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A STUDY OF DETERMINER PROJECTION (DP) IN KANA

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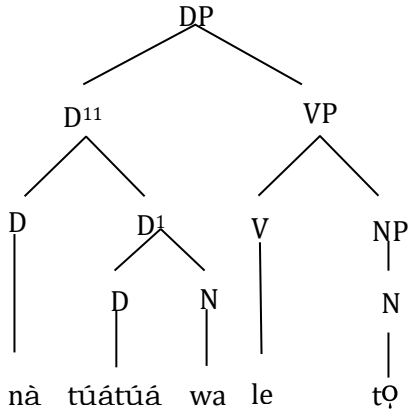
Abstract

This paper is based on the study of determiner projection (DP) in Kana. Kana is the language of the Kana people and part of Gokana people in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the south-south region of Nigeria. The paper discusses determiner projection in Kana with insights form government and binding theory proposed by Noam Chomsky in the early 1970s. The article points to the fact that the determiner projects maximally to become the head of the DP in Kana. Determiners in Kana include the definite article, the demonstrative, the quantifier, the numeral, the possessive pronoun, and the totalizer. There is another productive system of modifier called the numeral classifier. Numeral classifiers occur as a result of the use of numerals and they are found to occur with numerals. In Kana, determiners project to the D^1 and ultimately project to the DP. The use of demonstratives is based either on the speaker or on the hearer in the language. This is different from what obtains in English that demonstratives are only based on the speaker. Whereas the demonstrative **ama** depends on the point of view of the speaker, **ámá** depends on the hearer. The purpose of this study is to discuss the Kana language using modern grammatical approach of government and binding. The data for the study were gathered from two sources; primary and secondary. The primary data were obtain from personal interaction with mature speakers of the language and my own intuition as a competent speaker. The secondary data were gathered from materials in the library. This work stands as a useful material for teachers and students of linguistics and English who wish to embark on syntactic study using modern approach.

Keywords: determiner, projection, numeral classifier, syntactic, modifier, head.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The determiner is one of the word classes in human language whose function is to specify the reference of nominals. The determiner, according to Kari (1997, P.89) includes articles, demonstratives, quantifiers and numerals. In modern grammatical study, the determiner is the head of the determiner projection (DP). Haegeman (1994, P.608) notes that 'determiner projection' (DP) is a syntactic category whose head is a determiner. In DP analysis, the determiner projects maximally to become the head of the DP. The DP- analysis is the view of the majority in generative grammar today. Haegeman (1994, P.609) observes that the determiner is a 'functional head'. Determiner projection (DP) is a syntactic analysis in which the determiner becomes the head of the construction and not the noun in its vicinity. A projection of the determiner pushes the determiner from the phrasal position to the maximal projection. This is shown in the example below;



My first wife is in the house.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section attempts to review relevant literature on the subject matter as a way of making the discussion easy to understand.

Leggett, Mead & Kramer (1991, P.72) define a determiner as "a word such as a, an, the, his, our, your, that indicates that one of the words following it is a noun". This definition is of the view that determiners herald the presence of nouns in a sentence. Eyisi (2006, P. 108) asserts that "determiners comprise words that mark the presence of nouns". There is therefore a consensus of opinion between Leggett et al and Eyisi in looking at determiners as words that introduce the presence of nouns in a sentence. Eyisi (2006, P. 108) further says that determiners are of three different groups which include;

Group A: "articles which are either definite (the) or indefinite (a or an) as well as some, neither…. nor, each, every, either… or …"

Group B: "demonstratives, which include: this, that, these, those".
Group C: "genitives such as; my, your, our, his, its, their".
Words that "precede determiners in a sentence are known as pre-determiners: all, both, and half" (Tallerman, 1998, P.37). Example;
1a. "only half the guests had arrived by seven o'clock".
b. " Both of the students are brilliant".
c. "All the girls are here".
Bernstein (2008, P.211) looks at the determiner as "a modifying word that determiners the kind of reference a noun or noun group has, for example, a, the, every". A determiner in this context is "a word that modifies a noun or a noun phrase". Carnie (2003, P.29) sees the determiner as "a word, phrase or affix that occurs together with a noun or noun phrase and serves to express the reference of that noun or noun phrase in the context". That is, a determiner may indicate whether "the noun is referring to a definite or indefinite element of a class, to a closer or more distant element, to an element belonging to a specified person or thing, to a particular number or quantity, etc". Langendonek (1994, P.44) opines that " a determiner is used to modify a noun. It indicates reference to something specific or something of a particular type". All the above notions of the determiner have the same meaning. They all see the determiner as that which co-occurs with the noun or noun phrase and specifies the reference of that noun or noun phrase.

