

## **The Role of Dative ‘WA’ in Hausa Sentence**

**Habibu Abdulkadir**  
**[habibuabdul2017@gmail.com](mailto:habibuabdul2017@gmail.com)**

**Department of Nigerian Languages and Linguistics Sule Lamido**  
**University Kafin-Hausa,**  
**Jigawa state**

### **Abstract**

The paper attempts to present the role of dative “wa” in Hausa sentence using a transformational generative grammar that deals with morphological process, syntactic structure as well as semantic expression. The paper reveals that the dative wa/ma has vital role in the structure of Hausa sentence. It can be used as an affix to form words, an NP in a simple sentence and it can also be used as a semantic extension to transform a word from one word class to another semantically. It is a critical analysis in studying ‘wa’ in Hausa sentence by using theory of syntax of Chomsky (1957).

## 1.0 Introduction

The paper aims to study the role of dative “wa” in Hausa grammatical structure which focuses on how it can be transformed in words and sentence structure. It can be used as a dative ‘wa/ma’, as an NP(Hd2), as a sentence itself, all in syntactic structure and it can be used as an affix in morphological processes.

The aim of the paper is to study how the syllable ‘wa’ plays vital roles in Hausa grammatical structure as it affects three components of language viz.: syntax, morphology and semantics. The dative ‘wa’ can be transformed in syntactic structure, morphological process and semantics expression as well, according to finite rules of the grammar.

## 1.2 Conceptual OverviewStudy

### 1.2.1 Transformational Generative Grammar

Language can be defined as a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols that are used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing.

*ISSN: 3043-6648*

(Baba, 2016). The term language is used to facilitate mutual intelligibility in trade, social interactions, economic activities, socialization and educating the society. It is a medium aain almost all aspects concerning the country among the diverse communities. According to Yelwa, (2016), language is a powerful medium of communication, which enables us to express our feelings, thoughts, culture and social behavior as well as primary organization of a society or group. Therefore, language is a common code or system to many people with which they interact with one another in a speech community.

A transformational Generative Grammar is a portrayed in syntactic structure of Chomsky (1957) as one which provides enough language materials for analysis and eventual comparison. It is an effort to see how letters or words can be used and differ. This sort of grammar can generate sentences by means of a finite number of rules operating in the language vocabulary. According to Chomsky, there are certain regular processes of sentence formation in some languages that can be accounted and some that cannot be accounted in terms of finite state grammar that shows adequacy or in adequacy of a language. Hausa Language is among those adequacy languages than can be transformed in the generative grammar .

### 1.3 Critical Study of ‘wa’ in Husa Sentence

The word/syllable dative ‘wa’ has vital roles in transforming Hausa sentences in the generative grammar in some cases as in the following contexts:

- i. ‘wa/ma’ as dative in a sentence
- ii. ‘wa’ as an Hd2 in Noun phrase
- iii. ‘wa’ as a sentence itself
- iv. ‘wa’ as a symbol in interrogative sentence
- v. ‘wa’ as a suffix of verb words

#### 1.3.1 “wa/ma” as a Dative in Hausa sentence

Dative ‘wa/ma’ is a word used to indicate where an action is directed upon to the noun. Dative ‘wa’ is used in the Eastern dialect of Hausa while the dative ‘ma’ use in the Western dialect of Hausa. For example:

- (i) Musa ya saya **wa** Amina riga. Musa ya saya **ma** Amina riga

Gloss: (Musa provided a dress for Amina.)

- (ii) Amina ta sayar **wa** Musa mota. Amina ta sayar **ma** Musa mota.

Gloss:(Amina sold a car to Musa.)

- (iii) Ba a nuna **wa** kucciya baka. Ba a nuna **ma** kucciya baka

Gloss:(Do not reveal a secret.)

ISSN: 3043-6648

In the above three sentences ‘wa/ma’ served as indicators of where the action has fallen and performed a grammatical function. There is transformation of meaning among the three sentences as a result of using the dative.

