DEMONSTRATIVE PATTERNS IN ENGLISH AND IZHIA

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Abstract

This paper investigates the syntactic relation between the Izhia demonstratives and those of the English language, and examines how the demonstratives in both languages can enter into relationship with the nouns to form determiner phrases. The study uses the Contrastive analysis, Documentary Linguistics and the Determiner phrase Hypotheses as effective tools as well as the analytic method for identifying, predicting and generalizing syntactic structural similarities and dissimilarities, which may pose difficulties in second language learning or ease second language learning. Data used in this study were obtained through oral interviews. Demonstratives from the English perspective include; this, that, these and *ye, yehu, ndu ye and ndu yehu* from the Izhia perspective. The findings reveal that Demonstratives in both languages are functionally similar but structurally dissimilar, as the English demonstratives occur only in pre-position in their DP structures while in Izhia the reverse is the case as the demonstratives can appear in both pre-and post-positions in their DPs, and such is acceptable and grammatical in the language. On this premise, it is realized that the knowledge of the dissimilarities in the structures of the L1 and the L2 can enhance proficiency and good performance in the teaching and learning of English language as a second language. The study therefore recommends the design of a teaching mechanism that will draw learners' attention to the differences in the structure of both languages.

Key Words: Demonstratives, patterns, English, Izhia.

Introduction

Language documentation is a relatively new area of research endeavor in linguistics. According to Ogomaka (2005, p35), `In the last fifteen years, we have seen the emergence of a brand of linguistics which has come to be called documentary linguistics. It is concerned with the making and keeping of records of the world's languages and the pattern of use'. Ani (2020) is of the view that the aim of language documentary is to provide a comprehensive record of the linguistic practices characteristic of a given speech community. The major purpose being to ensure that the future generation of that speech community will have a reference material for their language and some form of linkage to their roots. Furthermore, Ani (2020) observes that Nigerian indigenous languages are at the verge of extinction courtesy of the new trend of nursery schools. One of such Nigerian indigenous languages is Izhia language. Languages are different and as a result, a second language learner may be confronted with some challenges in the process of learning the target language hence the need for a contrastive study. This study serves as a medium for the contrastive work on the area of the demonstratives in English and Izhia and how the demonstratives enters into relationship with the nouns to form determiner phrases.

Nigeria, like other countries in Africa, has many indigenous languages and like many African countries, Nigeria has adopted the English language as a second language. The language has gained the status of an official language in the country. Nigeria's national policy on education (2013) has established the use of more than one language for educational instruction. Thus, it advocates the learning of English and at least one Nigerian language at the primary school level, at which level, the learners are incapable of mastering enough of the English language and express the language poorly, especially in writing. In the words of Emenanjo (1978, p112), 'the English language should be taught early enough in our school system to allow for effective understanding and performance by the learners'. It is a fact that problems generally occur when two or more languages are brought into

contact and it is particularly the case with language learning in which two languages are involved. A typical example is English and Izhia.

Demonstratives

Demonstratives are determiners that point to a particular noun and are used to indicate closeness or farness. Eka (2018, p29) refers to demonstratives as a class of words which co-occur with nouns and express some semantic notions by limiting the meaning application of the nouns in the position they occupy. The source went on to say that demonstratives refer to words like this, that, those and these which specify a location which is relatively nearer to or further from the speaker by expressing near and distant meaning as well as indicate the number contrast. They function as pronouns by performing the duty of full noun phrases (NP) (Ndimele, 1996), and also function as determiners (DET) by specifying the range of reference of nouns by showing definiteness, indefiniteness by indicating quantity (Leech and Svarvik 2013). According to them, Demonstratives do not occupy the same position as other classes of determiners, but occur in different positions relative to one another. Tomori (1977) refers to demonstratives as items which co-occur with nouns to form noun phrases.

In the Minimalist program, demonstratives can go into relationship with a noun to form determiner phrase (DP). Anyanwu (2010) in discussion of specifier noun relations in Ngwa Igbo shows that demonstratives can function as specifiers in Igbo language and indicates that specifiers may occur pre-positions to the head in the language. Those that occur in post-position are labelled Post – N – Spec.

