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Structural Contrast of Determiner Phrase Items in English and Ọgba Languages

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Abstract: ***The paper investigated selected linguistic items within the Determiner Phrase (DP) and how they operate in the syntax of Ọgba and English languages. The objectives of the paper are to investigate the morphological and syntactic deigns of selected Ọgba and English linguistic items in the DP-structures in order to find out how their differences create communicative contentions in the bilingual's language use and to explain how the identified differentials affect grammar of the Ọgba-English bilingual. Resident in the corpus of syntax, the study made use of the contrastive analysis theory by Charles Fries and Robert Lado as its framework. The descriptive method was used for the analysis. 56 linguistic structures were investigated and the findings showed that the languages have structural variance in their designs in number derivation morphemes, tense derivation, class changing, class maintaining, determiner argument, possessive argument and vowel elision. The conceptual-intentional differentials exist both in graphic representation and in speech making which causes speech-hobble and articulatory perceptual effects usually considered unacceptable by native speakers of the English language. The position of this article is that since the trans-designated linguistic shapes and morphological differences cannot be changed. It is advisable to allow the different languages to function in their different status to retain the linguistic dignity of the Ọgba which is an indigenous language in Nigeria and the official language to avoid the colonization of one language on the other or cause one to go extinct because of preference on the other.***

Keywords: Arguments, Determiner Phrase, Grammar, Language Structures, Morphemes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Structural contrast of Determiner Phrase items in English and Ọgba languages investigates selected linguistic items within the determiner phrase, as they exist in the syntax of both languages and their variance in bilingualism. Ọgba is the name of a language and the name of

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the speakers of the language. The people of Ọgba in different parts of Nigeria and overseas by migration have their ancestral home land in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. They are rich in culture which usually interplays with the rich linguistics. Ọgba, Ekpeye and Iwhnuro hna (father of the Ikwerre's) are progenitors of Akalaka the Great who left Bini around 1460AD, during the turbulent reign of Oba Awuare (Ohia and Onyedibia, 2003; Gilbert, 2021). Again, the English language is a language of the Indo-European bloc adopted in Nigeria as official language used for trade, education, legislation and diplomacy.

As it is, the concurrent existence of the indigenous language and the official language make every educated Ọgba person a bilingual. The bilingual situation showcases some phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic problems in language use due to existing cultural differences. The existing linguistic differences are usually studied with intention to find their contrasts that actually pose the bilingual challenges in order to proffer solutions to bilingual challenges. The current study investigates the structural contrast of the Ọgba and English languages in the Determiner Phrase domain with a view to contribute to scholarship.

Structural studies however, make use of the models that have explicit specification of sentences and their structures that could be rewritten following linguistic rules to achieve transformations as described in Generative Grammar. The concept of Generative Grammar concepts propounded by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s has been rated by scholars as a more powerful grammar notion compared to the theories that precede its evolution as it allows for generativism of grammatical structures and transformations. The formula of the Generative Grammar according to its proponent cited in Nwala (2015) is guided by the structure in fig. 1:

Fig.1

$$S \rightarrow NP + AUX + VP$$
$$NP \rightarrow Det + N$$
$$VP \rightarrow V + NP$$
$$AUX \rightarrow T$$

Source: Nwala, 2015

The above formula holds the symbol 'S' for sentence (initial symbol), NP for noun phrase, AUX for auxiliary (shows tense) and VP for verb phrase. These rules divide the sentence of a language into constituent parts. The constituent structures of sentences are determined in part by the phrase structure rules via identified head in the string of construction. Additionally, the Generative Grammar introduced some scientific principles to language study such as psychologically based concept of mentalism, philosophically based concept of rationalism, mathematically based concept of the phrase structural rules, among others (Gilbert, 2023a).