(i) Example: Musa ya saya wa Amina riga. Musa ya saya ma Amina riga

S → NP + VP

NP → Hd2

Hd2 → Nn

Nn → proper Nn

Proper Nn → Musa

VP → VC + NP2

VC → Tns + PP + TM + V + D

Tense → Gen. past

PP → 3<sup>rd</sup> pers(male)

3<sup>rd</sup> person (male) → ya

TM → -a

Verb → saya

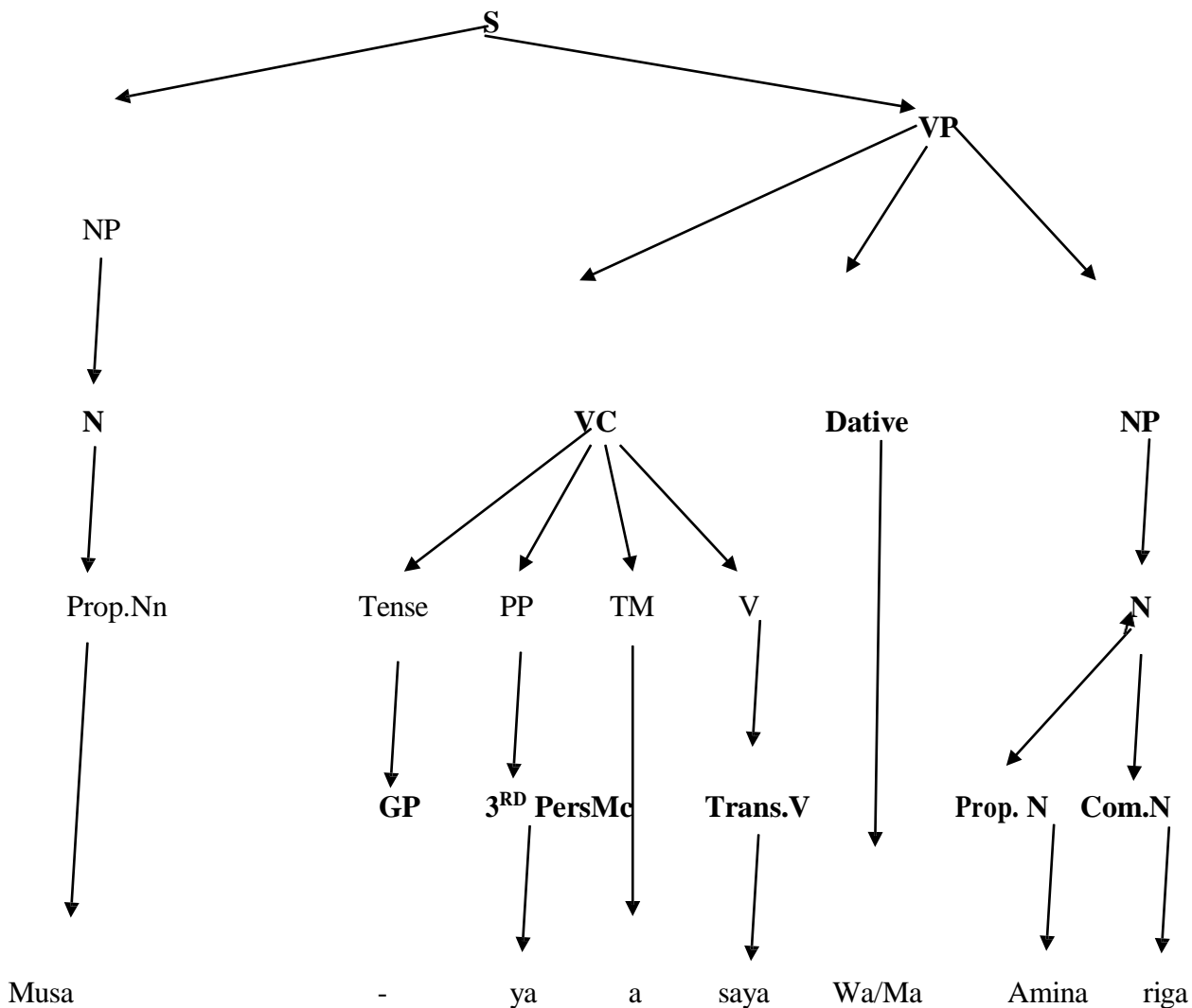
Dative → wa/ma

5 →

NP2 → Nn

Nn → Amina, riga

Musa ya saya wa Amina riga. Musa ya saya ma Amina riga



### 1.3.2 'wa' as a symbol/marker in interrogative sentence

Example:

- (i) **Wa** ke ba da karatu?
- (ii) Da **wa** da **wa** aka ba kuji?
- (iii) **Wane** ne ya zo makaranta?
- (iv) Da **wa** ake magana?

