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## A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF THE MORPHOLOGY OF IGBO AND TAROK LANGAUGES

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### **Abstract**

*Contrastive analysis is an important tool, which applied linguistics use in solving specific language problems. It was developed by structural grammarians to fulfill the need for finding out the problems any second language learner may encounter. Notwithstanding the controversy over its usefulness, its importance is still recognize in the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages. In view of this importance, the paper is on the contrastive study of the morphology of Igbo and Tarok. The paper base its analysis on the standard variety of the Igbo language and the hill Tarok language in Langtang. The following aspect of contrast are the focus of the paper classification of morpheme, morphological construction. Focusing on the above aspect of contrast the presenter observed that: There are differences and similarities in the classes types of morphemes of Igbo and Tarok. There are differences and similarities in the morphological construction Igbo and Tarok. There are differences and similarities in the morphological process of Igbo and Tarok. Base on the differences and similarities predicted, the researcher was able to recommend possible solutions for second language teachers.*

**Keywords: Contrastive, Morphology, Langauges**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Contrastive analysis is one of the tools which applied linguistics uses for the purpose of analysis. James (1983:4) identifies the two tools as "contrastive and error analysis", These two analysis are called tools because they are used to solve certain problems encountered in pedagogy, contrastive analysis is a tool developed by structural grammarians as a means of finding out problems any target language learner may encounter in language. This is because language is inherently variable.

Many scholars has defined contrastive analysis in different ways, but their definitions are geared towards the same goal. Establishing one of the views, Johnson (1975:14) define contrastive analysis as "a series of statements about similarities and differences between two languages". This simple means that the work of an applied linguists in using this tools is to find out the differences and similarities in languages. Lado's Study was, among other things, based on the assumption that individuals tend to transfer the forms, meaning and the distributions of forms and d meanings of their culture when attempting to speak a foreign language and act in the culture. Lado (1957), states:

Contrastive analysis is a scientific description of language to be learned, carefully compared with the parallel description of the native language of the learner and on the basis of this comparison the learners problems are predicted.

This definition tells us that if any two languages can be compared to prediction any problem a learner of one can encounter in the other, that it must be done in - scientific description. He went further to say that the problems of learning a second language (L2) do not arise as a result of difficulty in the features of the new language itself but because of the already exiting habits formed as a result of first language.

In like manner, Richard et al (1985), see contrastive analysis as:

A comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages for example the sound system or the grammatical system".

They further stated that the practice is based on the following assumptions.

- a) The main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from the first language.
- B) Teaching materials can be make use of contrastive analysis to reduce the effect of interference.
- c) These difficulties can be predicted by contrastive analysis.

He is of the opinion that before doing contrastive analysis that one have to determine the factor for his contrast. Is it in the area of:

- . Phonology
- . Phonotactic
- . Morphology
- .Lexical
- . Syntax

.Semantic and so on.

His view suggested that contrastive analysis is essential in language teaching. It is based on the above factors that the presenter decided to write on the contrastive study of the morphology of Igbo and Tarok languages. The writer wish to find out the level of morphological interference that will hinder Tarok students in the learning of Igbo as a second language (L2).

Since Richard (1985) in one of their assumptions stated that contrastive analysis can be used as a teaching material to reduce the effect of interference, the presenter wish to look at the following aspects of morphological contrast to reduce these interference

1. Classification of morpheme.
2. Morphological construction of Igbo and Tarok

### **Brief History Languages of Igbo and Tarok.**

The Tarok people of Langtang North and South Local Government Area are found in the Southern East of Jos, a distance of about 240 kilometer from Jos. According to geographical Zwalwap (1995) the Tarok tribe falls within two contrasting configurations, (that is the hill and plane Tarok) infact this division was the hand work of the British colonial masters during the portioning of Africa. This paper is going to concentrate on the hill Tarok whose former headquarter was at Shandam before their native authority were created with its headquarters at Langtang.

Contrastively, the Igbo people are highly populated and mostly found in such states like: Abia, Anambra, Delta, Ebony, Enugu and Imo states. There are sparce population of Igbo in states like River, Bendel and Cross Rivers etc.

### **Tarok and Igbo Languages.**

Language is derived from 'Lingua', which is the Latin word for tongue, which in turn emphasizes speech as the basic thing in languages. It is said to be one of the important characteristic forms of human behavior. This is why it is species specific. As a human attribute, language has been defined in different ways by different scholars and linguists. Some sees it as a means of communication. This is not the only means of communication. This is because signs and symbols can be used for communication.

