A Contrastive Study of the Nominal Group Structure Types in Jukun and English

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Abstract
Contrastive linguistics is geared towards unveiling the intricacies that differentiate between two languages, and hence the contrastive study of the nominal group structures of English and Jukun. Systemic Functional linguistics served as the theoretical framework. The data for the study were gathered from a native speaker of the Jukun language and some English texts such as Osisanwo (1999) and Ojo (2011) served as sources of English data. The native speaker told three stories, out of which one was selected for analysis. The structures of all the nominal groups in the clauses were identified and a contrastive analysis was done in the two languages. It was discovered that the two languages have same number of nominal group structural elements which include the four nominal group structural formulas ‘mhq’, ‘h’, ‘mh’ and ‘hq’. Also, the results show that the two languages were similar in ‘hq’ and ‘h’ structural formulas but differed in ‘mhq’ and ‘mh’. The English language structural elements in the nominal groups begin with modifier, headwords and qualifier but the Jukun start with headword, modifier and the qualifier. It means the Jukun has the ‘hmq’, ‘hm’ ‘hq’ and ‘h’ structural formulas. The study also revealed that nouns, pronouns and nominalisations can function as the subject, complement, and the adjuncts of the two languages. The findings further showed that at the clausal level, the elements that constitute the structure of the clauses of the two languages appear to be similar all the time. Likewise, words, groups, and clauses as shown from the results are sometimes embedded in the structures. Thus, making the nominal group structures complex and it could pose possible areas of learning difficulties. The learning difficulties are found to result from the differences that exist among languages and could be overcome when proper measures are put in place.

Keywords: contrastive linguistics, nominal group, Jukun language, structural elements
INTRODUCTION
The learning of a second language becomes very paramount and veritable, especially the English language. This is because English is the language of colonial authorities and was enforced upon the colonies. For the fact that English was made the language of colonial business, that is, the language of communication in the colonies, its learning was made mandatory. But it must be understood that the language is alien and was transplanted in an entire new environment, coming along with its culture and different worldviews, considering the fact that it is the most geographically dispersed language in the world and the mediating language in the face of heterogeneity and linguistic plurality in Nigeria.

This therefore makes the learning of English a challenge because the learner already has a first language with its internalised systems. It is the language through which he/she expresses his/her world view. This study also takes into consideration the challenges foreign learners of Jukun may encounter when trying to learn it. It will go a long way to unveil the intricacies that foreign learners may encounter on the course of carrying out researches in it. The contrastive study of languages arose in Nigeria as a result of pertinent issues such as trade, colonial and missionary activities between Europeans and Nigerians.

This study is situated within the purview of Hallidyan’s Systemic Functional Linguistics. This endeavour will enable the researcher to figure out areas of convergences and divergences in the two languages in the nominal groups structures of Jukun and English to give useful hints into the second language learning and will enable the learner to begin to notice ways in which structures in his/her mother tongue are similar or different in the target language. The outcome of this study will serve as a catalyst for further researches in both Jukun and English.

The Jukun Language
The Jukun language is a member of the Nigritic or Niger-Congo linguistic family (Ajiduku, 2013). They are found in the Benue valley of the middle belt region of Nigeria. According to Smith (1972), they were a powerful nation during the seventeenth century. The language is spoken approximately by over a million persons (not from official record) scattered in many states of Nigeria ranging from Taraba, Benue, Plateau, Gombe, and Adamawa. The Jukun according to myths are said to have migrated from the Middle East to their present location. In their present location, they established one of the strongest kingdoms referred to as the Great Kwararáfa Kingdom (Akoga, 2012).

The present research will be carried out in the Jukun-Ekpan dialect. Jukun-Ekpan is one of the numerous dialects of the Jukun language. It is mostly spoken in Wukari, Donga, Takum Local Governments of Taraba State and in some parts of Benue State. In Benue, they are popularly referred to as Ekpán-Nyonyo. Jukun-Ekpán, as speculated, is the second largest group, among the several Jukun dialects after Wapan. In the aspect of contact with the English language therefore, the Jukun
had their contacts with the English language in three different phases; the period of European traders from 1883-1899, the period of colonial administration from 1900-1920s and the advent of European missionaries from 1904-1934, (Akoga, 2012).

