



A Contrastive Analysis of Word Order in English and Ogba Languages

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Received: 25.12.2025 | Accepted: 16.01.2026 | Published: 18.01.2026

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18287889](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18287889)

Abstract

Review Article

This paper aims to examine of word order of English and the Ogba languages, So as to explore the structural differences and similarities between these two language systems. The study falls under a descriptive linguistic research design, utilizing a contrastive analysis approach. The method employed in sourcing materials for this study involved a comprehensive review of linguistic literature, grammatical descriptions, and language resources on both English and the Ogba languages. Additionally, data collection methods included text analysis, corpus studies, and consultation with native speakers. The theoretical framework guiding this research is Contrastive analysis hypothesis which provides a linguistic perspective on the underlying principles governing word order variations in language structures. Through this theoretical lens, the study aims to elucidate the syntactic rules and constraints influencing word order preferences in English and the Ogba languages. The findings reveal that Ogba and English share similar word order pattern, specifically subject-verb-object (SVO), as well as pro-drop parameters and morphological forms in verbs. However, the language exhibit parametric variations in several key areas. Notably, English is compliment-initial and head-final , whereas Ogba is head-initial and compliment-final. Also Ogba lacks prominent articles in noun phrases and exhibits different patterns with numeral and demonstratives. Based on the findings, it is recommended that further research delve into specific linguistic phenomena within the Ogba languages to provide a more nuanced understanding of word order variations.

Keywords: word order, parametric variations, noun phrases, head, numerals, demonstratives.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of communication that uses symbols, words, and grammar rules to convey meaning between individuals or groups. It can be spoken, written, or signed, and is a primary means of expression for humans. Language allows for the sharing of thoughts, ideas, emotions, and information. There are thousands of languages

spoken around the world, each with its unique characteristics and complexities.

Language is in addition symbolic, social and arbitrary. It is symbolic in that ideas about the world are represented in meaningful networks used for communication. Delving more into the systematic nature of language, which refers to the structured way in which humans convey thoughts, ideas,



emotions, and information to one another, it encompasses key aspects like grammar and syntax. Michael adds that “syntax is not the same thing as the grammar of a language; rather, it is the part of the grammar of a language, which the native speakers internalize” (p.1).

Chomsky (2000) defines syntax as “the study of principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages” (p.11). Syntax refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences. This structure allows for the expression of complex ideas. In this regard, it is safe to say that syntax and grammar are very crucial aspects of any language.

One notable characteristic of language is that language is rule-governed. Language has rules that govern how symbols can be combined to create meaningful expressions. Since language is rule-governed, any competent speaker must follow the rules to be understood. Likewise, one cannot underemphasize the function of the grammar of a language, which fully involves the syntactic structure of that language. According to Anagbogu, et al, “Language is used as a means of communication. This is its most important and most obvious use. By communicating, we mean all kinds of verbal interaction among human beings, such as exchange of ideas, feelings, information, etc.” (pp.15).

Different languages have different word orders. These differences in word order pose problems to the second language and result in the construction of ungrammatical sentences in the target language. Understanding the word order of a specific language is crucial for proper communication and comprehension. This study, therefore, is a contrastive study of the word order of English and Ogba languages, to identify differences or similarities of the word order in both languages and the possible effect the differences or similarities may have on the learning of English Language sentence structure by Ogba Speakers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Word

Alpatov (2016) stated that the concept of the word has evolved in European linguistic tradition,

originally relying on intuition and later becoming the subject of various definitions since the late 19th century. These definitions differ based on phonetic, morphological, syntactical, and graphical aspects, influenced by language differences (such as Russian, Romance, German, and Japanese). While some definitions consider the word as a complex unit incorporating multiple features, others focus on singular characteristics. However, none fully capture the word's essential role in language for users. The author argues that the word should not be seen merely as a structural component but as a significant unit in human cognition that plays a vital role in speech production, supported by evidence from aphasia and child language development.

