

**Analysis of Sentences in the Book of Exodus of New International Version of The English Bible**

by

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**Abstract**

This study was undertaken in order to examine the sentence structure of the *Book of Exodus of New International Version* of the English Bible. The study analysed simple and non-simple sentences in the book. In analysing sentence types in the book of Exodus, the study adopted Bolaji Aremo's paradigm. The findings showed that all the English sentence types – simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences – are found in the texts studied and that non-simple sentences dominate the texts. This indicates the complexity nature of the book and the messages being projected. The study further revealed that there are many direct speech sentences in the book. Moreover, this article differentiated between basic and non-basic sentences. While basic sentences are used to give information, non-basic sentences are used to give command, request or ask for information. Therefore, it was recommended that attention must be paid to the grammar and discourse nuances of the Bible for better understanding. Also, different structures of the English sentences especially different ways of deploying complex sentences must be considered in Biblical Studies.

**KEYWORDS:** Exodus, Linguistics, Biblical Studies, sentence, sentence types

**1. Introduction**

Importance of linguistics in Biblical Studies (BS) cannot be over-emphasised. Linguistics is important in Biblical Studies in understanding features of language in *The Bible*. The knowledge of linguistics aids the interpretation of the text. *The Bible* is believed to be an inspired Holy Word of God. It is a special text that needs to be studied in order to understand its meaning. Many readers depend on the Holy Spirit for its interpretation. This assumption is supported by McCain and Keener (2008, 114) that 'man needs the Holy Spirit to be able to understand truly the spiritual truths that are revealed in the Bible'. The present study does not dispute this fact, but a scientific study of *The Bible* through a linguistic exploration of its language also aids its understanding. Hence, this study is embarked upon in order to study the sentence structure of the whole book of Exodus and to answer the question, how are sentences structured to convey meanings in the book of Exodus?

When readers engage themselves in reading any text, they do so for the purpose of discovering a fact and getting its message. In interpreting a text, many factors should be considered. Silzer and Finley (2004) explain that for languages to be properly understood, forms, meanings and context, need to be considered. By form, they mean how a language is structured or represented; how different parts of a language are brought together to form different units such as phrases, clauses, sentences or larger texts. Matthews (2007, 143) describes form as “a realization of a combination of units in a language”. In addition, language is used to express meaning which has to do with what a word or sentence means. It has to do with sense-relation within the language. It is one thing to express our minds through the medium of speech or writing; it is another thing for the medium of expression to be understood by the hearer or reader.

Language, as a medium of literature, science and technology, computers, cultural identity and exchanges, instructions and other forms of communication, is a field of study that is approached from different levels of analysis. It is studied by linguists because it is “the most powerful, convenient and permanent means of communication in the world” (Syal and Jindal 2010, 10). Language is important to human beings because they use language to communicate with one another and this makes them different from other animals.

As a result of the importance of language, linguists have devoted their time to its study. They study consonant and vowel sounds in relation to their characteristic features and occurrence in words. Also, the nature of words and their composition may be understood by studying morphology which accounts for the study of the structure of words and how words are formed. In the same manner, larger units may be studied by applying syntactic theory to the study of phrases, clauses and sentences. This study is approached from syntactic point of view with a focus on Bolaji Aremo’s paradigm. In analysing the data, the researcher employs both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. In analysing the text qualitatively, a close examination of the structure of the book of Exodus is done, by looking at it chapter by chapter, verse by verse and sentence by sentence in order to study the sentence types in the book. In quantitative analysis, the sentence types identified are expressed in percentages.

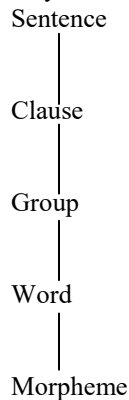
## **2. Language and Structure**

J. D. Murphy defines language as a medium of communication through which emotions, ideas, feelings and thoughts are expressed (Murphy 2007). It could be simply described as a means of communication. M. A. K. Halliday and Jonathan Webster see language as a systemic resource for making and exchanging meaning. It is a semiotic system that is based on grammar and characterized by both strata organization and functional diversity (Halliday and Webster 2009). This is buttressed by Susana Eggins’s assertion that language is a social semiotic system by all systemic linguists though their approach may be different (Eggins 2004). Also, she enumerates main theoretical claims about language thus:

- 1) that language is functional implies its being a meaning-making system,
- 2) that these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are exchanged, and
- 3) that the process of using language is a semiotic process, a process of making meanings by choice ((Eggs 2004, 3).

Language can also be seen as a social behaviour; a means to achieve certain communicative goals. David Morley describes language as a way of behaviour since it is used to perform a behavioural act whether it is spoken or written. Also, it is used for different functions such as ideational, interpersonal and textual which enable a speaker and a writer to express different kinds of meanings (Morley 2000).