As structural studies evolve in the descriptive era, Abney in1987 held the view that all the categories in a given structure have to be accounted for. In doing that, the traditional determiner usually attached to the maximal node of nouns to form noun phrase (henceforth, NP) has to be recognized as a category to form determiner phrase (henceforth, DP) in his DP-Hypothesis. The introduction of the determiner as a category increased the number of word-class to nine (Adjectives, Adverbs, Conjunction, Determiners, Interjection, Nouns, Prepositions, Pronouns and Verbs). Although Abney's study was English language based,

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similar phenomenon exists in other languages of the world including the Ọgba with (perhaps) a few differences (Obiamalu, 2015; Gilbert, 2021).

English was introduced to Nigeria in the late 16th and early 17th Century by the British merchants and Christian missionaries who initially settled around the coastal towns of Badagry and Calabar (South-Western and South-Eastern Nigeria). Subsequently, they extended to other parts of the country, including Ọgba land in South-South Nigeria. Between 1900 and 1907, when a native court and a government school were built in Ọgba land (Obowu, 1972), and subsequently English was adoption as an official language in Nigeria for education, trade and legislation; all educated Ọgba indigenes became bilinguals and multilinguals (Udoh, 2023). Following the statutory influence of the English language over the Ọgba, there are some noticeable linguistic arguments in the bilinguals' domain of language use during speech making, writing, naming and general communication. Again, the structural differences between both languages and the use of the English structure for academics and other formal situations have made the use of the Ọgba language structure in such situations ungrammatical. As a result, the aim of this article is to investigate the structural contrast of selected Ọgba and English linguistic items to find out their bilingual communication contentions morphologically and in the DP-domain.

The specific objectives of the paper are to investigate the morphological and syntactic deigns of selected Ọgba and English linguistic items in the DP-structures in order to find out how their differences create communicative contentions in the bilingual's language use and to explain how the identified differentials affect grammar of the Ọgba-English bilingual and to proffer measures on how to solve the problem.

2. RELATED WORKS

The current review clarifies experts' opinion on the grammar of language as they function in the languages under investigation. Grammar guides the use of any human language and is usually described by scholars from different worldviews. Palmer (1964), cited in Gilbert (2021, p.35) describes the grammar of a language as a model approved of that language. It is an idealised representation and conceptual system that explains the reality and totality of a language. Earlier on, Chomsky's inatism presented grammar as a mental description of the linguistic competence of a native speaker of a language which enables them to speak and understand their language confidently.

Conventionally, many types of grammar exist, which include: case grammar, cognitive grammar, construction grammar, generative grammar, lexical-functional grammar (LFG), mental grammar, theoretical grammar and transformational grammar, each of which by definition depends on the direction of investigation. To identify the internal grammar variables among languages, Agbedo (2000) and Nwala (2016) argue that the use of Immediate Constituent Analysis in linguistics can assist to split sentences into consecutive layers, or constituent units, in which each constituent consists of only a word or meaningful part of a word. These layers of different constituents are not arbitrary; they follow the rules of the language and the spatial relationship which defines the arrangement of linguistic items on the structure of any language for adequacy in communication.

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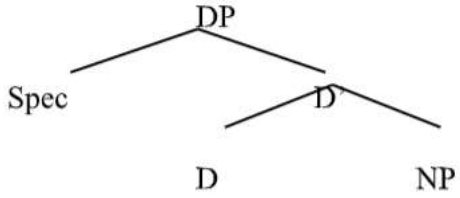
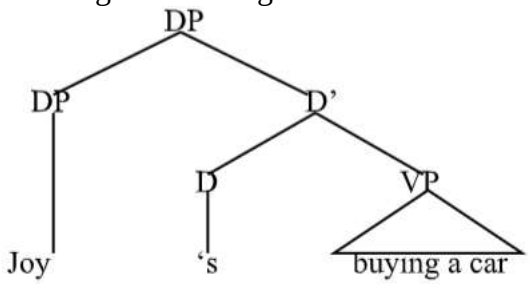
In recognition of this rule-guided phenomenon, Ndimele (1999) opines that "the first task of a linguist in the business of structural analysis of a language for effective communication is to identify the grammatical class to which all linguistic items of the language belong, because grammatical operations in human languages are category-based." These scholarly views are expressions of Chomsky's linguistic structural concepts and the developed DP-hypothesis in Abney (1987). Abney held that the noun (N) is not the head of the argument in nominal phrase/noun phrase (NP) structure, suggesting that the determiner (D) is the head of the phrase, if the structure contains a determiner at the maximal node of the structure. Abney's theoretical and empirical explanations made use of the structure as seen in figure 2 below.

