

## Existential Constructions in Amis

Existential constructions are non-canonical constructions in which there is proposition about the existence or the presence of someone or something in a context. Insofar, there are three major approaches to existential constructions, complex NP (e.g. Williams, 1984), NP-XP analysis (e.g. Milsark, 1974), and small clause analysis (e.g. Stowell, 1981). This study proposes that NP-XP analysis better captures the underlying structure of existential constructions in Amis. The major evidence comes from the interpretation of coordinating sentences. In Amis, the locative NP in a conjoined sentence can provide locative information for both clauses, not only for the closest one (1). Therefore, it is an evidence that XP is not within the same constituency with the second PIVOT, which in turn, rules out the small clause analysis. Then the movability of CODA in (2) and immovability of the complex NP (PIVOT+CODA) in (3) contradict the predictions complex NP analysis should make. Therefore, this study concludes that PIVOT and CODA in Amis existential constructions are under NP-XP relationship.

(1) Ira            k-u            fainayan ira            k-u            fafahian  
      Exist    NOM-CN    man    Exist    NOM-CN    woman  
      I            sefi  
      PREP    plaza  
      ‘There is a man and there is a woman in the plaza.’

(2) I    kiwkay    ira-ay            k-u            ma-lifung-ay  
      PREPchurch    Exist-FAC            NOM-CN            Neut-epidemic-NMZ  
      ‘There are people infected in church.’

(3) \*u    ma-lifung-ay            i            kiwkay    k-u            ira-ay  
      U    Neut-epidemic-NMZ    PREP    church    NOM-CN    Exist-FAC  
      Intended ‘What exists in church are people infected’

### Selected references:

- Milsark, Gary (1974). Existential sentences in English. PhD Diss., MIT.  
Stowell, Tim. (1981). Origins of phrase structure. PhD Diss., MIT.  
Williams, Edwin. (1984). *There* insertion. *Linguistic Inquiry* 15:131-53.