Murthy (2007) opined that “words are used for different purposes; they perform a variety of functions”. Words can be combined to form phrases, clauses, and sentences, and they can represent objects, actions, ideas, and more. In linguistics, words are categorized into different classes based on their function and grammatical properties. These classes are known as word classes or parts of speech. Here’s an extensive overview of the main word classes:

2.2 Universal Grammar

Lamidi (2013) defined Universal grammar as “a study of the conditions that must be satisfied by the grammar of all languages”. Chomsky (1981) describes universal grammar “as some system of principle, common to the species and available to each individual prior to experience”. Ndimele (1999) opined that Universal grammar is a common inheritance. It is a theory of knowledge, and not a theory of behaviour. Chomsky’s Universal Grammar theory proposes that humans are born with an innate, universal set of grammatical rules that predispose them to learn and use language. This theory suggests that languages differ superficially, they share fundamental similarities at a deeper level, rooted in this innate capacity. Universal Grammar is not a specific set of grammatical rules, but rather a framework or a set of principles that guide language acquisition.

Ndimele (1999) posited that “it must be stressed that the innate ability to acquire language is common to

all the children all over the world, no matter the cultural or linguistic background of their parents. It is wrong to assume, for instance, that Igbo children are born with a particular specific internal grammar of Igbo, and that this accounts for why they produce certain utterances in a particular way". He further explained that "the truth is that any child with normal mental faculties (no matter his linguistic or cultural background) can acquire any human language in the same manner with the same degree of competence as its true native speakers. The reason why this is possible is that there are certain principles that apply in the same manner in all languages. These common principles of all languages constitute what Chomsky refers to as Universal Grammar".

Chomsky's "Principles and Parameters" framework in linguistics posits that all languages share fundamental, universal grammatical principles (the "principles") and that differences between languages arise from specific parameters that can be set differently in each language. This framework, also known as "Government and Binding Theory," explains how children can learn any language despite the apparent differences between them.

At the heart of Chomsky's principles and parameters model lies the distinction between "principles" and "parameters." Principles are the universal rules that apply to all human languages. These rules govern the fundamental aspects of syntax, semantics, and phonology, suggesting that there is a shared cognitive architecture that underlies all linguistic systems. For instance, principles may dictate how sentences are structured or how meaning is derived from words and phrases.

In contrast, parameters are the specific settings that can vary from one language to another. These settings allow for the diversity observed in the world's languages while still adhering to the universal principles. For example, one parameter might determine whether a language has a subject-verb-object (SVO) order, like English, or a subject-object-verb (SOV) order, like Japanese. By adjusting these parameters, languages can exhibit a wide range of syntactic structures while remaining within the bounds of universal principles.

Chomsky's principles and parameters framework has profound implications for linguistic theory and the study of language acquisition. It suggests that children are born with an innate understanding of the principles of language, which allows them to acquire their native language rapidly and efficiently. This idea challenges behaviorist theories that posit language learning as a result of imitation and reinforcement. Instead, Chomsky argues that children possess a "Universal Grammar," an inherent set of grammatical rules that guide their understanding of language.

The principles and parameters model also provides a systematic approach to analyzing language variation. By identifying the universally applicable principles and the parameters that account for differences, linguists can better understand the relationships between languages. This approach has led to the development of typological studies that categorize languages based on their parameter settings, enriching our understanding of linguistic diversity.

Chomsky's Principles and Parameters model has significant implications for cognitive science and our understanding of the human mind. The idea that language is an innate faculty suggests that the capacity for language is hardwired into the human brain. This perspective aligns with the notion that language acquisition is a natural process, akin to the development of other cognitive skills.

Research in psycholinguistics has supported the idea that children are not merely passive recipients of linguistic input but active participants in the language acquisition process. They use their innate knowledge of principles and the surrounding linguistic environment to set the parameters of their language. This dynamic interaction between innate structures and environmental input highlights the complexity of language learning and the cognitive mechanisms involved.

Linguistic parameters are specific features that can vary across languages, influencing how syntax is realized. These parameters help explain the differences in sentence structure and word order across different languages, highlighting how languages can vary in the way they organize the Wh-parameter, Word Head Parameter, and Pro-drop

Parameters are linguistic principles that help describe how different languages structure their sentences.

2.3. The Head Parameter

The Head Parameter deals with the order of words in a sentence. Some languages, like English, follow a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order, while others, like Japanese, use a subject-object-verb (SOV) order. This parameter determines the sequence in which these elements appear. In linguistic literature, the notion of the “head” is crucial. The head of a phrase defines its core meaning, serving as a key element in determining the interpretation of various syntactic constructions. The Word Head Parameter defines the word order in sentences and specifies the position of the head about its complements or specifiers.

