

AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF ENGLISH MODIFIERS AMONG YORUBA BILINGUALS

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ABSTRACT: *In a fairly obvious sense, any native speaker of a language can be said to know the grammar of his or her native language. After all, native speakers clearly know how to form and interpret words, phrases and sentences in their native language, Radford (1997). But this, clearly, is not the case with L2 learners. In today's world, bilingualism has become an entrenched part of societal values. The pre-eminent position of the English language in global affairs has made its use widespread in international trade, international scholarship and scientific research. It is used as a second tongue to millions of users of other languages, Nigeria inclusive. However the study of psychological correlates of language has revealed that a bilingual speaker is (probably) never equally competent in both languages, Lado (1957). Therefore, this paper aims at discovering and describing the problems that the L2 learner of English will have. The theoretical frameworks adopted for the study involves a synthesis of **inter language theory model** and Quirk and Greenbaum's **Performance and Judgment test**. The study recommends that teachers and curriculum planners should employ both diagnostic and prognostic methods in addressing problems encountered by the L2 learners of English and that language learning tasks should be made to accommodate a variety of language activities since languages, generally, are ever dynamic.*

KEYWORDS: Error Analysis, English Modifiers, Yoruba Bilinguals

INTRODUCTION

Bloomfield and Newmark (1963) define language as “fundamentally the means by which men communicate with each other and with themselves”. Therefore, it is apt to conclude that language is an effective tool in socialization and social intercourse. Thus, it is the manifest use of language that distinguishes man from animals. In most African societies, especially among the educated elites, bilingualism has become an entrenched part of cultural values. This study is on error analysis of the use of English modifiers among Yoruba bilinguals in two tertiary institutions in Nigeria – Federal University, Oye – Ekiti and Federal Polytechnic, Offa. In most sentence constructions, the use of modifiers is ubiquitous.

According to Stageberg (1981), the use of modifiers preponderates over our sentences because in our everyday speech and writing we seldom use sentences “so spare and bony”. He defines a modifier as a subordinate element in an endocentric structure: “a word or word group that affects the meaning of a head word in that it describes, limits, intensifies, and/or adds to the meaning of the head.

In bilingual situation, it is trite to examine the affective factors between the two languages. The study of psychological correlates of language has revealed that a bilingual speaker is probably never equally competent in both languages, Langacker (1972), Lado (1975) and Bollinger

(1972). In the account of Lado (1971), the brain seems to have difficulty in storing the data of different languages separately. If there is a degree of overlapping even between the languages in bilingual communities, this...is one further justification for the contrastive analysis of languages... (P8). Lado's (1971) position is on all fours with James' (1964) who contends that in language teaching and learning, nothing seems to have greater potential value to the language teacher and learner than comparative and contrastive description of the learner's mother tongue and the target language.

Le Page (1964) has also made a clarion call to linguists to "research into indigenous languages, describe the features, prepare contrastive studies, and forecast difficulties likely to be encountered by learners (and) guide in the preparation of teaching materials. In carrying out a contrastive, (consequently error) analysis, the broad aim is to establish points of similarities and, of course, differences in them. It is to be noted that Contrastive Linguistic Analysis (CLA) is far more interested in differences than similarities. After all, Chafe (1985) contends that there are "numerous and far – reaching ways" in which languages are alike. The waning influence of (and interest) in (CLA) has been reawakened by the need to compare two languages and cultures with a broad view to discovering and describing the problems that the speakers of one of the languages will have in learning the other. And, since languages are ever dynamic and productive, inferences drawn from linguistic researches would remain ineffective, if new vistas are not opened in the areas of applied linguistics.

Furthermore, the perennially poor performance of students taking the English language examinations in our public schools has continued to impact negatively on Nigeria's educational objectives. This is predicated on the fact that the English language occupies a central position in Nigeria, Banjo (1981), Bamgbose (1992), and Odumuh (1985).