Furthermore, every language has its own structure. Daniel Egbe explains that fragments of natural language are arranged into grammatical units. The different sizes of stretches of language are called units. In Egbe's words, "grammar is the study of the relationship between words in a sentence" (Egbe 2000, 4). This relationship may be between words that form phrases, those between phrases that form clauses or those between clauses that form sentences. Grammatical units may be arranged in order of hierarchy thus:



The above shows that each unit is made up of members of the unit next below it on the scale. Sentences are made up of clauses, clauses are made up of groups, groups are made up of words, and words are made up of morphemes. S. H. O. Tomori (1977) explains each of the units thus:

The Morpheme: This is the minimal linguistic element that carries grammatical and semantic meaning. It cannot be further divided into smaller grammatical components. For instance, the word 'boys' is made up of two morphemes – 'boy' and '-s'; '-s' is a plural morpheme. There are also tense and number morphemes as in **walked** and **walks** respectively.

The Word: Although it is difficult to define a word, every language user can easily identify an orthographic word written between spaces in the horizontal plane. Words can be headwords, inflected forms, derived forms and combinations of different forms. Examples are:

- Headwords:       achieve, provide, dance, come
- Inflected forms: achieves, provides, dancing, comes
- Derived forms:  achievement, provision

The Group: Based on the grammatical rankscale, a group refers to two or more words; one of the words introduces its grammatical type. The word 'group' is always used interchangeably with the phrase. For instance, the following are groups/phrases: the man, the fat man, in the room, too slow, was going, has taken, and would have been.

The Clause: This refers to a group of words that has a verb. It is made up of one or more groups. The following are examples of independent clauses:

- The man travelled to Lagos.
- Pastor James preaches on Sundays.
- They saw my car outside.

The Sentence: A sentence is a correctly punctuated written piece that ends with a terminal punctuation mark. It may end with the full stop (.), the question mark (?), or the exclamatory mark (!). Also, a sentence is an independent linguistic form. Some examples are:

- Because Ade danced very well at the party, he won the prize.
- Who is on the Lord side?
- Waoh, this is unbelievable!

In forming larger units, fragments of language must be arranged in an acceptable manner. M. T. Lamidi expatiates this by saying that words are not arbitrarily strewn together in a sentence; they are grouped together to form larger units such as phrases, clauses and sentences (Lamidi 2008). Furthermore, a sentence is the largest unit of grammar and could be classified according to its structure and function. Akinola A. Asiyabola notes that the systemic grammarians classified sentences into simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex sentence, multiple sentence and multiple-complex sentence (Asiyabola 2013, 136).

### **3. Historical Background of the Book of *Exodus***

The book of *Exodus* is the second part of the Pentateuch and it continues the story that began in Genesis. This shows relationship between the book and other four books of the Pentateuch especially the book of Genesis. In considering the historical background of our text, we are going to consider its authorship and date, purpose, structure and major themes.

### **4. Authorship and Date**

As earlier pointed out, the book of *Exodus* is written by Moses. This is even confirmed in the book itself. For instance, Moses was instructed by God to write down the Ten

Commandments in Exodus 34:4, 27-29. In addition, it is written in Exodus 24:4 that “Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.” From all indications, there is no doubt that Moses wrote the book. This claim is supported by Walter C. Kaiser that:

These internal claims are supported by a strong association of Mosaic authorship with these same materials in other OT books such as Joshua 1:7; 8:31-32; I Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6 .... The NT writers likewise support Mosaic authorship of the Book of *Exodus*. Mark 12:26 locates Exodus 3:6 in ‘the book of Moses’ while Luke 2:22-23 assigns Exodus 13:2 to both ‘the Law of Moses’ and ‘the Law of the Lord’ (Kaiser 1990, 288).

The above quotation from Kaiser shows the authorship of *Exodus* as Moses. Both the Old and New Testaments confirm its authorship.

In considering the date, it is necessary to consider the time period of the historical events and composition. The historical events of Exodus began after the death of Joseph and a new king came into power. Before Moses came to lead them out of Egypt, Israel had lived in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40-41). They left Egypt and cross the Red Sea to the wilderness where they were before the death of Moses when they were about to enter the Promised Land. Based on these events, it could be said that the book of Exodus was written between 1526 and 1445 B.C. as pointed out by Frank DeCanio that:

A date of 1446 B.C for the Exodus has been supported in the Introduction to the Pentateuch. This would date the birth of Moses at about 1526 B.C. and the erection of the Tabernacle at 1445 B.C. Thus the majority of events recorded in the Book of Exodus occurred between 1526 and 1445 B.C., a time span of 81 years (DeCanio 2012, Online).

He further traces the composition of the book to the time when Moses was 80 years old when his leadership of Israel began to the time when he died. Reasonably, he assumes that “the one year Israel spent in the wilderness at Sinai would have presented Moses with a good opportunity to write the majority, if not all of *Exodus*. Taking the date of the Exodus as 1446 B.C., the Book of *Exodus* could have been written as early as 1445 B.C” (DeCanio 2012, online).

### 5. The Book of *Exodus* and its Structure

The structure of the book of *Exodus* may be considered by highlighting its location or contents. From these perspectives, Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard (2007, 70) quote Durham and divide Exodus into three parts based on location thus:

- Part One: Israel in Egypt (1:1-13:16)
- Part Two: Israel in the Wilderness (13:17-18:27)
- Part Three: Israel at Sinai (19:1-40:38) (Longman and Dillard 2007:70)

However, in considering Exodus' structure based on contents, they identify the following:

1. God saves Israel from Egyptian bondage (1:1-18:27).
2. God gives Israel His law (19:1-24:18).
3. God commands Israel to build the tabernacle (25:1-40:38)  
(Longman and Dillard 2007, 70).

