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NOUN POSTMODIFICATION IN ENGLISH AND IGBO: IMPLICATION FOR APPLIED ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

The study compared noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo for differences and if the differences constitute any problems to Igbo learners of English as second language. The study was carried out in ten secondary schools randomly selected from junior secondary 1 and 2 students in Ikeduru and Mbaitolu local government areas of Imo state, Nigeria. Twenty students were systematically selected from each school using the class register giving a total of two hundred. One research instrument "English language performance test (ELPT)" comprising of 65 items to test the validity of the predicted difficulties was used. The data was organized into total expected responses (ER), correct responses (CR) and wrong responses (WR) using descriptive statistics. All the noun postmodifiers in English occur in postmodification position in constructions while only few occur in Igbo. In the use of 'many' or 'much', 89% answered correctly in JSS 1, and 93% in JSS 2. In the use of 'a lot of' with 'have' or 'has', in JSS 1, 68% and 60% in JSS 2 gave wrong answers showing significant error margin. In use of 'neither', 'either' and 'each' with nouns, in JSS 1, 55% were wrong. In JSS 2, 50% were right. In use of non-finite clause in V-ed post modifications with nouns, only 38% gave correct responses in JSS 1, and 40% in JSS 2. There were differences in the characteristics and structural position of noun post modifiers in English and Igbo; most respondents had problems with choice of appropriate noun post modifiers.

Key words: Noun, postmodification, English, Igbo, Implications, Linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and known for the large number of languages spoken, estimated to be about four hundred (Roger, 2014; Simmons & Fennig, 2017). The languages spoken include: Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Ejik, and Tiv while hundreds of thousands others speak other languages as Temgale, Ishibori and Bethe.

Eventually, as formal education was introduced in Nigeria, the missionaries ensured that pupils spent the early years of the primary school programme learning in their native languages. As a matter of fact, between 1900 and 1960, the colonial administration gave support to the policy. It is however surprising, that despite the widespread use of the native languages in Nigeria, not even one of such Nigerian languages has been recognised as the dominant language. The reason is partly because there is no single language that is spoken and understood by an over-whelming majority of the population, besides, there does not appear to be a single Nigerian language which a good majority of Nigerians are willing to accept.

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It then goes without saying, that the linguistic situation in Nigeria is one in which a multiplicity of languages co-exist, each of which is used by its native speakers for most of their everyday communication activities. In every geographical location of the country there exist, at least, one area language, a language that has the largest number of the speakers in that region or location. In fact some of these languages are used by non-native speakers as a second language lingua-franca. It is usually easy for members of the same ethnic or language group to communicate without difficulties inspite of the fact that each of these languages has multiple dialectical variations.

There is a major- problem of inter-ethnic communication. It is regrettable that nobody in Nigeria speaks 'Nigeria as an English man would speak English, a Frenchman French or a Spainiard Spanish. There is therefore a linguistic iron-curtain or communication gap which is filled by the English language. Apart from facilitating inter-ethnic backgrounds, English stands as the official language of the country. It is the medium of instruction in our educational institutions from the primary school to University. It is also the language of science and technology and the language of wider communication.

As a matter of fact, English language from the foregoing is notoriously subject to fashion and is in contact with other languages. The Nigerian learner of English as a second language is naturally exposed to the problems associated with bilingualism (Bamgbose, 1978; Adegbite, 2009; Okunrinmeta, 2013). On this, Trifonovitch (1981) opined that first language acquisition is detrimental to second language learning. Further, as cited by Aduwa (2006), a student is automatically placed at a disadvantage when he/she already has a language of his/her own and he/she is asked to learn another language. The claim is that majority of secondary school students in Nigeria already have various mother tongues before they are admitted into schools which put them at a disadvantage. Abolaji (2012) concluded that bilingualism plays a role in language learning especially in second language situation, i.e. that second language learners' first

language plays a supportive role in the learning of the second language.

