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ASSESSING INFLUENCE OF TERA MORPHOSYNTAX ON LEARNING ENGLISH WORDS AND SENTENCES AMONG TERA STUDENTS IN SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN GOMBE STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the situation of English language learning among Tera students at various tertiary institutions in Gombe state, Nigeria. It mainly focused on how the morphosyntax of Tera interfere in the process of learning the construction of English words and sentences. The research objectives specifically focus to: analyse the word and sentence formation processes of Tera language; identify the areas of similarity and dissimilarity between Tera and English words and sentences; identify the major challenges of Tera speakers in constructing English words and sentences to proffer possible solutions to overcome them. The study used observation and descriptive survey methods as the research design. However, the target population of the research is students of high institutions of learning in Gombe state Nigeria. Structured questionnaire and interview were used for data collection while both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed for the analysis. The research finding reveals that both Tera and English largely operate on mixed-type morphological system. That is to say, agglutination, synthetic and polysynthetic methods are largely realized in the two languages. Nonetheless, the canonical syntactic structure of Tera and English are proven to be subject-verb-object (SVO) yet, Tera exhibits unique syntactic rules when the transformed words undergo

Keywords: L1 Tera, L2 English, Learning process, Interference, morphosyntax, tonal/stress clash.

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conjugation process in some instances. Importantly to note, Tera and English have different rules in constructing Interrogative sentences. Equally, Tera being a tonal language, tonal change largely reflects in its morphosyntax. The findings of the study therefore helps by: revealing the complexities of Tera word and sentence formation processes; understanding the areas of similarities and dissimilarities between Tera and English language words and sentences; explaining the implication of Tera morphosyntax complexity on learning English words and sentences among Tera students in Gombe state. By extention, the research findings can further help the generality of L1 Tera leaners of L2 English with important tips on morphosyntax interference to overcome in their learning process.

Introduction

Language is used to express thought Delbio, R., Abilasha, A. & Ilankumaran, M. (2018)

Generally, Language learning is a process of achieving linguistics competence as well as communicative competence in a language that is associated with certain challenges. Many attributes have been hypothesized as the causes of those learning predicaments by scholars. However, scholars broadly categorise the learning situation into two as those challenges typically attached to first language learning, and those linked to second language learning, under which the present study is anchored. This calls for different attempts to expatiate them. Mother tongue as defined Adegbite (2004), refers to the language which a group of people considered being inhabitants of an area acquired in the early years and which eventually becomes their natural instrument of thoughts and communication. Nonetheless, one may also be a native speaker of more than one language if all of the languages were learned without formal education, such as through cultural immersion before puberty (Oluwole, 2008). Second language on the other hand, simply refers to the additional language learned especially, through formal education for the purpose of formal communication. It should be noted that central aim of learning second language is to communicate using the target language, while accuracy and fluency gradually takes shape as the learner gradually makes progress.

While morphology deals with science of word and syntax concerns with the study of sentence structure, the term morphosyntax anchor on such situation whereby the form of a word may be affected by the syntactic construction in which the word is used (Katamba, 1989). It is further elucidated that word can be seen as a representation of a lexeme that is associated with certain morpho-syntactic properties as noun, verb, adjective, tense, gender and number amongst. Therefore, morphosyntax is the analysis of internal structure of utterance, both above the word level and below it. In this sense, morphosyntax is intimately linked with morphology and syntax. Combining morphology and syntax is grounded on the fact grammatical constructions involve in both. For

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example, the parts of speech (nouns, verbs) are distinguished by their distribution in the sentences (syntax) as well as by the shape of words (morphology).

