THE STUDY OF THE VERB *JÌ* IN IGBO: A MORPHO-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract
The Igbo language is one of the languages of the Benue Congo family chiefly spoken in the South-east part of Nigeria. The verb *jì* in Igbo language means hold/have. Although some works have been done on the classes of verbs in the language, no detailed study so far has been done on the verb *jì*. It is on this premise that this study sets out to examine the morpho-syntactic analysis of the verb *jì* with the objectives of exploring the different syntactic constructions in which It can be used to indicate different interpretations or meanings in the language, determine its morphological structures, syntactic patterns and characterizations in the constructions. The study adopts a descriptive approach in the analysis of the data. The data for the study was collected through the recording of the natural casual occurring speeches of the native speakers during conversations and discourses. A careful analysis of the data reveals that the verb *jì* can be used without attachment of any affix to express different semantic meanings such as present or past time meanings, to supply reasons for actions, show how certain actions are performed. It can inflect to indicate other semantic meanings such as: past time meaning, negation, preposition, imperative, and so on. The verb *jì* is a multi-argument verb and can subcategorize for two or three arguments in the syntactic structures. It also has the potential to participate in different constructions with physical objects/entities, states and events to generate different interpretations. It is an inherently low tone verb but the tone can change depending on the syntactic constructions. We, therefore, recommend further research works to be done in the verbs of the Igbo language to help in throwing more light on their different characteristic features.

Key words: Verb, Morphology, Syntax, Negation, Imperative

1. Introduction

The verb is one of the open categories in languages. It is a universal category. There is hardly any language that lacks the category. No meaningful expression or thought can be conveyed without the verb in any natural language. It is an essential component of a sentence. This is why Eyisi and Akaegbobi (2014:227) maintain that "the verb is the heart of any well meaningful sentence". The fact is that all the domains of human communicative activities rotate or swing around the verb to make them more meaningful and understandable. In the Igbo language, the category is a fundamental category to the grammar of the language. There is incontrovertible proof that the category contributes to the derivation of different words or vocabularies in the language but there does not seem to be any category that contributes to the derivation of the category in the language. The position of this category in the language gives it a prime place in research. This is why Nwachukwu (1976, 1983) and Mbah (2006) describe the language as a verb language. There is also a good amount of studies on the morphology of the Igbo verb, its syntax and semantics and it has been observed that individual verbs bear characteristics that distinguish them to an extent that demands a special study attention. This is evident in the recent works done by Mbamalu, (2014), Obiamalu and Mbagwu, (2014), Ogwudile, (2017), Uchechkwu, (2013) and so on.

The tone marking convention used in this work is the Green and Igwe (1963) convention. Only the high tones [´] (H) are left unmarked, the grave accent [`] is used to mark the low tone (L) while the macron (-) is used to mark the downstep tone (DS).

This paper is arranged into eight sections. A general introduction is presented in section one. Section two discusses the methodology used in the study. Section three highlights the brief overview of syntax. Section four presents the general overview of the verb and the notion of verb in Igbo language. Section five shows the morphological features of the verb *jì*. Section six treats the sub-categorization frame of the verb *jì*. Section seven presents the analysis of the data showing different syntactic constructions in

which the verb*jì*can be used to express different semantic interpretations in the language while section eight is the conclusion.

2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The data used for this study were collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary source was drawn through the recording of the natural casual speeches of the Igbo native speakers during conversations and discourses. The data so collected were carefully analyzed. The writers also utilize their intuitive knowledge for some data.

For the secondary source, insights were gained from textbooks, journal articles, and online materials.

The paper adopts a descriptive approach in the analysis of the data. This approach is preferred because its most outstanding feature depends on how the native speakers, who are not necessary literate, actually use the language without recourse to any standard rules of the grammar.

3. An Overview of Syntax

Syntax is a sub-field of linguistics that deals with how words are combined together to form phrases, clauses, sentences and how such sentences are interpreted in natural languages. Eyisi (2006) contends that syntax is the proper arrangement of words in a sentence. Syntax uses as building blocks, words which are combined together in a most meaningful and rule governed manner. This implies that words are not strung together haphazardly; they must follow the rules allowed by the human language. Every language has regular and peculiar patterns in which words must be combined to form sentences in that particular language, and any speaker who is competent in his language must follow the patterns that exist in his language. This is why Ikegwuonu (2013:34) maintains that ‘‘the speaker of a language is obliged to follow the specific rules of the language which he has internalized’’.