These problems impede the efficiency of the Nigerian learners in language acquisition. As a matter-of fact, the approach towards solving the problems is to make teachers of English as a second language sensitive of the advantages of contrastive analysis of at least one major Nigerian language with English, and of the appropriate instructional strategies to deal with the grammatical difficulties of the language group. The English language teachers' awareness of the grammatical, phonetical, lexical, syntactical and semantical structures of an additional major Nigerian language, other than his mother tongue, will turn his attitude towards a full and sympathetic understanding of the problems of his pupils. This sympathetic understanding coupled with the knowledge of the contrastive analysis of an L1 with the L2 (English) will equip the teachers of English in Nigeria schools and colleges with necessary tools to enhance not only good approach to grammar but also communicative ability in the use of English.

A *postmodifier* is a modifier that *follows* the word or phrase it limits or qualifies and modification by a postmodifier is called *postmodification (Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002). Biber et al. (2002) further opined that premodifiers and postmodifiers are distributed in the same way across registers; rare in conversation, very common in informational writing. In their own opinion, Guerra and Insua (2010) noted that in general, "postmodifiers are longer than premodifiers, which underlines the adequacy of end-weight".*

Postmodification can be one of four types:

- o a preposition with a further nominal group (a prepositional phrase): the boy *in the garden*.
- o a non-finite clause: the boy *walking down the road* .
- o a dependent clause which may be introduced by a relative pronoun or simply attached directly to the nominal it modifies: the boy *who was walking* .
- o occasionally, an adjective: and other things *interesting* (David, 1976).

The problem of this study lies in the fact that in Nigeria, English language is studied as a second language i.e. in addition to the basic mother tongue. But every language has its own peculiar system. For example, Nelson Francis in his book, Applied English Lingusitics as reported by Kolln and Hancook (2005) has noted that the "English language may be seen in general analysis to have four principal devices for signalling structural meanings. These are:

(a)   **Word order**- The sequence in which words and word- groups are arranged.

(b)   **Function words**: Words devoid of lexical meanings which indicate relationships among the meaningful words with which they appear.

(c)   **Inflections**: Alterations in the forms of words themselves to signal changes in meaning and relationship.

(d)   **Formal constrasts:** Contrasts in the form of words themselves to signal changes in meaning and relationship.

When this system is contrasted with the system of expression in Igbo language, one finds unavailable divergences between English and Igbo languages. This is essentially so if one takes a close look at English noun premodification and postmodification. The Igbo language expressed the equivalence of the English noun premodification and postmodification in completely different ways.

To this end, learning English as a second language, a Nigeria student is bound to have conflict between the language habits of the one being learnt (in this case, English) and the mother tongue. This conflict becomes more pronounced in his home environment. Arsad, Buniyamin & Manan (2014), in their study, reported that any environment in which every member of the family, including parents, speaks English in their daily life affected the student's performance. Nzinga (1983) in Oluwole (2008) lamented the low performance of new entrants at the University of Ilorin saying that —there is clear ignorance of most basic elements of logical interference and most of the students do not have the opportunity to undertake advanced reasoning tasks. Some of the factors responsible for the poor performance include the problem of

multilingualism, the adverse effect of the learner's mother tongue, lack of qualified teachers, absence of textbooks and teaching materials that are relevant to national objects, individual background, comprehension problem, social factor, individual differences and gender-mix of school (Eze, 2004); Nzeagwu, 2010; Sa'ad & Usman, 2014 ; Nzeagwu, 2014).

Some professionals in linguistics and bilinguals have illustrated that there exist similarities between mother tongue and the second language (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014). Mother Tongue education constitutes an important area of introduction to literacy which becomes useful in the acquisition of knowledge of the second language. Studies on L2 acquisition shows that learning another language can be less problematic, if a child can master the first language and develops competences in listening, speaking, reading, and writing that can be transferred to learning another language. This could be why in a study on 'patterns of communication in families and students' performance in the written English Language, Nzeagwu (2017) observed that patterns of communication within the students' families did not significantly affect the students' performances in the written English language. However, in another study, Fatiloro (2015) noted that learners of English as a second language find its learning difficult because sudden break from a familiar language to a non –familiar one can be difficult, thus various errors ranging from phonetical error to syntactic, morphological to semantic errors are committed.

