CHAPTER-IV

SYNTAX

4.0 Introduction

Syntax is a science of sentence that studies the combination of words, sentence structure or the rules that govern the formation of sentences. The term *'syntax'* is derived from a Greek word *'syntaxis'* meaning *'ordering together', 'systematic arrangement',* or *'putting together'*. David Crystal says, **"Syntax is a term for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language."** **(Crystal, 1978:346)**

'Sentence' is a combination of different types of words containing a whole expression of a single thought. It is one of the largest units of grammatical structure. It involves of phrases, clauses, words and morphemes. A sentence consists of *Subject* and *predicate/predicates*. *Subject* is a part of sentence that specifies the person, place, object about whom or which something is said. It may comprise of one word or more than one word. On the contrary, the *predicate* says something about the subject, or expresses about the action or state of the subject. Generally, it consists of the verb or verb accompanied by modifier or qualifier. Following are examples of the *subject* and *predicate* used in Mech dialect.

Subject	Predicate
(i) biyɯ	gabɯn pʰɯi-nai
He/she	tomorrow come-FUT
He/she	will come tomorrow.

114

(ii) sima-a (simaya)	sɯŋ-ɯ
Dog-NOM	bark-PRES-I
The dog	barks.
(iii) aŋ	siya lɯŋ-ɯ
I	tea drink- PRES-I
I	drink tea.
(iv) san-a	sinab-ha hab-nɯ
Sun-NOM	west-GEN set- PRES-I
The sun	sets in the west.
(v) raju-a (rajuwa)	bɔl gele-n ha-ɯ
raju-NOM	football play-DAT can-PRES-I
Raju	can play football.

4.1 Phrase

Phrase is a combination of group words of a sentence. The key function of a phrase is like noun, adjective, verb, adverb etc. Phrase in Mech dialect is found in the form of noun phrase, adjective phrase, verb phrase and adverb phrase.

4.1.1 Noun phrase

In Mech dialect, a noun phrase contains a noun and other associated words. Other words function as modifier of noun that precede or follow the noun. For Example-

(i) biyɯ sa-se *burai mansɯi*

He CLF-NUM old man

He is an old man.

115

4.1.2 Adjective phrase

An adjective phrase consists of an adjective followed or preceded by modifying words. The function of an adjective phrase is like an adjective. For example-

(i)   habɯi bad-se *zɯbud sɔmaina* bibar

That CLF-NUM very beautiful flower

That is a very beautiful flower.

4.1.3 Verb phrase

In Mech dialect, verb phrase consist of verb and other modifying words. Example-

(i)   aŋ tʰai-se sɔntʰra *za-nai thanai*

I CLF-NUM orange eat-Fut M may

I may eat an orange.

4.1.4 Adverb phrase

An adverb phrase is a combination of adverb and other related words that function as modifier. Example-

(i)   kʰamani-akʰɯu (kʰamaniyakʰɯu) *lasɯiyɯi maɔ*

work-ACC slowly do

Do the work slowly.

4.2 Types of sentence

From the structural viewpoint, sentence is found in three types viz.

1. Simple Sentence
2. Complex Sentence and
3. Compound Sentence

The sentence structure of Mech dialect of North Bengal area of West Bengal can also be discussed under these three heads.

4.2.1 Simple sentence

Normally, simple sentence consists of subject and one finite verb. It may have qualifying words, object etc. for the subject and the verb.

4.2.1.1 S-O-V structure

Word order or structure of simple sentence in Mech dialect is found in the form of S-O-V. This is one of the common features found in Bodo group of languages. For example-

<blockquote>

(i)   aŋ   haba   mɔɯ

I   work   do

I do work.

(ii)   aŋ ɯŋkʰam za-nai

I   rice   eat- FUT

I will eat rice.

(iii)   biyɯ   hatʰai-aɔ (hatʰaiyaɔ) tʰaŋ-a

He/she market-LOC go-PAST

He/ She went to market.

(iv)   aŋ-ni abɯɔ-a sɯɔdaɔna tʰɯi-bai

My-GEN accident grandfather die –PRF

My grandfather died in an accident.

</blockquote>

4.2.1.2 Sentence without verb

Sometimes in Mech dialect, a simple sentence is also formed without verb. It is one of the notable characteristics of this dialect. In such kind of sentences nouns, adjectives, numeral classifiers etc. expresses the complete meaning of sentences and play an important role as immediate constituents. A few examples are given below.

(i)   bibari-a (bibariya) sa-se sɔmaina seŋgri

        bibari-NOM CLF-one beautiful girl

        Bibari is a beautiful girl.

(ii)   gɔlab bibar-a sɔmaina

        Rose flower-NOM beautiful

        Rose is beautiful.

(iii)   dudu-a (duduwa) gɔpʰɔd

        Milk-NOM white

        Milk is white.

4.2.1.3 Single verb as a simple sentence

One notable thing of Mech dialect is that a single verb without other qualifying words also can express a complete simple sentence. Such kind of sentence functions as an imperative or commanding sentence based on the mood of the speaker. Example-

(i)   tʰaŋ

        go

(ii)   za

        eat

(iii)   pɯi

        come

However, these are used in continous context only and never in isolation.