Ani (2020) in the discussion of demonstratives in Izhia stated that Demonstratives in Izhia can occur in both pre – and post positions in their DP system and such is grammatical and acceptable in the language. This work investigates Demonstratives in English and Izhia and how the Demonstratives could enter into relationship with nouns to form Determiner phrases.

The Izhia Language

      Izhia is the name of the people and the language they speak. The language is spoken by a population of about one hundred and eighty thousand people (180,000). The language is predominantly spoken in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. It is a dialect of Igbo language. Izhia is the 2nd largest tribe in Ebonyi State. Izhia belongs to the Igboid subgroup within the Benue Kwa in the New West Benue Congo. Pockets of Izhia speaking communities are also found in Ntezi in Ishielu Local Government of Ebonyi State as well as a village in Otukpo in Benue State.

Research Methodology

      This study targets Izhia-English bilinguals. Data for this study were gathered through oral interviews. Each interview lasted for an hour, in three different sections, within two days interval. Those interviewed include His Royal Majesty, Eze David Ogbaekirigwe, who is minimally educated in English, Dr. James Ani and Dr. Aleke Matthew. To achieve the aim of this study, the analytic method was adopted. The data was analysed in three phases; the English phase, the Izhia phase and the comparative phase. The study also translated DPs with demonstratives in Izhia language into English. It examined the different demonstratives in both languages and their processes of entering into relationship with nouns to form determiner phrases.

Determiner Phrases in English and Izhia

      Determiners are important elements in language studies. Nweze (2014) posits that a determiner remains the indicator of given new information in many languages and needs to be accounted for. Similarly, Crystal (1997) and Berk (1999) observe that a determiner is a grammatical category which includes number or rather different kinds of words that always precede a noun and an adjective. Mbah (2011, p211) observes that 'a noun cannot project into a phrase whose nucleus is a verb or a preposition'. 'A determiner is a word which signals the

presence of a noun' (Ndimele 2003, p102). According to this source, the determiner is a cover term for articles (e.g. a, an, the), demonstratives (e.g. this, that, these, those), possessives (e.g. my, our, their, his, your), quantifiers (e.g. some, every, any, much, few, a few, several) and numerals (e.g. one, two, three, first, second, third). A determiner projects into a determiner phrase by entering into a relationship with a noun. By so doing, the determiner becomes the head while the noun serves as the complement.

Uzoigwe (2011), notes that languages could have the pre-modifier where the modifier is placed before the head and a post-modifier where the modifier is after the head. According to the author, the English language is a good example of a pre-modifier situation. This means that, in the English language, the determiners occur in pre-position. It is important to note that singular determiners take singular NP complements and plural determiners take plural NP complements.

In linguistics, a determiner phrase (DP) is a type of phrase posited by some theories of syntax. Determination itself is a concept employed in linguistic studies to explain the kind of referent a noun phrase has. According to Crystal (2003), determiners exhibit a sensitivity of structuring the real world entities that speakers and hearers exploit when making their references unambiguous to one another.

Scholars, particularly in the field of syntax, have made several contributions to the area. Crystal (2008) says that a phrase is a single element of structure typically containing more than one word which often leaves the subject-predicate structure typically of clauses. Smith (1969) notes that the determiner is the head that projects into a determiner phrase (DP). It identifies the DP-hypothesis as strictly a noun phrase (NP), since NP is a constituent of DP assumed to be a complement determiner. The determiner is a part of the larger umbrella of modifiers.

Determiners are one of the elements that are found within the domain of the NP. Erichsen (2010) defines determiner as a type of word that refers to a noun and determines which object, person or other

entity the noun represents. Also, the author asserts that determiners have little meaning apart from the nouns they refer to. In some languages like English, French and Spanish, determiners are usually placed before the noun, in other words, they are pre-posed before the noun they refer to, while in other languages like Igbo, Yoruba, Anaang, Ibibio and Izhia, they are post-posed. The above description is a justification of the intent behind this study, to ascertain the structural position of demonstratives in Izhia in comparison with those of the English language.