The Use of English in Nigeria

English is, arguably, the most enduring of the legacies of colonialism. The utilitarian use of the language for inter – ethnic communication, for politics and administration and as a medium of instruction in education and mass communication cannot be over – emphasized. According to Ogunsiji (2007), Nigeria is a force to reckon with in language situation in Africa today, Africa itself is considered to be perhaps the most multilingual continent in the world with more languages spoken per capital than anywhere else. A conservative estimate puts the number of languages spoken in Africa between one thousand and one thousand, four hundred.

As a result of the widespread use of En in Nigeria, there have evolved wide varieties of English in Nigeria. The focus of this paper would be on the Standard Educated Nigeria English (SENE). The SENE is both socially acceptable and internationally intelligible, Uboh (2004). The following have been identified by Adekunle (1985) as the various forms of *Nigerianism* in the English used in Nigeria.

- i Outright Transfer: Words like 'Emir' (a traditional ruler in Northern Nigeria), "Babanriga (long gown), Ogbanje' (a child that is believed to die young), "Sultan (a paramount ruler in an Islamic society), to name a few
- (ii) Transfer of some elements and reproduction of others:
 - Big man (an influential person/rich man)
 - Long leg (to use one's connection in solving problem)
 - Head not correct (to be foolish)
 - I am coming (form for "I'll be back in a moment")

- Tight Friend (close friends)
- Good talk (agreeable ... to the listeners)
- Acada woman (a very educated lady)
- Wayo man (a deceitful person)

Yoruba Language and People in Present Day Nigeria.

Yoruba is one of the three mega – ethnic groups in Nigeria alongside Hausa and Ibo. The pre – eminence of Yoruba Language has been firmly established in earlier works like Greenberg's (1963) *Language Universals*, Bamgbose's (1963) *A Study of the Structure and Word Classes in the Grammar of Modern Yoruba*, Banjo's (1960) *A contrastive study of Aspects of the syntactic and Lexical Rules in English and Yoruba* (1960) Tinuoye's (1985) *A contrastive Analysis of Morphology of English and Yoruba*, and Elizabeth's Duncan's *Twelve Nigerian Languages*, among others. According to Adeniyi (2004):

... the 40 millions Yoruba ethnic group in West Africa is a larger in population than 35 out of the 47 countries in Asia, larger than 52 out of 56 countries in Africa, larger than 19 out of 22 countries in North America, larger than 35 out of 43 countries in Europe and larger than all the 13 countries in Oceania... the Yoruba, within the present Nigeria multi nation state is larger than 164 countries and only surpassed by 27 countries in the whole world...

The pre – eminent position in terms of the size of the population and the scholarly interest in the study of the language has largely accounted for the focus on the language as a “subject of intensive scholarly study”. For example, Bamgbose (1978), in Awoniyi (1978) makes reference to the Ife six – year Primary Project at the University of Ife, Ile – Ife, (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile – Ife) an experiment involving the use of Yoruba language as a sole medium of instructions for the full six years of Primary education. He argues further:

Yoruba is one of the few African languages that have had a long tradition of use of education both as a medium of instruction and as a subject in the school curriculum. In many ways the special status of the language needs to be recognized. It is almost unique in that right from the beginning, indigenous scholars, notably Samuel Crowther, have been associated with its study and the evolution of its orthography. It has an extensive literature, which is increasing rapidly and for which there is an enthusiastic audience (forewords).

It is therefore “fitting and proper” that an error analysis of the language with regards to the use of English modifiers be carried out in response to the challenge posed by Le Page (1964) on research into indigenous languages.

Error Analysis and Applied Linguistics

The discussion on errors in second language learning tasks will be based on the submissions of Uboh (2004), Karra (2000), Spillner (1999), Corder (1967), Richards (1971) and Taylor (1986), Our focus here would be on concept of errors, description of errors, types of errors and the used of standards Educated Nigerian English (SENE) and the implication on Nigerian English (NE). At the onset, it is necessary to draw a distinction, as does Corder (1967) between errors (in competence) and mistakes (in performance). For example Richards (1971) indentifies sources of competences errors; L₁ transfers results in interference; incomplete or over generalized application of languages rules resulting in intra lingual error; construction of faulty hypotheses in L₂ resulting in developmental errors.