According to Michael (2016) “the four heads order identified in human language are;

Subject, verb, Object (SVO), e.g., English

Subject, Object Verb (SOV), e.g., Turkish

Verb, Subject, Object (VSO), e.g., Irish

Verb, Object, Subject (VOS), e.g., Malagasy “

The head parameter is all about where the main word of a phrase sits in relation to its supporting words. In simpler terms, the “head” is the key word in a phrase that defines what the entire phrase is about. For example, in a noun phrase (like “the big dog”), the noun (“dog”) is the head, while words like “the” and “big” are just adding extra info. The head parameter tells us whether the head comes before or after its complements, leading us to two main styles of language structures: head-initial and head-final.

In head-initial languages, the main word comes first. English is a classic example of this. So, in the phrase “the big dog,” the head (“dog”) is placed ahead of the modifiers (“the” and “big”). You see the same thing with verbs: in “John eats an apple,” the verb “eats” comes before the object (“an apple”).

On the flip side, head-final languages put the main word after its complements. Take Japanese, for example. When you say “neko ga iru” (which means “cat exists”), the verb “iru” comes after the subject. In noun phrases like “neko no oishii” (meaning “cat’s

delicious”), the noun “neko” comes before its modifiers.

This whole head parameter idea isn’t just a fancy term; it really matters in the world of linguistics and understanding language in general. The difference between head-initial and head-final languages suggests that there are some basic rules that all human languages follow, which leads to discussions around Universal Grammar (UG). This theory, put forth by Noam Chomsky, claims that all human languages share a deep structure, even if they look different on the surface.

The head parameter is just one of many settings that can vary from language to language, and it plays a big role in how we learn languages. When kids are picking up their native tongue, they tweak their understanding of language based on what they hear, and this parameter helps shape that process.

Additionally, the head parameter helps us look at how languages change and develop over time. Languages aren’t fixed; they grow and shift. Historical linguistics shows that some languages can change from head-initial to head-final structures (or the other way around). Things like language contact and social factors can influence these changes.

Plus, the head parameter can help us explore how different languages in a family relate to each other. In the Indo-European family, for instance, we can see variations in how heads are positioned, reflecting historical shifts and migrations. By examining these patterns, linguists can piece together aspects of ancient languages and learn more about what makes different branches of the family unique.

2.4 Word Order

The term “word order” refers to the sequence or order in which words are to be placed in a sentence. According to the Meriam-webster dictionary, word order is defined as “the order or arrangement of words in phrase, clause, or sentence. Song (2012) stated that Word order is one of the major properties on which languages are compared and its study is fundamental to linguistic. He further opined that “word order is the way words are arranged in a particular linear order in sentences”.

Hawkins (2014) stated that language appear to vary considerably with regard to word order. Take the position of the verb relative to subject and object. Three common orders are found: SOV, SVO, and VOS, as in (1)-(3) respectively. The orders VOS, and OVS, as in (4) and (5) are also found, though in relatively few languages.

1. SOV (e.g., Japanese)
2. SVO (e.g., English)
3. VSO (e.g., Welsh)
4. VOS (e.g., Malagasy)
5. OVS (e.g., Hixkaryana)

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Contrastive analysis (CA) is a theory introduced by Robert Lado in his “*Linguistics Across Cultures*” (1957) which established the foundations of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), asserting that elements similar to the learner’s native language (L1) will be easier, while different elements will be more challenging. Lado provided systematic procedures for comparing languages, which inspired language course design in the 1960s, particularly through the audio-lingual method. Gast (2013) opined contrastive analysis investigates the differences between pairs (or small sets) of languages against the background of similarities and to provide input to applied disciplines such as foreign language teaching and translation studies. With its largely descriptive focus, contrastive linguistics provides an interface between theory and application. It makes use of theoretical findings and models of language description but is driven by the objective of applicability. Contrastive studies mostly deal with the comparison of languages that are ‘socio-culturally linked’, ie, languages whose speech communities overlap in some way, typically through (natural or instructed) bilingualism.

Contrastive analysis, as a method of linguistic analysis, have a long tradition dating back at least to the end of the nineteenth century, with three important landmarks: the 1920s and the 1930s in American structuralism, the Chomskyan revolution in the 1960s with the emergence of generative grammar, and the ‘post-revolutionary emphasis on theoretical contrastive projects which subsequently

began to appear all over Europe. Generally, contrastive enterprises in linguistics can be divided into two areas: theoretical and applied (Fisiak et al. 1978), or autonomous and generalised (Di Pietro 1971).