In Izhia, determiners invariably exceed the nouns they refer to. This is to say that, the determiners in Izhia, occur in post-position with the exception of the demonstratives which can occur in both positions. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, the focus is on one aspect of the determiners: demonstratives.

i.	This man	*Nwoke ye*
ii.	That boy	*Nwata nwoke yehu*
iii.	These books	*Ekwo ndu ye*
iv.	Those buildings	*Ulo ndu yehu*

The above instances have the same distributions and hence can be considered determiner phrases with demonstratives in both languages.

English demonstratives such as 'this, that, those, these' are words that describe the names of persons or things in relation to the distance of a person or thing from where the speaker is, and   Izhia demonstratives; *ye* (this), *yehu* (that), *ndu ye* (these), *ndu yehu* (those) also play same role in the language. In Izhia, demonstratives operate at distributional equivalence with those of English language. For instance;

i.	Uwe m bu *ye*	–	Cloth my is this	This is my cloth
ii.	Ekwo m bu *yehu*	–	Book my is that	That is my book
iii.	Ulo anyi bu *ndu ye*	–	Houses our are these	These are our houses
iv.	Unwata m bu *ndu yehu*	–	Children my are those	Those are my children

Theoretical Bases

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Approach, also incorporated is the Documentary Linguistics and the Determiner phrase Hypotheses.

The Contrastive Analysis Approach

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is pedagogic, as it compares and contrasts the similarities and differences in languages and the proper assessment with an adequate method of diagnosing the problems. Contrastive analysis hypothesis is dependent on the belief that languages are different, and because of the differences, the second language learner may face difficulties in the process of learning the target language. The language "contrast" is a juxtaposition or comparison showing striking differences. Wilkins (1972) posits that if a contrastive study of the target language and that of the mother tongue is carried out, then the dissimilarities and similarities between the two languages can be revealed or shown. The essence of contrastive analysis is, therefore, to help in second language learning, revealing the similarities and dissimilarities that exist between two or more languages which make it possible to understand possible learning problems and possibly proffer solutions to them.

The status accorded English as a second language in Nigeria makes it pertinent for the continual need for contrastive studies of this language and Nigerian languages to investigate some of the learning problems of the speakers of such languages. Since English is accorded the prestige of an official language in the country, there is need to carry out contrastive studies on a Nigerian language like Izhia and the second language with which it exists to ascertain their processes of learning the possible difficulties. It is worthy of note that in learning a foreign language, contrastive analysis is very necessary since structure and culture of languages differ (Udegbuna, 2004). These dissimilarities pose a lot of problems to learners of languages. To lessen learners' difficulties, it is pertinent to compare and contrast the similarities and

dissimilarities of the languages concerned, hence the need for this study.

The Determiner Phrase Hypotheses

Syntactic theory is highly intricate and always evolving. Since the publication of Chomskey's syntactic structure (1957) and Aspect of the theory of syntax (1965), syntactic theory has been in a steady state of change and development. Chomskey's Lectures on Government and Binding (1981) and Minimalist Program (1995) paved way to re-interpreting several syntactic concepts and terms and introducing new ones.

One of the recently introduced concepts in the long diversified and rich timeline of the tradition of syntactic analysis is the notion of the determiner phrase contained in Abney's (1987) DP hypothesis. This hypothesis claims that what we traditionally think of as a noun phrase (NP) (e.g. the book) has the determiner as its head not the noun as earlier canvassed by Chomskey and others. In this kind of analysis, the NP is, in fact, a complement of the DP. Radford (2009: p, 454) succinctly states that within this hypothesis, 'all definite expression have the status of DPs-not just nominals like 'the President' which contains an overt determiner, but also proper names like 'John'. Now, within the framework of minimalist syntax, this hypothesis has become the standard for syntactic analysis. This is to say that within the minimalist syntax, the DP hypothesis has become the standard for syntactic analysis. In this study, the DP hypothesis is used in the analyses of DPs in two natural languages focusing on the demonstrative determiners to find out any possible cross-linguistic application of this hypothesis. The DP is not an alternative but a mandatory hypothesis for a consistent and valid syntactic analysis of the English sentence (Sideeg, 2016). According to Bernstein (2001; p,537), 'the DP hypothesis resolves what was a theoretical inconsistency between the treatment of noun phrases and clauses; that is, according to this approach, nouns like verbs project

into a functional category. The head as a syntactic category is the most important element from a grammatical point of view'.

