

THE SYNTAX OF CHALDEAN NEO-ARAMAIC

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1. Introduction

Chaldean Neo-Aramaic is a Semitic language spoken by the Chaldean Christians in Iraq and around the world. There are many dialects of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic, and in this research, I will be examining ACNA, which is spoken in the town of Alqosh¹ in the Plains of Nineveh in the northern part of Iraq. Currently, the language is in decline and is understudied. Therefore, this paper attempts to preserve the ACNA by generally describing its syntax, and specifically determining its word order, which typically refers to the order of subject (S), verb (V) and object (O) in a sentence.

1.1 Historical Overview

Chaldean Neo-Aramaic is a northeastern dialect of Modern Aramaic from the west Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family. The word Chaldean is ambiguous if used solely because it may refer to the Church, people, or language. Therefore, the term Neo-Aramaic is added as a reference to the language as well as its Aramaic root. Aramaic is a reference to the ancient Arameans who lived in Aram – modern day Syria. Earliest indication of Aramaic comes from the Aramaic kingdoms, which was written in ancient Aramaic. Then Aramaic became the official tongue after big empires had adopted it as the administrative language (Greenspahn, 2007, p.6). Among these kingdoms were the Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian empires, thus making Aramaic the lingua franca of the entire Near East (p.1).

In his book, Dr. Greenspahn (2007) highlights the importance of differentiating between a language and a script (p.6). The orthography of Ancient Aramaic was based on the Phoenician alphabet. In time, the ancient Israelites adopted the more squared writing style of Ancient Aramaic to write their own language, from which the Biblical Aramaic had developed, whereas the cursive style became what is known as the Syriac alphabet, which is the ancient Aramaic orthography that was used later by the early Christians. Due to religious conflict, Syriac developed two distinctive writing systems: Western and Eastern, both of which are still used today by the church in Syria and Iraq.

The dialects of Aramaic can be arranged according to the time in which they were used. First, 'old', or 'ancient' Aramaic was used in the first millennium B.C.E. which "... the division between the Aramaic

and the Canaanite branches of Northwest Semitic was relatively recent" (p.6). When the big empires, such as Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian, used Aramaic as their official language, which marked the next period of Aramaic, and that is the Official, Imperial, or Standard Literary Aramaic. After the falling of the Persian Empire, regional variations of Aramaic had emerged due to the lack of language standardization. The third period of Aramaic, Middle Aramaic, was spoken during the time of Jesus Christ. The time between the second and the ninth centuries C.E. marked 'Late' Aramaic. Finally, Modern Aramaic is currently spoken by most Christians in Iraq and Syria, southeastern Turkey (near Tur Abdin), and Mandaeans in southern Iran (p.6-7).

Modern Aramaic has various variations, one of which is Chaldean Neo-Aramaic. The first reference of the language appeared in a work of literature in the 17th century. Rather than writing in Classical Syriac, the School of Alqosh produced a religious poetry in the colloquial Neo-Aramaic and called the language 'Chaldean Neo-Aramaic' (Murre-van den Berg, 1998, p.508), thus marking the Neo-Aramaic dialects spoken in the Plains of Nineveh in northern Iraq.

¹ Alqosh is located 50 kilometers (31 mi) north of Mosul.

² Western Aramaic alphabet is also called Classical Syriac or Estrangēlā, which is no longer used. The term Western roughly refers to the west of Euphrates. Sertā is simpler and has been used since the 8th century in Syria and Lebanon for religious purposes.

³ Also called Madnhāyā, which means 'eastern'

⁴ Probably between the tenth and the seventh centuries (Greenspahn, 2007, p.6)