CAH’s strongest claim was that all L2 learning errors stemmed from L1 interference. However, evidence from the 1970s showed that many predicted errors were not observed, and some learners made uniform errors regardless of their L1. As a result, a moderate version of CAH emerged, suggesting that greater differences between L1 and L2 might facilitate learning by minimizing confusion. Technological advancements have allowed for a corpus-based approach in contrastive analysis, providing extensive comparisons of language differences in areas like lexis and syntax.

Comparative analysis theory is particularly well-suited for a study on the word order in English and the Ogba languages because it allows for a systematic examination of the grammatical structures of two or more languages. In the case of English and Ogba, this theory facilitates a detailed comparison of their syntactic structures, particularly how different word orders (e.g., Subject-Verb-Object in English vs. variations in Ogba) affect meaning and sentence formation. In summary, comparative analysis theory provides a robust framework for examining the complexities of word order in English and Ogba languages, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their grammatical structures and the implications of these differences.

2.6 Empirical Review

Agwu (2024) conducts a contrastive analysis of demonstratives in English and Ikwerre, examining their complex syntactic and morphological dynamics. He employs contrastive analysis and descriptive grammar theories, revealing similarities and differences that may challenge Ikwerre learners of English. The study finds that Ikwerre demonstratives, like English, serve as determiners, adjectives, and possessive markers. However, Ikwerre’s post-head position contrasts with English’s head-first structure. Whereas, this study touched on the headedness of the Ikwerre language, this current

study is on the head-structure of the Ogbá language as contrasted with the English language.

Nwokoji (2024) examined morphological processes in English and Ogbá languages, aiming to identify their differences and similarities. This comparative study addresses the lack of research on Ogbá's word formation processes, particularly in educational contexts. The goals were to discover the distinctive features and distribution of Ogbá morphemes and word-formation processes, to compare and contrast areas of similarity and dissimilarity in the two languages, and to identify the type of affixes in both languages. The data was gathered using the researcher's intuitive knowledge, the Ogbá Dictionary, and the Ibadan 400-word list. The Ogbá language is spoken as a first and second language by the inhabitants.. Christian (2024) investigated selected linguistic items within the Determiner Phrase (DP) and how they operate in the syntax of Ogbá and English languages. The objectives of the paper are to investigate the morphological and syntactic designs of selected Ogbá and English linguistic items in the DP-structures to find out how their differences create communicative contentions in the bilingual's language use and to explain how the identified differentials affect the grammar of the Ogbá-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.

Agwu, & Ndamzi (2024) investigated demonstratives as an essential linguistic element embodying deixis and indicating precise spatial and contextual relationships, serve as fundamental building blocks in communicative processes. The paper, therefore, examines the complex syntactic and morphological dynamics of demonstratives in English and Ikwerre languages and the differences and similarities in the use of demonstratives in both languages which may pose problems to the Ikwerre learner of English as a second language. The study

uses the contrastive analysis theory and the descriptive grammar theory to guide its analysis of data. This eclectic approach provides a meticulous and exhaustive analysis, examining the distinctive features, elusive variations, and multifaceted usage of demonstratives within the framework of English and Ikwerre grammar. The paper meticulously explores both proximal and distal forms of demonstratives, dissecting their roles as determiners, adjectives, and possessive markers in the linguistic structures of both languages. The findings of this study reveal that similar to English, Ikwerre demonstratives function as determiners, adjectives, and indicators of possession. Notably, the post-head position of Ikwerre determiners, distinct from English, reflects the language's headfirst structure, shaping its grammatical features. In the adjectival function, both Ikwerre and English utilize demonstratives in predicative contexts, imparting specific attributes or conditions to nouns. Structural disparities, such as the head-first language structure and the inclusion of a pronominal element in Ikwerre demonstratives, further distinguish their syntactic characteristics.

Nwokoji (2025) examined and compared the morphological processes of English and Ogbá languages. Its goal is to investigate and discover the differences and similarities in the morphological processes of the two languages under consideration. Comparative work on morphological processes has received little attention among Ogbá researchers with regard to word formation processes in classroom circumstances, thus, the researcher work on it. The goals were to discover the distinctive features and distribution of Ogbá morphemes and word-formation processes, to compare and contrast areas of similarity and dissimilarity in the two languages, and to identify the type of affixes in both languages. The data was gathered using the researcher's intuitive knowledge, Ogbá Dictionary and the Ibadan 400-word list. The Ogbá language is spoken as a first and second language by the inhabitants. Gilbert (2023) investigated selected linguistic items within the Determiner Phrase (DP) and how they operate in the syntax of Ogbá and English languages. The objectives of the paper are to investigate the morphological and syntactic designs of