In addition to the above, Bible History Online captures the structure of Exodus more clearly thus:

- 1) The sufferings of Israel (1:8-7:7). This section includes the birth, education and flight of Moses; his call to be the deliverer of his people and his consequent return from Median to Egypt; and his first ineffectual attempts to prevail upon Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, which resulted only in an increase in their burdens.
- 2) A manifestation of God's providential guidance of Israel, illustrated by the ten plagues (7:8-13:16). This section also includes the account of the observance of the first Passover (ch. 12).
- 3) The guiding of the people of Sinai (13:17-18:27), which tells of the departure and the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. This section also contains a narrative of the principal events on the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai, including the coming of the manna, the observance of the Sabbath, the supply of water from the rock at Rephidim and the advice of Jethro concerning the civil government of the great mass of people.
- 4) The making of the covenant at Sinai, together with the reception of the Ten Commandments (19:1-24:18). The laws recorded in this section regulated the religious, civil, and social life of the Israelites.
- 5) Directions for the building of the tabernacle (24:18-31:18).
- 6) The renewing of the covenant after the sinful actions of the Israelites in connection with the making of the golden calf (32:1-35:3).
- 7) The actual building and dedication of the tabernacle of the Lord (35:4-40:38), under the supervision of the two master craftsmen, Bezalel and Oholiab.

(<http://www.bible-history.com>)

## 6. Purpose

The original purpose of *Exodus* was to help the people of Israel understand their identity as God's special people, and to learn about their covenant obligations to him. They were to see themselves as God's "firstborn son" (Ex. 4:22-23) and as a "kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:5-6), called to bring God's blessings to the nations. *Exodus* describes how the Lord delivered Israel from Egyptian oppression (chs. 1-15), brought her into a covenant relationship with himself at Mount Sinai (chs. 16-24), and came to dwell in her midst in the tabernacle (chs. 25-40).

## 7. Major Themes in Exodus

(a) **The theme of oppression:** This theme is portrayed through tyrant oppression expressed

by the Israelites in the hand of the Egyptians. They were oppressed by giving hard labour. In Exodus 1:8-14, the Bible makes it clear that they were dealt with shrewdly and worked them ruthlessly. Also, they made their lives bitter with hard labour.

(b) **The theme of redemption:** As a result of their oppression, God redeemed Israel from Egypt. This theme cuts across the book of *Exodus*. Apart from being delivered from the Egyptian bondage, they were also delivered by passing over the Red Sea and through their wandering in the wilderness. Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard describe The Red Sea crossing as “the epitome of God’s work of salvation” (Longman and Dillard 2007, 71). Frank DeCanio explains that:

The Passover redemption provided by Yahweh was a *type* of the true redemption that He would one day effect through Christ for redeeming all mankind from sin. The basis upon which this conclusion is founded rests upon the supposition that the nature of God's purpose in delivering Israel from Egypt mandated the nature of the redemption that He effected through the Passover (DeCanio 2012, Online).

(c) **The theme of Law:** While in the wilderness, God gave the Israelites his law. This law is divided into two parts – the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant. The law helped Israel to know God’s will for them. Walter C. Kaiser (1990) explains how the foundation of biblical ethics and morality is laid out in Exodus. Through this foundation, the Israelites were guided on how to live, relate with God and one another (Kaiser 1990).

## 8. Analytical Approach

In analysing sentence types in the book of Exodus, the study adopted Bolaji Aremo’s paradigm. According to him, English sentences “fall into just two broad categories: simple sentences and non-simple sentences” (Arema 2014, 374). He further divides non-simple sentences into compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences. Therefore, this present study identifies simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences as the English sentence types. Each type (with examples given by Aremo) is explained below:

1. The Simple Sentence: This contains only an independent clause. It is regarded as a mono-clausal sentence by Asiyanbola (2013). Examples are:
  - (a) The boys cried out for help.
  - (b) The burglars were scared.
2. The Compound Sentence: This is formed by combining the source sentences by means of coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *or*, and *but*. It contains two or more independent clauses e.g.
  - (a) The boys cried out for help and the burglars were scared.

- (b) I may go to him or you may invite him here.
3. The Complex Sentence: This is a combination of an independent clause with one or more subordinate clause(s). Complex sentences are formed by linking the source sentences with subordinating conjunctions such as *when, because, if, though, unless, that* or *who*. Examples are:
- (a) I saw her when she was going away.
- (b) The man who came here yesterday was his uncle.
4. The Compound-Complex Sentence: This is formed by combining two or more independent clauses with one or more subordinate clause(s), e.g.
- (a) You should stay at home and do the work because time is running out.
- (b) They were angry when they heard the news and they ran home to report it to the other children.

## 9. Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

**Table 1: Sentence Types in the Book of Exodus**

| S/N | Sentence Type             | Total | Percentage (%) |
|-----|---------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1   | Simple Sentence           | 272   | 19             |
| 2   | Compound Sentence         | 472   | 32             |
| 3   | Complex Sentence          | 362   | 25             |
| 4   | Compound-complex Sentence | 354   | 24             |
|     | Total                     | 1460  | 100            |

The above table shows that the compound sentence has the highest number of sentences. There are 472 (32%) compound sentences in the book under consideration. This is followed by the complex sentence which has the total number of 362 (25%) sentences. The next type of sentence is a compound-complex sentence which has a total number of 354 (24%). The simple sentence occurs 272 (19%) times in all the chapters of the book of Exodus. In all, the book of *Exodus* which contains 40 chapters is made up of 1,460 sentences. These sentences are combinations of simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences.