From the foregoing, syntax concerns itself with the meaningful combination of words to form meaningful sentences following the rules of the grammar of the language. It is in the study of syntax that we try to capture the acceptable regular patterns of co-occurrence among various constituents of a sentence in any

language. This constitutes what could be regarded as grammatical rules in that language. Any attempt to violate such acceptable patterns in forming sentences, will always lead to ungrammaticality and unacceptability. This is why it is obligatory that the rules of every grammar must be observed in the formation of sentences by the native speakers of a language.

.4. Verb: An Overview

Obviously, the verb is very central in all the human languages of the world because it takes prominent position in the syntactic constructions. It is a universal phenomenon. It is the main part of every sentence that makes the sentence to be meaningful. It expresses action, existence or condition of an entity or object in the sentence.

Traditionally, the verb is "a doing word and an essential component of a sentence'' (Ikegwuonu, 2015:23). This implies that the verb is the main ingredient of a sentence and without it; no meaningful utterance can be made. Eyisi (2004) asserts that a verb is a group of words that is used to tell what someone or something is, does or experiences. Strumpt and Doughlas quoted in Eyisi (2004:228) define a verb as a word which expresses action, existence or condition. Ndimele (1999:96) observes that ''the verb is typically the most important word in the predicate area of the sentence'' Ikegwuonu (2013:34) posits that "words belonging to verb class in any language refer to a wide range of actions and states. The meaning of a verb can be analyzed into structure representation of events it designates". Verbs have significant influence on the overall structures of the sentence. They account for meaningful utterances and grammatical constructions in human language(s). Every language of the world has its verbs, but they are not used always in the same way in the natural languages. This implies that there exist some parameterized variations in their usage according to the grammar of the language where they are found. They also have different properties in different languages. For instance, in some languages like Chinese and Indonesian, verbs do not change for past and present tense but in languages such as English, Igbo and others, the verbs can inflect to indicate past or present.

Ikegwuonu (2013:35) affirms that ‘‘verbs have grammatical features, tense, aspect, mood, person, number and negation associated with them’’. In some languages such as English, Igbo and so on these grammatical features manifest in verbs as affixes.

From the foregoing, it seems that verb is very essential in the life of every living language because it enhances the growth, existence and development of the language in all ramifications. It is through it that all the important parts of speech are formed, our words take actions and we express who we are and how we feel. The verb can express physical actions such as *to write, to swim* and *to climb*. It also expresses mental actions like *to think, to guess* and *to consider*. Furthermore, it expresses a state of being like *to be, to exist* and *to appear*.

4.1. The Notion of Verb in Igbo Language

The Igbo language like many natural languages has its peculiar verb forms which are used in the grammatical constructions in the language. The Igbo verb form can be simple or complex. Mbah (2011:19) describes the Igbo language as “a verb language”. This is because of the significant roles the verbs play in the grammatical structures of the language, hence, Ikegwuonu (2013:36) maintains that ‘‘every aspect of the Igbo grammar requires the verb to make it complete sense, grammatical and meaningful’’. Supporting this view, Ogbalu (1972:60) affirms that “without a verb, no meaningful expression or complete thought can be conveyed”. It is not only in this respect that the verb is very important in Igbo language, its remarkable importance lies also in the fact that most nouns are formed from its root. In the Igbo language, many words are formed from the verb because it is the only category that can inflect. This is why Ikegwuonu (2019:30) maintains that the ‘‘Igbo verbs bear inflectional affixes such as tense, aspect and negation’’. She further adds that these affixes are bound morphemes. Mbah (2018:85) affirms that ‘‘ the affixes, which the verb root takes are bound morphemes’’. Some verbs in the Igbo language require complements inherently in order to determine their meanings in the syntactic constructions. The verb is classified into syntactic and semantic classes in their different domains in the syntactic structures. Emenanjo (2005:479-498) attempts the classification of

Igbo verb into five categories such as general complement verbs (GCVS), inherent complement verb (ICVS), bound complement verbs (BCVS), prepositional phrase complement verbs (PPCVS), and ergative complement verbs (ECVS).

The work of Nwachukwu (1976) focuses on the inherent complement verbs (ICVS) and his later works in (1983) and (1985), give detailed attention to the verbs. These verbs include nominal elements which may or may not be cognate with verbs such as*ịtụ anya* (to expect), *ịgba aja* (consult a diviner), *ịta arụ* (to bite) and so on. Uwalaka (1988) investigates the semantics of Igbo verbs to establish the implications of semantics for syntax of the verbs. In fact, her semantic analysis of the Igbo verbs recognizes six classes of verbs such as: action verbs, verbs of occurrence, experiential verbs, verbs of quality, locative verbs, identificatory and equative verbs. Almost all the classes have sub-classes. Uchechukwu (2011:1-4) divides the structure of Igbo verb into the following: simple verb, compound verb:[verb + verb] and [verb + suffix], and verbal complex: [verb + noun phrase] or [verb +prepositional phrase]. He further illustrates using the following sentences:

1. (a) Simple verb: gba (kick) as in:
   Ifeanyì gbà-rà boòlù ahù.
   Ifeanyi kick-rvpst ball that.
   Ifeanyi kick that ball.

