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 ǹdʒa
1SG 1SG-eat food
‘I eat.’

b) à?o dé ǹdʒa
2SG eat food
‘You eat.’

c) èbai re-dé ǹdʒa
1PL 1PL-eat food
‘We eat.’

(2)

(a) àmi n-gá-dʒá-ɗá
1SG 1SG-MOD-swim.swim
‘I should have swum.’

(b) à?o o-ká-dʒá-ɗá-ɗá
2SG 2SG-MOD-REDPL-swim.swim
‘You should have swum.’

(c) èbai re-ká-dʒá-ɗá-ɗá
1PL 1PL-MOD-REDPL-swim.swim
‘We should have swum.’

(3)

(a) àmi ma-dʒá
1SG 1SG.DEF-swim
‘I did swim.’

(b) èbai re-wa-dʒá
1PL 1PL-DEF-swim
‘We did swim.’

(c) à?o wa-dʒá
2SG DEF-swim
‘You did swim.’

(d) òbàù ne-wa-dʒá
2PL 2PL-DEF-swim
‘You did swim.’

(e) àpè a-dʒá
3SG 3SG.DEF-swim
‘He did swim.’

(f) àbà ba-dʒá
3PL 3PL-DEF-swim
‘They did swim.’

2 Various Syncretisms

(4)

(a) à?o ka-dé-ɗá
2SG MOD-REDPL-eat food
‘You are still eating.’

(b) àpè ka-dé-ɗá
3SG MOD-REDPL-eat food
‘He is still eating.’

(c) òbàù ka-dé-ɗá-i
2PL MOD-REDPL-eat food
‘You are still eating.’

(d) àmi n-gá-dé-ɗá
1SG 1SG-MOD-REDPL-eat
‘I am still eating.’
3 Primary Object Pattern (Dryer 1986)

(5)
(a) èmì ne: ñsà no 2SG give-3SG book DEM
(b) òbàù ka-ne-ne-i-ye ñsà 2PL MOD-redpl-give-2PL-3SG book
‘You gave me the book.’
(c) òlò: ñbà nà: 3-sell.
‘He sells them oil.’
(d) ène kpá: bòre ène lòì ñkpa-i-ye
person drum lend person tell.stories drum-EPEN-3SG.POSS
‘The drummer lent the story teller his drum.’

(6)
(a) ò-bó-i-ru e-buí ñsà 2-should-2PL-PRTCLE DEP-read book
(b) ò-bó-ri-ru e-buí ñsà 3-should-3PL-PRTCLE DEP-read book
‘You should read the book’
‘They should read the book.’

4 Inflection in Auxiliary Verb Constructions

4.1 Basic Pattern

(5)
(a) òbà ba-bere de òdʒo ñdʒa 3PL 3PL.DEF-PERC eat much food
(b) èmì ma-bere de òdʒo ñdʒa 1SG 1SG.DEF-PERC eat much food
‘They have eaten a lot of food.’
‘I have eaten a lot of food.’

(6)
(a) ò-bó-i-ru e-buí ñsà 2-should-2PL-PRTCLE DEP-read book
(b) ò-bó-ri-ru e-buí ñsà 3-should-3PL-PRTCLE DEP-read book
‘You should read the book’
‘They should read the book.’

4.2 Split Pattern

(9)
(a) òbàù ndʒe-i-ru e-gbóì ëtfú 2PL be.NEG-2PL-PRTCLE DEP-stitch clothes
‘You are not stitching clothes.’
(b) èbái re-do-do-rò nè-e ñsà 1PL 1PL-REDPL-be.pres-PRTCLE give-3SG book
‘We are still giving him books.’
(c) òbàù ñdʒe-i-ru e-gbóì ëtfú 3PL be.NEG-3PL-PRTCLE DEP-stitch clothes
‘They are not stitching clothes.’
(b) òbàù ba-bere òfú ñsà no nè-e 3PL 3PL.DEF-PERC take book DEM give-3SG
‘They have picked up the book and given it to him.’
You used to slaughter goats.

They want to/are about to eat something.

You should give him a book.

4.3 Inverted Pattern

(a) òbàù bo-r-e-né-i-e ñsā 2PL should-PRTCL-DEP-give-2PL-3SG book ‘You should give him a book.’

(b) àbà bo-r-e-ne-e ñsā 3PL should-PRTCL-DEP-give-3SG book ‘They should give him a book.’

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

(a) òbàù ka-kpánä-i be dé énu 2PL MOD-want-2PL COP eat something ‘You want to/are about to eat something.’

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

(e) ànjè bere fo-énu 3SG PERF plant-something ‘He used to plant something.’

(f) èbàì re-bere f 1PL PRTCL one-3SG-DEM-1PL-1PRL PERF ‘We used to plant something.’

You became very afraid.

You used to slaughter goats.

(a) àmì bere fà-ënu 1SG PERF plant-something ‘I used to plant something.’

(b) òbàù bere fô-áì-2PL PERF plant-something ‘You used to plant something.’

(c) à?o bere fô-ënu 2SG PERF plant-something ‘You used to plant something.’

(d) àbà bere-ri fô-àì 3PL PERF-3PL plant ‘They used to plant something.’

(e) ànjè bere fô-ënu 3SG PERF plant-something ‘He used to plant something.’