### Analysis of Sentences in the Book of *Exodus*

In order to examine the sentence structure of the book of *Exodus* of *New International Version* of the English Bible, all the verses in each chapter of the book were examined and their sentence types were analysed. From the study, it was discovered that the NIV employed different types of sentences such as simple, complex, compound and compound-complex sentences to project the message in order to ensure a smooth reading of the text and to avoid monotony. These sentence types involve both basic and non-basic sentences. This shows that the book of *Exodus* explores all the types of the English sentences identified by Aremo (2014). Some of the sentences start with the subject,



followed by the predicator with other grammatical elements. The deviation occurs when sentences are not the basic ones. In this case, they start with predicator or other sentence elements.

### Examples of Simple Sentences in the Texts

In all the chapters of the book of *Exodus* analysed, the simple sentence has the lowest percentage; its total percentage is 19%. This implies that this type of sentence does not occur often like other kinds. Sentences 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are simple sentences; each of them contains only one clause, but their subjects are realised by different nominal aspects. Though sentence 1 is fronted by an adverbial phrase, the subject is realised by a noun phrase with (m), h, (q) structure. The subject of sentence 2 has the same structure of (m), h, (q) without an adverbial phrase. Sentence 3 also has an adverb 'so' but the subject is realised by a pronoun – you. Similarly, sentence 4 has a pronoun as the subject while sentence 5 has a noun phrase as the subject.

1. During that long period, the king of Egypt died. (*Exodus* 2:23)
2. The elders of Israel will listen to you. (*Exodus* 3:18)
3. And so you will plunder the Egyptians. (*Exodus* 3:22)
4. I am the LORD. (*Exodus* 6:8)
5. No uncircumcised male may eat it. (*Exodus* 12:48)

In examining the information structure of sentence 1 to 5, it can be deduced that each sentence has its own focus. It can be said that their thematic focuses are different. While sentences 1 and 2 have marked themes which are realised by adverbials as their thematic progression, sentences 3, 4 and 5 have unmarked themes which are realised by nominal groups. Though sentence 3 has an unmarked, the conjunctive adverb 'so' occupies its normal position as an adverbial. However, the adverbial phrase 'During that long period' that is fronted in sentence 1 is placed at the initial position for prominence.

### Examples of Compound Sentences in the Texts

In this study, it was discovered that the book of *Exodus* of NIV made use of compound sentences in most of the chapters than any type of sentences. This implies the complexity of the message of God. This is evident in the total number of compound sentences representing 32% found in the book; even when comparing the chapters studied, it was discovered that Chapter 4 (see Appendix) contains the highest number (27) of compound sentences. When considering the message of chapter 4, one will agree that the message is complex and there is the need for using compound sentences to project the complexity of this message. Chapter 4 of the book of *Exodus* continues with God's encounter with Moses in the bush burning experience. Moses in this chapter raised some challenges he might encounter if he obeyed God's call. In response, God answered him by showing him some miracles he would perform in Egypt and how he would be helped. The complexity of this chapter can also be seen in the movement of Moses from Median to Egypt to embark on the great assignment given to him by God.

Another reason for the complex nature of chapter 4 can be seen by comparing this chapter to other chapters in the book of *Exodus*. Looking through the chapters, there is no other type of sentence that is more than this number. This may account for the reason why ‘and’ as a connective device is used frequently in the book to join units of equal rank especially clauses. A good example is taken from verse 3b of the book of *Exodus* chapter 4:

- Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it.

In the sentence above, ‘and’ is used twice to join three independent clauses; these clauses are (i) Moses threw it [staff] on the ground, (ii) it became a snake, and (iii) he ran from it.

The complexity of NIV is in line with Babalola’s findings (2007) that NIV “makes use of compound sentences in most of the verses” selected as data for his study, which makes it distinct from the other two versions (KJV and RSV) he studied. Examples of compound sentences found in the book of *Exodus* include:

6. The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. (*Exodus* 1:5)
7. Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. (*Exodus* 2:2)
8. She opened it and saw the baby. (*Exodus* 2:6)
9. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. (*Exodus* 2:6)
10. Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock. (*Exodus* 2:17)

From the above examples, it can be deduced that clauses are linked with both punctuation marks and conjunctions. That is, we have both syndetic and asyndetic coordination in the book under consideration. Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum (1973) explain that “the term coordination is used by some grammarians for both syndetic coordination when coordinators are present and asyndetic coordination when coordinators are absent” (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973, 253).

In sentence 6, the clauses – ‘The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all’ and ‘Joseph was already in Egypt’ – are separated by a punctuation mark (a semi-colon). One of the functions of a semi-colon is to separate two independent clauses as shown in sentence 6. Semantically, the second clause is elaborating on the first by extension. It gives additional information to the first clause.