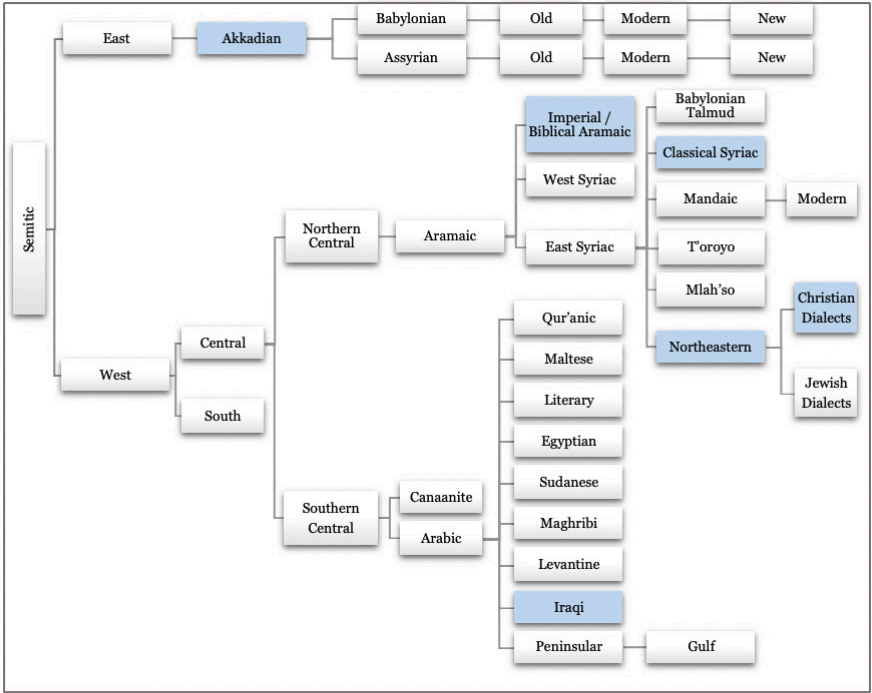


Figure 1 – Semitic Language Family Tree

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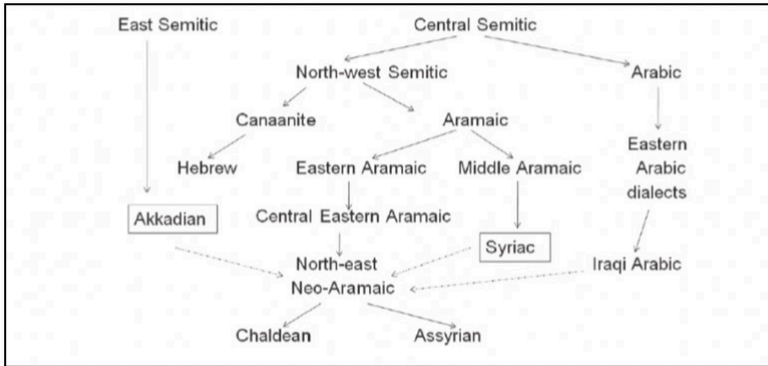


Figure 2 - The Relationship of Chaldean and Assyrian to Other Semitic Languages

Jim Hlavac (2012) Monash University, Author's Copy

Chaldean Neo-Aramaic has a historical relationship with other languages in the Semitic family as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. In the previous page, the highlighted branches in Figure 1 are used in Figure 2 to present the historical relationships of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic to the Semitic languages. The dotted arrows in Figure 2 show a direct influence of other languages in Chaldean Neo-Aramaic, while the regular arrows present the origin of the language.

1.2. Present-Day Issues

According to UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, the vitality status of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic is 'definitely endangered' (Moseley, 2010). There are a number of socio-political reasons for such status, such as discrimination, immigration, and mass media. First, as a minority, Chaldeans have been underrepresented politically in the Iraqi government. The former government of Saddam Hussein did not target Chaldeans directly; however, many Chaldean villages were destroyed under his rule. As a result, many Chaldeans moved to big cities such as Baghdad and Mosul. After the Iraq War in 2003, a large number of Chaldean Christians left the country due to religious prosecutions, thus decreasing their population from 8 percent in 1987 to 5 percent in 2003 (San Diego Union Tribune, 2014). There has not been any updated data regarding Chaldean Christian's population because there has been no official census after 2003 in Iraq.

In the diaspora, Chaldeans live in communities where they strive to keep their old culture and language alive. For example, Metro Detroit, Michigan, has the world's largest Chaldean population outside of Iraq (The Chaldean Community Foundation). However, the population does not necessarily reflect the numbers of speakers. Determining the exact number of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic speakers is not an easy task because there is a large portion of Chaldeans, or at least those who identify themselves as such, who do not speak Chaldean Neo-Aramaic. The UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger reported an estimated of 240,000 speakers worldwide (Moseley, 2010). However, some statistics show an estimation of 120,000 speakers of Aramaic dialects in Iraq (Murad, 2007). At any rate, there has not been any attempt to consider the number of ACNA speakers.