Fig. 2. Structure of DP-hypothesis



Abney's argument is that the determiner occupies the spec NP position and has not been as a maximal projection or the head of the containing maximal projection (NP).
Emenanjo (1978), referenced in Obiamalu (2015) and Gilbert (2021), avers that Abney's DP-concept suggests a full recognition of determiner as an independent category in word class. As a result, the possessive determiner will be represented as contained in the diagram below using the structure in the bracket:
1. Joy's buying a car is good.
1b. [*Joy's buying a car*] is good

Fig. 3. Showing sentence 1



The argumentative diagram further establishes D as a category and shows that DP "Joy" is the subject of the higher DP "'s" and makes the VP 'buying a car" as its complement. The scholars (cited above) further identified elements that could be found within the NP as the obligatory noun, adjectives, pronominal modifier, numeral, qualifier, demonstrative and relative clause.

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Obviously, the review showing the generative characteristics of language would have structural contentions in the domain of bilingualism, because of the cultural differences of the languages involved. Although, Noam Chomsky has set the phrase structure in his Generative Grammar concept; advanced by Abney, Emenanjo, Ndimele, Obiamalu, Nwala and Gilbert on the syntax of English and indigenous languages, but research is yet to be carried out specifically on 'structural contrast of determiner phrase items in English and Ọgba languages to show their bilingual contentions,' hence the current reality.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the qualitative research method which seeks to generate knowledge and understanding of the social world. It is a more suitable process for handling social phenomena. In the study, vital pieces of information were collated from various publications and documents of different organizations were utilized as the secondary sources and a structured conversational observation of Ọgba indigenes who speak English as their second language were arranged by the researcher as a primary source alongside various interactions with other competent scholars as it relates to bilingualism, language and communication.
Again, the study utilizes Contrastive Analysis (henceforth, CA) as its framework to investigate the relativisms of the graphic representations of selected Ọgba and English linguistic items with a view to finding their bilingual contentions. The CA argues that the behavioural advance to a second language learning is usually marred by the routines of the first language as presented by Robert Lado and Charles Fries in the 1950s. Their behavioural linguistic studies viewed linguistic competence as a series of habits, resulting in association and accumulativism which permits old habits to affect the new habits.

Fries, (1945) and Lado, (1957) posit that the most efficient materials in the target language learning are got from scientific description when carefully investigated in a parallel description of the native language. Furthermore, Lado argues that second language learners usually find some aspects of the target language simple to learn and others difficult, holding that the learning activities become easier when comparison is applied at the different levels of investigation (1957).

CA, as agreed by these scholars, regards learning as a cumulative process that suggests infiltration of new ideas into the mind of an adult learner which influences their past experiences. Obviously, the use of the CA to investigate the structural contrast of selected Ọgba and English linguistic items and their bilingual contentions when placed side-by-side would find out their possible differences that affect the grammar of the Ọgba-English bilinguals.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis focuses on selected morphological structures of derivational and inflectional morphemes as well as sentence structure designs involving the DP in English and Ọgba languages.

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Morphological Contrast of Number Derivation

Number derivational morphemes are usually achieved via the process of increase in number (that is, forming of plurals) of any described item in the root word.