(b) Compound verb: gba (kick) + pù (go out) → gbapù as in:

(i) Ifeanyì gbapùrù boòlù ahù.
Ifeanyi kick.off-rvpst ball that.
Ifeanyi kicked off that ball.
(ii)gba (spay/splash) +sa (on/upon) → gbasa (splash on) as in:

Mmiri gbàsàrà Ifeanyì.
Water spray/splash-on-rvpst Ifeanyi.
The water splashed on Ifeanyi.

(c) Verbal complex: gba mmiri water (something) as in:
(i) Ifeanyì gbàrà okà ahù mmiri.
Ifeanyi spray/splash-rvpst maize that water.
Ifeanyi watered that maize.

(ii) Ifeanyì nà-àgba n' èzi.
Ifeanyi aux-move prep outside.
Ifeanyi lays about.

Anyanwu and Ilone (2004) identify some Igbo verbs which lack semantic content or which are semantically opaque or indeterminate. They have used two tests to identify them, imperativization and pronunciation. The verbs include *gba, kpọ, da* and *kwa*. The verbs are liable to more than one interpretation except they occur with an appropriate normal element as in:

2. (a) gba - Ezè gbàrà (egwu / m̀gba / egbè / ọsọ / ọ̀bàrà) "Eze (dance / wrestled / wrestled / ran / bleed)

(b) kpọ - Ezè kpọ̀rọ̀ (ọkụ / oku / anwụrụ / ụga) "Eze (burnt (something) / called (somebody) / took some snuff / played a kind of clapping game)

5. The Morphological Features of the Verb *jì in* Igbo Language

Generally, the Igbo verbs can be divided into simple and complex verb forms. Mbah (2018:84) posits that ''a simple verb form must not change its form by vowel harmony rules in any morphological alternation''. The simple verb form consists of a consonant and a vowel. This implies that it has a CV structure- consonant (C) + vowel (V) ⟶ (CV structure). The verb ji is made up of a consonant /j/ and a vowel /i/⟶ *ji*. The verb root has a simple (CV structure).

With the addition of the infinitive marker */i/,* it is realized as *i + ji* *ijī* (to hold/have). Furthermore, the *-rv* past tense marker can also be suffixed to the verb root to realize *ji + jiri* (held/had) to indicate tense in the past. The verb *ji* can combine with another simple verb root to form a compound verb structure as in *i + ji* (hold have) + *de* (write) → *ijīde* (to hold/have). This combination involves an infinitive marker /i/ and two simple verb roots *ji* (hold/have) and *de* (write). The combination of the above two simple verb roots and an infinitive marker */i/* gives a compound verb structure *ijīde* (to hold/have). The verb *ji* is among the class of active verbs in the language. It is a multi-argument verb and can subcategorize for two or three arguments in the syntactic structures of the Igbo language. It can assign theta to its object complements in the sentences.

6. Sub-categorization Frame of the Verb *jì*

The verb *ji* obligatorily subcategorizes for NP complements in the syntactic structures of the Igbo language. This implies that it can take NPs as its object complements and assigns theta roles to them. The verb *ji* can have the following frames:

3. Example: ji V, + a. [– NP PP]

(+LOC)

b. [– NP NP]

c. [– NP]

d. [– PP]

(+LOC)

From the above frames, the verb *ji* can occur in the positions which are indicated by the gaps (-) immediately followed by an NP or PP. In (3a), the frame shows that the verb *ji* can be followed by an object noun phrase and a locative prepositional phrase. In (3b), the frame indicates that the verb *ji* can be followed by two noun phrases

consecutively. In (3c), the frame indicates that the verb *ji* can be followed by a single noun phrase object complement immediately. In (3d), the frame indicates that the verb *ji* can be followed by a locative prepositional phrase. Therefore, it implies that the verb *ji* can subcategorize for a single, two or three arguments in the syntactic structures of the Igbo language. All these frames are going to be reflected in this work. The verb *ji* always selects [+Animate] that is [+human] as the subject and also concrete objects, that is [+concreteness] in the syntactic structures of the Igbo language. It can also co-occur with both animate and inanimate object/entities in the syntactic structures.

7. The analysis of the verb *ji* in the syntactic constructions

This section study focuses on the analysis of the verb *jì* in the syntactic constructions to express different semantic interpretations. The analysis can be done in two ways:

a. The use of the verb *jì* without attachment of any affix in the syntactic constructions
b. The use of the verb *jì* with the attachment of affixes in the syntactic constructions.