The above examples show dative 'wa' as an interrogative marker which indicates question to the persons concerned directly. In most cases dative 'wa' is used in Hausa interrogative sentences that show its significance in Hausa transformational generative grammar.

### 1.3.3. Dative 'wa' as a sentence itself

Dative 'wa' can be used as a simple sentence in its grammatical functions mostly in exclamation statements.

Example:

- (i) **Waa!!** Ba dai ni ba.

Dative 'wa' in the above example clearly indicates an exclamatory sentence as a response statement to the target audience.

- (i) Haba **wa!!** Sai ka zo.

### 1.3.4 Dative ‘wa’ as a Hd2 in Noun phrase(NP)

In syntactic analysis, of dative ‘wa’ used in interrogative and direct statements can serve as Hd2 of NP in both sentences:

Example:

- i. **Wa** aka ba kudi yau.?
- ii. **Wane** ne yake zuwa makaranta?.

#### SENTENCE ANALYSIS

1. Wa aka ba kuji yau?

S	NP + VP
NP	Dative
Dative	wa
VP	VC + NP
VC	Tense + PP + TM + V
Tense	Prog. Past
PP	3 <sup>rd</sup> pers.
3 <sup>rd</sup> pers.	a

ISSN: 3043-6648

TM           Ka

V           Instr. V

Instr.V           Ba

NP2           N + Adv

Nn           Com. Nn

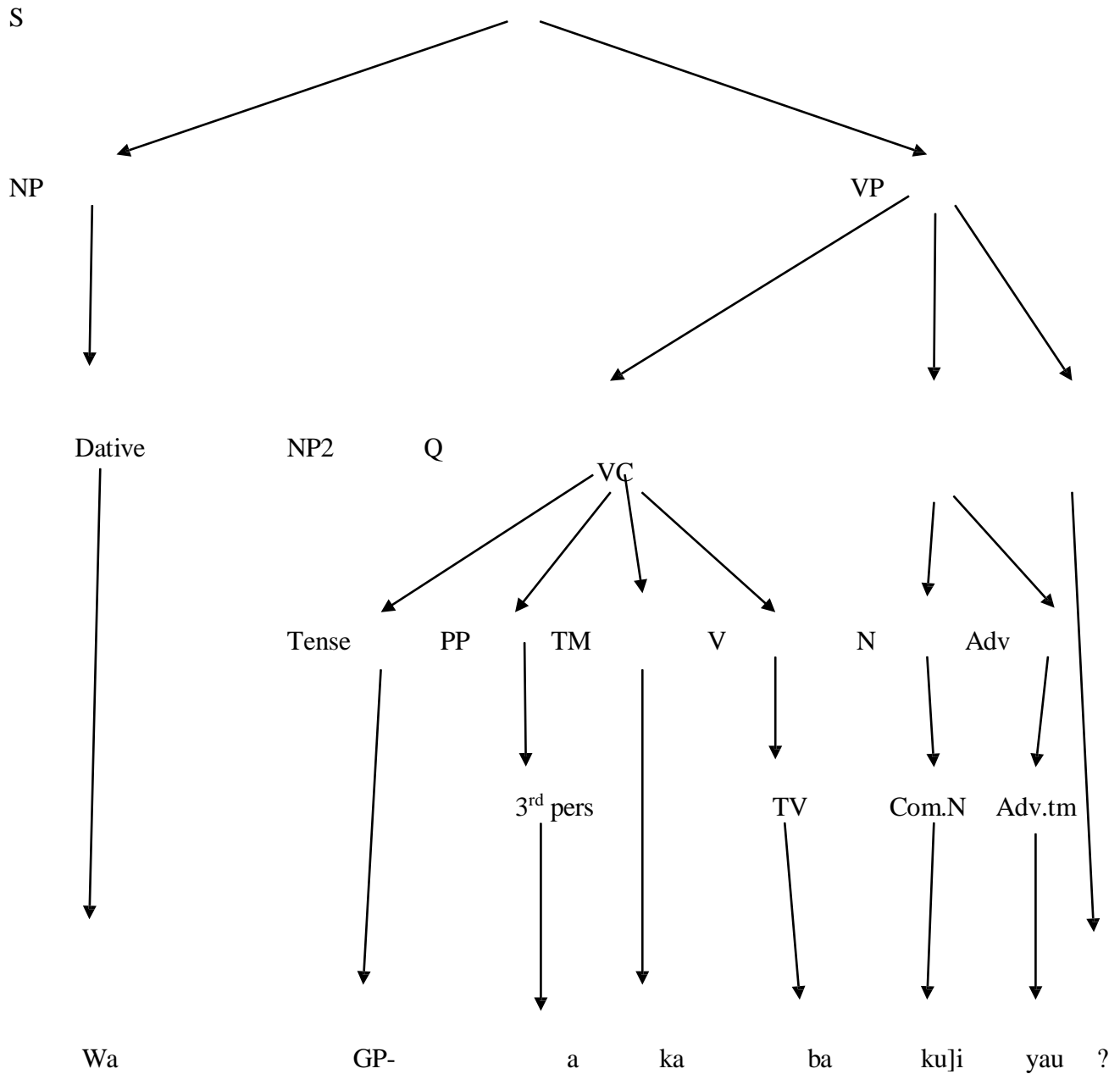
Com.Nn           kuji

Adv           Adv.tm

Adv.tm           Yau

TREE DIAGRAM

Wa aka ba kudi yau



The analysis in this sentence indicate a Dative wa/ma can serve as NP – Hd2 in a sentence in the absence of noun or pronoun in the sentence.



### 1.3.5 Dative ‘wa’ as a suffix to verb class

Dative ‘wa’ can also be used as a suffix to the verb class to transform it into noun class in Hausa sentences.

Example:

- (i) Rigar Musa ta sayar +wa ce.
- (ii) Ana bayar +wa kyauta.
- (iii) Itacen }ona +wa ne.
- (iv) Musa yana gana +wa da Amina.

A daitive wa can be use to transform verb class to noun class Example;

Verb (Aikatau)	Suffix ([afin ‘wa’)	Verbal noun (Suna aikatau)
Auna	Auna + wa	Aunawa
Bayar	Bayar + wa	Bayarwa
Ciyar	Ciyar + wa	Ciyarwa
Gina	Gina + wa	Ginawa