English Language		**Ọgba Language**	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
2. Child	Children	3. Ntachni	Otu Ntachni
4. Woman	Woman	5. Iynewna	Otu Iynewna
6. Man	Man	7. Iknewna	Iknewna Otu
8. Girl	Girl + s	9. Agbọgọ	Otu Agbọgọ
10. Boy	Boy + s	11. Okrobia	Otu Okrobia
12. Rat	Rat + s	13. Oko	Otu Oko

The analysis shows that number derivation morphemes in English language are bound morphemes, but are free morphemes in Ọgba word-structure when contrasted. Again, the English language uses '-s' to derive the plural of boy, girl, rat etc., but the Ọgba language uses 'otu' to derive the plural of the same items showing free and bound morpheme dichotomy.

Morphological Contrast of Past Tense Derivation

Tense derivations are accomplished by means of attaching fragments of linguistic items as prefixes or suffixes to affect the grammatical function of words in a given structure to produce a new perception.

English Language			**Ọgba Language**		
Base	Affix	Derived	Base	Affix	Derived
14. Slap	-ed	Slapped	15. Kụ	-rụ	Kụrụ
16. Buy	-	Bought	17. Kụ	-rụ	Zụrụ
18. Find	-	Found	19. Chọpia	-ri	Chọpiarị
20. Show	-n	Shown	21. Kọsị	-rị	Kọsịrị
22. Go	-	Went	23. Jịje	-re	Jịj're
24. Do	-	Did	25. Me	-rne	Mrne
26. Stone	-d	Stoned	27. Tụ	-rụ	Trụ
28. Drill	-ed	Drilled	29. Hi	-ri	Trụ
30. Dance	-ed	Danced	31. Gba	-ra	Trụ

In tense realization, the English language uses '-d, -ed, and –n' morphemes for regular verbs to form their past/past participle; but the irregular verbs have no uniformed way of marking their past/past participial tenses. Examples can be seen in the following irregular verbs: 'buy/bought, find/found, go/went, show/shown, do/did'. Ọgba language uses bound morphemes, such as: '-ra, -rị, -rne, -rụ' to realize the tenses of both the regular and irregular

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verbs in line with the normal native speaker's instinct. The contrast has shown consistency insertion of morphemes in Ọgba tense derivation and inconsistency in the use of morphemes in English tense derivation as some have zero morphemes while others accommodate the insertion of morphemes.

Morphological Contrast of Class Changing Morphemes

Class changing morphemes are majorly suffixes in English language. In this section, the paper examines how such morphemes operate in Ọgba language:

English Language			**Ọgba Language**		
Stem	Affix	Derived	Stem	Affix	Derived
32. Short (Adj)	ness	Shortness (N)	33. Nkpurukpu (Adj)	(Adj) -	Nkpurukpu (Adj)
34. Allow (V)	ance	Allowance (N)	35. Hasi (V)	-mạ	Hasimạ (V)
36. Joy (N)	ous	Joyous (Adj)	37. Obusọ (N/Adj)	-	Obusọ (N/Adj)
38. Enjoy (V)	ment	Enjoyment (N)	39. Ụsọ (V)	-sụ	Sụsọ (V)
40. Good (Adj/N/adv)	ness	Goodness (N)	41. Ọka (Adj/adv)	-ọdị	Ọdịọka (Adj/Adv)
42. Saliva (N)	ate	Salivate (V)	43. Ẹsna (Adj/N)	-	Ẹsna (Adj/N)

The English language uses the suffixes '-ness' to change an adjective to a noun; '-ance' to change a verb to a noun; '-ous' to change a noun to an adjective; '-ment' to change a verb to a noun and '-ate' to change a noun to a verb as seen in above. But such affixes do not change the class of Ọgba words of similar semantic perception. This situation suggests class realization differentials in the languages.

