
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysing the Use of some Morphological and Semantic Particles in the Krio Language in Kailahun District, Sierra Leone

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| ABSTRACT

The study dealt with comprehensive documentation of the language features of locative particles in the Krio Language in Kailahun District, a dominant non-native Krio area. The study examined specific language usage in space, synonymous with deictic features with respect to the speaker. The study used fluent and literate speakers of Krio, though few are non-native krio speakers. Based on the topic, the researcher considered personal experience in doing the research, including designing instruments such as desk-top research, use of the tape recorder, and corpus-based research. The findings revealed that locative nouns, locative particles, and locativized nouns exist in the Krio language and that such morphological and semantic features enhance comprehension, competence, and performance.

| KEYWORDS

Particles, Specific, non-natives, instruments, locative nouns, locative particles, comprehension, competence and performance

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The Sierra Leone Krio has unique morphological features, like the English Language. For example, talk, talks, talking, talker, talked, all have "Talk" and other smaller units: -s, -er, -ing, -er, -ed. These are described as morphemes, which are defined as minimal pairs known as grammatical functions in the English Language. The grammatical description of words allows the traditional division of most languages into minimal units, morphological elements, syntactic structures or sentences, and units of meaning known as semantics. It is important to note that morphemes are free morphemes when they stand on their own, derivational morphemes when they are formed from other morphemes, and inflectional when they begin or end other morphemes as root words.

The Sierra Leone Krio, like the English Language, has unique morphological aspects. For this study, they are considered to be locative structures in the Krio Language. Locatives are structures in language that denote the location or position of objects in relation to where the speaker is and the addressee. Three types of locatives are known, including locative nouns, locativized nouns, and locative particle groups. In his view, Crystal (1996) mentions that the use of particles can be in the form of foreign words, which are usually mispronounced, thus referring to them metaphorically as "loan" words which draw a natural picture of "borrowing" in the language.

Crystal (1996) also sees sentences as a composition of words while morphology is a decomposition of words, and words are associated with meaning to refer to objects, actions, ideas, and qualities in the world of experience, even outside language. In the same respect, Owen T. (1990) recognizes the existence of morphological and semantic features as transformational grammar and that languages are generally made up of individual words classified as parts of speech; suggesting that not all parts of speech are complete words as in the case of bound morphemes compared to free morphemes: bound morphemes include nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives while free morphemes include auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. Crystal (1996) also states

that Inflectional Morphology and Derivational Morphology are two main fields of morphology, but distinctively, the former studies the way in which words inflect or vary to express grammatical contrast in sentences, while Derivational Morphology studies the principle governing the construction of words without reference to the specific grammatical role that a word plays in a sentence. In this way, Derivational Morphology exceeds Inflectional Morphology in providing much more insight into morphological processes in language generally, such as in the case of the Sierra Leone Krio. Hence, there are inflectional affixes and suffixes performing grammatical functions: Suffixation includes nouns, third-person singular, present tense of the verb, past tenses of verbs, present participles of verbs, past participles of verbs, comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives.

In addition, Crystal (2000) asserts that morphological processes of a language, affixation, compounding, and conversion, and that "Reduplication," for example, goody-goody, wish-washy, is most prolific in the Krio language of Sierra Leone. Crystal goes on to say that in the case of "Borrowing" as a morphological process, the two most obvious factors in semantic change are the arrival of new words and the loss of old ones. He thus mentions that language is as dynamic as a human being and that this fact brings to mind the concept of "Language Change".

Roberts (2009), "unpublished," highlights that customarily a distinction can be made between locative structures, including the Sierra Leone Krio and that this fact demands some morphological and semantic clarifications. He points out the fact that locative nouns, locativized nouns, and locative particle groups constitute categories of locative nouns as structures employed in a language, denoting the position of an object with respect to a particular location of the speaker.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Comprehensive documentation of the language feature of locative particles in the Krio language had not been as vast as in the English Language. This study was to improve on the scarce documents or orthography in the Sierra Leone Krio Language.