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Bakare, & Agwu (2024) explored the past tense inflectional morphemes of English and Yoruba to identify the morphological and syntactic structural differences therein. It hinges on the Contrastive Analysis (CA) theory and the qualitative descriptive design while engaging the content analysis methodology, where data are analyzed through the language samples of the two languages concerned. From this study, it was discovered that while English indicates the past tense of regular verbs with the marker '-ed', Yoruba on the other hand, employs the main verbs in the language that denotes either the present or past such as "gbe"(carries/carried), "tà"(sell/sold), "jẹ"(eats/ate), "mu"(drink/drunk) and the like, depending on the context of usage. This paper also revealed that while the regular past tense inflectional morpheme of English is a suffix and bound, the main verbs in Yoruba are equally suffixes but free morphemes which are lexicalized to denote past actions. In addition, English in its grammatical rules, contains some exceptions or irregularities that do not conform to the regular pattern (irregular verbs, using suppletive, replative and zero morphemes), and which may further pose some difficulties to the second language learner. The study therefore recommends that second language learners whose first language is Yoruba should safeguard appropriate erudition and attainment of the right construction and treatment of the past tense inflectional markers of English as they are, to develop their expertise in the language.

Nwokoji (2025) compared the syllable structure of English and Ogbá languages. Language being a means of communication is made up of words and every word is composed of a phoneme or strings of phonemes which combine to form a syllable. A syllable is part of a word that contains a vowel sound that is pronounced as a unit. In comparing the syllable structure of the two languages the maximal onset principle was used. Thus, the English syllable structure is C-03 V C-04. This means that a word can have up to three consonants or no consonants before the vowel and four consonants or no consonants after the vowel. While the syllable structure of the Ogbá language is simple CV, V. this also means that words in Ogbá language comprises a consonant, followed by a vowel and in some cases another Vowel. It was also observed that the syllable structure of English language allows consonants clusters. Whereas, the Ogbá language syllable structure does not have consonant clusters. Also, there are some phonemes that sound alike in both languages. While Nwokoji dwelt on the phonological aspect of the Ogbá language, this study looks at the syntactic aspect of the language as it involves communication.

Osuagwu (2022) examined the prepositional phrases of Ogbá. A preposition in Ogbá is a member or set of items that always comes before noun phrases to constitute a single constituent of structure. Prepositions in Ogbá are used to connect a following noun, pronoun, adjectival or adverbial sense with some other word in the sentence. The qualitative research design was adopted in analyzing the data collected using the descriptive content analysis with a population of 14 native speakers. The findings of this paper reveal that Ogbá preposition is la (l'). This paper further established that syntactically, Ogbá prepositional phrases can serve as nominals as they can occur as the subjects, objects, indirect objects, and adverbials in sentences. Finally, this paper established that semantically, Ogbá prepositional phrases can be used to express notions such as suitability, position, direction, passage, temporal, commitment/accompaniment, purpose, measurement, relationship etc. while Osuagwu's work was on prepositional phrase of Ogbá.

Agwu & Ndamzi (2024) investigated Demonstrative as, an essential linguistic element embodying deixis

and indicating precise spatial and contextual relationships, serve as fundamental building blocks in communicative processes. This paper, therefore, examines the complex syntactic and morphological dynamics of demonstratives in English and Ikwerre languages and the differences and similarities in the use of demonstratives in both languages which may pose problems to the Ikwerre learner of English as a second language. This study uses the contrastive analysis theory and the descriptive grammar theory to guide its analysis of data. This eclectic approach provides a meticulous and exhaustive analysis, examining the distinctive features, elusive variations, and multifaceted usage of demonstratives within the

framework of English and Ikwerre grammar. This paper meticulously explores both proximal and distal forms of demonstratives, dissecting their roles as determiners, adjectives, and possessive markers in the linguistic structures of both languages. The findings of this study reveal that similar to English, Ikwerre demonstratives function as determiners, adjectives, and indicators of possession. Notably, the post-head position of Ikwerre determiners, distinct from English, reflects the language's headfirst structure, shaping its grammatical features. In the adjectival function, both Ikwerre and English utilize demonstratives in predicative contexts, imparting specific attributes or conditions to nouns.

3. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table I: The word order of English and Ogba Languages

| Word order SVO: (subject+verb +object) | English Sentence | Ogba Sentence |
|---|--|--|
| | i. <u>The cat chased the mouse.</u> S. V. O | i. <u>Elebeshi tchu ekireki</u> S V O |
| | ii. <u>John built a house</u> S V O | ii. <u>John gu ulor</u> S V O |
| | iii. <u>He bought a dog</u> S V O | iii. <u>O zunkita</u> S V O |
| | iv. <u>she ate rice</u> S V O | Iv. <u>O ri arusu</u> S V O |
| | v. <u>He read the book</u> S V O | V. <u>O gu ekukwo</u> S V O |
| | vi. <u>the team won the game</u> S V O | Vi. <u>O tu yen ameriegwu yen</u> S V O |
| | vii. <u>the manager led the meeting</u> S V O | Vii. <u>Onyeishi a bu inhi kahne okpari</u> S V O |

From the data in the table above, it is evident that the arrangement of words can significantly impact the interpretation of a sentence, making it essential to understand and use word order effectively. Different

languages follow distinct word order patterns. The English language follows a subject-verb-object word order. This means that in a sentence, the subject comes first, followed by the verb and then the object.

For example, in the sentence “the dog chased the cat”, “the dog” is the subject, “chased” the verb, and “the cat” is the object. This word order is relatively fixed in English. However, English word order can be flexible in certain situations, for instance, in questions, we can see the verb often comes before the subject, as in “does the child like rice?”. Additionally, other sentence constituents can be

placed to modify the meaning or emphasis. Despite these variations, the SVO word order remains the foundation of English sentence structure.

Just as the English language, the sentence in Ogba is composed of the SVO word order. Below are the examples of the word order of both languages;

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. John killed a goat | <u>John gbu ewu</u> S V O |
| 2. He rears goats | <u>O zhun gaewu</u> S V O |
| 3. She broke the chair | <u>O gbajima ngida</u> S V O |
| 4. They spoke the truth S V O | <u>wor ku eskoku</u> |

Table II: The Word order Variations in English and Ogba Language

| Parametric variations | English Sentence | Ogba sentence |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Head parameter | English Noun Phrases | Ogba Noun Phrases |
| | i) The beautiful child | i) Nwa oma (child beautiful) |
| | ii) The old car | ii) Ugbor-ali okiyan Car old |
| | iii) A good book | iii) Ezukwu ekwor (good book) |
| | iv) The happy children. | iv) ntachi obusor (children happy) |
| | v) My little brothers | v) Nwannem wor nde ntachi (brothers my little) |
| | Numerals in Noun Phrases | Numerals in Ogba |
| | i. One house | i. Ohun ulor |
| | ii. two books | ii. Ekwor ebor |
| | iii. One door | iii. Ohun aku |
| | Iv. two doors | iv. Aku ebor |

| | Demonstratives in Noun Phrases | Demonstratives in Ogba |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| | i. This house | i. Ulor ani di gba |
| | ii. This river | ii. Ozimini adi-gba |
| | iii. That child | iii. Nwatakiri agba |
| | English Verb Phrases | Ogba Verb Phrases |
| | i. she has swept the house. | i. O zamaye ulor |
| | ii. they have eaten the food | ii. Wo ri meh nrinya |
| | iii. the children are playing outside. | iii. Umu-ntachi di guri egwu eteizhi |
| | iv. He has weeded the grass. | iv. O tumaye ehiya |

As presented in table above, it is a fundamental concept that explains how words are organized to form phrases and sentences in languages. The head parameter refers to the position of the head word in a phrase, which determines the phrase’s overall structure and meaning. The head parameter specifies whether the head word comes before or after its complement. Languages can be classified into based

on the head parameter. Head-initial and head-final. The principle of headedness states that every phrase or constituents in a sentence has a head, which is the central element that determines the phrase’s grammatical properties, such as part of speech. The English language is head final and complement initial whereas the Ogba language is mainly head initial and complement final.