Documentary Linguistics

The term "Language Documentation" can be interpreted as denoting both a process and a result. In the result reading, language documentation has been defined as a lasting, multipurpose record of a language in the sense of a "comprehensive corpus of primary data which leaves nothing to be desired by later generations wanting to explore whatever aspect of the language they are interested in" (Himmelmann 2006). In other words, the result of language documentation as a record is both accessible and likely to be of interest to various potential users – including members of the speech community and their descendants, historians, anthropologists, people involved in education and language planning, and of course linguists with a multiple of different research interests and a variety of theoretical persuasions (Nichols, 1992). In the extreme case, an existing record of the language may form the basis for revitalization efforts even in the absence of fluent first-language speakers.

Documentary linguistics is a sub-discipline of linguistics that aims to provide a comprehensive record of the linguistic practices characteristic of a given speech community. The aim of a language documentation is to provide a comprehensive record of the linguistics practice characteristic of a given speech community (Himmelmann, 2006).

It is a subfield of linguistic which aims at describing the grammar and use of human languages. Language documentation seeks to create as thorough a record as possible of a speech community for both posterity and language revitalization (Wilkins, 1992). The record can be public or private depending on the needs of the community and the purpose of the documentation. In practice, language documentation can range from solo linguistics anthropological field

work to the creation of vast online archives that contain dozens of different languages such as first voice.

Language documentation provides a firmer foundation for linguistic analysis in that, it creates a corpus of materials in the language. The materials in quest can range from vocabularies list and grammar rules to children's books and translated works. These materials can then support claims about the structure of the language and its usage. This should be seen as a basic taxomonic task for linguists identifying the range of languages and the characteristics.

Language documentation can be beneficial to individuals who would like to teach or learn an endangered language. If a language has limited documentation, this also limits how it can be used in a language revitalization context. Teaching with documentation and linguistic field notes can provide more contexts for those teaching the language and can add information they were not aware of (Nichols, 1992).

Documentation can be useful for understanding culture and heritage as well as learning the language. Important components when teaching a language include; listening, reading, speaking, writing and cultural components. Documentation gives resources to further skills for learning a language. Language documentation and teaching have a relationship because if there are no fluent speakers of a language, documentation can be used as a teaching resource.

English Demonstratives

A Demonstrative is a determiner or a pronoun that points to a particular noun or to the noun it replaces. There are four demonstratives in English: the 'near' demonstratives, this and these, and the 'far' demonstratives, that and those. This and that are singular: while these and those are plural.

A demonstrative pronoun distinguishes its antecedents from similar things. When a demonstrative comes before a noun, it is sometimes called a demonstrative adjective or demonstrative determiner. Demonstratives show where an object, event or person is in

relation to the speaker. They can refer to physical closeness or distance. When talking about events, the near demonstratives are often used to refer to the present while the far demonstratives often refer to the past.

Izhia Demonstratives

Demonstrative belongs to the lexical category of pronouns and behave in different ways. A pronoun is generally used to replace a noun. Pronouns substitute for nouns as they occur in the same syntactic environment where nouns and noun phrases do (Ndimele, 1996).

A crucial role that demonstratives play in language is to instruct the interlocutor to maintain attention to the intended referent. In a sentence, demonstratives can function as determiners or as pronouns. Demonstratives in Izhia are *ye* and *yehu* (singular), and *ndu ye* and *ndu yehu* (plural) (Aleke 2023). According to the source, while *ye* and *ndu ye* are used to show nearness, *yehu* and *ndu yehu* are used to demonstrate farness.

Comparative Analysis of English and Izhia Demonstratives

In this section, we will compare the functions and structures of demonstratives in the two languages, English and Izhia, to see if they are similar or different in form, so as to predict the possible needs of the learners.