At the same time, the phenomenon studied in this research might have appeared a bit vague in relation to the morphological and semantic composition of linguistic elements. This vague condition might have been a compelling problem that posed itself to the learners of Krio. Contrarily, other people may have considered the use of locative structures in the Krio language as a more impediment to meaningful comprehension; and that it had been a potential barrier to communication. The controversy might have been a linguistic dilemma that might have had much bearing on the teaching and learning of the Krio language. The study was therefore intended to investigate, analyze and resolve the inherent conflict.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The general aim of the study was to undertake an analysis of the use of Sierra Leone Krio particles, whereas the objectives of the study were to:

- Identify and classify the various groups of locative particles in the Sierra Leone Krio Language.
- Give a morphological description of each main and sub-categories of locative particles identified in the Krio Language.
- Give a semantic description of each of the main and sub-categories of locative particles identified in Krio.
- Give the semantic similarities and differences between some locative particles.
- Give the educational value of locative particles in the Krio Language as a teaching subject.
- Give some suggestions and recommendations that might reflect the conclusions of the findings.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study explored aspects of the Krio Language locative particles along with some identifiable forms, their morphological features, and their semantic values.

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study was to find out whether locative forms in the Krio Language were important in meaningful communication.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The study was important because the investigation is an important literature on the Krio Language useful to lecturers, teachers, and students of linguistics, as well as researchers of a similar study.

1.6 Limitation and Delimitation to the Study

The study was limited to financial constraints to cover the cost of stationery, transportation for computing and binding the completed report, and other forms of expenses. Materials for the literature review were hardly accessed. Therefore, the researcher had to go the extra mile to search for relevant texts, as there were no orthographies on particles.

2. Methodology

The study was purely a descriptive approach due to the nature of the topic. However, the researcher verified the data very thoroughly through discussions using the following:

2.1 Study Area

The study was a sociolinguistic study which is another branch of linguistics.

2.2 Sample Population Size

The study targeted twenty-five participants, including twenty non-native speakers and five native Krio speakers. There were more non-native speakers because it was difficult to identify the native speakers of Krio in the study area.

2.3 Study Instruments

In order to gather accurate information for the study, the following sources were utilized:

- **Personal Experience**
Being a fluent and literate user of Krio, the researcher accessed a lot of information on the use of locative structures in the language
- **Desk Top Research**
The researcher investigated the few native and non-native users of the language and textbooks which documented particles in language. This extensive review of available sources resulted in meaningful input.
- **Use Of Tape Recorder**
The researcher used a tape recorder during informal discussions to obtain the data on the subject to ease the conduct of the study. Transcription of the data was then done in Krio, verified, and utilized for the study
- **Use of Corpus**
A purely descriptive approach was used to analyze the data by;
 - Identifying locatives in Krio
 - Transcribing locatives in Krio
 - Identifying locative nouns
 - Identifying locativized nouns in Krio
 - Transcribing locativized nouns in Krio
 - Identifying locative particles in Krio

3. Results and Discussion

Like other Sierra Leonean languages, the Krio language uses words or structures that can customarily be distinguished from other kinds of words. Locative nouns, locativized nouns, and locative particles, all of which are studied in the Krio language, demand morphological and semantic clarification. The study, therefore, dealt with such clarifications and analyzed the findings as follows:

3.1 Locative Nouns

Locative are structures in a language that denotes the position or location of an object meant to be described within the confines of an area in relation to the speaker and the addressee.

Locative nouns are categorized in Krio as shown in these examples:

3.1.1 Case One(I): Locative Nouns

dɔŋ	(below)
bilo/ɔnda	(below)
bɔtɔm	(bottom)
ples	(place)
sɔmsay	(somewhere)
ɔp	(up)
pan tap	(on top)

bien	(behind)
di ɔda say	(the other side)
da ɔda say	(that other side)
forod	(cross-road)
saydwe	(side way)

These are sets of locative nouns and are functional morphemes, typically prepositions. Nonetheless, they are inherently and semantically locative since the feature (+ locative) is seen in each element without a derivational process, as in prefixation and suffixation in other languages.