Apart from the punctuation marks, coordinating conjunctions, such as, *and*, *or*, and *but* are used to link clauses in the book of *Exodus*. Even in the sentences above, ‘and’ is used from sentence 7 to 10 to link independent clauses except in 10 where ‘but’ is used in addition to ‘and’ to show contrast. However, it must be noted that the clauses linked with ‘and’ and ‘but’ in sentences 7 and 10 are more than two clauses while the clauses combined in sentences 8 and 9 are just 2. This is clarified by Bolaji Aremo that “a

compound sentence may also be formed from more than two simple sentences [clauses], in which case it will contain more than two simple clauses” (Arema 1997, 2).

### Examples of Complex Sentences in the Texts

Apart from compound sentences, there are many complex sentences found in the book of *Exodus*. It has the next percentage (25%) after the compound sentences. A complex sentence is a combination of independent clause plus one or more dependent (subordinate) clause. As shown in the examples below, the book of *Exodus* contains all the types of finite subordinate clauses that we have in English, namely: adverbial clause, relative/adjectival clause and noun clause. Examples are:

11. Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. (*Exodus* 9:20)
12. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. (*Exodus* 1:21)
13. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. (*Exodus* 2:2)
14. All the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. (*Exodus* 12:28)
15. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. (*Exodus* 6:7)

### Complex Sentences with Adverbial Clauses

The book analysed shows NIV is structured by placing subordinate clauses that are used as adverbials in the initial position more often before the main clause. Though there are instances in the book where adverbials are placed after the main clauses, this is not common. Placing adverbials at the final position is only found in another type of sentences like compound-complex sentences (this will be discussed under the compound-complex sentence).

Examples of initial adverbials are found in sentence 12 and 13 above where they function as an adverbial clause of reason and of time respectively. In English, sentences with adverbial clauses can be structured in two different ways depending on the focus of the writer. In sentences 12 and 13, the adverbial clauses (dependent clauses) are placed before the independent clauses for emphasis. This shows that in NIV, adverbial clauses are placed in front of the independent clauses to signal that the information fronted is important. Dependent clauses are emphasised by placing it at the beginning of the sentences. Pragmatically, this has an extra effect on the reader. The fact that the element in the first position is for prominence and to attract attention is supported by Bolaji Arema thus:

Now non-basic simple sentences in which obligatory parts other than the subject are placed in the first position are often formed and used when it is desirable to make such parts more prominent and capable of

attracting greater interest than would have been possible in their usual non-initial position (Arema 1995, 298).

Hence, sentence 12 could mean that, because the families feared God that he gave them families of their own. This implies that if they do not fear God, they would not have gotten their own families. In a similar way, sentence 13 could be interpreted to mean that it was when she saw that he was a fine child that she hid him for three months. The time when she saw the child is very important. Therefore, the writer chooses to front these clauses to attract extra attention to them in the sentences and to make them stand out. This is supported by Steve Runge that:

The choice to front something represents the choice to attract extra attention to it in the sentence, making it ‘stand out’ more. Choice implies meaning. Understanding the implications of choices give us insight into what writers were seeking to signal through the word-order variation attested in the Greek NT (Runge 2008, 14).

Therefore, sentences 12 and 13 may be re-written in such a way that the focus of the sentences will be changed thus:

- He gave them families of their own because the midwives feared God.
- She hid him for three months when she saw that he was a fine child.

The revised versions of sentences 12 and 13 show that there is a close connection between the main and subordinate clauses, and their degree of integration is very high. However, the degree of integration of the original sentence is not high.

Apart from using fronting of adverbial clauses to start communication, they also have a textual connection; that is, they are related to sentences written before them. Steve Runge (2008) quoted Levinsohn (2000, 8) who identifies two primary tasks performed by emphasising an element thus:

- It provides a starting point for the communication, and
- It cohesively anchors the subsequent clauses to something which is already in the context (Runge 2008).

In considering information structure of the book of *Exodus*, the subordinate clause may be regarded as the given information, and they are fronted for the purpose of emphasis so that they will not be taken for granted. They also function as the marked theme since they are the focuses of the messages.

### **Complex Sentences with Relative/Adjectival Clauses**

Apart from complex sentences with adverbial clauses, there are instances of complex sentences with relative/adjectival clauses. The two types of relative clauses – restrictive and non-restrictive – are found in the book. A good example of the restrictive relative clause is:

16. Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. (*Exodus* 9:20)

In this sentence, ‘who feared the word of the Lord’ is a relative clause that functions as the postmodifying element to ‘those officials of Pharaoh’ in the structure of the above sentence. This subordinate clause clarifies the noun phrase – Those officials of Pharaoh – by specifying it. This may imply that there may be other officials who did not fear the word of the Lord and who did not hurry to bring their slaves and their livestock inside, but it is only those who feared the word of the Lord that hurriedly brought their slaves and livestock inside. The implication of this clause is found in the sentence that follows the above sentence:

17. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field. (*Exodus* 9:21)

Also, it could be said that the relative clause is used in the above sentences for the purpose of over-specification in order to help readers to see how important the clause is, to the element being referred to and to view it in a specific way.