Concept of Error

According to Spillner (1991), errors are information in contrastive linguistics; they are thought to be caused by unconscious transfer of mother tongue structures to the system of the target language and give information about both systems. Also, in the inter language hypothesis of second language acquisition, errors are indicative of the different intermediate learning level and are useful pedagogical feedback. In both cases, error analysis is an essential methodological tool for the diagnosis and evaluation of the language acquisition process. Errors also give information in psycho analysis (for example, the Freudian slip), in language universal research, and in other fields of linguistics, such as linguistic change.

In the account of Uboh (2004), errors in language are most often conferred solely to second language learners. This is because of the widely-held belief of the proponents of contrastive analysis (Selinker, Fries and others) that errors result from using a language in which one lacks complete language competence. However, it has been contended that native speakers also commit errors because of their lack or insufficient knowledge of the grammar of their language, (Chomsky, 1967). Corder (1974) also holds that errors are wrong language selection, which cannot be corrected by the speaker even when attention has been drawn.

Stages involved in the Analysis of Error

Corder (1974) identifies three stages involved in error analysis and they are logically dependent upon each other. These are:

- (a) Recognition
- (b) Description, and
- (c) Explanation

The process of recognizing and indentifying errors is one of comparing original utterances with their plausible reconstruction and authoritative reconstruction (that is an interpretation/reconstruction of the utterance derived from the learner himself) and identifying the difference. Recognition of errors is thus crucially dependent upon correct interpretation of the learner's intention.

Description only begins when recognition has taken place. In the same vein, explanation of error can be regarded as a linguistic activity, concerned with accounting for why and how errors come about, Uboh (2004). It is thus from the explanation of errors that theories such as transfer, facilitation, interface, overgeneralization, conflict, ambiguity, equivocation, vagueness and misdirection emerge.

Statement of the Research Problem

The multilingual situation in Nigeria, especially among educated elites has necessitated the linguistic inquiry into the nature of similarities and differences that exist between the mother tongue (MT) Nigerian language and the Target language, (TL) – English. This study, therefore, reawakens the consciousness of the need to have as many linguistic (error) analyses (Ea) as possible of English and other Nigerian languages. Specifically, the following questions are asked:

- (i) Does modification in English have the same structure as that of Yoruba?
- (ii) If yes, what are the points of similarities?
- (iii) If no, what are the points of divergences?
- (iv) In what way(s) do the similarities and differences affect the speakers of L₂?

- (v) Using test hypothesis, are there cases of over-generalization, reduplication or super imposition in the L₁ or L₂?
- (vi) What general inferences are derivable from the error analysis?

Aims and Objectives of the Study

In everyday conversation, sentences are not used so “sparse and bony”. “Robust expressions are used to describe, to limit, to intensify and to qualify our utterances. It is the structure of modification that makes a central focus in speech and written text, Oyedokun (1998). The study aims to provide a broad-based inquiry into sources of errors in the use of modification among Yoruba bilinguals. The overall objective is to present fresh insights into the growing research on Nigeria languages.

Scope and delimitation

This study is intended to examine the broad spectrum of corpus materials on modification, as related to both English and Yoruba, using the former as the base language. This is predicated on the fact that the English language has been standardized for well over three centuries. We wish to posit that the corpus materials from Yoruba do not compare favorably with that of the English language. However, and notwithstanding this claim, enough scholarly materials in Yoruba have been sourced in order to provide a basis for generalization in the course of our analysis.

Different Approaches to the Study of Modification

Several scholarly works have appeared on modification. To begin with, Fries (1951) argues that it is counter-productive to attempt a study of modification based on conventional definition such as Braun’s (1947) that “a modifier is a word or group of words that add to the meaning of another word”. His contention is that modifiers cannot be defined in terms of meaning content but on the basis of structures. As such, he opines that modifiers must be described in terms of the formal units of which they are composed and the characteristic arrangements of these units.

Christophersen and Sandved (1969), maintain that a structure of modification contains a head and a modifier. For example, they cite the example of “fresh air helps”, where “fresh” is the modifier of the headword “air”.