Ha]a	Ha]a + wa	Ha]awa

Jera	Jera + wa	Jerawa
Kara	Kara + wa	Karawa
}era	}era + wa	}erawa
Lauya	Lauya + wa	Lauyawa
Mi}a	Mi}a + wa	Mi}awa
Ni}a	Ni}a + wa	Ni}awa
Rama	Rama + wa	Ramawa
Samo	Samar + wa	Samarwa
Tauna	Tau + wa	Taunawa
Wanke	Wanke + wa	Wankewa
Yanke	Yanke + wa	Yankewa
Zauna	Zauna + wa	Zaunawa

## Conclusion

The paper critically study the role of dative “wa” in Hausa sentence structures that focused on how words and sentence transformed by the used of a dative „wa/ma“, as an NP(Hd2), or as a sentence itself in the syntactic structure as well as an affix in morphological processes. The fact finding of the paper,<sup>13</sup> shows how the syllable „wa“ plays vital roles in Hausa grammatical structure as it affects three components of

language; Viz: syntax, morphology and semantics, where the dative „wa“ transformed in syntactic structure, morphological process and semantics expression as well, according to finite rules of the language.

## References

- Bature, A. (1982), „Semantic Relationship Between Hausa Lexical Items. B.A. Dissertation. Department of Nigerian Languages, Kano; Bayero University Zaria; Ahmadu Bello University, Press Limited.
- Bello, A. (1992). *The Dialects of Hausa*. Revised Edition (2015). Zaria; Ahmadu Bello University, Press Limited.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge Massachussets. M.I.T. Press. Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Fifth Edition, USA and UK Blackwell.
- Junju, M.H. (1981). *Rayayyen Nahawun Hausa*. Zaria; Northern Nigeria publishing company Limited.
- Prasad, T. (2014). *A Course in Linguistics*. (Second Edition). PHI. Learning Private Limited, Delhi – 110092.
- Sani, M.A.Z, (1989). *An Introduction to Phonology of Hausa*. Zaria; Northern Publishing Company.
- Skinner, N. (1977). *A Grammar of Hausa ( for Nigerian Secondary Schools & Colleges)* Zaria. Northern Nigeria Publishing Company.
- Yule, Y. (2010). *The Study of Language*. (Fourth Edition). London; Cambridge University Press