7.1. The use of the verb *jì* without attachment of any affix in the syntactic constructions

The verb *jì* can be used as a lexical verb without attachment of any affix in the syntactic constructions to indicate different semantic interpretations in different contexts in Igbo language.

7.1.1. *Jì* can be used to indicate the simple present time meaning

When it is used to indicate the simple present time meaning; it follows an NP subject immediately in the syntactic construction as in:

4a. Òbi jì akwụkwọ n' aka.
Obi hold book prep-hand.
Obi is holding the book in the hand.

b. Òkekē jì akwā Ike.
Okeke hold cloth Ike.
Okeke is holding Ike's cloth.

c. Òjo jì ego ahụ̀.
Ojo hold money Dem.
Ojo is holding/having that money.

d. Uzọ jì àkwa.
Uzọ hold egg.
Uzọ is holding an egg.

e. Ihe Uchè jì n'aka bụ̀ m̀kpa.
Thing Uche hold prep-hand be staff.
Uche is holding a staff in the hand.

In the above data, the verb *ji* relates to the actions/events that are current or that are happening or taking place at the time of utterance or at the time of speaking. In examples (4a-d),it is followed by the object complements respectively while in (4e), it is followed by the object noun phrase and a locative prepositional phrase. In (4a), it subcategorizes for three arguments-*Obi, akwụkwọ and aka. Obi* is the external argument and is theta marked as the Agent while *akwụkwọ* and *aka* are the internal arguments .It also assigns theta role to the object NP complement in the sentence. The noun phrase *aka* which is the complement of the preposition *n*' is theta marked as the goal. The frame is the same as indicated in (3a) above. In (4b), the verb *ji* subcategorizes for three arguments- *Okeke, akwa* and *Ike*. *Akwa* and *Ike* are the internal arguments that serve as the NP object complements while *Okeke* is the external argument. *Okeke* is theta marked as the source/Agent while *Uche* is theta marked as the theme. The frame is the same shown in (3b) above. In (4c and 4d), the verb *ji* is followed by the object NPs respectively. It subcategorizes for two arguments in each sentence respectively. In (4c), *Ojo* is the external argument and *ego* is internal argument. *Ojo* is theta marked as the Agent/source while *ego* is theta marked as theme. In (4d), *Uzọ* is the external argument that is theta marked as Agent while *akwa* is the internal argument and is theta marked as

theme. Examples (4c and 4d) have the same frame with (3c) above. In (4e), the verb *ji* is followed immediately by a locative prepositional phrase. It subcategorizes for three arguments- *Uche, aka and mkpa* where *Uche* is the external argument, *aka* and *mkpa* are the internal arguments. *Uche* is theta marked as the Agent and aka is theta marked goal as well as location. The frame is the same as indicated in (3d) above.

7.1.2 *Ji* can be used to indicate past time meaning.

Sometimes, when ji is used in certain constructions or contexts, it relates to the actions or events that have taken place in the past at the time of utterance. Consider these examples**:**

5a. Ụzọ̀ jì ego Uche ọnwa atọ̄.
Ụzọ hold money Uche month three.
Ụzọ held Uche's money for three months.

b. Nye m àkpà m jì bịa.
Give 1sg bag 1sg hold come-ovs-suff.
Give me the bag I came with.

c. Ha jì ùchichì me nzùkọ.
3pl hold night do meeting.
They held the meeting at night.

d Èbelè jì puku naira ìse te ofē.
Ebele hold thousand naira five rob soup.
Ebele cooked soup with five thousand naira.

The above data indicate that the actions or events have happened in the past at the time of speaking. This implies that the actions have ceased to happen. In (5a and d), *ji* is followed immediately by the object NP complements respectively and subcategorizes for two internal arguments in each of the sentence.

7.1.3 *Ji*can be used to supply reason for an action performed by someone

In the Igbo language, *ji* can be used in the syntactic construction to supply the reason for an action being performed by someone in contexts. Examples:

6a. Ihe Òkekē jì pịa Uchè ịtàlà bụ̀ nà ọ kàrịrị ya.
Thing Okeke hold flog-ovs-suff Uche stick be Conj 3sg big-self 3sg.
The reasons why Okeke flogged Uche is because he is bigger than him

b. Ihe Chikē ji ta Eze ahụhụ bù màkà àsị ọ tùrù.
Thing Chike hold chew Eze suffering be Conj lie 3sg throw-rvpst.
The reason why Chike punished Eze is because he lied.

c. Ihe Njìde jì zo ònwe yā bụ̀ màkà egwù mmanwụ
Thing Njide hold hide self 3sg be Conj fear masquarade
The reason why he hid himself is because of the fear of masquerade.