4.2.2 Complex sentence

Complex sentence consists of one *principal clause* and *subordinate clause*. The subordinate clause depends on principal clause to express a complete sentence. In complex sentence, there may be more than one infinite verb and one finite verb. It depends on number of clauses. Following are a few examples of complex sentence.

(i)   nɯuŋ   mabla   tʰaŋ-nai aŋ mitʰi-gɯuu

You   when   go-FUT I know-DEF. SUFF.

I know when you will go.

In this example, *aŋ mitʰi-gɯuu (I know)* functioned as principal clause and *nɯuŋ mabla tʰaŋ-nai (when you will go)* as subordinate clause.

(ii)   aŋ bunai-aɔ (bunaiyaɔ) gɯulɯi-a gab-a

I   beat-LOC   child-NOM cry-R PAST

The child cried when I beat him/her.

In the second example, *gɯulɯi-a gaba (Child cried)* functioned as principal clause and *aŋ bunayaw (when I beat him/her)* as subordinate clause.

4.2.3 Compound sentence

In Mech dialect, a compound sentence is found in the form of combination of simple sentences or principal clauses with the help of conjunctions. Example-

(i)   aŋ-bɯ tʰaŋ-nai *ar* bi-bɯ pʰɯi-nai

i also go-FUT and he/she also come-FUT

I will go and he/she will also come.

(ii)   zɯuŋ san-aɔ haba maɔɯ *ar* mɯuna-aɔ (mɯunayaɔ) undɯyɯu

we day –LOC work do and night-LOC sleeping

We work by day and sleep at night.

In the above two examples sentences are combined by conjunction *ar (and)*.

4.2.3.1 Equi-deletion

Equi deletion is "***an obligatory rule in transformational syntax, usually abbreviated to Equi, which deletes a NOUN PHRASE from a COMPLEMENT CLAUSE in a SENTENCE when it is identical in meaning (COREFERENTIAL)***

119

with another noun phrase in the main clause of the same sentence." (Crystal, 1978:133)

Like other languages, in Mech dialect also sentences are formed by equi-deleting the equal components (that may be any kind of grammatical component) of simple sentences. For example-

    (i)   aŋ dumba bit^hai za-nai

            I maize fruit eat-FUT

            I will eat maize.

    (ii)   ada-a (adaya) dumba bit^hai za-nai

            brother-NOM maize fruit eat-FUT

            Brother will eat maize.

By equi-deleting same components of the above mentioned two sentences, it can form a single sentence with the help of conjunction *ar (and).* viz.

    (i)   aŋ ar ada-a-(adaya) dumba bit^hai za-nai.

            me CONJ elder brother-NOM maize fruit eat-FUT

            Me and my elder brother will eat maize.

4.3 Classification of sentence depending on meaning

In Mech dialect, sentences can be classified in different types depending on the meaning. These are-

    1. Assertive sentence

    2. Interrogative sentence

    3. Imperative sentence

    4. Exclamatory sentence

    5. Optative sentence

4.3.1 Assertive sentence

Assertive sentences make simple statements. There are two types of assertive sentence viz. affirmative and negative.

4.3.1.1 Affirmative or positive Sentence

Affirmative sentences affirm something. Example-

(i) aŋ mansɯi-akʰɯu (mansɯiyakʰɯu) mitʰigɯu

I person-ACC know

I know the person.

(ii) aŋ nɔ-aɔha tʰaŋ-nai

I home-LOC go-PUT

I will go to home.

(iii) seŋgri-ya sɔmaina

girl-NOM beautiful

Girl is beautiful.

In Mech dialect, a few examples are also observable, where positive sentence is expressed like a negative sentence. But it depends on the mood of speaker. Example-

(i) zayalase datʰaŋ

(Do not go without eating i.e. eat and go)

Above instance looks like a negative sentence, but actual meaning of this sentence is- 'eat and go'.

4.3.1.2 Negative Sentence

Negative sentence signify negativity. In Mech, negative sentences are formed by affixing different suffixes and prefixes to the verb. Negative suffix of this dialect are *{-le}* and *{- kʰɔ}*. Example-

(i) biyɯ pʰɯi-*le*

He/She come-NEG

He/She does not come.

(ii)   aŋ za-*kʰɔ* (zayakʰɔ)

I eat-NEG

I am not eating.

There is only one use of negative prefix i.e. *{da-}* in Mech dialect. For example-

(i)   bitʰai-yakʰɯɯ *da*-za

Fruit-ACC Neg-eat

Do not eat the fruit.

(ii)   Haba-yakɯɯ *da*-maɔ

Work-ACC Neg-do

Do not do the work.

In Mech, the word *'ɯŋa'* is also used to express negative sentences. Example-

(i)   biyɯ sa-se mɯzaŋ mansɯi ɯŋa

He/She CLF-one good person not

He/She is not a good person.