Another reason for the decline of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic⁵ is the lack of effective resources to preserve the language. First, Chaldeans are schooled in languages other than Chaldean Neo-Aramaic. Only those who are affiliated with the church, e.g. priests and monks, are required to read and write in Aramaic, which is far from the spoken Chaldean dialects. Moreover,

there are numerous dialects of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic, some of which are mutually unintelligible. Furthermore, there is no mass media production in Chaldean; instead, newspapers and TVs are in either Arabic or English. In brief, for the lack of both efficient means to maintain the language, and linguistics research and analysis, this paper is my first step in the ladder to explore the language deeply in an attempt to preserve it.

2. Current Study

The focus of the present study concerns the grammatical judgments of word order with a corresponding syntactic analysis in order to create a model for the syntax of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic. This study focuses on three types of verbs, and those are intransitive⁶, transitive⁷, and ditransitive⁸, each of which was used in the simple and progressive aspects.

2.1. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Languages in the Semitic family, usually, have multiple word orders, some of which have completely changed from one order to another. For example, Hebrew has shifted from VSO in Biblical Hebrew to SVO in Modern Hebrew. On the other hand, Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) are both VSO and SVO, whereas Arabic colloquial is mostly VO and SVO. Similarly, ACNA is expected to have a flexible word order, for which often VSO order is preferred over SVO. Therefore, the hypothesis for this study suggests that by using a variety of syntactic hypotheses, a model tree of ACNA's syntax will be presented and examined, and then a final model tree will be constructed for ACNA, but first, it is essential to answer the following questions:

- I. What is the word order in ACNA?
- II. Is it flexible?
- III. If so, what is the preferred word order?
- IV. What are the factors that influence such preference?

⁵Depends on where the Chaldeans are populated, they study Arabic in Iraq, in English in the US and Australia; etc...

⁶Intransitive verbs require one argument only, such as sleep in 'Mary slept'

⁷Transitive verbs require two arguments, a subject and an object, such as hit in 'the car hit the tree'

⁸Ditransitive verbs require three arguments, a subject and two objects, such as give in 'Mary gave John a pen' or 'Mary gave a pen to John'

3. Data Generalization

Speakers of ACNA have the tendency to omit the subject if it has already been stated. Even when the subject is deleted from the sentence, the subject agreements is always morphologically formulated within the verb. A subject agreement can be an affix, which can be defined as a bound morpheme that attaches to the stem of a word. In ACNA, subject agreement usually appears as a suffix; however, they are inseparable from the verb, and they must agree with the subject's person, number, and gender. In general, subject noun phrase can either precede or proceed the verb, or be omitted as previously stated; however, a verb is always minimally required in order to create a sentence in ACNA. Generally, verbs in Chaldean Neo-Aramaic are free morphemes (independent words); however, if the verb is a copula, it may be a suffix.

3.1. Data Collection

The main resources used for this research are collected previously from the Field Methods course and Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF). For the purpose of this research, additional data was also primarily collected by audio-recorded elicitation sessions with native speakers of ACNA in San Diego, California, and Las Vegas, Nevada

3.2. Data Transcription

The data is transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). All data is translated using a word-to-word translation. Then the equivalence translation of English is provided as well.

4. Analysis

Examining the data begins with analyzing the small entities that construct a sentence. Generally, a sentence is mainly comprised of a verb, a subject, and sometimes an object. However, languages such as Spanish, Italian, and Arabic do not require a subject in the sentence for the reason that the formation of the verb indicates the subject's person, gender, and/or number. As a member of the Semitic family, ACNA possesses similar characteristics of subject omission, which, in linguistics, is referred to as a null-subject language. As a result, forming a sentence in ACNA requires at least a verb, which is the main element of the sentence.

4.1. Word Order

Word order is the syntactic ordering of constituents in a given language; in other words, it denotes the location of important sentence elements such as the subject, the object, and the verb. There are six possible word orders for sentences that are constructed

of a subject (S), a verb (V), and an object (O). Over 85% of the languages are SOV and SVO (Tomlin, 2014, p.120). According to Carnie (2013), nearly 9 percent of languages around the world are VSO (300). As previously mentioned, ACNA is selectively flexible in its word order. This is shown in (1).