In addition, Cook (1969) in his *Tagmemic Theory Analysis Approach* describes the modification structure as a subordinate endocentric structure in which “there is one head slot and a series of (Optional) modifier slots”. Therefore, we have the Noun phrase with a noun as the head and adjectival, (determiners, quantifiers, possessives and descriptive adjectives which may modify the noun); the verb phrase with a verb as the head and the modifiers which may include adverbials, verbal auxiliaries, or modals, and negatives; the adjectival phrase has an adjective as the head and the modifiers to include intensifiers and the markers for comparison when such markers are free forms; the adverbial phrase has an adverb as the head and the markers for comparison when such as free forms. Cook (1969) also highlights the notion of concord marking as the agreement between head and modifiers in modifier-head phrase. In Tagmemics, according to him, concord is marked with a tie bar connecting fillers of the slots and marked with a “C” for grammatical concord. This specification is with regards to features such as gender number and case. For instance, the relative agrees as far as possible in gender, number and person with its antecedent, but its case depends on the part it plays (as subject, object, etc) in the clause. The following examples are illustrative:

1. The list of all 200 level students, which was pasted on the billboard, **has** been removed
2. These books, which are from my supervisor's library, **have** helped me in writing this paper. Yet another reference point in our study is Mathew's (1981) propositions on modification structure, its relationship with the structure of complementation, and issues of optional and obligatory constituents. This is due to the fact that many linguists hold divergent (and often contentious) views on the subject matter. In the accounts of Hockett (1958) and Robins (1964), a construction is endocentric "if at least one of its elements can be substituted for the whole" (Mathews (1981). He submits that "there are a good number of cases where the endocentric structure is obligatory, as in:
 3. (a) She is a typical case
 - (b) She is a case
 4. (a) That is a separate matter
 - (b) That is a matter
 5. (a) Her hat was a bizarrely constructed affair
 - (b) Her hat was an affair* (unacceptable construction)
 6. (a) A finely wrought argument
 - (b) A wrought augment*

The unmodified noun according to Matthew (1981) in the above example would always a different sense, or might indeed be regarded as different lexemes. In all these theoretical postulates, we identify sentence modifiers, the noun phrase post-nominal modifiers, the verb phrase (One word adverbials), the verb phrase (word group adverbials, finite clause, non-finite clauses and nouns in apposition).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sources of data

The data for this study were sourced from bilinguals in two tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

- (i) Federal University Oye-Ekiti, and
- (ii) Federal Polytechnic Offa.

The primary sources consist of news bulleting in Yoruba and guided discussions among the students. Alaroye Yoruba text provides the secondary source.

Sample Population

Students from the two aforementioned tertiary institutions provide the sample population for this study. These students were randomly tested on the use of modification in Yoruba, The choice of final year students was anchored on the presumption (by the researcher) that errors committed as such level (of students study) have become fossilized.

Data Collection Instruments

Each of the students was requested to listen to a recorded material comprising news bulleting and excerpts from the Yoruba novel - Kekere Ekun by Afolabi Olabimtan. This was translated into English by the students.

Sampling Procedure

From the several materials reworded and translated, the corpus materials were chosen at random. This was in view of the fact that any of the recorded and translated materials could, generally, serve to provide the data for our analysis. However, and notwithstanding the randomness of our choice of the data, we have ensured that thorough examinations of the several sources were carried out before the final choice of the corpus materials for our analysis.

The reliability or accuracy of the translated materials was verified by linguistic experts (who major in Yoruba language) at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Ibadan. The following, therefore, have been taken into consideration.

- a. Defining the population
- b. Listing the population
- c. Obtaining adequate sample
- d. Selecting a representative sample
- e. Eliminations sample errors and
- f. Validating the randomization process

Testing procedure

Each of the four main sources of our data was examined, using three levels of linguistics analysis, namely;

1. Syntactico - Semantic,
2. Lexico – Semantic and
3. Morpho – Phonological

All these come under the eclectic linguistic theory approach. And as indicated earlier in this work, the framework adopted from this study was derived from a synthesis of the various grammatically models reviewed. As a result we have provided three frames for analysis.