Some studies have been carried out in Jukun, ranging from syntactic, phonological, morphological, literary and so forth. Few works have also been carried out on contrastive analysis. Shimizu (1980) asserts that in Jukun, there are Noun Phrases (NP), Aspect Marker (AM), Verb Phrase (VP), Adverbial (Ad) and Modals (Md). He clearly points out the noun phrases with their attributes. In his assertion, determiners ‘zun’ (indefinite article), ‘ra’, (definite article) and ‘ri’ (referential) are some of the attributes of the noun phrase. Dative noun phrase (NPd), accusative noun phrase (NPa), and complement noun phrase (NPc). This shows clearly that his work is essential to this present research since it captures the whole network of different forms of noun phrases functioning as NG elements in Jukun language.

Ajiduku (2013) identifies noun phrases, verb phrases, adjectival phrases, prepositional phrases as the type of phrases found in Jukun sentences. He opines that phrases contain more than one word and yet operate as one unit with one meaning in a grammatical unit. He adds that a phrase forms part of a sentence but when it is removed from the sentence, it does not make a complete sense. The reason is because a phrase contains neither subject nor finite verb. He states that noun phrases behave like nouns and they can either be subject or object of the verb as the case may be. It is only a few individuals that have carried out a contrastive study on the Jukun and English languages.

Fakuade (2007) contrasts stress and intonation of Jukun and English. He opines that mother tongue influence play a major role in negative transfer from the first language when the two languages (Native Language, NL and Target Language, TL) have structural differences. As rightly mentioned, the sound system of any language is subdivided into the segmental and supra-segmental levels. He therefore based his work on the supra-segmental level, contrasting the Jukun stress and intonation placement with that of English. He concludes that Jukun learners of English may encounter some difficulties in learning English because of the absence of stress and intonation in Jukun.

Another Jukun contrastivist is Magaji (2017), carried out a contrastive study of some dialects of Jukun. Four dialects were selected and contrasted side by side, essentially to examine the varieties of the Jukun language with the aim of determining whether a standard variety actually exists as claimed. The import of the contrastive study is to discover where the dialect converge and diverge. The findings show that although mutual intelligibility exists among the dialects, most of them vary in terms of words used and their meanings. The study finally concludes that there is no standard variety, and for this, a standard dialect to be chosen and measures should be taken.
to design orthographies for the dialect most widely spoken and speakers of that variety encourage others to accept it.

Alli (2016) and Alli et al (2017) are both contrastive works on some structures of English and Jukun. Whereas Alli et al (2017) is an elaborate work on the contrastive analysis of the elements of clause structures of both Jukun and English, Alli (2016) on the other hand is a contrastive analysis of nominal group structure of the two languages. The findings from Alli et al show that at the clausal level there are no predictable areas of learning difficulties. This is because the structures of most clauses from the data contain the subject, predicator, complement and the adjunct, complying with the standard structure of a normal clause. It further buttresses that the elements are serially arranged in the SPCA order. Sometimes some clauses may have one or two or three elements absent in the structure while in other instances more than one element could feature in a clause (multiplicity of elements) and there also exist instances where elements could be mobile in nature (mobility of elements). The study therefore focuses on identifying the elements that constitute the Jukun clause. In the same vein, Alli (2016), an earlier contrastive study, is an unpublished M.A. Thesis on nominal group structures of Jukun and English, a research work of one of the researchers, which forms the basis for the present study. Other experienced grammarians contribute tremendously to the development of the study, rendering it one of the best works on the NG structures of Jukun and English. It is needful, at this juncture to specify the elements that constitute the nominal group of all human languages. The structure of nominal groups of most languages contains; modifier, head and qualifier, thus, (m) h (q), Ojo (2011), Osisanwo (1999). The ‘h’ is not bracketed because it is the most important and obligatory element in the nominal group structure. Both ‘m’ and ‘q’ are bracketed to indicate that they are optional elements in the nominal group structures.