Table III: The Shared Parameters for Word order Formation in English and Ogba

| S/N | Shared Parameters | English Sentences | Ogba Sentence |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Null subject or po-drop parameter | i. <u>She</u> is a prophet. pro | i. <u>Obu</u> nye omuma pro |
| | | ii. <u>They</u> are crying. pro | ii. <u>Wor</u> di kwekwan pro |
| | | iii. <u>He</u> is my good friend pro | iii. <u>Obu</u> ezukwumu nzum pro |
| 2. | Sameness in Basic word order | D. SVO: subject + verb + object | |
| | | i. He builds houses. | i. O rhun je ulor |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Morphological Forms in Verbs | ii. He built a house. | iii. O rhun ulor |
| | iii. He is building a house | i. O di-rhunulor |
| | iv. She had built a house | ii. O rhun-ma ulor |
| Wh-Parameter | i. Who are you? | i. Onye ki bu? |
| | ii. Where are you going to? | ii. Ekelo ki do jeh? |
| | iii. What is your name? | iii. Kini a bu ehuan gi? |
| | iv. Who is that? | iv. Onye a di gbe? |

In spite of the differences observed, in what follows are the shared parameters that are similar in English and Ogba languages as shown in table above.

The Null Subject or Pro-drop Parameters

The null subject or pro-drop parameter has it that some languages allow for the pronominal subject to be unexpressed like we have it in Japanese as earlier stated. Whereas, this is permitted in some languages English and Ogba require it to be explicitly expressed as a nominal bearing the subject function. For example,

1. He is at home
Ogba: o diya ulor
(he is at home)
2. She is my friend
Ogba: o bu nzumu
(she is friend my)

Sameness in Basic Word Order

The Ogba and English language share the same basic word order. Hawkins (2004) listed three common word order of which English was enlisted under one. According to him we have; SVO, SOV, and VOS as the common orders, whereas VSO and OVS as used by relatively few languages.

- a. SVO: subject+ verb +object
 1. The cat chased the mouse

- Elebeshi tchu ekireki
S V O
2. He bought a dog
O zu nkita
S V O
 3. She ate rice
O ri arusu
S V O

Morphological forms in Verbs

In English we have morphological forms that are changed to suit tenses. This is the case in Ogba language, examples are;

- i. O rhun je ulor
He builds house
- ii. O rhun ulor
He built house
- iii. O di rhun ulor
He is building house

In the examples above, it is seen that the verb ‘build’ went through different morphological changes to indicate the different tenses. The Ogba language joins the verb ‘is’ and the present continuous tense ‘building’ to get the present continuous form of the verb “build” which is translated as ‘di-rhun’ in the example three, also the morpheme ‘ma’ in example four is compounded with the verb ‘rhun’ to produce the past perfect form of the verb ‘build’.

Table IV: Areas of Difficulties resulting from Differences in Word Order

| Areas | English | Ogba |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Demonstratives | 1. This house | Ulor ani di gba |
| | 2. That chair | Ngida amgba |
| | 3. These children | Ntachi ndor |
| | 4. Those books | Ekwukwor ndor |
| Adjectives | Head initial | Head final |
| | Beautiful house | Ulor ma-nma |
| | Fat woman | Nwawiya gbibu |
| | Long story | akikor eh-nka |

From the tale above it can be seen that learning a new language is a pretty conscious and complex process. According to Contrastive Analysis, picking up a new language becomes way easier if the way your first language (L1) is set up is similar to the new one. But if they're really different, it can make things a lot trickier for the learner. Research shows that English and Ogba actually have some similarities in their sentence structures. For instance, both languages use an SVO (subject-verb-object) word ordering pattern.

There are notable variations in word placement between the Ogba language and English, particularly concerning the omission of articles in sentences. In Ogba, the order of a subject and its complements in a Noun Phrase is often reversed; the modified noun comes before the modifier, unlike in English where the modifier precedes the modified noun.

Another important aspect is the compounding of perfect tense verbs (such as "have" or "has") with lexical verbs, which causes them to function as suffixes, while the lexical verbs serve as the base. Additionally, the researcher noted that in Ogba, numerical modifiers for nouns display irregularities: aside from the number "one," which serves as a premodifier, all other numbers are treated as

postmodifiers. This can lead to confusion for language learners.

These variations can pose significant learning challenges, especially in instances where multiple words in Ogba correspond to a single word in English. For example, "ugbor-mini," which literally translates to "transport of water," actually refers to the concept of "school" in English.

Furthermore, Ogba learners of English may find the behavior of certain demonstratives in Ogba to be confusing compared to their English counterparts, further complicating their learning experience as shown in table IV.

1. This woman
Ogba: nwanwiya ani di gba
(woman this)
2. That man
Ogba: nwoko amgba (man that)

The data above shows a contrast between the English and Ogba demonstratives particularly in the rearrangement of the words in Ogba language to describe the English counterpart. Given this variation, there is a high tendency of learning

difficulty which may also result to system transfer on the part of the L2 learner. To this effect, the CA theory clearly puts it that the more the differences, the more the learning difficulties. Also, there is the case of sameness in the translation of certain prepositions Ogba.