(f) èbàì re-bere f 1PL PRTCL one-3SG-DEM-1PL-1PRL PERF ‘We used to plant something.’

You didn’t use to plant beans.

(a) ñàììfì bere fo tjàtjàma NEG.1SG-1SG-PERF plant beans ‘I didn’t use to plant beans.’

(b) re-bere fo NEG.1PL-PERF plant ‘We didn’t use to plant something.’

(c) ró-bere fo tjàtjàma NEG.2SG-PERF plant beans ‘You didn’t use to plant beans.’

(d) ró-bere fô-áì NEG.2PL-PERF plant ‘You didn’t use to plant beans.’

(e) ré-bere fo tjàtjàma NEG.3SG-PERF plant beans ‘He didn’t use to plant beans.’

(f) ré-bere-ri NEG.3PL-PERF plant ‘They used to plant something.’

You must not tie the rope.

(a) ñììgësi b-òbà e-bò-e-i odììgì ñò must.NEG COP-2PL DEP-tie-PRTCL-2PL rope DEM ‘You must not tie the rope.’
They must not tie the rope.

- bere ‘already’  
- ?ọtọ ‘quite/well’  
- kará ‘merely, just’  
- tọtọ ‘ever, able to can’

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

(16) (a) ọ-ọ-ọ-gbọi ẹtjú (b) ọ-ọ-ọ-gbọi ẹtjú
1SG-be.PRES-PRTCL-DEP-stitch clothes 2- be.PRES-PRTCL-DEP-stitch clothes
‘I am stitching clothes.’ ‘You are stitching clothes.’

(c) ẹ-ọ-ọ-gbọi ẹtjú (d) re-ọ-ọ-gbọi ẹtjú
3-be.PRES-PRTCL-DEP-stitch clothes 1PL-be.PRES-PRTCL-DEP-stitch clothes
‘He is stitching clothes.’ ‘We are stitching clothes.’

(e) ọ-ọ-i-rụ e-gbọi-ị ẹtjú
2-be.PRES-2PL-PRTCL DEP-stitch-2PL clothes
‘You are stitching clothes.’

(f) ẹ-ọ-ọ-ọ-ọ-gbọi ẹtjú
3-be.PRES-3PL-PRTCL-DEP-stitch clothes
‘They are stitching clothes.’

(17) (a) ọ-bo-ı-ru e-ma: ạdádzì ọnụ  
2-should-2PL-PRTCL DEP-bring-2PL Adaji gift
‘You should bring Adaji a gift.’

(b) ẹ-bo-ři-ru e-ma: ạdádzì ọnụ  
3-should-3PL-PRTCL DEP-bring Adaji gift
‘They should bring Adaji a gift.’

(18) (a) ọbàù ọsú no ne-i-e  
2PL.take-2PL book DEM give-2PL-3SG
‘You delivered the books to him.’

(b) ạbà ọsú-ři ọsú no ne:  
3PL.take-3PL book DEM give.3SG
‘They delivered the books to him.’

(19) (a) ọ-dose dé ńdʒa  
2-must eat food
‘You (SG) must eat food.’

(b) ọbà dose dé-į  
2PL must eat-2PL
‘You (PL) must eat.’

(c) ạbà dose-ri dé ńdʒa  
3PL must-3PL eat food
‘They must eat food.’
5 Comparative Ogoni/Kegboid (Gokana, Kana)

(20) Gokana

(a) aè tú ííra kùùmà nùt
3-PAST take.SV key key open-INSTR door
‘he opened the door with the key’
(Roberts 1985: 262)

(b) mìn tú kpègè zamà giòrò
1-PAST take.SV money buy-INSTR slave
‘I bought a slave with the money’

3-PAST take.
SV
key key open-INSTR door
‘I opened the door with the key’

(21) Gokana

(a) mì tumù gíma kpóòmá nɔm
I take-1/2AGR knife cut-INSTR animal
‘I cut the meat with the knife’
(Roberts 1985: 263)

(b) ò tú-ù ipkpè bùmà múúró
you take-1/2AGR spoon cook-INSTR soup
‘you cook the soup with a spoon’

(22) Gokana

(a) oò tu-i gíma kpóòmá-i nɔm
2PL-PAST take-2PL knife cut-2PL animal
‘you cut the meat with a knife’
(Roberts 1985: 263)

(b) aè kɔ aè túe gíma kpóòmáe nɔm
he.PAST say he.PAST take-SS knife cut-SS animal
‘he said he cut the meat with a knife’

(23) Kana

mì-wèè biyù kpá
1-PAST read book
‘I read a book/books’
(Ikoro 1995: 89)

(24) Kana

(a) màà fà nàm
1.PROG weed farmland
‘I am weeding farmland’
(Ikoro 1995: 165)

(b) mì-lùù wíí
1-come:FACT farm
‘I came to the farm’
(Ikoro 1995: 169)

(25) Kana

(a) mì-sì mì-dźigë
1DF-AUX 1OPT-snatch
‘I may snatch her’
(Ikoro 1995: 196)

(b) Legbo é-sà à-lú
L. 3DF-AUX 3.OPT-come
‘Legbo may join us later’

(26) Kana

(a) m-wèè à-kàà
1-PAST 2-call
‘I called you’

(b) m-wèè a-dáb mûè
1-PAST 2-MOD see
‘I was able to see you’

(c)m-dâà
1-MOE
‘I can

6 References


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