Semantically, the verb *ji* is used to express the reasons why the above actions were performed. In other words, it implies that there exist certain things that prompted the agents to perform the above actions. The verb *ji*is the following the subject NPs immediately and co-occurs with the verbs: *pịa, ta*, and *zo* respectively. In (6a), *Uche* is theta marked as patient as well as experiencer whereas *ịtàlà* is theta marked as the instrument which was used by *Okeke* to perform the action of flogging, and *Okeke* is theta marked as the agent. In (6b), *Eze*is the experiencer as well as the patient whereas *Chikē* is an agent . In (6c), *Njìde* is the expriencer and the verb *ji* subcategorizes for a single in internal argument.

7.1.4 *Ji* is used to show the thing with which something is made

In certain constructions, when *ji*is used, it expresses the semantic interpretation, indicating the thing (e.g., object or entity) with which something is made. Examples:

7a. Òbi jì ụrọ̄ kpụ ìtè.
Obi hold clay mould pot.
Obi used clay to mould the pot.

b. Chukwu jì ajā ke mmadụ.
God used sand create person.
God used sand to create human being.

e. Ngọzị jì ọkà me àkàmù
Ngọzị hold maize do pap.
They used maize to prepare pap.

Semantically, in the above examples *ji* is used to express the idea which something or an entity is made from. *Ụrọ̄* is theta marked as the instrument used to mould the pot in example (7a), whereas ajā is used as the instrument for creating human being in (7b) and ọkà is used as the raw material for preparing pap in (7c). This implies that *ụrō, ajā* and *ọkà* constitute the raw materials which are used to produce *ìtè, mmadù and àkàmù*, The verb *ji* subcategorizes for two internal arguments in each of the above sentences.

7.1.5 *Ji* is used to show how a certain action is done or carried out

Jì can be used to express how certain actions are completely accomplished by the agents who initiated them. Consider the following examples:

Examples:

8a. Ụzọ̀ jì mmà gbuo ewū.
Ụzọ hold knife kill-ovs-suff goat.
Ụzọ killed the goat with a knife.

b. Òkekē jì egbè gbaa ele.
Okeke hold gun shoot-ovs antelope.
Okeke shot an antelope with gun

.

c. Ha jì ṅgàjì ète ofē.
3pl hold spoon pr.cook soup.
They cooked soup with spoon.

d. Ijèọma jì ụgbọàlà bịa.
Ijeoma hold vehicle come-ovs suff.
Ijeoma came with a vehicle.

e. Èkène jì ǹkàtà tinye azù.
Ekene hold basket beat-suff fish.
Ekene put the fish in the basket.

In the above examples, *ji* is used to introduce the instruments (*e.g.mmà, egbè,ǹgàjì,ụgbọàlà* and ǹ*kàtà*) which are used as the means of fulfilling the actions or events which have been completely achieved in the past by the agents who initiated them. It subcategorizes for two internal arguments as its object complements in examples (8a,b,c and e) while in (8d), it subcategorizes for a single internal argument as its object complement.

7.1.6. *Ji* can be used to express prepositional notion

In Igbo, the verb *ji* can be used to express prepositional notion. The English preposition *with* is expressed with the verb *ji* as in:

9 a. O jì àkà bia.
3sg hold bag come-ovs.
He came with a bag.

b. O jì ezi uchè rụọ ọrū.
3sg hold good sense work work.
He worked with good sense.

c. O jì ezi alò merie hā.
3sg hold good suggestion won 3pl.
He won them with good suggestion.

Furthermore,*ji* can take a bound suffix to express prepositional notion when it subcatergorizes for at least two or three arguments. The vowel suffix [v] which is attached immediately after the verb *ji* indicates prepositional notion which in turn expresses the notion of benefactive and translates as *for* or *on* or *against.*
Examples:

10. a. Òkekē jiị̄rì ego yā chụọ àjà.
Okeke hold-v-rvpst money 3sg chase-ovs sacrifice.
Okeke used his money for sacrifice.

b. Chikē jiị̀rì àmàmihe yā merie ndi irō.
Chike hold-v-rvpst wisdom 3sg defeat the enemy.
Chike used his wisdom to defeat his enemies.

c. Ò jiìrì aka yā pùọ ezī.
3sg hold-v-rvpst hand 3sg go-ovs outside.
He left outside on his own.

d. Òbi jiìrì há òfọ
Obi hold-v-rvpst 3pl ọfọ.
Obi stands on truth/justices against them.

e. Ó jiị̀rì Ezè ego ụtụ ọtụtụ ogè.
3sg hold-v-rvpst Eze money levy some time.
He/she held Eze's levy for some time.

f. Uchè jiìrì ndi òtù yá otù ǹdè nàirà afò gara àga.
Uche hold-v-rvpst person group 2sg one million naira year go-rvpst pref-go.
Uche held for his group one million naira last year.