2.1 The DP hypothesis

Abney (1986, P.121) proposes that the determiners are 'base – generated' under the nominal AGR. He also points out that "certain realizations of D, the articles, **the** and **a** require the presence of an NP complement. Other instances of D do not require a complement". He thus maintains that the demonstrative, **that** is a case in point. Brinton (2000, P. 119) argues that "the head of the DP is a determiner and not a noun". He further says that the English noun phrase in its sentential aspect has the determiners as the head of the determiner phrase. Example;
2a. "**a** little boy, **the** little boys"
b. "**my** little boy, **your** little boys"
c. **"this** little boy, **those** little boys"

Abney (1987, P. 122) further asserts that "determiner phrase (DP) is a type of phrase posited by some theories of syntax". These theories posit that the head of the DP is the determiner and not its referent, the noun. The DP is therefore a current syntactic concept which posits that "the head of the determiner phrase (DP) is the determiner (D)". In traditional grammar, therefore, the NP was recognized as having the N as its head, but in GB syntax, the DP is maintained. This notion is opposed to the NP in previous syntactic models.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The government-binding theory (GB) is the theoretical framework for this study. Grammar in GB framework is described as an interlocking set of sub-theories. It views grammatical theory as a product of interactive processes necessary for comparison of different languages. In GB, therefore, the range of language specific rules are narrowed down. Serious constraints are imposed on rules and system of rules. Thus, "the numerous transformational rules have been cut down to move Alpha, that is, move anything anywhere" (Ndimele 1992, P.48). Ndimele goes further saying that "proponents of GB syntax suggest that essentially the same principles of syntax are operative in all languages, though, language specific options are allowed in the form of very small number of parameters".

The GB theory was propounded by Noam Chomsky, the father of modern linguistics. Government and binding theory (GB) is "a descendant of the extended standard theory and ultimately, of classical transformational grammar" (Ndimele 1992, P.48). The government and binding theory (GB), is a theory in the tradition of transformational grammar proposed by Chomsky in the 1970s and 1980s. GB theory differentiates two kinds of perspective in the study of grammar. These are "the rule system and the systems of principles". The rule system comprises "the lexicon, the syntactic and the interpretive components. The systems of principles are the 'X-bar theory', 'case theory', 'Binding theory', 'Bounding theory, and 'control theory'. For the purpose of this study, we shall discuss only the X-bar theory"(Ndimele,1992,P.128).

2.2.1 X-bar Theory

The 'X-bar theory' was first proposed by Noam Chomsky in the early 1970s. This was published in the article entitled "Remarks on nominalization". The X-bar theory determines the configuration of D-structure. It was proposed to remedy the inadequacies of PSG. For example, in PSG, only two levels of representations were recognized; the lexical and phrasal levels. Proponents of X-bar theory are of the view that there can be intermediate categories which can exist between the lexical categories and the phrasal categories. These intermediate categories are between the lexical categories and the phrasal categories or ultimate categories. These intermediate categories were labeled X-bar or X^1. The head of any category can project maximally or endlessly.

The "central idea in X-bar theory is the recognition of the fact that phrasal projections have heads upon which other elements are dependent" (Nkeh, 2014, P. 107). The phrase is just an outgrowth of the head which, in X-bar syntax, is called projection of heads.

2.3 Research Methodology

This paper deals with a study of determiner projection (DP) in Kana. The data were collected from two sources: the Primary source and the Secondary source. In the primary source of data, the researcher generated some of the data and collected others through personal and informal interaction with mature native speakers of the language. Responses and elucidated information are documented immediately for retrieval when necessary.
The Secondary source deals with the library. In the secondary source, data were collected through library materials. Works of renowned scholars on the subject matter were accessed and used for the study. Books and other written materials, pertaining to the determiner were consulted and relevant areas used. The internet materials were also used to supply the needed information for this study.