This study, therefore, will attempt to answer the following questions:

1.   Are there differences in the structural positions of noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo?

2.   How well do Igbo students perform in their use of English noun postmodifiers and to what can their linguistic difficulties be attributed to if any?

3.   What are the similarities, if any, between English noun postmodifiers and their Igbo equivalents?

4.   Do the similarities, if any, between English noun postmodifiers, and their Igbo noun

equivalents facilitate learning of English language by Igbo students?

5. Do the dissimilarities interfere with the learning of English language by Igbo students?

6. What are the possible consequences, if any of the differences between noun postmodifiers in the two languages for an Igbo learning English as a second language?

7. Are there remedial measures the teacher of English language could use to check or ameliorate the problems caused by the dissimilarities?

These questions jointly constitute the primary problems of the present research. In finding answers and solutions to the items, it is hoped that this study will identify the characteristics of the English noun postmodifiers as contrasted with Igbo equivalent noun postmodifiers and the effects of these on the average Igbo speaker as he strives to learn the second language L2; suggest how the problems can be solved and their possible implications to the development of applied English linguistics.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to:-

(a) Make a constrastive analysis of noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo with emphasis on the similarities and disimilarities

(b) Make some predictions of likely areas of difficulties from the differences;

(c) Establish the truth of the existence of the problems and if they are sources of difficulties to the learning of English;

(d) Make recommendations for a better linguistic development in relation to a better teaching and learning of English as a second language.

Significance of the study

The Igbo-speaking people constitute one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Igbo language is one of the three Nigerian languages recommended by the National Policy on Education (1977, 1981) and the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the educational process and the conduct of the business of the National Assembly respectively. The language is spoken in Imo, Abia,

Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and parts of Bende and Rivers States. The study is therefore, directed towards the improvement of the learning of English in one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Findings from the study can, however, to a considerable extent, be generalized for English language teaching to other Nigerian language speaking groups because most of the languages have a lot in common.

In view of the importance of noun postmdifiers in the generation of sentences, it is necessary to find out the areas of difficulties that the Igbo speaking learners encounter with noun postmodifiers and suggest remedial exercises for the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

A description of the noun postmodifiers in Igbo and English will highlight the differences in their patterns in the two languages as well as possible areas of difficulties for Igbo learner of English. So, the study will help English teachers of Igbo speaking students identify those errors that are related to their L1 and those caused by the patterns of English language itself. The teachers will then be better able to direct attention to those areas especially when choosing instructional materials and methodology.

Apart from classroom teachers, textbook writers would probably find this study useful. They will know the areas of difficulty faced by the learner and thus, be better placed to produce texts that are cognisant of the peculiar linguistic difficulties of the Nigerian learner of English as a second language. Textbooks designed on the strength of such knowledge will be an asset in the learning and teaching of English in Nigeria.

Research assumptions

To direct this study, the following assumptions have been formulated:

(a) There are differences in the characteristics and structural positions of noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo.

(b) Igbo speakers of English have problems with the choice of appropriate noun postmodifiers.

(c)   These differences constitute major source of difficulties in the teaching and learning of English by Igbo speaking students.

Review of related literature

Bright and McGregor (1978) observed that the English language to some Nigerians is a first language and to others a fifth one. English is not a national language and is less of a lingua franca than pidgin English which is a separate language of its own. Suffice it to say that English as used in Nigeria is an important element in the Nigerians communication network which is being served by a collection of functionally complementary units in Nigeria's linguistic repertoire.

English language acts mainly as the vehicle for that aspect of contemporary Nigeria culture which is now reflected in our history, educational system, administrative set up, our industrial and technological efforts, our political experiments, our international alignment preferences, our pattern of dressing, and to a large extent, in the attitude of the Nigerian elite and most likely in the way the leaders of the Nigerians community structure reality (Nzeagwu, 2005).