Moris (1968:1) observed that language is a system of inter-locking system" Adding, "by a system we mean a constant pattern of regularities". This implied that in linguistics when a system is formed with other symbols that it become a regularity.

On the other hand, Block and Triger (1942) see languages as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operate". That definition brought out about five characteristics of language:

- I. Language is systematic.
- II. It is arbitrary
- III. It is basically vocal
- iv. It is a production of society (social phenomenon)
- v. It is used for co-operation.

Taking language as a production of society, we should note that language and society related. Since that is so, the role of language in any given society like Tarok and Igbo language cannot be over emphasize.

Zwalwap (1995:3 11) claim that "Tarok people had their origin from the Eastern central or Southern African and that linguistically, the language belongs to the Benue Congo group.

Contrastively some linguists observed that Igbo belongs to the "Kwa" language family.

### **Concept of Morphology**

There are certain observable linguistic rules that are followed in the formation at words of any given language. That is to say that words are not formed at random but must be done in line with certain basic principles. There is an aspect of linguistics which is responsible for these rules. This aspects of linguistics is known as morphology.

Morphology is the study of morpheme and how they are combine to form words. Lyon (1968:95) view morphology as "that branch of linguistics that deals with the internal structure of words"

Now if morphology is the study of morpheme and are combine to form words, what then is morpheme? Morpheme is the smallest grammatical sound unit or it is the smallest unit of a sound that is grammatically pertinent. Morpheme has other branches:

1. Classification of morpheme.

Generally, these are two major branches or types of morpheme: (A) Free Morpheme

(B) Bound Morpheme.

A. Free morpheme: There are morphemes that can exist in isolation. In other word, they are morphemes that exist independently and could have semantic and grammatical meaning without combining them with other morphemes. They can be called independent morpheme. This type of

morpheme can be found in both Tarok and Igbo languages see example 1 from Tarok.

'agar'	'shoulder'
Ishi	'head'
Awo	'hand'
Afu	'stomach'
Igum	'navel'
Ifir	'nails'
Imar	'millet'
Evan	'yam'
Iva	'dog'
Alumwa	'groundnut'
Example 2 from Igbo language	
Isi	'head'
Aka	'hand'
Ako	'stomach'
Mvo	'nail'
Ji	'yam'
Ahuekere/opapa	'groundnut'
Nkita	'dog'

In Igbo free morpheme can accept another free morpheme in the formation of new words

Example 3 in Igbo.

- i. Mbubere + anya-'Mbubereanva'

'mbubere' means 'hairs' while 'anya' means 'eye'

When the two are conjoin together, it give you what we called eyelid in English.

ii. "Anya' + 'ukwu' will give you 'anyuukwu'

Which means greedy'. when 'anya' which is 'eye' is combined with 'ukwu'

which is 'big' you get what we called 'anyuukwu' which means 'greedy.

When 'di' which means 'husband' is combine with 'nta' which is hunt,' it gives, you

What is called 'dinta' which means 'hunter.

Similarly, this can be found in Tarok language where two words can be joined together to get a new word. Example 4 in Tarok.

1. akpap' +t iwu' - 'akpapiwu'. The word 'akpap' means hair' while iwu' stands for 'eye'. And when the two are joined together, it became 'akpapiwu' which means 'eye lid' or 'eye lashes'.

I. Ifan + ga+ ashar - ifanga-ashar' ifan' is a word for 'finger' and 'ga' has no meaning while 'ashar' which mean 'foot and when joined together gives you 'ifanga-ashar' which means 'toe. Free morphemes can stand as a word and can act as a root or stem where other morphemes can be affixed to for the formation of another word. Examples can be cited in Igbo language. Example 5 ,

ii. je-E + je + ghi - 'ejeghi - 'didn't go"E is a prefix, infinitive or impersonal which work hand in hand with 'ghi' to bring out the negative in the word 'ejeghi' which means 'didn't go'. These two affixes are attached in front and at the back of the morpheme 'je' in order to get the new word 'ejeghi.

I . ri-I+ri+ ela+ri 'irielari'

Here the infinitive or prefix 'I' is attached to the front of the morpheme or root 'ri' which means 'eat'. Another affix is added to the 'iri' to get is riel' which means ate' which now become the stem and the final affix which is suffix ri is added to

get 'irielari' which means 'eaten'

In Tarok however, this is not possible rather other morphemes can be conjoin to form phrases but not words. Example 6.

i. ga Cit kan'-gone.

