspect of noun phrase in Kurama language, chapter centers on the transformational processes of the language. Chapter five concludes the research work.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adapted in this research work is the theory of Government and Binding.

1.7 DATA COLLECTION

The data for this research were collected using the language informant to elicit the data. The Ibadan word list of (400) four hundred basic items is used for the collection.

The data were collected through direct interviews with the informants or language helper with the use of Ibadan wordlist which contains items that are illuminating and capable of making linguistically significant generalizations.

ASPECTS OF NOUN PHRASE IN KURAMA LANGUAGE

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