Equally significant is the fact that quite a substantial body of the intellectual endeavours of Nigeria are carried out and recorded in the English language. Danladi (2013) noted that the English language is the means of instruction in schools, and is a compulsory subject that must be passed at all levels of education in Nigeria.

The importance of English language in Nigeria is very clearly stated in the national policy on Education (1981). What this means is that a Nigeria child who desires Western education, must of a necessity have an all round proficiency in English. The reason for this could be easily understood.

First and foremost, the indigenous language lack textbooks and second, the fact that some classes in secondary and higher stages contain students from different linguistic backgrounds. To this end, it becomes imperative that English must therefore be introduced at some stage of the child's education.

According to Wilkins (1972), a person with no knowledge of linguistic science who picks up a modern descriptive grammar and glances through it, even in a fairly superficial way will be struck by the very strangeness of much that he sees. No doubt he will notice first the new symbols and terminology, which will be quite unlike anything that he remembers of grammar from his school days. On a clear reading, he may discover that the attitudes to language too are different from those that he himself acquired in the course of his education. If he comes to the conclusion that there is little resemblance between linguistics and 'grammar' we should not be surprised because for a long time linguists themselves defined their subject by the ways in which its principles were a rejection of principles followed in traditional grammatical descriptions.

Wilkins (1972) is of the opinion that linguistics is not about language teaching. He holds that it does not follow that because there have been changes in the scholar's study of language, there should be related changes in the teaching of foreign languages. But since both linguistics and language teaching have language as their subject-matter, the possibility that each can learn something from the other must be considered. It proves that linguistics does not have implications for language teaching. These implications must be fully understood so that they can be used to evaluate our language teaching practices.

Language teaching methodology has for centuries been a matter of fashion, because of the very great difficulty of studying it objectively. Linguistics is one of the fields to which language teaching may be referable, if we are to attain this objectivity. The main contribution of linguistic sciences in application to language teaching according to Corder (1973) is that they enable a proper description of the language taught. As a matter of fact, the greatest thing in language teaching is a good description of the language which could be the learner's own mother tongue or a second language.

This then means that the importance of descriptive linguistics to second language teaching is to carefully map out the relationship between the learner's behaviour in his first language and his expected behaviour in the target language. If there is no such knowledge, there would be little

possibility of reasonable sequencing of materials and no chance of distinguishing mistakes from the systematic errors which actually constitute the best evidence that language learning is effected.

There are two different approaches identified by linguistic and pedagogical theory namely- the contrastive analysis based on the premises that languages are different and that because of these differences the (L2) learners will encounter difficulties. The basic practice of contrastive analysis is to first write a description of a particular subset of each language and compare (i.e. description of phonology, morphology or syntax) (Sridha, 1974; Mohammad, 2016). One then compares the two subsets noting the differences and similarities. From this comparison, a prediction is made as to what a learner will find difficult or (easy) to learn.

It suffices to say that this study will completely be a contrastive analysis of English noun postmodifiers and their Igbo equivalence. It goes this way because the audiolingual theory where contrastive analysis anchors uphold that errors are imperfect habits and could be avoided. Contrastive Analysis seem to see learners' errors as emanating from a learning mechanism usually referred to as transfer (Xie & Jiang, 2007). Learning is faster with positive transfer of learning but interference comes as a result of negative transfer.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the analysis of structural differences and similarities and noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo would assist the teacher to predict and identify possible errors of Igbo learners of English as a second language.

Contrastive analysis of structures of noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo

Postmodification explicitness: Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum, Quirk (2010) indicate that explicitness in postmodification varies considerably. According to him it is greater in the finite relative clause. For example: *The girl who stood in the corner*

Than in the non-finite clause: *The girl standing in the corner*

From which the explicit tense (is? was?) has disappeared, though this in turn is more explicit than the prepositional phrase.

The girl in the corner - from which the verb indicating a specific posture has also disappeared.