2.4 Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze Kana language using modern theoretical approach of the government and binding theory of syntax. The study goes further to establish the fact that there are sentential heads in the Kana language in which the determiner is one of the heads. It is also to show that lexical items, especially the determiner can project maximally as heads of sentences in the language.

3.0 Data presentation and analysis

The data for this study is here presented and analyzed to reflect modern syntactic description of the determiner and its projection.

3.1 The definite article

The definite article performs a specifying function. It denotes that the speaker and the hearer have prior knowledge of the noun which it specifies. Only the definite article **lo** 'the' occurs in Kana. It is used to express particularity. It therefore makes a specific reference. Example:

3. [lo nwíí] le tọ

   D N be:FACT house

   the child is in the house

The DP here consists of the D+N. The VP serves as the complement of the DP.

4. [lo lé bíira nwíí] ú

   D good black child die

   the good black child died

5. lo gbárà àlu-a

the man PRE-come-CL

the man has come

Its use presupposes that the speaker and the hearer have a common knowledge of the particular 'man' that is referred to.

Apart from the proper nouns, the definite article is used with all kinds of nouns in Kana.

3.2 The demonstrative in Kana

Demonstratives according to Kari (1997,P.98) are nominal modifiers which show the distance of the noun they modify. That is, the proximity of the noun to the speaker or its distance from the speaker. Ndimele (2003,P.115) asserts that "a demonstrative presupposes an anchor with respect to the position of the speaker, and then asserts closeness or distance from that anchor".

In Kana, there are two term spatial deitic systems: proximal and distal. They include **ama** 'this' and **aya/ámá** 'that'. **Ama** performs a proximal reference, while **aya/ámá** performs a distal function. The singular and plural reference is signaled by the presence of the 'pluralizer' **maà** which occurs before the noun.

6. nwíí ama

child Pr. Dm

this child

7. maà nwíí ama

PL child Pr.Dm

these children

8a. nwíí aya
child dt.Dm
that child

8b. maà nwíí aya
PL child dt.Dm
those children

9a. nwíí ámá
child dt.Dm

that child

9b. maà nwíí ámá
PL child dt.Dm
those children

Note that the use of **ámá** indicates that the specified noun is close to the hearer. It means that the thing being referred to is close to the hearer and not the speaker. It should be noted, therefore that the use of '**aya'**, is based on the distance of an entity from the speaker, while, the use of **ámá** is based on the distance of an entity from the hearer. Nwíí ámá 'that child' could also mean 'that boy/girl that is standing with you' (the hearer).

3.3 The quantifier in Kana

Mensah (2011,P.48) observes that "the quantifier specifies number properties to the noun it precedes". He also notes that in Efik, quantifiers modify plural or mass nouns.

A quantifier is "a nominal modifier which occurs in the vicinity of a noun and which expresses the idea of quantity" (Ndimele, 2003,P.117). Quantifiers normally precede the specified noun within the DP structure. The following are some of the quantifiers in Kana:

10a. dẽnẽ nwíí le bu bụẹ
quan child be:FACT in town
every child is in town

10b. zɨ̃ ɨ̃zɨ̃ ɨ̃ buẽ á lu eèté
quan village PROG come outside tree
each village should come to the town square

10c. õõ wa naa lee
quan wife NEG good
many wives are not good

10d. pío buẽ wo nu
quan village plant thing
some villages engage in farming

10e. m-mẹ nẹẹ sí wíí

quan person go:FACT farm

many people went to farm

Kana has no distinction between count and non- count nouns in the use of quantifiers. Consider the following data:

11a. Sìgà buẽ sí wíí
quan village go:FACT farm
many villages went to farm

11b. Sìgà zĩã le tọ
quan food be:FACT house
some food is in the house

12a. m̀-mẹ tọ le bu lo be
quan house be:FACT in the house
many houses are in the compound

12b. m̀-mẹ zĩã̀ le bu
quan food be:FACT in
much food is in

Note that in (11a-11b), the quantifiers **sìgà** and **m-mẹ** can freely co-occur with count and mass nouns. Thus, in Kana, there is no meaning difference between 'many' and 'much'. The gloss of the quantifiers **sìgà** and **m-mẹ** as 'some', 'much' and 'many' merely depend on the English distinction between mass and count nouns. Since Kana makes no such distinction, the quantifiers can be used freely or interchangeably. Again, in Kana, numerals are regarded as a type of quantifier. Therefore, the quantifier and the numeral cannot co-occur in a single DP.