Frame I contains the syntactic – semantic analysis, and it has ten items for review:

- i. Marked structure
- ii. Unmarked structure
- iii. Restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers
- iv. Genitives and of-construction
- v. Head vs predicative construction
- vi. Attributive vs predicative construction
- vii. Structure of coordination
- viii. Embedded and recursive processes
- ix. Attachment and dangling modifiers and
- x. Misplaced structures.

Frame II contains the lexico- semantic analysis and it also has ten items for review, namely:

- i. Function words and lexical words
- ii. Adjectival,
- iii. Determiners
- iv. Quantifiers and intensifiers,
- v. Relatives and clause connectors
- vi. Adverbials
- vii. Comparatives and superlatives
- viii. Collocations and extension of meaning
- ix. Redundant modifiers and
- x. Ambiguous at the lexical level

Frame III contains the Morpho-phonological analysis of the following six items:

- i. Super segmental as disambiguating elements,
- ii. Wrong compounding
- iii. Wrong compound loan words

- iv. Misuse of syntactically formed (but morphologically bound) structure in discourse
- v. Genitives and
- vi. Numerals

Analytical procedure

The procedures adopted in this study include a synthesis of the analytical models of Banathy (1969) and Whitman (1962), the inter language theory analytical framework and Quirk and Greenbaum's (1973) Performance and Judgment Test. Specifically, these test frames were adopted.

NO	ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE CORRELATIVE L ₁ =L ₂	FREQUENCY OF NON-OCCURRENCE OF CORRELATIVE L ₁ =L ₂	FREQUENCY OF INCORRECT USAGE (MEAN OF ALL RESPONDENT)	% OF INCORRECT USAGE
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Sources: Quirk and Greenbaum's (1973) performance and Judgment Test

Formulating the null alternative hypothesis

$$H_0 : P_1 - P_2 \leq V_1 \quad H_1 : P_1 \neq P_2$$

$$H_1 : P_1 \geq P_2$$

$$H_1 : P_1 \leq P_2$$

The acceptance of the null hypothesis is (H_0) which presumes that population A (P_1) is equal to population B (P_2). This, in our analysis, means that the structures of modifications (based on items) are the same in L_1 and L_2 . The alternative hypothesis presumes that population A is not the same as population B, giving that P_1 is greater (or less) than P_2 .

If the numerical value of the test statistics falls in the rejection region we reject the null hypothesis and concluded that the alternative hypothesis is true. If, however, the test statistics does not fall in the rejection region, we do not reject (H_0). Therefore, judgment about which of the hypotheses is true is reserved. We do not conclude that the null hypothesis is true because we do not (in general) know the probability that our test procedure will lead to an incorrect acceptance (occurrence) of H.

The level of significance of our result is equal to 0.01. By this we are overtly confident that the value result of our data analysis is accurate.

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**Analysis**

4.1.1 Table 1 (a) below presents the syntactic-semantic analysis of data I – IV (Overall)

No	Items	Frequency of occurrence	Frequency of occurrence of correlative L = L2	Frequency of non-occurrence of correlative L = L2	Frequency of incorrect usage	% incorrect usage
1.	Marked structure	11	05	06	02	18.18
2.	Restrictive structure	310	155	155	36	11.6
3.	Restrictive and non restrictive modifiers	299	197	102	1165	38.7
4.	Genitives and of constructions	50	30	20	10	20
5.	Head vs wrong dependency	04	04	00	04	100
6.	Attributive and predictive constructions	208	142	66	22	10.5
7.	Structure of conditions	11	11	00	0	0
8.	Embedded and recursive processes	10	10	00	01	10
9.	Attachment and dangling modifiers	03	03	00	03	100
10.	Misplaced structure	05	05	00	05	100

4.1.2 Table 2 (b) below presents the overall results of the lexico-semantic analysis of all the four corpus materials:

No	Items	Frequency of occurrence	Frequency of occurrence of correlative $L = L_2$	Frequency of occurrence of correlative $L_1 \neq L_2$	Frequency of incorrect usage	% of incorrect usage
1.	Functions words and lexical words	404	29	375	17	4.2
2.	Adjectival	372	37	335	19	5.1
3.	Determiners	66	09	57	06	9.09
4.	Quantifiers and intensifiers	18	12	06	00	0
5.	Relatives and clause connectors.	51	42	09	04	7.8
6	Adverbials	21	18	03	05	23.8
7.	Comparatives and superlative	02	00	02	00	00
8.	Collocations and extensions of meaning	23	10	13	12	52.1
9.	Redundant modifiers	10	09	01	10	100
10.	Ambiguities at the lexical level	01	01	00	01	100