From the above examples, the *–v* suffix [-i] maps unto the verb *ji* immediately and expresses the notion of benefactive while the final *–rv* marks the past tense.

7.1.7 *Ji* can be used asa connective word that introduces embedded clauses

Examples:

11.a. N'ụtụtụ ha jì bịa dị̀ mmā.
Prep-morning 3pl hold come-ovs.suff be good.
In the morning that they came is good.

b. Ọ gwàrà ya jì n'ogè bịà.
3sg tell-rvpst 3sg hold prep-time come-ovs.suff
He told him that he should come early.

c. Ọ jụ̀rụ̀ ihe unù jì ego ahụ̀ me.
3sg ask-rvpst thing 2sg hold money Dem do
He asked what you did with that money.

In the above examples, *ji* is used as a connective which introduces the embedded clause. It does not follow the subject NP immediately in the above sentences. It serves as a link or connector of the embedded clauses and independent clauses.
Furthermore, *jì* can be used as an introducer of a relative clause as in:

12.a Ụmùakājī ugwọ akwụkwō bịàrà ebe à.
Children hold debt book come-rvpst here.
The children that are owingschool fees came here.

b. Òkekē jī egbè gbagbu onyeohī ùnyàahù bìàrà nzùko taà.
Okeke hold gun kill thief yesterday come-rvpst meeting today.
Okeke that shut the thief with gun yesterday came to meeting today.

c. Onyenkuzi ahụ jī ēgō zùrù ugboàlà ọma.
Teacher that hold money buy-rvpst car beautiful.
That teacher that has money bought a beautiful car.

In the examples above, *ji* is used as an introducer of relative clauses. It is observed that its tone has changed to downstep.

7.1.8 *Ji*can be the head of the verb phrases

Like other verbs we have in the language, *ji* can be the head of verb phrases.
Consider the following examples:

13.a. Jì irē gụ̀ọ ezē gī ọnū.
Hold tongue count-ovs teeth 2sg mouth.
Use your tongue to count your teeth .

b. Jì ego ahụ̀ bìa n' ụ̀tụ̀tụ̀ echī.
Hold money Dem come-ovs-suff prep-morning tomorrow.
Come tomorrow morning with that money.

c. Jì eze ihū gī tàwa akị ahụ.
Hold teeth front 2sg chew-suff kernel Dem.
Chew that kernel with your front teeth.

d. Jì aka gī màra àgwà.
Hold hand 2sg measure beans.
Use your hand to measure the beans.

e. Jì ehihiè chọ̀wa ewu ojīị̄.
Hold afternoon look goat black.
Look for the black goat in the afternoon.

In the above data, the verb phrases are headed by *ji* respectively and it subcategorizes for two internal arguments in (13a, c and d) respectively whereas in (13b and e), it subcategorizes for single internal argument respectively.

7.1.9 *Ji* can co-occur with the question words/interrogatives

Ji can co-occur with the interrogatives in the syntactic structures. Consider these examples:

14.a. Gịnị̄ kà ha jì?
What foc. 3pl hold?
What are they holding?

b. Ònye jì àkpà ahụ̀?
Who hold bag Dem?
Who is holding that bag?

c. Òleē onye ji òkè gị?
Which person hold share 2sg?
Which person is holding your share?

d. Kèdụ ihe ji unù ime ihe ahụ̀?
What thing hold 2sg pr.do thing Dem?
What is holding from doing that thing?

e. Kèdụ ihe ji unù ịpụ n'ogè?
What thing hold 2sg pr.go prep-time?
What is holding you from going on time?

It is observed that in example (14a), the verb *ji* occurs at the sentence final position and it is on the low tone and does not subcategorize for any internal argument. In examples (14b - e), it is following the question words immediately and it is on high tone. In (14b), it subcategorizes for a single NP object complement. In (14c), it subcategorizes for two internal arguments. In (14 d and e), it subcategorizes for a single NP respectively.