3.1.2 Case Two (II): Locative Nouns

bien domɔt	behind (the) door
bifo di sofa	in front of the bed
ɔnda di bɔks	under the box
Midul da buk	in the middle of that book
Frɔnt di shop	in front of the shop

Case two has other locative nouns. Morphologically, the elements in each set constitute a free functional morpheme which is followed by a noun described as a free lexical morpheme. Semantically, the elements are inherently locatives, consisting of free functional morphemes that are followed by nouns described as lexical morphemes. The particles are also followed by pronoun elements with

(+ Human) features, as in the following examples:

bien mama	(behind Mum)
bifo anti	(in front of Aunt)
afta bɔla in skul	(after Bola’s school)
frɔnt Bale dɛn	(in front of Ballay and others)
midul dɛn os dɛn	(in the middle of their houses)

In all these, there are free functional morphemes with a noun (+ Human) or pronoun that follows it. Semantically, they are inherently locatives, containing the features (+ locative).

3.1.3 Case Three (III): Locative Compound Words

da ɔda say	(that other side)
di ɔda say	(the other side)
dis ɔda say	(this other side)
da say	(that side)
bifo say	(before)
bien say	(the back part)

In compounds or compounded words, each set is a morpheme beginning with a free functional morpheme followed by another noun preceded by an adjective as in ;

da	ɔda	say
that	other	side
(free functional morpheme)	(adjective)	(noun)

dis	ɔda	say
this	other	side
(free functional morpheme)	(adjective)	(noun)
di	ɔda	say
the	other	side
(free functional morpheme)	(adjective)	(noun)
dɛn	ɔda	say
those	other	sides
(free functional morpheme)	(adjective)	(noun)

The above are semantically and inherently locatives having (+ locative) features

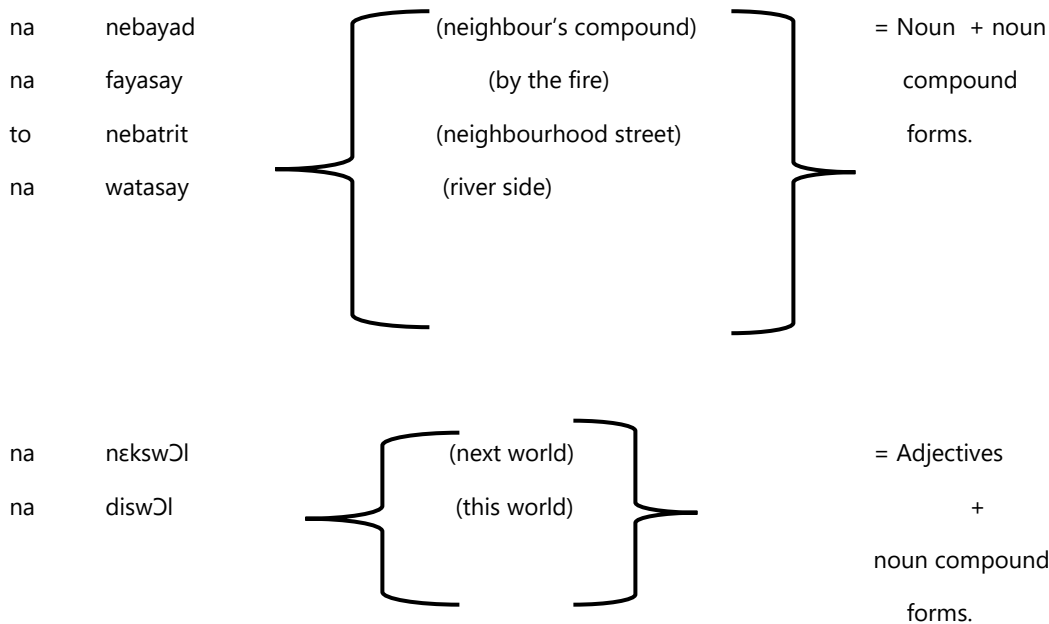
3.1.4 Case Four (IV): Locatives - Reduplication

lo-lo-lo	low-low-low (literally very low)
bien-bien-bien	way behind
bifo-bifo-bifo	right in front/ before
ɔp- ɔp- ɔp	way/right up

In the above case, the set of locatives is morphologically reduplicated. Reduplication is characterized by a change in pronunciation. The items are free functional prepositions or words. They are also inherently locative.

3.2 Locativized Nouns

The second category of locatives is locativized nouns. Like locatives, they participate in compounding: adjectives and nouns combine to form new locative structures:



The above forms are derivational forms that exhibit semantic features from a locative denoting a specific location.

