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A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE ADJECTIVES IN ENGLISH AND NUPE LANGUAGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Languages differ in various aspects such as phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics. The differences in two languages in most cases constitute barriers in language learning while similar areas facilitate learning. Nupe and English languages are two distinct languages, therefore differences are expected. This paper carries out a contrastive analysis of quantitative adjectives in English and Nupe languages with a view to highlighting areas which Nupe learners of English as a second language will find easy or difficult to learn. The major area of similarity between the two languages is that, Nupe, like the English language, has features which act as the English quantitative adjectives. The paper also discovers numerous areas of differences such as, in the position of quantitative adjectives in the two languages and differences in the number of quantitative adjectives in the two languages, among others. Recommendations were offered to tackle the problems highlighted in the study.

INTRODUCTION

English Language is an important language in Nigeria. It plays various functions in our social, political, educational, economic and religious lives. It is the language of the government from local to national level; language used in our educational sector from primary to the university, even our nursery school use English Language in teaching and learning. Business transactions are also mostly done in some forms of English. Knowledge of English is also a passport to good job in Nigeria. Internationally, English language is also widely used. It is the language of Science and Technology and the internet, in fact, globalization is made possible through English language.

The roles of English language in Nigeria notwithstanding, the performance of students in all levels of our educational system is falling day by day. A typical example is in our universities where the written and spoken English of some of our students is deteriorating daily. In other levels i.e. the secondary and primary, the situation is better imagined. Many reasons account for this anomaly. Among these are first language interference, intricate nature of English language rules, improper teaching and lack of commitment to learning on the part of the students. As educators, we cannot close our eyes and fold our hands to these problems. Something needs to be done and one of these is the purpose of this paper. This paper aims at a contrastive analysis of quantitative adjectives in English and Nupe languages which would go a long way in improving our curriculum. This is because; Wilkins (1974) maintains "the errors and difficulties that occur in learning the use of a foreign language are caused by the interference of our mother tongue. Whenever the structure of the foreign language differs from that of the mother tongues we can expect difficulty in learning and error in performance".

This paper would therefore pinpoint areas of similarities and differences in quantitative adjectives between English and Nupe languages. The differences are likely to pose learning difficulties for Nupe learners of English as such; worthwhile recommendations would be proffered for improvement.

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Contrastive analysis is derived from the audio-lingual method of teaching and learning which sees language learning as involving the acquisition of a set of rules or habits. This stand is supported by an aspect of psychology that deals with the study of human behavior. Crystal (1992) defines contrastive analysis as the study of the forms of language learning, the identification of structural similarity and difference between two languages. The assumption of this kind of analysis is that point of differences will be areas of potential difficulty in the learning of one or another language.

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Many researchers on behavioural psychology have shown that one main task of the teacher of a foreign or 2nd language therefore is to suppress the inhibiting effects of L1 on the internalization of the target language, thus the importance of contrastive analysis.

Contrastive analysis operates in a particular order which is by first, writing a description of a particular subset of each language to be compared (description of phonology, morphology, syntax) and then compares these two subsets, noting the differences and similarities. From the comparison, a prediction is made as to what the learner will find difficult or easy to learn, Headbloom (1979). Chaturvedi (1973), cited by Greethakumary (2002), suggests some guiding principles for contrastive analysis.

To analyze the mother tongue and the target language independently and completely;

To compare the two languages item-wise-item in all levels of this structure;

To arrive at the categories of (a) similar features (b) partially similar features (c) dissimilar features for the target language;

To arrive at principles of text preparation, test framing and target language teaching in general.

It is in the light of the above that this paper would carry out a contrastive analysis of quantitative adjectives in English and Nupe languages.

Nupe Language

Nupe language is a Nigerian language spoken in Niger, Kwara and Kogi States of Nigeria, Nupe speakers also receive instructions in schools through English language. However, the differences in the two languages are bound to affect the smooth flow of communication when teaching and learning is taking place with English as a medium of instruction.

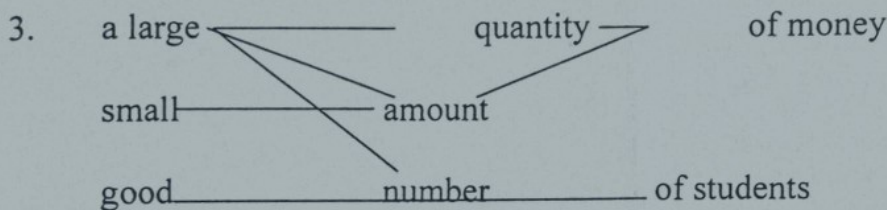
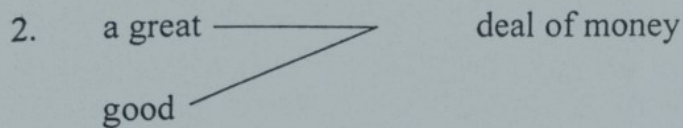
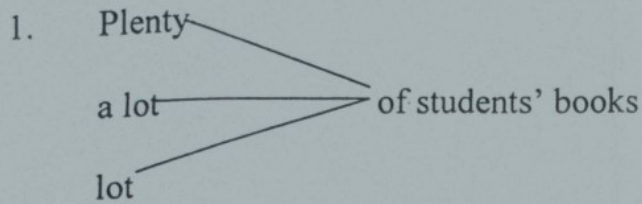
QUANTITATIVE ADJECTIVES IN ENGLISH AND NUPE LANGUAGE