7.1.10 *Ji* can be used in expressing figurative notions

Examples:

15a. Ò jì akwà àsa ahụ̀ màrà ònwe yā
(He that uses cloth in washing the body should be mindful of himself)

b. O jì anya hụ ntị̀ yà. (He saw his ear with his eye)

c. E jì anya àma ọkā chārā àcha, imùpù ya bụ̀ụ̀sà. (The ripe maize is known at sight, unfolding the cob is more futility/hunger.)

d. Ihe e jì echèta mmadụ̀ bụ̀ọrụ mmadụ̀ lụ̀rụ̀.
(People are remembered by their deeds/turns)

e. Onye jì ego kwàa nnà ya na ọ bụghị̀ diọkpara gbùrù.
(He who has money should perform the funeral rites of the father since the first son did not kill the father)

g. Ejùlà jì ire ọma àga n'ogwū.
(With good tongue (caution) the snail threads on thorn (without harm)

h. Idèmmirī/idìdè jì ọ̀fọàwa àlà (With ọfọ (a symbol of authority) the flood/earthworm shares/splits the land)

7.2 The verb *ji* can inflect to indicate different semantic interpretation

In the syntactic constructions, the verb *ji* can inflect in the surface syntax to indicate different semantic interpretations. This implies that *jì* take affixes to express different meanings in the syntactic constructions. The examples of such constructions are shown below:

7.2.1*Ji* can inflect to indicate past time meaning

The verb *ji* can take the *–rv* past time marker to indicate past tense as in:

16. a. Ha jìrì osīīsọ̄ pụ̀ọ ezi.
3pl hold-rvpst quickly go-ovs.suff outside.
They quickly ran outside.

b. O jìrì nwayọọ kwu okwū.
3sg hold-rvpst talk talk.
He/She spoke gently.

b. Oyibo jìrì ụkwụ je ugbō.
Oyibo hold-rvpst leg go farm.
Oyibo went to the market with leg.

Futhermore,*ji* can also take the suffixes: *–bu* and *–bulu* to indicate past time meaning as in:

17 a. Òkoye jìbù egō.
Okoye hold-prior money.
Okoye used to have money.

c. Ùju jìbù akwā Chioma.
Uju hold-prior cloth Chioma.
Uju used to hold Chioma's cloth.

b. Egō jìbùlù ọkwa onyeisī.
Ego hold-prior-pst post head.
Ego used to hold the post of a president.

c. Ìzùégbū jìbùlù ụgwō.
Izuegbu hold-prior-pst debt.
Izuegbu used to be a debtor.

The above examples indicate past time meaning because of the attachment of the suffixes *-bụ* and *-bùlù*. They are semantically eventive.

The extensionl suffixes can also be attached to the verb *ji* to indicate other different semantic readings as in:

18.a. Chikē, jìde ònwe gī.
Chike, hold- ext-suff self 2sg.
Chike, hold yourself.

b. Hà jìkọ̀tàrà aka ọnū me yā.
3pl hold-ext-suff hand mouth do 3sg.
They joined hands together to do it.

c. Jìkọnù aka ọnū.
Hold- ext-suff.encl. hand mouth.
Hold your hands together.

d. Ụzọ̀ jìdègìdèrè àkpa ahụ̀ tupu o wèta yā.
Ụzụ hold-ext-suff bag Dem Conj 3sg bring-suff 3sg.
Ụzọ held that bag for months before he brought it.

e. Ijèọma jìkàtàrà ego m̄ tupu o nye m̄ yā.
Ijeoma hold-ext-suff money 1sg before 3sg give 1sg 3sg.
Ijeoma held my money for a long time before she gave it to me.

7.2.2 *Ji* can inflect to indicate negative notions

The verb *ji* can be inflected to indicate different negative notions by attaching the following negative suffixes: The general negative suffix *ghị*. The perfective negative suffix *-beghị* The imperative negative suffix *-la -na*

i. The general negator *-ghị*

19.a. Ò jighī àkpà unù.
3sg hold-neg bag 2pl.
He is not holding your bag.

b. Ò jighī uchè yā me yā.
3sg hold-neg sense 3sg do 3sg.
He did not do it with his senses.

c. Ejighī m ego ha.
Pro.pref- hold-neg 1sg money 3pl.
I am not holding their money.

d. Ò jighị̄ Okekē ụgwọ ọnwā ise.
3sg hold-neg Okeke debt month five.
He is not owing Okeke for five months.

ii. The perfective negative suffix *-bèghì*

20.a. Ò jibèghị̀ m ụgwọ̄.
3sg hold-perf.neg 1sg debt.
He/She has not owed me.

b. Hà èjìbèghì aka ha gwu àlà.
3pl pr.hold-perf.neg hand 3pl dig land.
They have not used their hands to dig the land.

c. Ụbà ejibèghị̀rị̀ị̀ aka ri nrī.
Ụba pr.hold-neg pulp-perf hand eat food.
Ụba has not eaten with hands.

iii. The imperative negative suffix *-la-na*

21.a. Ejìlà ụgwọ̄.
Pr-hold-imp debt.
Don't owe.

b. Ejìlà egbè je ọ̀gụ̀.
Pr-hold-imp gun go war.
Don't go to war with gun.

c. Ejìlà oke m.
Pr-hold-imp share 1sg.
Don't hold my share.