- | | | | |
|-----|----|----------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) | a. | dmɪʎla | Mary |
| | | dmɪʎ-la | Mary |
| | | sleep.REC-3.SG.FEM | Mary |
| | | 'Mary slept' | |
| | b. | Mary | dmɪʎla |
| | | Mary | dmɪʎ-la |
| | | Mary | sleep.REC-3.SG.FEM |
| | | 'Mary slept' ¹⁰ | |

Sentences with intransitive verbs may start with the subject followed by the verb, or vice versa. When native speakers were asked to translate the sentence and then determine which sentence is more acceptable, they stated that both were equally correct. Moreover, they specified that the first word heard is the most important piece of information that the listener needs to know. Therefore, the flexibility in the subject-verb order is a matter of emphasis. However, this is not the case for both transitive and ditransitive verbs. Thus, the word order is affected by argument structure.

4.1.1. Explicit Subject

Languages can be formed differently from each other, some of which requires a subject and a verb, and other may require a verb only. For example, creating a simple sentence in English requires a subject noun phrase and a verb predicate. In other words, the subject is an independent entity of the verb in the syntax of English. On the other hand, the verb in ACNA is morphologically formed to include the subject; both the verb and the subject are inseparable from each other. Furthermore, subject pronouns are used only when ACNA speakers are being emphatic. Because this research examines word order, the majority of the data includes explicit subjects. Speakers of ACNA typically express intransitive and transitive sentences with explicit subjects as in (2).

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| (2) | a. | ɜni | kdsɪɟi | |
| | | ɜni | k-dɜɟi-i | |
| | | 3.PL.NOM | 11AB-sleep-3.PL. | |
| | | 'They sleep' | | |
| | b. | Mary | dɪɜʎqɑ | brɔnɑh |
| | | Mary | dɪ-nɜʎq-ɑ | brɔnɑ-h |
| | | Mary | FUT-kiss-3.SG.FEM | son-POSS |
| | | 'Mary will kiss her son' | | |

⁹ A suffix is an affix that is attached to the end of the stem.

¹⁰ Verb in simple past in ACNA are expressed in three different patterns, one-time event in the near past (dmɪʎla), one-time event in the far past (dmɪʎwala), and habitual (kdɪmɪyawa), whose equivalence in English is 'used to'.

Although (2a) includes an overt pronoun, in these cases native speakers of ACNA mainly use the verb only (without the subject pronoun). However, (2a) is acceptable and interpreted as emphasizing the subject. In addition, due to flexibility in word order, /kd mxi ni/ is also acceptable. Typically, speakers of ACNA start the sentence with the progressive aspect with the copula, which includes the tense and the subject agreement, followed by the subject then the main verb. This is shown in (3)a. Moreover, speakers of ACNA point out that the same sentence in (3)a can be communicated by starting with the subject, followed by the verb – as in (3)b – as well as starting with the verb and then the subject, as shown in (3)c.

(3)	a.	wola	Mary	bidmaza	lqanpa
		wə-la	Mary	bi-dmaza	l-qanpa
		COP.PRES-3.SG.MEM	Mary	PROG-sleep	LOC.sofa
		'Mary is sleeping on the sofa'			
	b.	Mary	wola	bidmaza	lqanpa
		Mary	wə-la	bi-dmaza	l-qanpa
		Mary	COP.PRES-3.SG.FEM	PROG-sleep	LOC.sofa
		'Mary is sleeping on the sofa'			
	c.	wola	bidmaza	Mary	lqanpa
		wə-la	bi-dmaza	Mary	l-qanpa
		COP.PRES-3.SG.FEM	PROG-sleep	Mary	LOC.sofa
		'Mary is sleeping on the sofa'			

Even though 'Mary is sleeping on the sofa' can be uttered in three different word orders, speakers of ACNA declared that their preference is (3)a. They clarified that (3)b significantly emphasizes the subject. It is important to note that speakers of ACNA prefer to hear what they consider more important piece of information in the sentence, and that is the copula because it carries the tense and subject reference – when did the action happen and who performed it. Clarifying the subject is the only case speakers of ACNA would use (3)b. On the other hand, the participants rated (3)c as grammatical yet rarely used, thus not preferable. Evidently, SVO word order in (3)a and (3)b is highly preferred over VSO order in (3)c in the progressive aspect.