4. Discussion of Findings

This study has unraveled and highlighted the peculiarities of the Ogba language in comparison to the English language. Following the position of CA, the process of second language learning could either be facilitated or complicated depending on the relationship between the systems of the learner's L1 and those of the target language. Below the researcher considered the complications necessitated by the variations in Ogba and English systems.

The study observed substantial dissimilarities as well as some similarities in Ogba and English syntactic structure. This similarity in word order will create an ease for speakers of the Ogba language to learn the English language. Furthermore, on the areas of similarities between both languages, the researcher observed that they are but non-pro-drop languages, in that, both languages require the expression of definite pronominal subjects in sentences. These similarities, if given proper attention and carefully utilized by teachers of English, it will create an avenue for an easier facilitation of learning, thereby increasing the chances of speakers of the Ogba language to gain proficiency in the target language. However, the researcher advised learners against falling into the temptation of overgeneralization as within these similarities are significant dissimilarities that should be taken note of.

On their areas of differences, the researcher observed that in terms of the arrangement of the head and its complements in a Noun Phrase, the English language is head-final and complement-initial whereas the Ogba language is head-initial and complement-final. This difference can create a major problem for the Ogba speaking English learner, in that, Ogba speaking English learner will naturally select words from the lexicon based on what he/she is used to. Therefore, if such a learner is not properly guided and the L2 teacher does not give adequate attention

to this area of variation, overcoming this problem becomes a major challenge.

The researcher further observed that the lack of prominence of articles in Noun phrases in Ogba language as opposed to those of the English language. It was also observed that in some cases in the Ogba language, determiners are subsumed into the head word or completely omitted in noun phrases. As regards Numerals in Noun Phrases, the researcher observed that in Ogba language, numbers function as postnominal modifiers unlike in the English language except numbers such as one (1), ten (10), twenty (20) and four hundred (400) which function as prenominal modifiers. To this regard, the researcher highly cautions against generalization in order not to overlook cases of exceptions.

The data analysis on Demonstratives in Noun Phrases shows that in Ogba demonstratives such as "this" and "that" in Noun Phrases which is translated as "Ani Di gba" and "amgba" respectively function as postmodifiers to nouns or subject/object. The researcher also observed that in Ogba, the arrangement of the constituents of a verb phrase is different from that of the English language, in that, certain verbs such the perfect verb forms "have/has" become suffixes and are attached to the lexical verb which become their base in order to indicate tense. Therefore, instead of "She has swept the house", the Ogba speaker will say "O za ma ulor" which is literally translated as "He swept-has house". This invariably marks the Inflectional node empty because the verb which is supposed to fill that category has been affixed to base.

The foregrounding is the rationale for this study; to account for such structural dissimilarities between the English and Ogba languages that would inhibit the learning of the English language by speakers of both languages.

5. Conclusion

The aim of every cross-linguistic study is to tinker out parameters that differentiate the systems of the languages under study and proffer solutions to the challenges such parameters engender in the learning of the second language. When the systems of a learner's L1 and the target language are different,

learning the target language becomes complicated. This difference is what Universal Grammar described as parameter. A concrete knowledge of the system of a language is what is known as the competence of a native speaker.

Furthermore, apart from the variation in the systems of English and Ogba creating challenges for learners, the lack of teachers of English as second language who have native speakers' competence is another challenge. Today, teachers of English as second language, are second language speakers themselves, who were also taught by second language speakers. This could also be factored in the fallen standard of the English language.

In spite of these similarities, the systems of English and Ogba express substantial variations in the formation of sentence. The researcher observed that the English language is head-final and complement-initial whereas the Ogba language is head-initial and complement-final. Moreso, there is the lack of prominence of articles in Noun Phrases in Ogba whereas in English, determiners are essential in the formation of Noun Phrases.

The researcher observed that the Ogba language is a self-sufficient language, in that, in instances where a literal translation from English to Ogba will result in some level of ambiguities, the language structure makes allows for a modification.

Succinctly, the study has highlighted areas of possible difficulties and has proffered solutions to ameliorate possible challenges in the formation of English sentences by the Ogba L2 learners of English. Thus, the learning of English by Ogba natives will be made easy, while relying on this work as instructional material.

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