There are many quantitative adjectives in English whose chief aims are for stating the amount or content of nouns. The quantitative adjectives behave like demonstratives and possessives because they occur attributively while modifying the nouns. The quantitative identified by Quirk and Geoffrey (1992) are some, any, neither, every, a few, a little, many, much, several, and enough. Willis (1991) goes further to include fewer, less, another, almost, each as quantitative.

Quantitative adjectives according to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) can be divided into two groups or classes: the first class is the close system quantitative and the second is open class quantitative. The close system quantifiers are many, more, most, few, fewest, little, less, least, and several.

The open class quantifiers constitute 3 groups according to their patterning with noun clauses.

They are:



Unlike the English language, all Nupe quantitative adjectives post modify the nouns e.g.

English: Many boys

Nupe: Egi bagi danyin

The quantitative 'much' according to Willis (1991) is used to talk about a large quantity of something while 'little' is for small quantity and is used with un-count nouns as in

I have got much money (positive)

I have not got much money (negative)

We took little tea (positive)

We did not take little tea (negative).

'Many' is used for large number of people or things and 'few' for small number. They are used with plural count nouns. Examples:-He wrote many books

a. He did not write many books

b. They were few boys in class

c. There were not few boys in class

d. In Nupe language, 'many' and 'much' and even 'plenty' mean the same thing and can stand for either "danyi" or "saranyi" in the language. Examples

English: I have not got much money

Nupe: Me de ewo saranyi a

DT: I have money much not

As characteristic on Nupe adjectives, they post modify the nouns.

The Nupe language equivalent for 'few' and 'little' is "degi" and can be used with countable and uncountable nouns. For example:

English: Little sugar

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Nupe: Sugar degi

DT: Sugar little

English: Few people

Nupe: Ezezhi degi

DT: Person + plural few

English: Few books

Nupe: Takadazhi degi

DT: Book + plural few

English: Little Water

Nupe: Nuwon degi

DT: Water litte

In some Nupe constructions, the quantitative 'few' and 'little' can also mean "small". Moreover, at times the meaning of 'few' is apt only in a descriptive phrase as in "a dokun a" which means 'not many' e.g.

Ezahi dokun a - Nupe

People many not - DT

People are not many (few)-English

However, just like in English, in Nupe much and many can be used in declarative, negative and interrogative constructions. For example:

English Declarative: I have much money

Nupe Declarative: Mi de wo danyin

DT: I have money plenty

English Negative: I have not much money

Nupe Negative: mi de ewo danyi a

DT: I have money plenty not

English Interrogative: Why won't I have much money?

Nupe Interrogative: Ki la me a de ewo danyin a yio?

DT: Why do I not have money much not do?

It is clear from the constructions above that even though these quantitative can be used in declarative, negative and interrogative constructions in the two languages; in Nupe the translations are a little bit awkward and very confusing.

In English there is also room for extending the degrees of much, many, plenty, little, few by using the intensifier 'very' and 'too'. Example,

He has too much work

Too many people still smoke

In Nupe language such degrees of extension do not exist. 'Too much', 'very many', 'too many', still mean either "saranyin" or "danyin". However, Nupe language allows the use of "saranyi ko" which emphasizes the term "saranyin" (much or many). However, the "ko" is closely knitted with "saranyi" and not a different word as in the case of English 'very' and 'too'.

Examples:

1. Nupe: Ezazhi fibo saranvin ko
DT: People in present many very
English: There are very many people
2. Nupe: Ewo fi nanba o saranyin ko
DT: Money in bag plenty + very
English: There is plenty money in the bag

The above examples show that "saranyin ko" is used to extend the degree of 'many and much' in Nupe and can as well mean 'plenty' of This situation of extension does not however extend to "degi" the Nupe language equivalent for 'few' and 'little'.

e.g. I have very little money left.

Very few cars have reversing lights

Such emphasis for 'little' and 'few' above does not exist in Nupe language.

The quantifier 'less' according to Willis (1991) refers to an amount of something that is smaller than another amount. Example:

1. The people have less access to education
2. This machinery uses less energy

'Fewer' or 'less' is used in informal English with plural nouns to refer to a number of people or things that is smaller than another. Example: There are fewer trees here.