4.1.2. Null Subject Hypothesis

As indicated previously, according to language typology, the grammar of null-subject languages (NSLs), such as Spanish, Italian, and Arabic, allows the deletion of the subject in the sentence, while the verb typically encompasses the subject agreement, which is a referent of the subject's person, number, and/or gender. In ACNA, the usage of subject pronouns is unnecessary in the sentence, as shown in (4).

(4)	kpəlɣitwa
	k-dɔmy-it-wa
	HAB-work-2.SG.MASC.PST
	'You (used to) work'

The subject agreement clarifies who or what the subject is, and in (4), it is a third person singular masculine. Each subject agreement is part of the morphological construction of the verb. In ACNA, there are nine different types of subject agreements (shown in

Table 1), and those agreements are suffixes, except for their person singular masculine (he), which is part of the in the verb's pattern.

'work'	Subject Agreements	English Translation
kpəlɣən	-ən	I (fem) work
kpəlɣn	-n	I (masc) work
kpəlɣɔz	-ɔz	We work
kpəlɣət	-ət	You (sg.fem) work
kpəlɣt	-t	You (sg.masc) work
kpəlɣutu	utu	You (pl) work
	kpəlɣ	He work
kpəlɣə	-ə	She work
kpəlɣi	-i	They work

Table 1 - Subject Agreements in ACNA

In English, the category of work is ambiguous because it can be a verb as in 'I **work** every day,' or a noun as in 'my **work** is difficult.' One must heavily rely on the syntax of English in order to determine whether 'work' is a noun or a verb. On the contrary, words in ACNA are formed in patterns; each of which defines the category of words. Therefore, creating a verb requires putting a root of a word into its verb pattern, and then attaching the subject agreement suffix to it. Most importantly, verb patterns and subject agreements are inseparable from each other. Native speakers of ACNA use a proper noun only at the beginning of a conversation to establish whom or what the subject is, and then they omit it for the rest of the conversation, thus falling under the null-subject languages.

4.1.3. The Importance of Verbal Type on Word Order

Verbs in ACNA are the most important element in the sentence. Not only do verbs carry all the necessary information such as tense, aspects, and subject reference, but also their category directly affects the word order. Specifically, word order could be either strict or flexible depending on whether the verb is intransitive, transitive, or ditransitive. In order to examine any possible word order, the data following sections includes both the simple and progressive aspects of the present tense accompanied with an explicit subject.

As previously described, word order is flexible for intransitive verbs, as shown in (1) and (3). On the other hand, sentences with transitive verbs may be flexible, as shown in (2b), or not. When asked about grammatical judgment, speakers of ACNA stated that (5) sounds strange.

(5)	#wola	bnɣaqa	Mary	brɔnsh
	wə-la	bi-nɣaqa	Mary	brɔnsh-h
	COP.PRES-3.SG.FEM	PROG-kiss	Mary	son-POSS
	'Mary is kissing her son'			

For sentences with transitive verbs, the word order is not as flexible as intransitive verbs. The only acceptable word order is SVO, in which the subject must always precede the main verb. Speakers of ACNA expressed that at first, they assumed that Mary in (5) was the person being kissed. Upon the request of some participants, the sentence was repeated. Only then they were able to indicate that (5) is unconventional.

Sentences with ditransitive verbs in ACNA can be structured in two way. The verb in first form is followed by indirect object then the direct object, as shown in (6a). In the second form, the verb is followed by a direct object then a preposition phrase (indirect object), as shown in (6c). In contrast to the intransitive and transitive verbs, the only acceptable word order for sentences with ditransitive verbs is SVOO, as shown in (6).