Examples of non-restrictive relative clauses are:

18. Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. (*Exodus* 1:8)
19. The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah ... (*Exodus* 1:15)

In sentences 18 and 19, non-restrictive relative clauses are used to give additional information on their preceding phrases. In 18, ‘who did not know about Joseph’ gives additional information on ‘a new king’. However, in sentence 19, ‘whose names were Shiphrah and Puah’ supplies us with additional information on ‘the Hebrew midwives’. Through this, we are able to know the names of these midwives. The difference between the two relative pronouns – who and whose – used in introducing these relative clauses in these sentences must be noted. ‘Who’ is used as the subject of the clause where it occurs while ‘whose’ is used to show possession.

### **Complex Sentences with Noun Clauses**

The complex sentences with noun clauses are also found in the book. Sentence 20 and 21 are good examples:

20. All the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. (*Exodus* 12:28)
21. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. (*Exodus* 6:7)

‘What the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron’ and ‘that I am the Lord your God’ are noun clauses functioning as the direct objects. These clauses are embedded clauses and function as the elements of the main clauses. The embedded finite clauses exemplify above are called ‘wh-clause’ and that-clause respectively. Embedding is defined by Angela Downing and Philip Locke as ‘a kind of subordination by which a clause functions as a constituent of another clause or of a group’ (Downing and Locke

2006, 28). Their level of integration is higher than that of an adverbial clause in the final position in the sense that their sentences will be incomplete without them.

### Examples of Compound-Complex Sentences in the texts

As shown in this study, the sentence type with a percentage next to the complex sentence is the compound-complex sentence. It has 24%; the complex sentence is 1% higher than it. A compound-complex sentence is a combination of clauses that are formed partly like a compound sentence and partly like a complex sentence (Arema 1995). It contains at least two independent clauses plus one or more dependent clause(s). The examples below buttress our assertion that most of the adverbials are placed at the initial position in NIV for the purpose of emphasis. Sentences 23, 24 and 25 confirm this assertion.

22. The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." (*Exodus 1:15-16*)
23. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. (*Exodus 2:3*)
24. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. (*Exodus 2:10*)
25. When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. (*Exodus 2:15*)
26. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. (*Exodus 6:5*)

Sentence 22 is made up of eight clauses with three independent clauses and five dependent clauses. The dependent clauses are made up of both relative and adverbial clauses. In the same sentence, there are adverbial clauses of time and condition which are placed before the main clauses. The instruction is very clear, 'when' or by the time the midwives discovered that the Hebrew women give birth, the condition for killing or not, depends on the sex of the child.

Sentences 23, 24 and 25 have the same structure with their adverbial clauses fronted. Also, sentences 23 and 24 have the same structure because they have the same number of the sentence and their information structures are the same. The focus of these sentences is on the adverbial clause of time which modifies the predicators in the main clauses. The structure is different from that of complex sentence in the sense that there are two independent clauses where the second clause is elaborating on the first by extending it. However, sentence 25 has five clauses of three independent and two dependent clauses. The independent clauses are elaborating the first by adding something new. While the second independent clause is used to show contrast, the third is giving additional information. The first dependent clause - When Pharaoh heard of this - is an adverbial clause of time while the second is an adverbial clause of place -

where he sat down by a well – which also functions as the appositive clause because it qualifies an adverbial item – in Median.

Sentence 26 has three clauses – two independent clauses and one dependent. The dependent clause is a non-restrictive clause which is used to supply additional information on ‘the Israelites’ while the second independent clause is elaborating on the first by giving additional information.

As we have established the fact NIV is structured by placing adverbial clauses at the initial position, more examples of such are:

27. Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.” (*Exodus* 5:23)
28. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground”. (*Exodus* 4:9)
29. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (*Exodus* 2:12)

It must be noted that all the examples except sentence 29 have finite subordinate clauses while that of sentence 29 is realised by non-finite clauses. Non-finite clauses are also fronted for the purpose of emphasis. The few instances where the adverbial subordinate clause is placed at the final position are found among the compound-complex sentences. Examples of such instances are:

30. And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it. (*Exodus* 7:5)
31. Anyone who beats their male or female slave with a rod must be punished if the slave dies as a direct result, but they are not to be punished if the slave recovers after a day or two, since the slave is their property. (*Exodus* 21:20-21)

### Examples of Direct Speech Sentences in the Texts

In addition to the above, there are many ‘direct speech sentences’ in the book of Exodus. Examples of direct speech sentences are sentences 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36. These sentences may be grouped into reporting and reported clauses. Reporting clauses are not the main propositional contents of the message, but they are used to provide the source of information. All the reporting clauses are underlined in the sentences below.

32. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.” (*Exodus* 1:22)
33. Then Moses was afraid and thought, “What I did must have become known.” (*Exodus* 2:14)
34. Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.” (*Exodus* 16:19)
35. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ (*Exodus* 33:12)

36. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” (*Exodus 34:27*)

Though there are different ways by which direct speech sentences are being analysed by linguists, we believe both clauses – reporting and reported clauses – are important for the interpretation of utterances and both can be regarded as independent clauses. To Bolaji Aremo, a direct speech sentence is a complex sentence formed by combining two simple sentences (Aremo 2014). The fact, that he identifies the two as simple sentences, makes each independent of the other. He further classifies the reporting clause as the main clause while the reported clause is a subordinate (complement) clause. This is counteracted by Angela Downing and Philip Locke that ‘what is traditionally classed as the complement clause is, in fact, the main proposition’ (Downing and Locke 2006, 301). They hinged their argument on the fact that what is said is more important than the introductory clause. All the underlined clauses above help us to identify the source of information and differentiate between the source of information and the main proposition. For instance, in sentence 34, the main propositional content is ‘No one is to keep any of it until morning’ while the introductory clause, ‘Then Moses said to them’ helps the readers to understand the source of information to be Moses.