In Nupe language, there is no equivalent for the English 'less' and 'fewer'. The quantitative adjective 'several' and 'enough' also have no apt equivalent in Nupe language. 'Several' in English is used with plural count nouns e.g. several applications were invited. While 'enough' is used with both plural count and non-count nouns e.g. there are enough people in the seminar. The near equivalent for 'enough' in Nupe is "kunkun" which may also mean 'adequate' and cannot begin a sentence and when used within the sentence has a part of it is deleted to become "kun". Example:

Nupe: Eje a kun
 DT: Food do enough
 English: Food is enough

'Some' is also another quantitative adjective which is frequently used in English. Willis (1991) maintains that 'some' is used with un-count nouns and plural nouns to talk about a quantity of something or a number of people or things without being precise e.g.

1. I have left some food for you
2. Some trains are very fast
3. I have some good ideas to offer.

'Some' is also used with a singular noun when one does not know which person or thing is involved or when such knowledge is not necessary. For example:

Some man phoned but he did not leave his number.

Quirk and Geoffrey (1992) believe that 'some' is pronounced with emphasis when used before uncountable and countable plurals. Example:

Give me some water
 I bought some books

Moreover, 'some' used before singular countable is pronounced/S◻M/ with less emphasis.

In Nupe, the only equivalent to the various uses of 'some' in English is "Ndochi" which can be used in declarative, negative and interrogative constructions and can appear in initial, medial and final positions in sentences. Examples:

	Nupe/Direct Translation	English
1. DT	Eza <u>Ndochi</u> wu ye Person some beat eye	<u>Some</u> people are kicked.
2. DT	Wo kpe egi <u>ndochi</u> ye? You know child some do?	Do you know some or another child?
3. DT	Mi le zandochi ye a I see person some see not	I did not see another/some person
4. DT	Yi gi Ndochi be Call child another/some come	Call another/some child

The constructions above show that "Ndochi" can also mean 'another' and not only 'some'. This is a serious source of confusion to Nupe learners. The quantitative 'any' is used in front of plural and uncountable nouns to talk about a quantity of something that may exist or not. It is also used in interrogative and negative sentences (Quirk and Greenbaum (1973).

Examples:

1. Are there any jobs men can do and women cannot?
2. It does not make any difference.

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'Any' is also used with singular noun to emphasize that it does not matter which person or thing is involved. Examples:

1. Any container will do.
2. My house is not any better than yours

In those uses of 'any' above, 'any' is relatively weakly stressed. But there is another use of 'any' in which it is nearly always pronounced with strong stress. Strongly stressed 'any' can be used before uncountable and countable nouns. For example: these books are obtainable from any book seller. We need something to sleep, any mattress will do.

The meaning of 'any' here is something like no matter whom/what. Sometimes, some of the uses of 'any' are parallel to those of some. For example:

1. I saw some boys in the street.
2. I did not see any boys in the street.
3. Did you see any boys in the street?

Here, 'some' is used in affirmative sentences when we want to imply the actual existence of something or of somebody and 'any' in interrogative and negative ones in many cases (Dilligham and Walkins, 1988). The Nupe equivalent for 'any' is "Ndondo". For example:

	Nupe	English
1.	Yi egi ndondo be	Call any child to come
	DT Call child any come	
2.	We de 'ewo' ndondo бага о?	Do you have any money there?
	DT you have money any in there?	

The Nupe "Ndondo" (any) can also be used for the English 'every; e.g.

Nupe: Zan Ndondo		English: Every Person
DT: Person Every		
Nupe: Fon Ndondo		English: Every Day
DT: Day Every		
Nupe: Ekan Ndondo		English: Every Time
DT: Time Every		

The fact that a single Nupe word (Ndondo) is used for two different English words (any/every) is a source of error to Nupe learners of English.

'Another' is used with singular nouns to talk about an additional person or thing. Example:

Could I have another cup of tea?

He opened another shop yesterday

'Another' can also be used with a number and a plural noun to talk about more people or things.

➤ Another four years would have passed before we met again.

➤ I have got another three books to read.

The Nupe equivalent for 'another' is 'Ndochi', but applicable only in some contexts. Examples:

English: He opened another shop yesterday.

Nupe: Wu kpee kata yankun Ndochi tsuwo

DT: He open room sell another yesterday
English: I have another book in my box.
Nupe: Me de takaida Ndochi dan kpati mi bo o.
DT: I have book another in box my in

However, the above sentences notwithstanding, the same Nupe word "Ndochi" can also replace English 'some' as earlier shown in this paper. This explains why "Ndochi" preceded by "yan", "zan" or "kan" or "fon" is synonymous with English something, somebody, sometimes and someday respectively. This proves that there is no apt equivalent of 'another' in Nupe language.