Tera people (who call themselves Nyimatli) dominantly reside mainly in the northern and central parts of Gombe State in Northeast Nigeria (Babayo, 2000). They number up to 200,000 with their mother tongue used in family and village life and in local markets; they use Hausa as their language for wider communication, but increasingly, English features in higher levels of education and in new business evolving around computing. Hausa is generally used in their education and worship and in the city life of Gombe. Remarkably, they are among the educated ethnic groups who interact with the Westerners since early 18th Century through trade and missionary activities. This led to the British and Foreign Bible Society published a 'tentative' translation of the Gospel of John in Tera around 1930. Though Tera people are known to be literate largely, only a handful number of attempts have been proffered in the 1990s to record their history and orthographic predicaments, but no appreciable attention is forthcoming to address their morphosyntax, talk more of second language learning situation. Therefore, this study aims to examine the challenges of Tera students second language learners of English language especially, their ability to construct English words and sentences.

Typologically, Tera language like English, largely employs isolating (also called analytic), agglutination and fusional. Isolating contains only word that consists of a single (root) morpheme with no affixes, and categories such as number and tense are expressed by a separate word. For instance, both English and Tera express futurity using isolating system as demonstrated in the following table:

Table 1: the table showing isolating examples in Tera and English

Language	Typologcical class	Example
English	Isolating	I will come, we shall learn, Musa will pay
Tera	Isolating	Ngadha bha, cem kada shogha, Musa kada biya

Tables 1 above presents examples of isolating in Tera and English respectively. It has been demonstrated that is possible to have the process in which expressions are grammatically and acceptably rendered with only root words un-affixed in both the languages under study. This explains a similarity of morphosyntax between the Tera and English.

Agglutination, which defines the instances whereby a language has words which can contain several morphemes, yet easily divided into their component parts (normally a root and affixes). Each affixes clearly identifiable and typically represents a single grammatical category or meaning. Both English and Tera have these instances in derivatives as will be presented in the table below:

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Table 1: the table showing agglutinating examples in Tera and English

Language	Typologcical class	Example
English	Agglutination	Village → Villages, dance→ dances→ dancing
Tera	Agglutination	Zumdi→ zumdan, bhekhi→bhekhti→bekhtan tuki→tukti→tuktan, shogari→ shogaran

The table above presents examples of agglutination in both Tera and English through which a root has been derived by attaching affixes. Notably, while English largely derives both nouns and verbs, Tera in contrast mostly derives verbs. This reserves the fact that plurality in Tera is mostly expressed through isolating system.

Fusional language in the other hand consists of several morphemes, but in contrast to agglutinating systems, the affixes mark several grammatical categories simultaneously. That is to say, the distinction between agglutinating and fusional is that, each affix in the former normally contains only one element of grammatical or lexical meaning, while in the latter affixes normally have several simultaneous functions. The English pronoun system, are largely fusional since a single form can be used to indicate person, number, gender, and case. The word "him", for instance, is used to express a third person, singular, masculine direct object. This is similarly found in Tera pronoun. For instance, the word "bharan" (him) stands for third person, singular and possessive. Such linguistic evidence of similarities and dissimilarities between Tera and English has being the trigger for grounding this research to examine the L1 Tera interference to L2 English learning situation of Tera students.

Aim and Objectives of the Research

This study aims to primarily interrogate the Influence of morphosyntax of Tera language on learning English language. The study will thus, specifically look into the following objectives:

1. To analyse the words formation processes of Tera language.
2. To analyse the sentences structure of Tera language.
3. To identify the areas of similarity and dissimilarity between Tera and English morphosyntax.
4. To examine the implication of complexity of Tera morphosyntax on constructing words and sentences of English among Tera students in selected tertiary institutions in Gombe state.
5. To assess the major challenges of Tera speakers in constructing English words and sentences.
6. To suggest possible solutions to overcome the challenges.

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Review of Related Literature

This section is devoted for review of related literature to the present study which comprises those works on concepts as well as empirical reviews backed with the theoretical reviews in the study. Some of the aspects studied on morphosyntax include ellipsis (omission of structures), redundancy (repetition of elements) and concordance (normative coincidence of certain grammatical process through accidents). Likewise, from morphosyntax, comparisons can be made about the different grammatical process through the different existing languages, and with that, discover the underlying mechanisms in the language (Mauricio & Abella, 2015).