Headwords
Ojo (2011) defines the head word as the noun which is being modified or qualified by other element in the group. Without the headword, the nominal group cannot be realised. That means it is the only obligatory element in the group. The elements that are used to realise the headwords are nouns, pronouns and nominalisations in English, just like headwords are realised by nouns, pronouns and nominalisations.

Modifiers
Modifier refers to all elements coming before the headword in the NG structure. They are sometimes refers to as pre-head elements. Some scholars postulate that a word or group of words that does the work of an adjective is known as enlargement or attribute.

Qualifiers in the structure of the nominal groups
The qualifier is the third linguistic element in the NG structure. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) view the qualifier as the complement functional entity by the
conflation of Head and Thing. The Thing according to them is the embedded item which may be clause phrase, or word. Bloor and Bloor (2004) view it differently. To them, the qualifier is performing the sixth function in the NG structure. This is better illustrated below:

Deitic Numerative Epithet Classifier These two new light Thing Qualifier ball in the field

Contrastive Linguistics
There are many views on what really contrastive linguistics is. The many views as observed under this study are those that hinge on the fact that C.L. is an inter-linguistic phenomenon, a system, a psycho-socio linguistic study, methodological endeavour of contrasting languages and many others. Johansson (2000) views contrastive linguistics as the systematic comparison of two or more languages, the main intention of the comparativist is to describe the similarities and differences of the two languages. He further states that the objective of the comparison may vary: language comparison is of great interest in a theoretical as well as an applied perspective. It should be able to reveal the universality and the specificity of the two languages. This is therefore important both for the understanding of language in general and for the study of the individual languages compared. This point is made bare by James (1980) as the ability for an individual or a community to possess two languages.

According to James, CA is concerned about how a monolingual becomes bilingual. Kurtes (2006) in his own submission defines contrastive analysis traditionally as a method which helps the analyst to ascertain in which aspects the two languages are alike and in which they differ. Kurtes’ claims led to the distinction between theoretical and applied contrastive studies. Theoretical studies relate more closely to language typology, essentially non-directional, where universal properties of languages are shared by the two languages and areas of their manifestation are brought to the barest, while applied studies are the application of the manifested differences to pedagogy. In this situation therefore, they were said to be directional, as they “start from a property or expression in one language and investigate its manifestation in another”.

In both cases, they are all contrastivists. The work of Kurtes (2006) is elaborate and captures the essence of carrying out any contrastive analysis of any language. Even though it does not capture the psychological relevance of contrastive analysis where the learner’s linguistic behaviour are brought to the fore but to a large extent, this has a closer link to the cultural behaviour of the language learner. The learner’s linguistic behaviour is relevant in contrastive analysis because they already have their first language with its internalised structure; that needs to be synchronised with the target language. If this is not done, there will be linguistic displacement which may affect the outcome of the contrastive effort. In fact Lado, who is the proponent of CA, posits that different cultures should be compared in order to unveil reasons behind certain linguistic behaviours (Lado, 1957).
Gast (2012) on the other hand, approaches the study of contrastive linguistics in two dimensional ways; narrowly and broadly. He defines contrastive linguistics narrowly as a branch of comparative linguistics that is concerned with pairs of languages which are ‘socio-culturally linked. Gast (2012) also broadly defines, ‘contrastive linguistics’ as comparative studies of (small) groups (rather than just pairs) of languages, and that those they require a socio-cultural link between them. On this view, contrastive linguistics is a special case of theoretical or descriptive approach to language study where one language is distinguished from other types of languages.