- (6)
- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|
| a. | Mary | dimɔdrɪsɑ | Adam | pɪlɑsɔp-utɑ | | |
| | Mary | di-m-ɔdrɪs-ɑ | Adam | pɪlɑsɔpuʈɑ | | |
| | Mary | FUT-CAUS-study.PRES-3.SG.FEM | Adam | Philosophy | | |
| | 'Mary will teach Adam Philosophy' ¹² | | | | | |
| b. | *dimɔdrɪsɑ | | Mary | Adam | pɪlɑsɔp-utɑ | |
| | di-m-ɔdrɪs-ɑ | | Mary | Adam | pɪlɑsɔpuʈɑ | |
| | FUT-CAUS-study.PRES-3.SG.FEM | | Mary | Adam | Philosophy | |
| | 'Mary will teach Adam Philosophy' ¹³ | | | | | |
| c. | Mary | dimɔdrɪsɑ | pɪlɑsɔp-utɑ | ts | Adam | |
| | Mary | di-m-ɔdrɪs-ɑ | pɪlɑsɔpuʈɑ | tɔ | Adam | |
| | Mary | FUT-CAUS-study.PRES-3.SG.FEM | Philosophy | DAT | Adam | |
| | 'Mary will teach Philosophy to Adam' | | | | | |
| d. | *dimɔdrɪsɑ | | Mary | pɪlɑsɔp-utɑ | ts | Adam |
| | di-m-ɔdrɪs-ɑ | | Mary | pɪlɑsɔpuʈɑ | tɔ | Adam |
| | FUT-CAUS-study.PRES-3.SG.FEM | | Mary | Philosophy | DAT | Adam |
| | 'Mary will teach Philosophy to Adam' | | | | | |

Speakers of ACNA stated that only (6a) and (6c) are acceptable, whereas (6b) and (6d) are ungrammatical. The speakers' grammatical judgment indicates three facts. First, the subject must always precede the ditransitive verb. Second, it is extremely preferred that the subject precedes the transitive verb, and third, the subject and the intransitive verb can freely exchange their order. In other words, SVO is generally preferred over VSO in ACNA.

4.2. Syntax Tree Diagram

Once the word order for ACNA is established, I began the process of constructing a model for ACNA syntax. The basis of this analysis is the English syntax tree in Figure 3. Many sentences in ACNA were put in the

English model; however, it failed for VSO sentences.

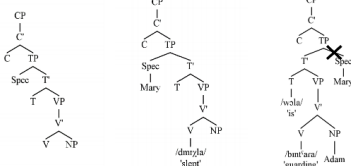


Figure 3.1 Model Tree for English, Figure 3.2 SVO Sentence in ACNA, Figure 3.3 VSO Sentence in ACNA

The English tree may work for VSO sentences; however, it completely failed for TSVO, which is the most preferred order for the progressive aspect. For example, /w la Mary b nt ara Adam/ 'Mary is guarding Adam' failed completely in Figure 3.3 because the NP subject is the specifier of VP; therefore, any insertion between T and VP is not permitted. In the next section, a deeper examination is provided using transformational rules to accommodate the flexibility in ACNA word order.

4.2.1. The Transformational Rules

Transformational rules can move words around in the sentence such as V T and T C. The first type of movement allows the verb to move to the T head in the tree; this is known as verb raising or V T movement. This movement addresses the issue of adjunct (adverbs) when it appears between the verb and its complement. It also explains tensed auxiliary movement in English (Carnie, 2013, p. 291-311). In ACNA, this movement perfectly fits the simple aspects in Figure 4; however, it was unfitting for the progressive aspects as shown in Figure 5.

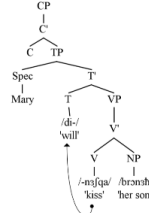


Figure 4 V to T - Simple Future

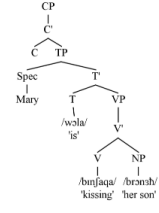


Figure 5 V to T - Present Progressive

At first glance, V T movement seems to work for ACNA, as shown in Figure 4. Some linguists prefer to keep /di- aqɑ/ 'will kiss' in V and add [+fut] in T while keeping the arrow to indicate the tense. In any case, while V T movement may work for other languages, it was problematic for the progressive aspect because it did not work for TSVO order.

The second movement that was subject to examination is (T C), which is used in English and other languages, typically for yes/no questions¹⁴. However, forming a yes/no question in ACNA is a matter of intonation¹⁵, thus making the movement unnecessary. In short, both V T and T C function in the basis of the Head-to-Head movement, in which T is the head of TP, V is the head of VP, and C is the head of CP. Given that the position of the subject has not been solved yet, the proceeding section will examine the VP-Subject Internal hypothesis and then apply the Head-to-Head movement into the tree.