4.1.3 Table 3 (c) below presents the morphological analysis of all the results.

No	Items	Frequency of occurrence	Frequency of occurrence of correlative $L = L_2$	Frequency of non-occurrence of correlative $L_1 \neq L_2$	Frequency of incorrect usage	% of incorrect usage
	Supra segmental as disambiguating element	12	12	00	04	33.3
	Compounding	07	04	03	03	42.8
	Compound loan words	04	00	04	02	50
	syntactically formed but morphologically bound structures	19	00	19	10	52.6
	Genitives	34	06	28	10	29.4
	Numerals	24	01	23	08	33.3

Discussions

Syntactico – semantic Analysis

ITEMS 1 -2: It is obvious that the respondents' L1 has had a predominant influence on their L2 in the examples cited below;

“Youth Muslims – Muslim youths

“Leaders workers – Labour leaders.

ITEM 3: Evident cases of use of non-restrictive structure that do not clearly make reference to the items they modify.

These examples are illustrative:

(a) – “The list of all students which shows their performance”. This restrictive modifier tilts towards “situations” and not “list”.

b. Arrangements ...for Stella which has commenced yesterday”

Here, the construction “which has commenced yesterday” appears to modify “Stella” and not “funeral services”.

ITEM 4: Genitive and of construction

The data from our respondents reveal that the genitive and of- constructions are used as varieties of the genitives. In cases where only one (of the two) is grammatically acceptable many of the respondents made wrong choice. Examples:

- Governor's wife in Ogun – Ogun state first lady
- Importance of the news – News highlights
- Governor's office – Office of the Governor

ITEM 5: Head vs wrong dependency

To account for wrong dependency in our data, we isolated the structure “Modifiers + head” for formal analysis. A few examples would suffice:

- The protest by the workers that are announcing
- Otunba Alao Akala the Deputy Governor of Oyo state who represented the governor.

In the first example, the dependent clause, “that are announcing” (itself an anomalous construction) is wrongly attached to “worker” instead of “protest”. And, in the second example, “who represented the governor” is wrongly attached to “Oyo state”.

ITEM 6: The main syntactic functions of adjectives are that they can be used attributively or predicatively. In our sourced data, the following usages (from the respondents) have generated ill-formed (anomalous) constructions:

- Youth Muslims – Muslim (Islamic) Youth
- Policemen Inspector – Inspector-General of police

ITEM 7: The relationship between the constituent structures of co-ordination becomes a source of ambiguity, as in:

- Six Egba Chiefs and representatives of the Alake

The unnecessary lexical items coupled by “and” make the construction “verbose”.

ITEM 8: The phrasal or sentential constituent completely contained within another phrase or sentential constituent results in ambiguity in the following:

- This country that is going on ...

The structure “that is going on” is an anomalous attachment with “country”, instead of “funeral programme”.

ITEM 9 & 10: The following examples illustrate dangling or misplaced structure (from or data).

- That the increase in the price of petroleum arises... from Surulere stadium.
In the example, “from Surulere stadium” is a misplaced structure. Indeed it is the “peace rally”, not the stadium. The lexical item, “arises” in itself is a wrong choice.

Lexical semantic analysis

ITEM 1: A wrong choice of either lexical or function word has serious effects on meaning realizations in the following (from our respondents)

- Those amenities
 - To welcome the late first lady
- In the first sentence, ‘those’ functions as a determiner and a ‘distant’ reference. The anomaly here is hinged on the fact that no reference was earlier made to such amenities that would have formed the antecedent for the distant reference’. In the second example, the construction presupposes that the people went to meet “the late first lady”, and not her remains.