The English 'each' or 'every' is used for members of a group of people or things. 'Each' is used when referring to the members as individuals and 'every' when a general statement about all of them is made (Dilligham and Walkins, 1988). Examples:

1. Each applicant has two choices
2. Every child would have milk everyday

In Nupe, equivalent of 'every' is the same as 'any' i.e. "ndondo". It can also be used for the quantitative 'each'. Examples:

English: Each child has a book
Nupe: Egi nondo de takada inni
DT: Child every has book one
English: Every land has buildings on it
Nupe: Kin ndondo de batuzhi kpe ti u bo
DT: Land every/each has buildings on head of it

'All' is also an adjective used with plural count nouns and uncount nouns to talk about every person or thing in the world or in the group one is talking about (Willis, 1990). Examples:

English: All bags should be searched
Nupe: A la nanba kpááta sa
DT: They should bag all search
English: All the children are sleeping
Nupe: Egi zhi kpááta e lele
DT: Child + plural all is sleeping
English: I enjoyed it all
Nupe: Mi wo mau kpááta
DT: I hear sweet all

As can be seen from the sentences above, 'all' is the only English quantitative adjective where Nupe learners would have little problem as it has an apt equivalent "kpááta" in Nupe language. The situation however differs with adjectives like 'both', 'either', and 'neither'. These are used to talk about two people or things that have been mentioned or are known to the hearer. 'Both' is used with plural nouns while 'either' and 'neither' are used with singular nouns. In 'either' the two things or people are seen as individuals while in 'neither' they are not only seen as individuals but a negative statement is made about them (Quirk and Geoffrey, 1992).

Consider these examples:

English: Amina kept the money in both hands
Nupe: Amina a ewo lafi egwa gubaba o
DT: Amina do money in hand two two
English: 53014 You can have either money of food
Nupe: Wo ade ewo ko ma yangichi
DT: You can have money or food
English: Neither of the children is there
Nupe: Egi ndondo dan bo a
DT: Child each in not

Nupe language as can be seen from above, has "gubaba" meaning two-two as Nupe equivalent to 'both', "ko" or "ndondo" for 'either' and different words depending on the context but denoting negative for

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'neither'. It is interesting to note that the "ko" used for 'either' is more applicable to 'or' than 'either'. All these are causes of problems to Nupe learners of English.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The analysis in this paper has shown the following findings.

1. In Nupe, adjectives generally come after the nouns they modify i.e. they are post modifiers.
2. There are only few quantitative adjectives in Nupe compared to the numerous in English.
3. The few quantitative adjectives in Nupe are "Ndondo" which is used for English each, every, and any. "Danyin" used for English plenty, many, much, several and a lot. "Degi" for English 'few', small, 'little' etc.
4. Most of the so-called Nupe quantitative adjectives are not the apt equivalent of their English counterparts. They are not steady in their use and the unsteadiness becomes deeper as one goes on in the analysis.
5. Some quantitative adjectives such as a little, a few, none, a lot, lack or word to word equivalent in Nupe language. They are therefore described before they are understood. The predictions above therefore confirm that Nupe learners will have problems as they learn English quantitative adjectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered in view of the problems highlighted in this study.

1. Students should be adequately exposed to the language so as to enhance effective language habits.
2. Each structure of English language should be taught gradually through constant repetition to ensure remembering and minimize the problems of rule generalization and misapplication.
3. English language textbooks should make correlation between each aspect of the language. For instance, what is taught in grammar should be reflected in comprehension, oral, and written works, i.e. the four language skills should be adequately represented. The text books should also allow room for revision so that the previously learnt structures would become part of the students. The existing textbooks should also be revised and modified in line with the peculiar needs of the Nigerian students and in the light of the mother tongue interferences revealed by this study.
4. Curriculum planners should among others bear in mind the linguistic differences existing between the learners' mother tongue and English when designing the English language curriculum. The curriculum should also be made child-centred by considering the learners' background experience as well as expose them to situational contexts that will kindle their interest in learning the language.

CONCLUSION

The study has embarked on a contrastive analysis of quantitative adjectives in English and Nupe languages with a view to highlighting the similarities and differences between them. One of the outstanding similarities discovered by this study includes the fact that both Nupe and English languages use Quantitative adjectives to talk about the quantity of noun(s) in a given situation. The differences are many; some of which includes the position of quantitative adjectives in the two languages, and differences in the number of quantitative in the two languages. These differences are likely to pose problems to Nupe learners of English language. Recommendations that would minimize the impact of the problems highlighted were offered. It is therefore hoped that studies into other areas of the language would be carried out, in not only Nupe language but other languages, so as to ensure a hitch-free study of English as a second language.

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