Morphological Contrast of Class Maintaining Morphemes

Scholars refer to these morphemes that deal with formation of new words from the initial ones as lexical morphemes:

English Language			**Ọgba Language**		
Stem	Affix	Derived	Stem	Affix	Derived
44. Duke (N)	-dom	Dukedom (N)	45. Oba (N)	-eze	Obaeze =kingly (Adj)
46. Mother (N)	-hood	Motherhood (N)	47. Oba (N)	-uku	Nneuku (N/Adj)

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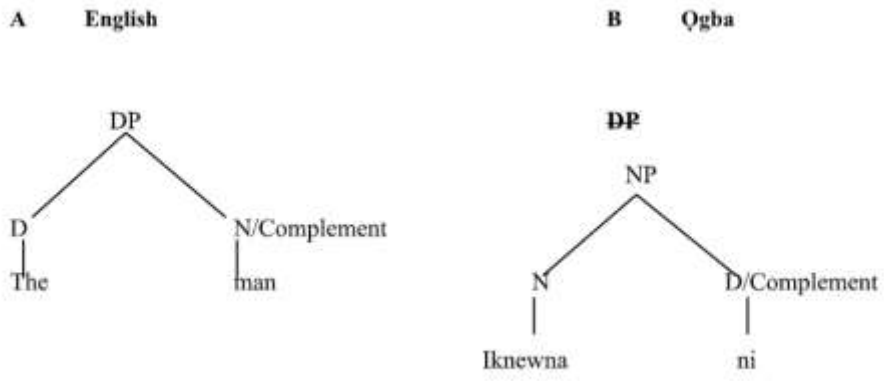
The words that maintain their classes in English language when affixed with morphemes do not maintain their classes in Ọgba language when affixed with their relevant morphemes as shown above. These findings are express anthropological examples of the differences in the formation of word structures of *kwa* language family tree of the Niger-Congo and that of the Indo-European bloc languages (Gilbert, 2021).

Contrastive analysis of the Syntax of Ogba language and English
This section is hinged on syntactic analysis which describes some structure designs within the DP in English and Ọgba languages.

Determiners and nouns
The determiners and nouns usually find their common place in the subject domain of a simple construction, and the typology of a language structure could be identified via a careful investigation of the determiners and the nouns in the subject domain of any language.

48. The man
[ni iknewa]
Properly written as 'iknewa ni'
The word-order of the English and Ogba languages are described in the structure 48 demonstrated in figure 4 'A' and 'B' below. The article "the" is ni in Ogba language, while man is iknewa respectively. The structure crashes in Ogba description, because in Ogba structure, the article is usually at the bottom of the phrase and not at the ultimate position like the English structural design. It shows typological differentials.

Figure 4 Typological differentials in Ọgba and English DP-structure



The two Dp-structures in figure 4 simply show that while English is determiner initial, Ọgba is determiner final.

Possessor Argument
DP assumes that a nominal phrase has a head and takes an NP as its complement and also provides a specifier position that could accommodate other elements such as the possessor

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argument. The possessor argument also known as Gen-determiners are usually attached to the noun to show ownership or possession.

49. Obi's wife.

In English, the NP, Obi as a Noun is marked by "'s" to take the possession of wife. The genitive markers are usually at the right hand side of the Noun in the English structure. However, in Ọgba language structure, the genitive markers appear at the overt position in what the researchers view as Nk-determiner in Ogba structure.

50. Nkem → Nke + mmu
[Mine]

51. Nkii → Nka + iyu
[Yours]

52. Nkuọ → Nke + wọ
[Theirs]

53. Nk'Azu → Nke + Azu
[Azu's]

The Nk-concept in Ọgba language syntax has further shown that the English structures make use of bound morphemes to indicate genitive determiners at the bottom of the Noun while the Ọgba structure makes use of the free morphemes constantly by inserting them at the maximal nodes.

In making speech, using the Nk-hypothesis in Ọgba syntax, certain linguistic items are usually elided. For example, Nke wọ is not pronounced in its original form, instead, the final "e" at the bottom of the nke is elided and another linguistic item "u" is inserted instead and the space existing between the "nku" and "wọ" is usually closed to form "nkuọ" which can be spoken as acceptable. This identified process and relativism existing between words in Ọgba language as they are utilized in spoken structure is technically viewed as elision in phonological in the mind of the speaker before saying them assimilation.