Leech *et al*. (2010) went further to explain that part of the relative clause's explicitness lies in the specifying power of the relative pronoun. It is capable of:

(a)   showing agreement with the head and

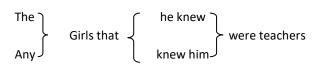(b)   indicating its status as an element in the relative clause structure.

Postmodification by quantification and comparison

There are a number of quantitatives in English. Quantitatives are used for quantification purposes- adjectives of quantity or quantitative adjectives.

According to Sandved (1969), they include the following: some, any, no, either, neither, each, every, a few, a little, many, much, several, and enough. In the list also is 'a lot of (Hill, 1968). These make up the qunatitatives in English.

Hill (1968) says that 'much' is used with (or in place of) non-count nouns: much sand, much salt, much water, while "many" is used both with (and in place of) plural nouns; "a lot of", is used both with non-count and plural nouns.

According to Leech *et al.* (2010), there are other types of restrictive clause, concerned with quantification and comparison. The definite article may refer back to something previously specified or forward to something that will constitute the specification. The definite article can be replaced by other determiners, sometimes even by items strongly associated with indefiniteness.
Example:

The / Any Girls that { he knew / knew him } were teachers

One such determiner is what followed by obligatory zero: *What girls he knew were teachers*

The authors continue to assert that a factor determiner of this sort is cataphoric "such" often implying low quantity or quality which always correlates with "as" in the relative clause. The "as" functioning equally as subject or object:

Such girls as   [he knew   ]   were teachers (formal)
                        [knew him]

and in place of "such" (and without the reductive implication) we may have "as" - quantifiers;

As many girls as he knew were teachers (more commonly: 'All the girls he knew……….').

He took as much (butter) as he wanted.

This type of correlation with quantifiers can involve the comparative, in which case, the item corresponding to a relative pronoun is "than".

He smoked [more] cigarettes than [he bought]
                [fewer]   [were normally available]

In Igbo, Emenanjo (1978) identifies two quantifiers. They include: "na abo" and "nile" meaning "two" and "all" respectively.

Like other nominal modifiers, quantifiers cannot be used alone or as head of noun phrase (NP). When used with nominal, quantifiers may retain their inherent tones. But when followed by other things, notably the demonstrative a 'this' or a relative clause, two of them may change their tones in accordance with the tone rules:

Example:

Ha + dum + bi -   Ha dum bi ……
 'They' 'all' 'who live'; 'All of them who live……'

Ha + naabọ -   Ha naab˺ọ bi……
 'two'   'the two of them who live at'

Ha + naabọ + a -   Ha naabọ a
                        'Two of these'

The other quantifier "nile" always retain it's inherent tones.

Emenanjo continues to say that in the structure of the NP, all quantifiers are used after their nominals, thus:

(i)   "dum" is always the last word in the NP when there is no relative clause coming after the demonstrative or the other quantifiers:

E.g. Ha naabọ dum   'The two of them'
 Ha nile dum   'All of them'

ii.   'naabọ' can be used between the adjective and the demonstrative or after the demonstrative with an appreciable difference in meaning:

E.g. Ulọ ọma naabọ ahu   'Those two beautiful building'

Ulọ ọma ahụ naabọ   'Two those beautiful buildings'

So far, it is evident that most quantitative we have in English may not be identified in Igbo.

'Either' in English does not have equivalent. Similarly, 'neither' 'each' 'every' do not have equivalents in Igbo.

It then becomes evident that Igbo language lacks a number of the English quantitatives in it's vocabulary. It is however interesting to observe that the available quantitatives in Igbo, like many other Igbo nominal modifiers, occur in the post modification position. They occur after the nominals they modify.

Prediction

The Igbo leaners of English are likely to have some problems in the use of quantification because quantitatives in Igbo, like many other Igbo nominal modifiers, occur in the postmodification positions while in English majority of them occur in the premodification position.

The absence of many quantitatives in Igbo will likely pose some problems for an Igbo learner of English. For example, 'either' and 'neither' have no Igbo equivalence. Also since "much" and "enough" do not have their equivalence in Igbo, their correct use by an Igbo learner of English may be problematic.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to identify the structural patterns of the noun postmodifiers in English and Igbo so as to determine the aspects of the first language which may pose problem for a good mastery of English noun postmodifiers. The sample, research instrument and procedure used to collect the data is described.