4.2.2. VP-Subject Internal Hypothesis

As a rule, the subject is positioned in the specifier of the TP. From this point of view, the subject is a separate entity from the verb, which completely fails in languages with a VSO order. Syntacticians suggest that the subject should be lowered to become part of the verb phrase. Koopman and Sportiche (1991) suggest that the subject is “generated in the specifier of a VP” (Carnie, 2013, p.305). According to this hypothesis, the subject becomes an argument of the verb, thus closer to it. Such a scenario perfectly works for VSO languages, and especially ACNA, whose verb morphology includes subject agreements. The examination of this hypothesis is in Figure 7. The sentence in Figure 7 can be expressed as /w la Mary b n aqa br n h/, which fits perfectly in the tree, or /Mary w la b n aqa br n h/ in which a Head-to-Head movement is required. Consider the following:

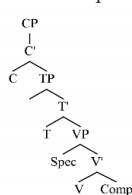


Figure 6
VP-Subject Internal Tree

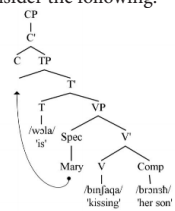


Figure 7
SVO and TSVO

At this point, the diagram in Figure 6 has been applicable for both SVO and TSVO. Regarding VSO order, presented Figure 7, the V T movement resolved the issue of VSO. On the contrary, VSO sentences with the progressive aspect failed fit in this diagram. Therefore, a new hypothesis will be introduced in the next section to resolve such complication.

4.2.3. Inner-Aspect

According to Travis (2010), there is an inflectional domain within VP, which is used to determine the Inner Aspect (p.1). Moreover, Travis discussed the possibility of a non-lexical category, or the inflectional domain being aspect (p.7). In ACNA, the aspect is morphologically inflected with the main verb, as shown in with progressive b - in (7a) and habitual k- in (7b):

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| (7) | a. | bɪdməɣa | b. | kdʒmɣa |
| | | bi-dməɣa | | k-dʒmɣ-a |
| | | PROG-sleep | | HAB-sleep-3.FEM |
| | | Sleeping ¹⁶ | | She (habitually) sleeps |

The final tree is presented in Figure 9, which is examined using Head-to-Head movement. It perfectly fits VSO and TSVO. In addition, the subject ‘Mary’ may rise to be positioned in the specifier of the ASPP then TP, presented in orange arrows, thus creating an ideal structure for SVO. The continuous aspect in ACNA is always prefixed to the gerund to create a progressive verb. Some linguists have argued that the morphology of the verb may parallel the syntax. Considering this point of view, an aspect phrase can be added to the diagram.

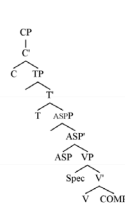


Figure 8
The Final Model for ACNA



Figure 9
A VSO sentence

5. Conclusion and Future Research

The purpose of the present study was to examine the word order of ACNA in order to accurately describe the syntax of ACNA. The results were that the ACNA has a flexible word order, in which SVO is preferred over VSO. According to ACNA speakers, such flexibility such flexibility occurred for two reasons: emphasis and influence of other languages. Furthermore, the type of verb determined the acceptable word order. After applying a variety of syntactic hypotheses such as Transformational Rules of movements, Null-Subject, VP-Subject Internal, and Inner-Aspect, a model tree of ACNA’s syntax was presented in Figure 9 and then examined. The model should be able to present any sentence produced in ACNA. Future research will have to investigate different types of sentences such as negative and interrogative sentences in order to further investigate its syntax in attempts to preserve the language due to its decline.

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List of Abbreviations

1	first person	nom	nominative
2	second person	np	noun phrase
3	third person	pl	plural
aspP	aspect phrase	POSS	possessive
caus	Causative	PRES	present
cop	copula	PROG	progressive
cp	complementizer phrase	PST	past
fem	feminine	REC	recent past tense
fut	future	SG	Singular
hab	habitual	spec	Specifier
loc	Locative	TP	tense phrase
masc	masculine	VP	verb phrase