### **Examples of Non-Basic Sentences in the Texts**

All the sentences discussed so far in this study are declarative sentences. They are meant to give information. Apart from declarative sentences, there are instances of interrogative and imperative sentences in the book. These are:

#### **Interrogative Sentences**

37. Why did you leave him? (*Exodus 2:20*)
38. Then what shall I tell them? (*Exodus 3:13*)
39. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? (*Exodus 8:26*)
40. What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? (*Exodus 14:11*)

Some of the sentences above are used to elicit information, but in sentences 37 and 40, no information is provided. They are rhetorical questions. In the context in which sentence 37 is used, it is a rhetorical question. ‘Reuel’ the father of seven daughters whom Moses assisted in watering his flock asked his daughter why they left ‘him’ Moses who helped them and rescued them from some shepherd, probably Reuel asked them why Moses was left unassisted in spite of his help to them. This fact can be supported by the next sentence after the question. The sentence – Invite him to have something to eat – is a statement made by ‘Reuel’ after the rhetorical question. The daughters did not provide any information.

Similarly, sentence 39 is a rhetorical question. The sentence was made by Moses in *Exodus 8:26* when Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron that they could offer sacrifices to their God in his land. It could be said that Moses asked the question not to get any response from Pharaoh, but for him to acknowledge the fact that offering sacrifices in the land of



Egypt would be detestable to the Egyptians. The question implies that they would be stoned to death if they offered a detestable sacrifice in the land of Egypt. This may be confirmed by the statement made by Moses prior to the asking of this rhetorical question in the same verse (*Exodus* 8:26). The sentence read thus: “The sacrifices we offer to the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians.” In addition, Pharaoh did not respond whether the sacrifices would be detestable or not. Alternatively, the sentence may not necessarily be rhetorical. Moses could have been seeking the assurance of God’s protection from the likely dire reaction of the Egyptians.

The second question – sentence 38 – was asked by Moses when he had the encounter of burning bush with God in the wilderness. He asked God what he would tell the people of Israelites about God. It must be noted that this sentence is not a rhetorical question because the information was provided. God responded to Moses’ question. The question is asked in *Exodus* 3:13 and God gave his response to the question in *Exodus* 3:14. However, when considering the context in which sentence 40 is made, one may say that is a rhetorical and at the same non-rhetorical. In the book of *Exodus* 14:11, the Israelites expressed their fears by asking Moses why he brought them out of Egypt when they saw the Egyptians marching after them to recapture them and they could not go forward because of the Red Sea in their front. They were afraid and thought they would be killed by the Egyptians. Then, they began to ask a series of questions in which the above question was one. This sentence is rhetorical on one hand in the sense that the people asked the question to express their fears or accuse Moses. This is confirmed in *Exodus* 14:10 which reads thus: “As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD.” On the other hand, it is non-rhetorical in the sense that Moses responded to their questions by calming them down. He answered them, ‘Do not be afraid’ (*Exodus* 14:13).

Also, the difference in the structure of the above interrogatives must be considered. The structure of these sentences is different. Sentences 37 and 38 are non-basic simple sentence while that of sentences 39 and 40 are non-basic complex sentences. Sentences 37 and 38 are mono-clausal sentences, but sentences 39 and 40 have more than one clause.

### **Imperative Sentences**

The imperative sentence is used to give a command. Bolaji Aremo identifies three different types of commands, namely: commands without a subject, commands with a subject and commands with let (Arema 2014, 361). The command with let and command without a subject are found in the book of *Exodus*. Examples of such are:

41. Let my people go, so that they may worship me. (*Exodus* 7:16)
42. Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. (*Exodus* 107)
43. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. (*Exodus* 12:17)

44. Eat nothing made with yeast. (*Exodus* 12:20)

Sentences 41 and 42 are commands with 'let'. They are used in different contexts. The first (41) is a reported speech by Moses. Moses is relaying God's message to Pharaoh to let his people go to worship him. It is a command by God Almighty and Pharaoh is expected to obey. In contrast, sentence 42 is said by the Pharaoh's officials. Though they were not in the position to issue a command to their king, the context in which the sentence is uttered demands for it. After the Egyptians have suffered in the hand of God and his servants Moses and Aaron, the officials have to command their kings to let the people go so that they may worship their God.

Sentences 43 and 44 are commands without a subject. They have the same effect on the hearers like that of let command. In sentence 43, God is commanding the people of Israelites through Moses to celebrate a lasting ordinance. However, in sentence 44, the command is being given to the same people not to eat anything that is made of yeast. They are to comply without complaining.

### 10. Conclusion

Having done a careful analysis of the sentence structure of the book of *Exodus*, it is obvious that all the types of sentence identified in English are used in the book. In comparing the sentence types used in the book, it was discovered that non-simple sentences (compound, complex and compound-complex sentences) dominate the book of *Exodus* and it could be said that the book is complex in structure considering the messages being projected in the book.