Description of the sample

Two hundred subjects (students) were selected for the study. They were randomly selected from ten secondary schools in Ikeduru and Mbaitolu Local Government Areas of Imo State. In selecting the schools, the location and type of school involved was considered. Out of the ten schools, six are unisex and four co-educational; rural communities. The reason for such spread basically was to ensure from their responses whether or not there are significant differences in the standard of

performance between unisex and co-educational school on the one hand, and between urban and rural schools on the other hand. Since the schools were selected from two local government areas, their standard is also being considered. It is true that this is not the basic concern of this study, it was hoped that such incidental findings could be used for purpose of applied linguistics in schools

le A: Type of school, local government area and location of school

Type of school	
Unisex	**Co-eduactional**
Amaimo High School Ikeduru	Ugiri-Ike Community Sec. Ikeduru
Amaimo Girls Sec. School Ikeduru	Ngugo Comprehensive Sec Ikeduru
Atta Girls Sec. School Ikeduru	Mbieri Sec. Techn. School Mbaitolu
Obazu Girls Sec. School Mbaitolu	St. Cathrines Sec. School Mbaitolu.
Archdeacon Dennis Seminary Mbieri Mbaitoli	
Ogwa Girls Sec. School Mbaitoli	
Local Government Area	
Ikeduru local govt.	**Mbaitolu local govt.**
Ugiri-Ike Community Sec.	Archdeacon Dennis Seminary
Amaimo High School	Ogwa Girls Sec. School
Ngugo Comprehensive Sec	Obazu Girls Sec. School
Atta Girls Sec. School	Mbieri Sec. Techn. School
Amaimo Girls Sec. School	Amaimo Girls Sec. School
Location of school	
Urban area	**Rural area**
Obazu Girls Sec. School	Ugiri-Ike Community Sec
Archdeacon Dennis Seminary	Ngugo Comprehensive Sec
Mbieri Sec. Techn. School	Amaimo Boys High School
St. Cathrines Sec. School	Atta Girls Sec. School
	Amaimo Girls Sec. School
	Ogwa Girls Sec. School

Twenty students were randomly selected from each school to give the total of two hundred students. Ten students each were selected from classes (JSS) 1 and 2. In the rural schools, the two classes have two arms and five students were chosen from each arm. For the urban schools, the two classes involved had more than five arms each. To this end, the first five arms were used and two students were chosen from each arm.

Research Instrument

The research was conducted through a test. In view of the predictions made earlier on the likely areas of difficulties that may confront an Igbo learner of English in the use of English noun post modifiers, a test of 65 items was constructed. The questions were meant to test the validity of the predicted difficulties.

On the whole, the following aspects of English noun post modification were covered by the test: adjectives and nouns.

Based on the predicted difficulties, test items of different numbers were constructed for each aspect of English noun post modifications.

Five test items were set for each aspect of English noun post modification. The questions were constructed with blank spaces; each blank space to be filled with a correct answer chosen from the options in the brackets.

Research Procedure and Evaluations

The test was personally administered by the researcher to the students randomly selected in each of the chosen schools. There was official permission from each of the principals of the schools. The Dean of studies of each school helped the researcher to get the sample using systematic sampling from the class registers. The selected students then were gathered in a classroom and the test questions were strictly administered and properly supervised by the researcher.

The data analysis was purely descriptive. The correct and wrong responses were separately organized, quantified and analyzed by the use of frequency of scores and percentages. Both correct and wrong responses were presented for each test item to enable the researcher identify the source and typology of error for each test item. The results were presented in tables to enhance interpretation and analysis. The formula for percentage was:

$$\frac{F}{N} \times \frac{100}{1} = \%$$

F = frequency-the number of responses on the questionnaire

N = the total number of respondents

% = the percentage of all correct and wrong responses for a particular test item.