It is also mentionable that, sometimes positive sentence is expressed like a negative sentence. Such type of sentence also depends upon the mood of the speaker. Example-

(i)   sampʰrambɯ tʰaŋbai tʰa

(Go everyday, i.e. do not go everyday)

The example of above sentence is a positive sentence and two meanings can be interpreted from it one is positive and the other one is negative. One is 'go everyday' and the other is 'do not go everyday' and in both subject is hidden.

4.3.2 Interrogative Sentence

Interrogative sentence contains questions or enquiry about something. Mech dialect has certain interrogative non-particles viz. *sur, ma, bɔbe* in the form of pronouns.

Pronoun *sur* can be placed in any position in a sentence. Example-

> (i)   <u>sɯr</u> gabdɯŋ?
>
> Who crying
>
> Who is crying?

> (ii)   nɯŋ-nɯ <u>sɯr</u>-kʰɯu naŋgɯu?
>
> you-DAT who-ACC want
>
> Whom do you want?

> (iii)   biyɯ <u>sɯr</u>?
>
> He/she who
>
> Who is he/she ?

In Mech, interrogative pronoun '*ma'* can sit in initial, medial and final position in a sentence. Example-

> (i)   <u>ma</u> kʰlam naŋgɯu ?
>
> What do shall
>
> What shall I do?

> (ii)   nɯŋ <u>ma</u> zanɯ ?
>
> You what eat
>
> What will you eat?

> (iii)   nɯŋ-ni nama <u>ma</u>?
>
> You-GEN name what
>
> What is your name?

Interrogative pronoun *bɔbe* can be placed in initial and medial position in a sentence. Example-

     (i)   <u>bɔbe</u>-aɔha (bɔbeyaɔha) tʰaŋnɯ?

            where-LOC go

            Where are you going?

     (ii)   nɯŋ <u>bɔbe</u> gram-ni?

            You which village-GEN

            Which village you are from?

4.3.3 Imperative Sentence

Imperative sentence expresses order, request etc. Example-

     (i)   duar-akʰɯu kʰeɔ

            door-ACC open

            Open the door.

     (ii)   habaɔ tʰaŋ

            there go

            Go there.

     (iii)   zɯu-akʰɯu da-lɯŋ

            wine-ACC not-drink

            Do not drink the wine.

4.3.4 Exclamatory Sentence

This type of sentence expresses surprise, emotional feelings etc. Example-

     (i)   bibara ma ese sɔmaina!

            How beautiful the flower is!

     (ii)   hab! biyɯ tʰɯibai!

            Alas! He is no more.

(iii)   dinɯi ma ese gɔrɔm!

What a hot today!

(iv)   madi dukʰu-naŋtʰaɔ!

What a tragedy!

(v)   esebaŋ zamba!

How foolish!

4.3.5 Optative Sentence

Optative sentence expresses wishes, prayers etc. Example-

(i)   anangɔsai-a nɯŋ-nɯ bɯr hɯtʰɯŋ

May God bless you!

(ii)   nɯŋ gɯbaɔ bɯsɯr tʰaŋna tʰatʰɯŋ

May you live long!

4.4 Kernel sentence

Sharad Rajimwale in his book 'Handbook of Linguistic Terms' says that **"*Chomsky distinguished between two types of sentences: Kernal sentences and Transforms. The Kernel sentences are the basic constructions, from these the rest of the complex constructions are made. The rest of the sentences are transformations of the kernel sentences. (Rajimwale, 2006:121)*** The sentences of Mech dialect is found in the form of kernel sentence. Example-

(i)   nɯŋ ɯŋkʰam za-bai

you rice eat-PERF

You have eaten rice.

(ii)   nɯŋ ɯŋkʰam za-bai?

you rice eat-PERF what

Have you taken rice?

125

Following is also an example of kernel sentence of Mech dialect.

   (i) habɯi ma-se sima

      that CLF-one dog

      That is a dog.

   (ii) habɯi ma-se sima?

      that CLF-one dog

      Is that a dog?

Above given examples show that by using intonation sense of the sentence can be changed.

4.5 Immediate constituent (IC)

Immediate constituent is "*a term used in GRAMMATICAL analysis to refer to the major divisions that can be made within a SYNTACTIC CONSTRUCTION, at any level." (Crystal, 1978:180)* The sentences of Mech dialect can also be divided into parts thereby subsequently arriving to the morphemes. For example-

(i) aŋni apʰaya pʰuŋaɔhai dɯi lɯŋɯ

(My father drinks water in the morning)
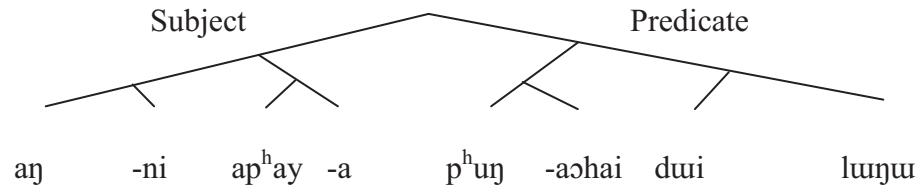
(ii) abɯua gɯbrab zɔbrazɯŋ dakʰal tʰɯibai

(My grandfather died on day before yesterday after prolonged illness)