Here 'ga' stands for 'go'cit which is written is writing separate from 'ga, Cir which is written separate from 'ga' should be 'ga'cit' to bring the meaning word must be written separately from the other unlike in Igbo where they are W which is gone'. The 'kan' in the phrase shows the past participle of the word go but each word must be written separately from the other unlike in Igbo where they are written together. '

ii. kwalk cit kan"swum'.

Here 'kwak' which is swim' is written separate from cit (i.e. kwak cit which me Swam'). And 'kan' is written separate again to bring out the past participle (1e. kwat kan' which means 'swum'). So looking at this the presenter observe that you cannot hold any of these word to be either the root or stem morpheme.

## **B. BOUND MORPHEME**

Bound morphemes are dependent or subordinate to free morphemes b. morphemes are only recognized when conjoined to other morphemes in form of new words (i.e. their function depend on their attachment to other morphemes)

Examples of Bound morpheme can be found in both Igbo and Tarok languages

In Igbo, bound morpheme can never be written separate from the word are attached to. Example 7 in Igbo.

- i. Chu'-'fetch' = 'churu'-'fetched 'ru' is a bound morpheme which is the past tense 'ed' and can never be separated from 'chu' in writing, otherwise the meaning will not be there to give you 'fetched'
- ii. ga' -'go'- 'agaghi'- didn't go'. In this word the first 'a' though a prefix infinitive or impersonal must be there for the meaning of 'ghi' which is didn't or 'negative' to come out. Therefore, 'a' and ghi are bound morpheme that can never be spearted from 'ga' which means 'go'. Contrastively bound morpheme in Tarok are more or less an enclitics. Example 8.

ga cit-'came'

cu cit- 'arrived'

'cit' in those two phrases shows the past tense marker 'ed' in English while the two words 'ga' which means 'come' and 'cu' which means 'arrive' are present form of those words respectively.

yen char -a girl"

ovan char'-girls

Char-girl

In these examples 'yen' means 'one', 'ovan' stands for 'more' than 'one' and 'and' 'char' is neither for 'one' or 'more'. The presenter observed that 'cit' 'yen', and 'ovan' are enclitics but not bound morphemes because they are written separately to the morphemes they are suppose to be attached to.

Bound morphemes or affixes can be classified into four:

a. Prefix

B. Infix

c. Interfix

d. Suffix

Prefixes: These are bound morphemes that occurs only before other morphemes. It is the only bound morpheme that can be found in Tarok language.

Example 9 inTarok.

Nkwak-to swim

Mpa cit - fetched

The 'n' in 'nkwak' which means 'to swim' is a prefix and must be three to give 'nkwak' which means 'to swim'. The 'n' can never be written separate. Also 'm' in 'mpa cit' can never be written separate. The 'm' existence in 'mpa' contributes to the meaning of 'cit' which is the past tense 'ed' in the word 'fetched'!

Similarly, this prefixes are plenty in Igbo language. Example 10 in Igbo

I. Iwe - 'to take'

ii. Iri - 'to eat'

iii. Eri- eat'

iv. Agba - 'run'

v. Igba - 'to run'

Those underlined sound are some prefixes that can be found in Igbo. Here 'I in 'iwe', Tin in, and T'igba' means 'to'. Prefixes in both languages can never be written separately from the word they are attach to.

B. Infixes: These are bound morphemes/affixes that are inserted into other morphemes but not in between morphemes. This can be found in Igbo.

Example 11 in Igbo

i. Agahiela - has gone astray gangs.

'hie' which is mistake' is the infix in the word 'agahiela', looking at this, one will find that 'hie' is not in the middle of the morpheme 'agahiela' because 'aga' has three sounds

(a + g + a) and 'la' has only two sounds (l + a) 'la'

ii. Emehiela- done wrong. The 'hie' is also an infix meaning as above

iii. mmemina' -'eliminate'

mi is an infix found between 'mme' and 'na' and its meaning comes out only when it is affixed between 'mme' and 'na' to get mmemina meaning 'eliminate',

X. Interfix, These are bound morphemes that can be found in between the morphemes they are attached to. The morpheme must be equally separated, before interfix can come at the middle. Also each separate part must be a free morpheme. A clear example can be found in Igbo language. Example 12 in Igbo

'anu'-'meat'

'anu'-'meat'

anu + m + anu = anumanu = animal

'Anumanu' which is 'animals'. The first 'anu' can stand alone while the second 'anu' can also stand alone and each has its individual meaning as 'meat'. Looking at this, we find out that the insertion of 'm' at the middle brought out another meaning of the morpheme from 'meat' to 'animal'.