If 0 - 19% of the total respondents give wrong responses for a given test item such an item is considered as an insignificant problem area as such remedial drill could help.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, a sixty five test item was administered with specific reference to the predicted areas of differences and difficulties in noun post modification in English and Igbo. The number and percentage of correct and wrong responses obtained in any given item or for a group of item is quantified at this stage. This is to say that the frequency and percentage of the correct and wrong responses were given for each test item.

In addition, attempts were made to identify sources of error. Depending on the error margins, individual, group or collective remediation was recommended and reasons for the errors suggested. An error margin of 20% is required as significant enough to call for group, collective and individual remediation. This, of course, has implications for applied English linguistics. To quantify the test items and for purposes of comprehension, the data is organized into five columns in the tables:

1. Classes tested: for this research, it is junior secondary school (JSS) 1 and 2
2. Test items: On this column, the various item numbers are indicated.
3. Total expected responses (E R) are recorded on this column
4. Correct Responses (CR)
5. Wrong Responses (WR)

The sections for correct and wrong responses are further sub-divided into frequency of responses; and percentage of responses

Table 1 dealt with 36 which tested the use of 'many' with nouns. 'Much' or 'many' was to be filled into the sentence. 'Many' can co-occur with plural count nouns while 'much' is used with non-count nouns. To this end, 'many' is the correct answer.

A high performance was recorded here. Out of the expected number of responses in J.S.S. 1, 89 or 89% answered correctly while 11 or 11% answered wrongly. In J.S.S 2, 93% answered correctly leaving just 7% wrong. The error margin is insignificant and the remediation to the errors could be through individualized drills. Xie and Jiang [30] had opined that foreign language learning is a process of hypothesis and trial and error occurrence is inevitable. This could be why we still had some that got the answer wrong despite the high percentage that got correct answer

Table 1: Responses to the test on the use of 'many' with nouns

CLASS JSS	TEST ITEM	TOTAL ER	C R		W R	
			F	%	F	%
1.	36	100	89	89	11	11
2.	36	100	93	93	7	7

Item 37 contained in Table 2 dealt with the use of 'a lot of' with nouns. A sentence was constructed with 'a lot of' and the students were required to fill in the gap with either 'have' or 'has'. With the explanation given in Table 1, 'have' becomes the appropriate answer to the question. A poor performance was recorded here. In J.S.S. 1, 32% of the respondents answered correctly and 68% gave wrong answers.

In JSS 2, 40% answered correctly and 60% gave wrong answers. There is a significant error margin. This calls for group and remediation exercises. The reasons for the failure may be traced to developmental errors resulting from the nature of the target language and L1 interference predicted earlier. It has been opined that learners of English as a second language find its learning difficult because sudden break from a familiar language to a non – familiar one can be difficult thus various errors ranging from phonetical error to syntactic, morphological to semantic errors are committed (Fotiloro, 2015). Fema (2003) was of the view that the major cause of the errors in English used by Nigerians can be attributed to the interference of mother tongue with the English language. He added that students often use their native language or mother tongue in all their interactions and English is only used within the four walls of the classrooms and ends there. Sa'ad & Usman (2014) in their study opined that it is clear that the negative attitude of students toward learning of English language is one of the causes of poor performance in the subject (English language). Language learners usually make errors in English in general, and syntax and pronunciation in particular often as a result of the influence of their L1 (Khan, 2003). Some studies have supported the idea of mother-tongue interferences in different language aspects and skills (Bhela, 1999; Khan, 2005; Khan, 2009; Nitsche, Kidd

& Serratrice, 2009). It is important to remember that the mistakes in the target language are not committed only due to the linguistic reasons, but also due to socio- linguistic and psycho-linguistic reasons (Khan, 2011).

Table 2: Responses to the test on the use of 'a lot of' with nouns.