The most important thing to note in CA is that at the end it will serve pedagogic purpose. Every language has its own specific structure. Similarities between the two languages will cause no difficulties; that make the transfer a positive one, but if there are differences, it will cause some form of learning difficulties, that makes it a negative transfer (or ‘interference’). The student’s learning task can therefore roughly be defined as the sum of the differences between the two languages. It is the task of the teacher to observe areas of learning difficulties and design materials that will cater for them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
This study is carried out within the Systemic Functional Linguistics’ scale and category theoretical framework. Halliday (1994) proposes four categories-unit, structure, class and system, and scales relating them – rank, exponence and delicacy. This study focuses on the scale of delicacy in the two languages under review. The scale of delicacy as described by Morley (1985) is the term that determines “the degree of detail in the analysis of grammatical systems”. Butler (1985) defines it as “the degree of detail in which a structure is specified and where it is concerned.” According to Matthiessen (1989), scale of delicacy orders system on a cline from the most general system option to the most specific ones and at the same time orders realisation of the options according to their systemic environment. Berry (1979:29) submits that scale of delicacy “enables the simplest minimal segmentation to be borne in mind while the most complex segmentation is being carried out. It therefore shows that rank, exponence, and delicacy are the scales used by M. A. K. Halliday (1976). His scale of inclusion includes a “sentence” via “clause-group” and “word” to a “morpheme”. Three degrees of delicacy are talked about namely; primary, secondary and tertiary degrees of delicacy.

The primary degree of delicacy is essentially the first level of analysis of a structure. In clause structure, the clausal elements are the primary delicacy of the clause. Halliday separates the primary delicacy from the secondary delicacy (Morley: 1985). Primary delicacy gives account of the minimum number of elements necessary to account for the operation of a given unit. For instance, the SPCA constituents in the clause rank can be classified as the primary degree. The secondary delicacy gives a more detail or delicate description of the extended system that differentiates the elements.
This is more detailed compared to the primary delicacy. This is a further analysis of the immediate constituents of the clause. In other words, it is the further degree of specificity of the clause constituent and when this level of specificity occurs, it is the secondary degree of delicacy. For example:

\[ S \quad P \quad C \]

///The lady with the baby/ /is/ /our principal///

Using the sentence above, we could generate another level or degree of analysis at the subject position and this will be the secondary degree of delicacy to the clause as can be seen below:

\[ m \quad h \quad q \]

\[ The \quad lady \quad with \quad the \quad baby \]

The subject of that sentence is ‘the lady with the baby’ is a nominal group with MHQ structure. This process of going further to split the subject of the clause into its nominal group structure is the secondary degree of delicacy.

Morley (1985), states that the third degree of delicacy is tertiary degree. It is the more detailed and extended analysis carried out after the secondary delicacy in a clause. For example:

//The king died yesterday//

This is a clause with SPA structure that can further be divided into groups, which can also be divided into four words. At the subject of the clause, we have nominal group /the king/, ‘mh’ structure, which can further be realisable as ‘the’-determiner, ‘king’-noun. This additional categorisation is the tertiary degree of delicacy.

**METHODOLOGY**

The instrument for the collection of data was face to face interview method (unstructured) and the research was subjected to qualitative analysis through scales and categories theoretical framework. Since it is a contrastive study, a story was sampled out from many told by an elderly woman and other examples taken out of grammar texts such as Osisanwo (1999) and Ojo (2011) serve as the English data. English scholars such as Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Bloor and Bloor (2004), Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) and host of others also served as source of relevant English data for this research. Other Jukun data are taken from examples used by Shimizu (1980) and Ajiduku (2013). Also words from four hundred wordlist translated into Ekpan-Jukun dialect served as source of data. The researcher is also a speaker of the Jukun language.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

In order to determine the constituent of the nominal group structure of the Jukun and English, the data was subjected for detailed analysis using the scale and category theoretical framework. Since it is a contrastive study, contrastive statements are made at the end of each analysis in order to show its compliance with the mhq model, as earlier mentioned. They are structured differently from language to language. In this section, we are going to see how these elements are arranged in Jukun and English and apply them to our data to see how they differ. We may only look at one example from each structure type. The mhq structural...
formula can be used to generate four different NG structures as we are going to see.