7.2.3 *Ji* can be used with na- and ga- forms to express progressive or habitual aspect

When *ji* is used with na- form, that is, the auxiliary verb, it expresses progressive aspect or habitual aspect. In that case, the prefix *e-* is attached to it. as in:

22.a. Ndị uweojīī nà-èji egbè alụ̀ọ̀gụ̀.
Ndị cloth black aux-pr-hold gun fight war.
The policeman are using gun in fighting war.

b. Ha nà-èji n'ogè èbido nzùkọ.
3pl aux-pr-hold prep-time pr-live-keep meeting.
They are holding the meeting on time.

c. Nwokē à nà-èji ùgbu akụ̀ azụ̀.
Man this aux-pr-hold net catch fish.
This man is using the net to catch the fish.

In the above examples, the prefix /e-/ is attached to*ji* to form *eji* which is a participle. Since the participle cannot stand alone in the syntactic structures, the auxiliary verb *na-* helps it to stand in order to make the sentence meaningful.

Furthermore, the verb *ji* can be used with the auxiliary verb *ga-* to indicate future aspect as in:

23.a. Ha gà-èji ego hā je be gī.
3pl fut-pr-hold money 3pl go home 2sg.
They will go to your house with their money.

b. M gà-èji ụtụtụ̀ je ugbō.
1sg fut-pr-hold morning go farm.
I will go to farm in the morning.

c. Ihe m gà-èji ga bụ̀ ụgbọàlà m.
Thing 1sg fut-pr-hold go be vehicle 1sg.
I will go with my vehicle.

7.2.5. *Ji* can be used to express imperative mood

In the syntactic constructions, the ovs suffix *-e* is attached to the verb *ji* to indicate imperative interpretations as in:

24.a. Jìe onwē gị̄ aka.
Hold-ovs.suff self 2sg hand.
Hold yourself.

b. Jìe irē gị̄ akā.
Hold-ovs.suff tongue 2sg hand
Hold your tongue.

In above examples, the verb *ji* with the attachment of the ovs suffix [-e]is used to give command to someone.

7.2.6 *Ji* can be attached the prefix /i-/ to express infinitive mood

In expressing infinitive mood, the prefix /i-/ is attached to the verb *ji.*

Examples:

25.a. O kwùrù ya òtu a ijī melite mmụọ yā.
3sg say-rvpst 3sg like this pr-hold do-suff spirit 3sg.
He/she said it like this in order to raise his/her spirit.

b. Ha nyèrè ya ego ijī nyèrè ya akā.
3pl give-rvpst 3sg money pr-hold give-rvpst 3sg hand.
They gave him/her money to help him/her.

c. Ọ gwàrà ha okwu ijī nye èkène.
3sg talk-rvpst 3pl talk pr-hold give thanksgiving.
He/she talked to them to give thanks.

In above examples, the infinitive verb *iji*which appears at the sentence medial position indicates the speaker's intention. The tone of the vowel of the CV root becomes downstep tone. Furthermore, *ji* is duplicated with the attachment of the prefix /o-/ to indicate gerund as in:

26. Ò jìjì ndị uweojīī jì Chikē dị mmā.
Holding the police hold Chike be good.
The holding of Chike by the policemen is good.

In the above example, the verb *ji* appears in two positions: at the sentence-initial position as a gerund.

7.2.7.*Ji* can take enclitics- ga, cha to indicate quantity

The verb *ji* can take the enclitics *ga* and *cha* to indicate quantity. *Ga* is glossed as some while *cha* is glossed as all.

27a. Anyị jìgà akwà bịa.
1pl hold-encl cloth come-ovs.
We came with some clothes.

b. Ha jìchà akwụkwọ ahù.
3pl hold-encl book Dem.
They held all those books.

Conclusion

This paper explored the different syntactic constructions in which the verb *ji S*can be used to express different interpretations or meanings in the Igbo language. The paper revealed that the verb *ji* can be used without attachment of any affix in the syntactic constructions to express different semantic meanings such as present or past time meanings, to supply reasons for an action being performed by someone, show how certain actions are performed. Furthermore, it can also inflect to express other semantic meanings such as: past time meaning, negation, progressive aspect, prepositional notion, imperative notion and so on. The verb *jì* is a multi-argument verb and has the potential to participate in different constructions with physical objects or entities, states and events to indicate different interpretation or meanings in the syntactic constructions. It always selects animate entity, that is, [+human] as it's subject. It can co-occur with both animate and inanimate entities or objects in a syntactic construction. The study also shows that the inherent tone of the verb *ji* can change depending on the syntactic constructions.

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