Additionally, it must be pointed out that the book of *Exodus* is full of direct speech sentences. In some cases, Moses always quoted God directly in relaying his messages to the Israelites and the king of Egypt, Pharaoh. Also, direct speech sentences are used for Moses and Pharaoh in some parts of the book whereby what they said was actually presented with introductory clauses. The reported clause is the real message being passed across to the readers while the reporting clause is the source of the information which may be elliptic without affecting the main proposition.

Another kind of sentences found in the book is the non-basic sentence. While the basic sentences are used to give information in the text, the non-basic sentences, which include interrogative and imperative sentences, are used to request, ask for information or to give a command to the addressee(s) as the case may be. While the interrogative sentences have the pragmatic effect of eliciting information from the hearer, the imperative sentences have the pragmatic effect of commanding. The hearer is required to obey the command issued by the speaker. In the book of *Exodus*, most of the commands in the text analysed are given by God as a Supreme Being and His creatures are expected to obey. It was, however, discovered that most of the time in the book; the addressee(s) disobeyed God's commands. A good example is found when Moses was relating God's

message to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Instead of obeying by allowing the Israelites to go, he asked Moses: “Who is the LORD that I should obey him and let Israel go?” Similarly, God commanded his people not to make any graven image as an object of worship, but they disobeyed him.

As established at the introductory part of this work, the fact that *The Bible* readers need the help of the Holy Spirit in interpreting *The Bible cannot be disputed*; however, linguistic tools will also aid understanding. Thus, it is recommended that the teachers and students of *The Bible* should not only focus on the contents, attention must also be focused on the grammar as well as the discourse nuances of the text. This will help them to draw the attention of their students to the importance of linguistics in biblical studies. Efforts should be made to draw attention to different structures of the English sentences especially different ways of deploying complex sentences.

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#### APPENDIX ANALYSIS OF SENTENCE TYPES

**Table 2: Analysis of Sentences Types in the Book of Exodus Chapters 1-20**

| CHAPTER | SIMPLE | COMPLEX | COMPOUND | COMPOUND-COMPLEX | TOTAL |
|---------|--------|---------|----------|------------------|-------|
| 1       | -      | 4       | 6        | 7                | 17    |
| 2       | 2      | 6       | 25       | 7                | 40    |
| 3       | 6      | 9       | 13       | 8                | 36    |
| 4       | 7      | 6       | 27       | 11               | 51    |
| 5       | 2      | 2       | 20       | 6                | 30    |
| 6       | 16     | 7       | 8        | 9                | 40    |
| 7       | 3      | 7       | 10       | 10               | 30    |
| 8       | 8      | 10      | 16       | 10               | 44    |
| 9       | 1      | 11      | 20       | 9                | 41    |
| 10      | 6      | 12      | 25       | 4                | 47    |
| 11      | 3      | 4       | 5        | 2                | 14    |
| 12      | 14     | 24      | 13       | 14               | 65    |
| 13      | 9      | 10      | 3        | 6                | 28    |
| 14      | 6      | 7       | 22       | 11               | 46    |
| 15      | 12     | 6       | 22       | 3                | 43    |
| 16      | 8      | 7       | 13       | 24               | 52    |

|       |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 17    | 4   | 2   | 10  | 10  | 26  |
| 18    | 1   | 10  | 13  | 8   | 32  |
| 19    | 4   | 9   | 8   | 13  | 34  |
| 20    | 7   | 5   | 8   | 8   | 28  |
| TOTAL | 119 | 158 | 287 | 180 | 744 |
| %     | 16  | 21  | 39  | 24  | 100 |

**Table 3: Analysis of Sentences Types in the Book of Exodus Chapters 21-40**

| CHAPTER | SIMPLE | COMPLEX | COMPOUND | COMPOUND-COMPLEX | TOTAL |
|---------|--------|---------|----------|------------------|-------|
| 21      | 2      | 16      | 1        | 15               | 34    |
| 22      | 5      | 14      | 7        | 11               | 37    |
| 23      | 9      | 14      | 11       | 12               | 46    |
| 24      | 4      | 3       | 8        | 8                | 23    |
| 25      | 7      | 17      | 9        | 5                | 38    |
| 26      | 14     | 10      | 8        | 5                | 37    |
| 27      | 5      | 3       | 7        | 7                | 22    |
| 28      | 12     | 16      | 10       | 10               | 48    |
| 29      | 15     | 15      | 20       | 10               | 60    |
| 30      | 7      | 15      | 11       | 9                | 42    |
| 31      | -      | 7       | 3        | 3                | 13    |
| 32      | 5      | 7       | 15       | 24               | 51    |
| 33      | 3      | 5       | 10       | 14               | 32    |
| 34      | 10     | 14      | 12       | 11               | 47    |
| 35      | 3      | 9       | 1        | 6                | 19    |
| 36      | 14     | 7       | 10       | 6                | 37    |
| 37      | 14     | 8       | 9        | 1                | 32    |
| 38      | 9      | 10      | 9        | 1                | 29    |
| 39      | 12     | 11      | 8        | 4                | 35    |
| 40      | 3      | 3       | 16       | 12               | 34    |
| TOTAL   | 153    | 204     | 185      | 174              | 716   |
| %       | 21     | 29      | 26       | 24               | 100   |