3.4 The numeral in Kana

Nkeh (2009, P. 61) notes that numerals are words used for counting. A numeral therefore names a number. Numerals in Kana directly precede the nouns they modify. Three types of numerals are distinguished in Kana: cardinal, ordinal and distributive. Ikoro (1996, P.108) identifies three stages that are involved in the derivation of the cardinal numeral:

A. The cardinal numerals

The first stage in the cardinal numeral is based on the basic cardinal number.

13a. zĩĩ nwíí
one child
one child

13b. bàà nwíí
two child

two children

Other cardinal numerals in Kana are

taa	'three'
nyìã̄	'four'
ò-òò	'five'
ìnì-ĩĩ̄	'six'

It is from the first stage that the numerals seven, eight, and nine are derived. The process involves the combination of the verb **èrè** meaning 'have' with the basic cardinal numbers such as **bàà**, **taa** and **nyìã** respectively. The derivation of the numeral, 'seven involves a final vowel deletion of the numeral **bàà**.

14. èrèbà nwíí

seven child

seven children

Others include:

èrètaa 'eight'

èrènyìã 'nine'

The formation of the numeral 'ten' involves a single morpheme.

15. lòb nwíí
ten child
ten children

The second stage involves numbering from 11-20. The process involves the combination of the numeral lòb 'ten' which functions as the base and the lesser unit beginning from 1-9. The complex NP connective '**lè'** functions as the additive marker.

16. lòb – lè-zĩĩ̄ 'eleven'

lòb – lè-bàà 'twelve'

lòb – lè-taa 'thirteen'

lòb – lè-nyìã 'fourteen'

lòb – lè-ò-òò 'fifteen'

lòb – lè-ìnì-ĩĩ̀ ‘sixteen’

lòb – lè-ẹ̀rẹ̀bà ‘seventeen’

lob – lè-ẹ̀rẹ̀taa ‘eighteen’

lob – lè-ẹ̀rẹ̀nyìã̀ ‘ninetten’

tub ‘twenty’

The third stage involves addition and multiplication.

17. tub lè lòb – (20+10) ‘thirty’

bàà tub – (2x20) ‘forty’

bàà tub lè lòb – (2x20+10) ‘fifty’

taà tub – (3x20) ‘sixty’

nyìã̀ tub – (4x20) ‘eighty’

nyìã̀ tub lè lob – (4x20+10) ‘nighty’

ò’ òò tub – (5x20) ‘one hundred’

lòb tub – (10x20) ‘two hundred’

bóó – (400) ‘four hundred’

B. The ordinal numeral

In Kana ordinal numeral are formed thus:

18. túátúá ‘first’

baà dò ‘second’

taà dò ‘third’

nyìã̀ dò ‘fourth’

òò dò ‘fifth’

ìnì dò ‘sixth’

èrèbà dò ‘seventh’

èrètaà dò ‘eighth’

èrè nyíã dò ‘ninth’

lòb dò ‘tenth’

Observe that apart from túátúá ‘first’, other ordinal numerals are formed by the combination of the cardinal numeral and a suffix **dò**.

C. The distributive numeral

The distributive numeral is based on cardinal numbers. The process involves complete reduplication of a relevant cardinal number and the reduplication form still follows the original tone pattern of the numeral.

19. zĩĩ zĩĩ ‘one by one’

bàà bàà ‘two by two’

taa taa ‘three by three’

nyìã nyìã ‘four by four’

ò’òò-ò’òò ‘five by five’

lòb lòb ‘tèn by ten’

tub tub ‘twenty by twenty’

Examples:

a. Cardinal

20. zĩĩ nẹẹ le tọ

one person be:FACT house

one person is in the house

b. Ordinal

21. nà túátúá wa le tọ

my first wife be:FACT house

my first wife is in the house

c. Distributive

22. bii ama è bìì bààbàà nẹẹ

play Pr.Dm be:FACT play two by two person

this game is a game of two by two persons

3.4.1 The numeral classifier in Kana

Isaac (2003, P.59) asserts that "a numeral classifier system is an open set of classificatory particles which are syntactically associated with numerals (in some languages morphologically bound to them)". They may also be associated with demonstratives, adjectives, or the noun itself. Typically, the particle appears once in the DP. Ikoro (1994, P.121) has drawn attention to the fact that "numeral classifier system can also be found in an African language". He showed that numeral classifiers occur in Kana, a Cross River language. Nkeh (2009, P.66) also notes that "numeral classifiers occur in Kana and can occur in the DP without the presence of the numera"l. Unlike numerals, numeral classifiers in Kana directly precede the noun in the DP without any intervening element.