**Nominal Group Structural Types**

There are many assumptions about how words are structured in a sentence. The first assumption is the unstructured-string hypothesis, which assumes that words occur in linear order but not randomly and can easily lead to ambiguity. The second assumption is the phrase or group structure hypothesis. This shows that words are not arbitrarily strung together in a language; they are organised based on relationship. The structures of one language might be different from the structures of another depending sometimes on their socio-cultural relationships, (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Languages that are culturally related through their linguistic phyla sometimes have structures that appear similar and those that are culturally dispersed may have different structures. The structure of nominal groups of most languages contains; modifier, head and qualifier, thus, (m) h (q), Ojo (2011), Osisanwo (1999). The ‘h’ is not bracketed because it is the most important and obligatory element in the nominal group structure. Both ‘m’ and ‘q’ are bracketed to indicate that they are optional elements. As much as all the languages of the world contain these elements, their structuring may differ from one language to another, and the differences in structures are assumed to pose great problems to language learning.

The **h-type in Jukun and English**

The h-type structure shows that the headword is the only element in this structure.

**Jukun:** Our data shows that Jukun has the h-type NG functioning in its clause structure. The bulk of the NG extracted in the data is replete with this type of formula. Below are some examples:

```
h /Könkön/‘ Lion’
```

Others are;
Idi (house), imba (boy), miskin (boys), ibu (he), ame (me), and so forth.

**English:** The h-type structure is also found in the English data. For instance,

```
h /Abraham/
```

Lagos, Ibadan, John, David etc, are examples of h-type structure.

**Contrastive Statement:** The Jukun data shows that both nouns and pronouns can be used in the h-type NG. It is evident that what is pre-modified in English can be left without a modifier in Jukun; no wonder the Jukun are found to transfer this problem in their usage of English. For instance, a Jukun may say “run! Lion is coming”. They omit the definite article ‘the’

The **mh-type in Jukun and English**

**Jukun:** The Jukun language has this type of structure as identified in the data but are structured differently. The modifier comes after the headword, the Jukun has it as ‘hm’ NG structure, thus;

```
h m /Nùkpí m/ Story my ‘my story’
```

**Ukin** unye
Day one
‘one day’

Below are other examples:
*Imbánáhénè* (boy this) this boy
*Imbánáhánè* (boy that) that boy
*Miskinbáhénè* (boy these) these boys
*Miskinbáhánè* (boy those) those boys.

**English:** The English data has this type of structure. In English the NG structure are arranged beginning with the modifier followed by the headword. For instance;

```
the carpenter
```

**Contrastive Statement:** In this case, the Jukun arranges the structure of its NG different from English. Jukun begins with the headword followed by the modifier. The first example realises the modifier with a definite article and the second example is realised by a numeral. But English begins with the modifier followed by the headword. The modifiers are realised in English the same way as Jukun.

**The hq-type in Jukun and English**

**Jukun:** Our Jukun data shows that this type of structure is found in Jukun nominal group structures. For instance,

```
h q
/Ükyén mbè Ibwén/  
‘tail of goat’
```

**English:** In English, this kind of structure exists. For instance;

```
h q
/students on scholarship/  
```

More examples can be found below:

```
/Imba idinakaiften/

/Boy first house/
```

```
/Takarda iskimbe teburl  
Books on table  
‘books on the table’
```

**Contrastive Statement:** The Jukun language has the hq-type structure with an embedded prepositional group as the qualifier of the noun head. The preposition ‘mbè’, stands for ‘of or for’. It does not have exact preposition similar to that of English, but the English language has preposition such as ‘for’ or ‘of’ performing different functions. Other example has no position explicitly written but can be inferred.

**The mhq-type in Jukun and English**

**Jukun:** This is a complete structure where all the elements of NG are found. The Jukun data shows this type of structure exists but it is arranged differently, thus; ‘hmq’. For instance;

```
h m q
ákén shishi mbè Kónkòn  
words pity of Lion  
‘compassionate plea of the lion’
```

Other examples:

**Miji sisi mbe uwom**
Food sweet of wife my
‘The sweet food from my wife’
This kind of structure is also found in the English data, thus;

```
m h q
/The writing of the work/ was easy.
```

As given above, ‘the’ is an article, ‘writing’ is a noun and ‘of the work’ is the qualifier.