However, this cannot be found in Tarok language. Although it seems, there but there is none because their writings are in phrase form but not in morphological form. Example 13 in Tarok.

- i. ugwar mi ucer- 'nursing mother.

The 'mi' is never an interfix because everything is written separately,'

- ii. ga cen sit- visited.

We observed that 'cen' is not an interfix because the morphemes are written in phrase form but not as a single word.

d. Suffixed: These are bound morphemes or affixes that occurs after the root or stem of a word. It is the last affix that is attached to the end of a morpheme or word. This can be found in Igbo, Example 14 in Igbo."

- i. agaghi' -didn't go'

- ii. agabelari has completed'

- iii. agamielari' - 'has gone far

The 'ghi and 'ri' are the last affixes in those morpheme and cannot allow any other affixes to come after those suffixes.

On the other hand this is not obtained in Tarok language

## 2. Morphological construction

This deals with how morphemes are constructed. It can be continuous or no continues constituent.

### A. Continuous constituent morphemes.

Morpheme is said to be in continuous construction when there is no intervening morpheme, that may contribute to the meaning of such morpheme in a word. This can be found in both Igbo and Tarok languages. Example 15 in Igbo.

- i. Churu – 'fetched'

- ii. Ichu – 'to fetch'

- iii. Kwuru – 'talked'

- iv. Riri – 'ate'

There are two different morphemes from each word. It could either be prefix/infinitive which stands for to and the root morpheme or the suffix which is the past tense marker and the root morpheme as the case with 'churu kwuru' and 'riri'

Similarly this type of morphological construction can be found in Tarok language. Example 16 in Tarok

- i. Akasuwa - 'market'
- ii. Igon - 'branch'

There are two morphemes in each word and there is no intervening morphemes. The only difference in construction of morpheme in Tarok and in Igbo is that, that of Tarok prefix in the above examples has no grammatical meaning.

#### B. Non continuous constituent

Morpheme is said to be non-continuous in construction if there is intervening morpheme. These morphemes must contribute to the grammatical meaning of the other. This can be found in the two languages. Examples 17 in Igbo.

- I. Agaghi' - 'didn't go'
- II. Agala' - don't go'
- III. Ekwuola'- 'don't say'

In the above examples, the meaning of the suffix can never be completed without the prefix 'a' or 'e' where the root morphemes are infixes in them. More so, this is obtained in Tarok language. Example 18 in Tarok.

- I. mpa cit' - 'fetched'

The past tense marker 'cit' in Tarok has no meaning without the prefix 'm' in mpa. Therefore 'm' and 'cit' constitute the tense marker in the above phrase. Finally in the course of this paper, the writer observed that there are differences and similarities in the morphological structures of Igbo and Tarok languages.

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.**

The findings in this paper shows the following:

1. The way free morphemes stand in Igbo to act as root or stem where other morphemes can be affixed for the formation of new words are not the same With Tarok.
2. Since no two languages can exhibit the same morphological structure, the
  - a) While Igbo bound morphemes are bounded to either the root or stem paper identified that: morphemes that Tarok bound morphemes are not.

The infixes in Igbo are found inside the verb while that of Tarok are separate.

The interfix in Igbo are inserted at the middle of the morphemes a that of Tarok is at the middle of two different morphemes.

Suffixes in Igbo are always the last bound morpheme of any word or free morpheme but in Tarok it is not so.

### **CONCLUSION.**

No two languages are the same. It is because of these difference that applied linguistics use contrastive analysis as one of its tools in solving certain language problems which a learner of any language may encounter. When these learning problems are identified, possible solutions are provided.

Using applied linguistics tools, the presenter identified some significant differences in the morphological construction of Tarok with those of Igbo. They are as follows:

1. The internal structure of free morphemes of Tarok and Igbo are not the same.
2. While the internal structure of Igbo bound morphemes are bounded, that the internal structure of Tarok bound morphemes are not bounded like:

Igbo: 'agaruola' - 'has reached'

Tarok: kwak cit kan -'swum'

These observations will help us as teachers of the Igbo language to language two (L2) learners to predict the problems, which the Tarok students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin will encounter and therefore, prepared the presenter to solves problems as it arises

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