CLASS J.S.S.	TEST ITEM	TOTAL E. R	C. R		W. R	
			F	%	F	%
1	37	100	32	32	68	68
2	37	100	40	40	60	60

Table 3 covering items 38, 39 and 40 tested the use of 'neither', 'either' and 'each' with nouns. Sentences were constructed involving the stated quatitatives. The respondents were required to fill in the blank spaces with either 'is' or 'are' the given options. 'Either', 'neither', 'each' when used with nouns normally occur with singular nouns. Singular nouns take singular verbs. Hence, the correct response for the items 38 - 40 should be 'is'.

Out of the total number of responses in JSS 1, 45% were right, the remaining 55% were wrong. In JSS 2, 50% were right and 50% wrong. The poor performance showed a significant error margin which needs group and collective remedial drills. The errors are traceable to developmental problems of L2 resulting from insufficient mastery of the rules governing the use of the quantitative predicted earlier.

Table 3: Responses to the Test on the Use of 'Neither', 'Either' and 'Each' with Nouns.

CLASS J.S.S.	TEST ITEM	TOTAL E. R	C.R		W. R	
			F	%	F	%
1	38, 39, 40	300	135	45	165	55
2	38, 39, 40	300	150	50	150	50

Table 4 dealt with items 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 which tested the use of non-finite clause in V-ed post modifications with nouns. The non-finite clauses normally go with modifiers in -ed at the post modification position. On the whole, there are constraints on aspectual expression in V-ed post modification clauses. However, the expected answer for the items is -ed. Out of the expected responses,

only 38% gave the correct responses in JSS 1, the remaining 62% gave incorrect responses. In JSS 2, 40% answered correctly leaving 60% wrong. The performance is clearly poor.

The reasons for this poor performance could be attributed to a number of factors, namely: mother tongue inference, to a lesser extent and development error and non-mastery of the rule governing the use of the V-ed, to a larger extent as predicted earlier. Since the error margin is greater than the minimum significant error margin of 20%, it is significant enough to call for group and collective remediation exercise.

Table 4: Responses to the Test on the Use of Non-Finite Clauses in V-ed Post Modification with Nouns.

CLASS JSS	TEST ITEM	TOTAL E R	C R		W R	
			F	%	F	%
1.	41, 42, 43, 44 45	500	190	38	310	62
2.	41, 42, 43, 44, 45,	500	200	40	300	60

The research focused on the problems faced by Igbo learners of English noun post modifiers. A working cue was devised in the way of formulating three research assumptions, namely:

a) There are differences in the characteristics and structural positions of noun post modifiers in English and Igbo.
b) Igbo speakers of English have problems with the choice of appropriate noun post modifiers.
c) These differences constitute major sources of difficulties in the teaching of English to Igbo speaking students.

In view of this, there was a detailed theoretical contrastive analysis of noun post modifiers in English and Igbo. In the analysis, efforts were made to cover various aspects of post modification. There was every effort to highlight the differences and after close examination some of the differences were predicted as very inhibiting factors in the teaching and learning of English as a second language. The inhibiting influence of the first language structure and the peculiarities of the features of English language constitute the basis for determining difficulties.

A total of sixty-five test items based on the predicted areas of difficulties was constructed and administered to 200 students randomly chosen from JSS 1 and 2 in ten different secondary schools in two local government areas of Imo state. This was in an effort to confirm or reject the predictions made earlier. On the whole, from the analysis and results, the error margin was found to be often significant.

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings in the study, there are differences in the characteristics and structural position of noun post modifiers in English and Igbo. Igbo speakers of English have problems with choice of appropriate noun post modifiers. These differences constitute major source of difficulties in the teaching and learning of English by Igbo speaking students.

In attempt to assist students overcome their difficulties and to facilitate the mastery of English noun post modifiers, the researcher after identifying the difficulties, suggested some remedial measures and also made some recommendations. These include structural and sample drills very highly stressed as means of checking the problems the learners encounter. Such exercise would create lasting experiences in the children's minds. Teachers of English should have knowledge of Igbo when teaching English to their students to enable the teachers be better placed and prepared to concentrate their effort and emphasis on those areas of difficulty arising from the differences in structure between English and Igbo.

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