**Contrastive Statement:** The Jukun nominal group in this case is the representation of a complete NG structure. It shows that Jukun, just as
other languages, has all the elements functioning in its NG structure. The English also, in this situation has a similar structure. This shows that the two languages can have all the element of nominal group structure functioning in their NG structures but the difference is that while the Jukun has hmq, the English language is mhq.

Other NG structural types
The modifier, even though optional in the structure of the NG, it is fairly elaborate. The modifier is composed of four element of structure as earlier exemplified. They are; DOEN. The DOEN bring about the multiplicity of the modifier structure, hence, mmh, mmmh and others

The mmh structural type in English and Jukun

**English**

m m h

The first (goalkeeper)

**Jukun**

h m m m

*(Mbaidun) aho nakafiten ne*

‘The first old man’

Contrastive Statement: The English and Jukun languages show that there are instances of many modifier occurring in the NG structure.

**The mmmh-type structure English and Jukun**

**English**

m m m h

The first old man

**Jukun**

h m m m

*(Mbaidun) aho nakafiten ne*

‘The first old man’

Contrastive Statement: the two languages have this type of structure but their arrangements differ. The Jukun structures are hmm and hmmm, the English are mmh and mmmh

**FINDINGS**

This study focuses on the nominal group structures of Jukun and English. In the course of this research, it is discovered that there exist four basic nominal group structures in the Jukun and English language. This shows that the two languages appear to have same number of elements functioning in the structure of their nominal groups. The four NG structures of the two languages are derived from the mhq nominal group formula. Other structures such as ‘h’, ‘mh’ and ‘hq’ are derived from the ‘mhq’. The result of the study shows that the two languages are similar in the ‘hq’ and the ‘h’ structural formulas. They differ in the ‘mhq’ and the ‘mh’ structural formula. The reason has been that while the English language structures its elements in the NG structure beginning with modifier headwords and qualifier, the Jukun structure starts with headwords, modifier and the qualifier.

However, it means the Jukun has the the ‘hmq’, ‘hm’ ‘hq’ and ‘h’ structural formulas. Our findings also show that nouns, pronouns can function as the subject, complement, and the adjuncts (as
temporary noun heads and an element of another group) in the structure of the clause of both languages. The element of the nominal groups are derived from the same word classes such as nouns, pronouns and nominalisation and their morphological processes seems to be similar but with slight differences in terms of plural morphemes where Jukun allows two affixes to indicate plural in one word. This is not possible in English. The findings still shows that at the clausal level, the elements that constitute the structure of the clause of the two languages appear to be similar all the time.

CONCLUSION
The following conclusion may be drawn from the findings of this research. At the clausal level there are no predictable areas of learning difficulties but at nominal groups structure there are predictable areas of learning difficulties since the nominal group do not have similar structures. When a single word is featuring as the headword in a nominal group in both languages, the structure is always similar. But when more than one word is used, most especially when it involves the ‘mh’ and ‘mhq’ structures, then the structure becomes more complex. The structuring appear to be more complex at the qualifier position as some of the data embeds rank-shifted clause which function there as a completive of a prepositional element. What we have observed from the comparative study of nominal group structures of Jukun and English definitely has some implications for the teaching of English as a second language. As a language in contact, the teaching and learning of the second language should be given due consideration. In this respect, the following, among others, should be noted.

In the first place, there are no predictable areas of difficulties when it involves only the ‘h’ and ‘hq’ structures since both languages have this structures in their NGs. Nevertheless, the qualifier as earlier stated is complex. Also, some form of solution to the difficulties encountered should be proffered. Firstly, the learners should be exposed acculturation process where they learn the second language in a setting that appears to be like native speakers’. This is because the nominal group structure of a particular language is part and parcel of its culture and exposure to such culture will enhance quicker acquisition. Furthermore, the learners should be exposed to the literature of the Jukun and the English language. The teaching programme of the two languages should incorporate literary works such poetry, plays and storytelling because literature is language in use. For the learners to enhance communicative competence, language teachers should not neglect the aspect of literature in our school system. Language teachers should have full knowledge of the two languages compared. This will go a long way to make the teaching and learning of the two languages effective, productive and interesting.

References


