

Pro-Drop in Kanuri language

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This paper examines the phenomenon in which the subject of a finite sentence is suppressed in Kanuri Language. It presents evidence that null subject sentence exists in Kanuri and admitted Kanuri into the league of pro-drop languages. We observed that Kanuri has a rich system of subject-verb agreement morphology. The content of the pro-drop is identifiable from the state of the main verb in the sentence. The verb in most finite declarative sentence contains a clitic-like subject pronoun, which agrees with the number person with the main subject in the sentence. The paper draws data from the Kanuri spoken in Maiduguri; therefore, we described, analyzed and concluded that Kanuri is a pro-drop Language.

Kanuri is spoken as a major language in Borno and Yobe state in Nigeria. It is also spoken in Niger, Cameroun, Chad, Sudan and the Republic of Libya. There are essentially two significant word orders in Kanuri. They are the basic word order (SOV) and the permissible word order (OSV), which obligatorily applies case marking to the subject or to the object Noun Phrase or to both.

There is sizable amount of works in the area of structural description of the Kanuri Grammar in general linguistics. But there appears to be little or nothing in the area of the pro-drop parameter. The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine the pro-drop phenomenon in Kanuri. Pro-drop is a situation in which the subject of a finite sentence or clause is suppressed. In other words, it is a phenomenon in which the subject position in a finite sentence or clause contains an unexpressed (empty) category. In the theory of pro-drop, the unexpressed (empty) category or as it is sometimes called, the null subject, is referred to as the "pro" (cf Heagman 1994).

The pro-drop theory determines whether the subject of a declarative finite sentence or clause can be detected. The theory has been applied to many languages of the world and found out that it is applicable to the following languages: Chinese (cf Huang 1989), Italian (cf Riemsdijk and Williams 1986), Radford 1997, Japanese (cf Huang 1989) and Spanish (cf Sells 1985). Languages differ in many ways. The pro-drop is one of the parameters in which language could be distinguished and described.