Below are examples of English and Izhia demonstratives in their DP structures:

	Demonstratives	Determiner	Phrase structures
1	*ye* (this)	*Uwe m bu ye*	*Cloth my is this* (this is my cloth)
		ye bu uwe m	*This is cloth my* (this is my cloth)
2	*yehu* (that)	*Ekwo m bu yehu*	*Book my is that* (that is my book)
		ye hu bu ekwo m	*That is book my* (that is my book)
3	*ndu ye* (these)	*Ulo anyi bu ndu ye*	*House our are these* (these are our houses)

		Ndu ye bu ulo anyi	*These are house our* (these are our houses)
4	*ndu yehu* (those)	*Unwata m bu ndu yehu*	*Children my are those* (those are my children)
		Ndu yehu bu unwata m-	*Those are children my* (those are my children)

The above DPs show that demonstratives in both languages are used to portray closeness and farness as well as to augur singularity and plurality respectively. This means that demonstratives in the two languages under discourse are functionally similar but structurally dissimilar as English demonstratives appear only pre-posed while Izhia demonstratives occur in both pre- and post-positions. This means that Izhia demonstratives, unlike their English counterparts, can pre- and post-modify a noun in their DP structures, and such is grammatical and acceptable in the language. This, in some cases, leads to ungrammatical constructions among Izhia English bilinguals. Similarly, from the above examples, it is shown that the English demonstratives pre-modify the persons, things and the distance to the right, while Izhia demonstratives can pre- and post-modify persons, things and the distance to both left and right.

Furthermore, in examples 1a and b, the Izhia demonstrative *ye,* whether at the pre- or post-position, is the head of the phrases while the remaining part of the phrases form their respective complements. The English demonstrative 'this' is also the head of the phrases while the rest part of the phrase is the complement. In example 2a and b, the Izhia demonstrative *yehu* remains the head of the constructions despite its position of occurrence, while its English equivalent 'that' maintains its pre-position structure as the head of the construction. In examples 3a and b, the Izhia demonstrative *ndu ye* pre- and post-modify the noun *ulo* and is the head of the phrases while its English counterpart 'these' only pre-modifies the noun in the phrase.

In examples 4a and b, the Izhia demonstrative *ndu yehu* is the head of the phrases whether in pre- or post-positions while its English

counterpart, 'those' as the head, can only pre-modify a noun. This simply means that English demonstratives, unlike their Izhia counterparts, can only pre-modify nouns while the Izhia demonstratives can pre- and post-modify nouns in their DP structures.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

This study has examined syntactically the English and Izhia demonstratives in their DP structures. The paper notes that the demonstratives are words that describe the names of persons, or things in relation to the distance of a person or thing from where the speaker is, and that they can as well particularize things. This is why Uzoigwe (2011) says that demonstratives perform the function of particularizing or 'definitizing' their nouns. The study made it clear that Izhia demonstratives operate at distributional equivalence with those of their English counterparts. In addition, demonstratives in both languages specify or particularize the nouns they deal with either to their right in the English or to their left or right in Izhia. In other words, the structural positions of demonstratives in the two languages differ considerably (though similar in one hand, since Izhia demonstratives can occur in both positions), judging from the X-bar syntactic model which defines languages as either left-branching or right-branching because of the placement of the complements modifying and qualifying the head phrase (Uzoigwe, 2011).

The Izhia language is considered a right-branching language which has its determiners post-posed after the nouns they modify. This means that demonstratives, like other determiners in Izhia, are post-posed in their DP structures, (though they can occur both in pre- and post-position) while in the English language, the reverse is the case as they (demonstratives) occur only in pre-position. These differences are what inform the learning difficulties of L2 learners and should be the focus of L2 teachers. Teachers should draw up a course plan to see that these differences are efficiently handled in order to make the learners proficient in both the source and the target language.

Finally, the study suggests that further studies of this kind should be carried out on the form of Izhia and English in such areas as semantics and syntax to broaden the horizon on the areas of similarities and dissimilarities in their functions and structure.

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