We agree with Isaac (2003, P.69), Ikoro (1994, P.89), Nkeh (2009, P.66) that there are numeral classifiers in Kana, but observe that in Kana, nouns indicating units of currency, units of time, units of space, and units of distance do not occur with numeral classifiers. It is also observed that in Kana, a numeral classifier forms a 'morphological unit' with the enumerated noun and not the numeral. Again, in addition to their semantic functions, numeral classifiers also show certain syntactic features. It should be noted that when a numeral is used to modify a noun, certain classifiers are used to ensure that the sentence is grammatical and meaningful. Below are some of the numeral classifiers and their etymology.

Numeral classifiers and their probable etymologies.

Classifier	**Probable etymology**
Kà	kà + bigness
té	té + height
kum	kum + bunch
kérè	kérè + bit
nwÍÍ	nwÍÍ + smallness
Ko	ko + pack
bób	bób + plenty
apẹ́ẹ̣	apẹ́ẹ̣ + shinness/strip
ayúú	ay̰úú + seed-likeness
Kpò	kpò + heap
abà	abà + whole
dẽ́ẽ̃	dẽ́ẽ̃ + sight
Akpá	akpá + flatness
beè	beè + roundness

In a DP comprising a numeral and a classifier, the numeral and the noun, the word order is:

NUM + CL + N

The parameter for assigning any of the classifiers above to a particular noun is the shape of the noun. For instance, a classifier that has a round or seed-like shape can only co-occur with nouns of similar shape. The form of a classifier is always the same irrespective of number, therefore the classifier and the classified must share a common shape. Isaac (2003, P.70) observes that shape is the major organizing principle in the classifier systems of most Asian and African languages.

There are certain classifiers that are assigned to nouns based purely on their function. Classifiers like **kà**, **té** and **kum** are functionally assigned. Ikoro (1994, P.90) notes that in such cases, "… the original meaning of the noun which now functions as a classifier in the grammar has been bleached off. As a classifier, such forms have been grammaticalized. In such cases, the classifier and the classified have nothing in common semantically".

The classifier **kà** seems to have the highest distribution. It can co-occur with all count nouns whether animate or inanimate, but it does not occur with mass nouns. Examples**:**

use of kà does not establish a similarity between the shape of the classifier and the classified. Kà is considered to be a function-based classifier.

23. [zĩĩ kà nwíí] le tọ

    onẹ Cl child be:FACT house

    one child is in the house

24. taà té zoo dọ kẹ

    three CL palm fall:FACT ground

    three palm trees fẹll down

The classifier té is used to count objects, which are long and straight, but its extension to naa 'gun' as in (25) indicates that té is a functional classifier. Guns are not made of wood, hence naa 'gun' is not classified according to shape, but according to its function as a transporter of bullets. Ikoro (1994, P.98) has similar observation.

25. ò'òò té naa le bu fáà

five CL gun be:FACT in vehicle

five guns are in the vehicle

can also have the classifier modifying the noun without the numeral.

26. [té naa] mma kẽ

CL gun plenty ground

there are plenty of guns

27. [èrèbà kum abuì] tọà

seven CL plantain spoil

seven bunches of plantain spoilt

The classifier kum is used to count bunch-like objects as shown in (27) above. The classifier kérè is used to count objects that can be segmented into parts as seen below.

28. [taà kérè bẹẹ] le bu akpó

three CL wrapper be:FACT in box

three pieces of cloth are in the box

The classifier nwíí is used to count only young entities.

29. [baà nwíí núú] ú

two CL rat die

two rats died

The classifier ko is used to count small quantities of food items (e.g. pepper, meat, fish, etc,) that are wrapped when bought from the market, thus, food items put into wraps are generally referred to be the classifier ko.

30. [baà ko bàrí] pe
two CL fish lost
two packs of fish lost

The classifier akpá is used to count slices of things that are flat.