Again, in Ọgba language syntax, linguistic items used as determiners to make references to an object, entity or person that exist at the maximal node of the English structure are demonstrative determiners. Example:

54. That man
[Nka-nua Iknewa]
Iknewa nkanua

A noticeable overt movement has taken place at the glossary, showing the differences in the head of both structures of the languages in the demo-determiners such as "that", "these", "those" and "every". Both languages have their equivalents of the demo-determiners. Such equivalents in Ọgba demo-determiners are nka-nua, nde-nua and ndnia.

Vowel Elision

Vowel elision is a phonological operation in languages which is to simplify reading process of the phrase, clause or sentence. When a vowel is elided in a string, an apostrophe (') is utilized to indicate for a second language learner while a native speaker would know that the elision is as a result of the occurrence of two juxtaposed vowels:

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55. Ka ịye sụ olu Ọgba ⟶ K'ịye sụ olu Ọgba (**kịye sụ olu Ọgba**)
[Let us speak language Ọgba] [Let's speak language Ọgba]

56. Adi mu la ojie ⟶ adim la ojie
[I am coming] [I'm coming]

The lexical similitude of both languages in vowel elision shows the universality of the process (vowel elision) of structural realization.

The findings in this research fulfilled the study objectives:

1. There are morphological and syntactic designs in Ọgba and English languages in number derivation morphemes, tense derivation, class changing, class maintaining, determiner argument, possessive argument and vowel elision that are completely different form each other.
2. Relativisms of the linguistic items from the conceptual-intentional system of the two languages showed divergences in free and bound morphemes. It also showed consistency in insertion of morphemes in Ọgba tense derivation and inconsistency in the insertion of morphemes in English tense derivation, class realization differentials, structural typological differentials, trans-headedness with lexical similitude.
3. The extent to which their differences affect grammar of the Ọgba-English bilinguals include free and bound morpheme dichotomy, class realization and structural typological differentials which by extension affects articulatory perception in the grammar of any language. In clear terms, the differentials provided variance in graphic representations which could cause speech-hobble in speech making.
4. To curb the bilingual situation, linguists and language enthusiasts should have in-depth knowledge of the structural description (SD) of both languages and allow them to exist side-by-side to avoid the colonization of one language on the other or cause one to go extinct because of preference on the other.

The current study has shown trans-designated linguistic shapes and their relativisms in the English and Ọgba language SD. The trans-designated linguistic shapes are anthropological samples of the differences of *kwa* language family tree of the Niger-Congo and that of the Indo-European bloc languages. Furthermore, the investigation has synergised linguistics, philosophy and anthropology in language communication.

5. CONCLUSION

The structural variance in the designs of Ọgba and English languages in number derivation morphemes, tense derivation, class changing, class maintaining, determiner argument, possessive argument and vowel elision have shown the differentials in conceptual-intentional system of the two languages. The linguistic items from the conceptual-intentional system of the two languages showed divergences in free and bound morphemes. It also showed consistency in insertion of morphemes in Ọgba tense derivation and inconsistency in the insertion of morphemes in English tense derivation, class realization differentials, structural typological differentials, trans-headedness with lexical similitude as an anthropological sample of two languages of different origin.

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In view of the fact that the English has been accorded the status of a formal language in education, commerce and legislation in Nigeria, and in view that the trans-designated linguistic shapes and morphological differences which usually cause articulatory perceptual effects such as speech-hobble in the spoken language of the Ọgba-English bilinguals cannot be changed. It is advisable to allow the different languages to function in their different status.

Again, to retain the linguistic dignity of the indigenous language in Nigeria, linguists and language enthusiasts should have in-depth knowledge of the structural description (SD) of the indigenous languages and the official language, in order to allow them exist side-by-side to avoid the colonization of one language on the other or cause one to go extinct because of preference on the other.

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