ITEM 2: Adjectival occupy central roles in syntactic rule in modification, from our data, the following are wrong choices of adjectival:

- Good cooperation, instead of ‘mutual’ or even tight.
- Korean representative, instead of ambassador

ITEMS 3 & 4:

- The good cooperation
 - Leader of a society
- The determiners in the two examples have no antecedent

ITEM 5:

Errors in relative/clauses connectors are observed in the following:

- Which lost their lives in Iraq
- Who leaves and the owner cries

ITEM 6:

Form our corpus materials, the structure “as long as ...” does not contribute any semantic value to 2(a). The same thing applies to the adjunct (of time) “now” in 2 (a).

ITEM 7: The following present vague, incorrect or weak constructions:

- The trading to be more stronger...
- More tightly

ITEM 8: The following are replete with wrong collocations:

- The house of representatives in Ogun state
 - Government of independent of Korea
- Where (i) Ogun state House of assembly, and
(iii) Korean Republic will be an acceptable form.

ITEM 9: The following represent cases of redundant modifiers:

- 7:30 am in the morning (either “a.m. or” in the morning”)
- The person that was there when it all happened (eye witness).

ITEM 10: The following constitute ambiguities at the lexical level.

- Advantages of government (*dividends* of democracy (itself a Nigerian English usage)
- Rearrangement of the democracy programme (Political reforms)

Morpho- Phonological analysis

ITEM 1. The supra segmental – the terminal rising, sustained or falling could be used to resolve the ambiguities in the following examples (from our data):

- Young Muslim associations (adj + N + N)
- Trial census programme (adj + N +N)

ITEM 2: The standard (Current usage) is to insert a hyphen between “co” and “operation” the same applies to “ thirty + three”. In the same vein, the hyphens in “vice-governor” and “no-body” are unnecessary.

ITEM 3: No evidence of misuse/occurrence of wrong compound loan words.

ITEM 4: The following present some abnormality

- Is it what you wish that is important?
- The census programme do- it- and- let's- see. In the first example, the respondents adopted a literal translation of the structure of Yoruba into English. Based on the corpus materials, the lexical item “Man’s wish, “Selfish/personal interests” would have been more appropriate. “Trial census” is the most appropriate terminology in the context in the second example.

ITEM 5:

Examples of ill-formed genitives in the corpus materials are

- Oyo’s (of Oyo state)
- One’s self (oneself)

ITEM 6: It is the extant rule of grammar that in writing, as far as possible, “cardinals and ordinals are better written in words”. In our corpus data, the following do not confirm to the standard usage.

- 332 Muslim
- 98th birthday anniversary

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted an error analysis of modification process in English and Yoruba, using the former as a base language. The basic aim of this task has been to determine the way (s) by which the similarities and / or differences in two languages affect the competence and the performance of the speaker of L₂. Also, using tests hypothesis and inter lingual error analysis approach, we sought to infer cases of over-generalization, reduplications or super-imposition in the L₂ or L₁. For the purpose of the research, a board spectrum of materials on modification as related to both English and Yoruba was examined.

For analytical expediency, our analysis was grouped into three parts, namely: Lexico-semantic, syntactic-semantic, and morpho-phonological. These were not treated haphazardly: we had some basic assumptions. One, that our target population is bilingual. Two, that its L₁ has serious influences and effect on its L₂. Three, that there are evidences that the structures of modifications in English and Yoruba have bases for contrastive and error analyses.

We have been able to demonstrate the fact that the structure of modification is prominent in general language use. One inference from our analysis is the varying degree of mastery of modification by our respondents, judged by the frequencies of error from the data. It is also worthy of note that virtually all the respondents did not take cognizance of the aspect of pragmatics as an extension of meaning and that the structure of an L₁ should not be superimposed on L₂, where divergence (s) occur.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We strongly recommend both diagnostic and prognostic approaches to establishing problem areas among language learners and users.

Also there is the dire need for the teacher to make use of inferences from error analysis in tackling language learning/ teaching problems.

Finally, the language teacher and curriculum planner should make the English language syllabus/course specification much more dynamic and flexible. It is absurd, given the dynamic nature of language, generally, to adopt a dogmatic approach in the teaching of English as presently is the case in our schools.

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