3.3 Locative Particle Groups

In the Sierra Leone Krio, locative particles occur in word groups which begin with "to", "na" "oba", "pan", as in

- i. **Particle "to"**
 to edmasta to the headmaster

to	Patrik	to Patrick
to	ɔnkul	to uncle
to	sisi	to elderly sister (an elderly woman)

ii. Particle “to” + pronoun

to	mi	to me
to	unu (plural)	to you (plural)
to	dɛm	to them
to	yu	to you (singular)

In the above group, the particle “to” plus pronoun marks a noun separately, indicating that each item, in this case, exhibits a feature (+ Human). Morphologically, the particle “to” precedes a noun as well as a pronoun, described as a functional morpheme. “To” in English is known as an infinitive. However, the article does not mark noun objects or abstract nouns as in

to	tɔk	to talk (abstract)
to	briz	to breeze (abstract)
to	lɔv	to love (abstract)

iii. Particle “na” → “on”

(Realized as) or (Function as)

na	tebul	tebul	on the table
na	bed	bed	on the bed
na	wɔl	wɔl	on the wall
na	blakbod	blakbod	on the blackboard
na	pepa	pepa	on paper

Particle “na” corresponds with “on” in English. The nouns which the particle marks are either (+ object) or (+ Human). Morphologically, “na” is a free functional morpheme (preposition).

Particle “na” → “in”

(Realized as) or (Functions as)

na	liayf	in life
na	di wɔl	in the world
na	mɔt	in the mouth
na	di bɛlɛ	in the stomach
na	di mont	in the month

In these items, the particles express locality in connection with abstract mental concepts. They lack physical or imaginary boundaries. Particle “na” is a free functional morpheme realized as “in” in Krio. The semantic value of the features is (+ locative) in the noun complements. They are inherently locative.

iv. Particle “na” → “at”

(Realized as)

na	ba	at the bar
na	bich	at the beach
na	sinima	at the cinema
na	steshɔn	at the station
na	mitij	at the meeting

Particle “na” which is realized as or functions as “at” is an adverbial feature denoting (a place).

Particle “pan” → “on”

(Function as)

pan	am	on him/her/it
pan	yu	on you

pan	dɛn/dɛm	on them
pan	dis	on this
pan	dat	on that

Particle “pan” also has restricted usage and can be interchangeably used with the particle “na’ to denote “on” in the English language. Morphologically, particle “pan” is a free functional morpheme, and it has pronoun complements that are personal and demonstrative pronouns, while the feature (+ locative) is embedded in the pronoun complement.

Particle “pan” which functions as “on” also performs other functions, including the following:

“pan”	→	“on”
pan tebul		on the table
pan pepa		on the paper
pan bɔ̃di		on the skin
pan domɔ̃t		on the door
pan mata		on the mat

Here ‘pan’ marks nouns and thus has the feature (+ object). “pan” is a free functional morpheme and refers to locatives in different ways.

4. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

4.1 Summary

The study investigated and analyzed Sierra Leone Krio particles and, categorized the particles, gave morphological and semantic descriptions of the particles with their differences and similarities or educational values. It was clear that locatives are specialized structures identifying locations in space and time used to aid communication and comprehension.

4.2 Conclusion

The study showed that locative nouns, locativized nouns, and locative particles form the three main categories of locatives. It stated that while locative nouns express universal locative relationships, locativized nouns express locative relations involving other objects apart from the speaker, but locative particles, on the other hand, probably emerged as an alternative locativized strategy in the Sierra Leonean Krio language used by both literate and non-literate learners of the language.

4.3 Recommendations

The study recommended that:

1. The curriculum planners and the Ministry of Basic Education should:
 - support the teaching of Sierra Leonean languages in school, especially Krio.
 - Include locative particles in the curriculum of study in school.
 - Encourage teachers to study Sierra Leonean Languages and specialize in Krio.
 - Encourage students and teachers to be educated on the values in the learning of Sierra Leonean Languages, including Krio.
2. The school administrators, teachers, and lecturers should:
 - emphasize the use of the appropriate methodologies, including role play, drama, discussion, and explanations in the teaching of Krio.
 - Ensure that Krio is learned by both literate and non-literate learners, emphasizing particles of Krio words for fluency in the Krio language.

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