31. [nyìã akpá akàrà] tọà
four CL bean cake spoil
four slices of bean cake spoilt

Observe that the determiner phrase comprises the numeral followed by the numeral classifier and the noun it modifies. Though the numeral classifier occurs with the numeral, it only modifies the noun.

3.5 The possessive pronouns

A possessive pronoun is a word used to show ownership or possession. In Kana, possessive pronouns function as determiners because they occur in the same phrase as the nouns which they are used to modify.

Emphatic

32a. ńda péé le tọ
poss goat be:FACT house
my goat is in the house

32b. íli péé le tọ
poss goat be:FACT house
our goat is in the house

32c. ólo péé le tọ
poss goat be:FACT house
your goat is in the house

32d. àlẹ péé le tọ
poss goat be: FACT house
his goat is in the house

Non-emphatic

33a. nà péé le tọ
poss goat be: FACT house
my goat is in the house

33b. o péé le tọ
poss goat be: FACT house
your goat is in the house

33c. ye/e péé le tọ
poss goat be: FACT house
his goat is in the house

Possessives in Kana

a. **Dependent Possessives**

	Emphatic	Non-emphatic	Gloss
Singular	nda	na	my
	ólo	o	your
	ále	ye/e	his
Plural	ili	i	our
	boòlo	boo	your (PI)
	álabà	wa	their

b. **Independent Possessives**

Singular	ndaà	mine
	óloò	yours
	álee	his/hers
Plural	íliì	ours
	bòoloò	yours (PI)
	álabà	thiers

3.6 The totalizer

The totalizer according to Ikoro (1996, P.61), is used to express a comitative such as 'x and family'. It conveys a specific message that the referent is accompanied by the other person mentioned. Ikoro (1996, P.61) also notes that "the persons expressed by the totalizer need not be members of one family. In most cases, however, it will mean a close companion". The totalizer in Kana is expressed by means of a prefix **bà-**

34. bà – Lénu le wíí
    TOT PN be: FACT farm
    Lénu and company are on the farm
35. nu bà-Lézina lè
    thing TOT PN be :FACT
    there is Lézina and company's thing

4.0 Result/Findings

Major findings of the study are given in this section: Determiner Projection was explored and observed that the determiner projects maximally to become the head of the sentence in Kana. It was also observed that in Kana, determiners occur before the noun they modify in the DP structure. The research unveils that there is a modifier in Kana, called the numeral classifier. These numeral classifiers are used with the numeral to describe shape, weight and even size of the modified noun.

In Kana, the determiner projects from the D to the D^1 and ultimately the DP. The Study finally reveals that Kana can be describe using modern syntactic description of the government and binding theory.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the study so far, we observe that determiners in Kana precede the noun in the DP. We also observe that determiners specify the reference of nouns or pronouns in Kana. In the DP, the D is the head. In Kana, determiners include the definite article, the demonstrative, the quantifier, the numeral, the possessive pronoun, and the totalizer. All these perform specifying function in Kana. In our discussion of the numeral, there is a system of modifier that is found to occur with numerals. This system of modifier is called the numeral classifier. The numeral classifier is a classificatory system found to exist in African and Asian languages. Though the numeral classifiers occur as a result of the use of the numeral, it occurs morphologically with the enumerated noun. The numeral classifier performs semantic function to the nouns. This means that the noun selects a classifier that matches its shape. Apart from these semantic properties, nouns in Kana are also classified on the basis of their functional quality.

There is another productive determiner found in the language. This is the totalizer. The totalizer is used to express a comitative such as ‘x and family or x’ and his/her folks. This conveys a specific message that the referent is accompanied by the other person mentioned. The persons expressed by the totalizer need not be members of one family. The determiner projects to the maximal level to become the head of the determiner phrase (DP). Demonstratives in Kana performs either a proximal or distal reference. **Ama** performs a proximal reference while **aya/ámá** performs distal reference. Note, however that, **aya and ama** are used based on the location of an entity from the speaker, while **ámá** is used based on the position of an entity from the hearer. Hence, demonstratives in Kana is not bias. It is either used based on the location of an entity from the speaker or the hearer.

5.2 Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended as follows:

The work is recommended to teachers and students of English and linguistics who wish to study syntax using modern approach. It is also recommended for English users who aim for good spoken and written English. The study does not claim to be exhaustive, but stands as a basis for further research in syntax and in the Kana language in general.

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