Pucilowsiki (2013) sees mophosyntax as traditionally marked aspect in the verb more than in time, especially for constructions of transitive verbs. The research findings reveals that several serial verbs (sequences of verbs without coordination or subordination marks) in Ho language grammaticalized becoming constructions auxiliary verbs.

In another attempt, Rissman, Legendre & Landau (2013) also viewed morphosyntax as the knowledge of auxiliary verb be (being) of children is specific to that element, and it develops slowly. In the same vein, in an awareness- raising experiment, the researchers showed that children aged 2 and 3 represent the forms are and is (verbal forms of being as auxiliary) as part of an abstract syntactic framework. This implies that knowledge of morphosyntax has enormouse impact in second language learning.

Markman (2005) argued that morphosyntactic relationships are expressed through grammatical forms (grammatical accidents, mode and verbal aspect) these forms very depending on the characteristics of each language. He further added that different languages can be classified according to morphosyntactic procedures to relate the words within sentence or sentences: insulators, binders, inflectional and polysynthetic. Moreover, he stated that, in the agglutinating languages morphosyntactic relationships are expressed through the use of affixes, which are particles added to the root of a word to form a new one or change its grammatical form. In conclusion, he stated parataxis and hypotaxis which are another subject in the field of morphosyntax. Parataxis (Coordination) and hypotaxis (subordination) in the first, there is no hierarchy between two or more clauses, which occurs in the hypotaxis relation in the type of morphosyntactic marks that are used in each case. This can be seen in the following sentences:

"After you eat, wash the dishes"

"Eat, and then wash the dishes"

It has been exemplified that meaning of both sentences above are similar. However, in the first, subordination is used and in the second, coordination. Among other things, this implies that the verb takes the conjunctive mode in the first adoration and the indication in the second.

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From the pedagogical perspective, which is close to the present study, Adebayo (2008) examines the influence of mother tongue on performance of English knowledge in junior School Certificate Examination in Western Nigeria. He found that mother tongue influences the students' performance in English language in junior School Certificate Examination in Western Nigeria.

Studies on morphosyntax of Nigeria's native languages have been carried out by a quiet number of scholars. These include Adewole, Ubaidallah and Mohammed (2022), who analyses Hausa and English morphosyntax contrastively. They acknowledge seven varieties of Hausa but anchored their study around north central, where a significant differences is realised. Their findings reveal that generalisation of Hausa rules in constructing English language often renders structures ungrammatical. This finding reflects in Abdulmalik (2017), who conducted a Morphosyntactic Analysis of Fulfulde Voice and Tense in Adamawa dialect, which situates to Yola South.

Another perspective taken on morphosyntax studies is pedagogic, who view mother tongue as potentially valuable learning resource instead of more source of interference opens up greater pedagogical space, and hence may bear constructive implications for L2 instruction, especially in homogenous context (He, 2012; Delbio, R., Abilasha, A. & Ilankumaran, M. 2018). Building further to "advantage only" approaches, Manrique (2013) investigates the advantage of L1 experience in learning L2. The study focused on influence of oral production and its consequences in constructing L2 words and sentences. On examining some students of foreign language, it is discovered that mispronunciation and grammatical errors are the most common types of interference between the mother tongue and the target language.

With regard to Tera specific studies, few attempts have been made by scholars and students with very insignificant linguistic studies forthcoming on second language learning situation. While some these studies are not yet published, others have well been published in a book forms and journals. British and Foreign Bible Society published a Tera 'tentative' translation of the Gospel of John in 1930s in an alphabet that included many letters with a subscript dot. A catechism and song book followed shortly afterwards in stenciled form, but the typing omitted all subscript dots. Though the missionary policies relegated the use of local languages like Tera in preference for developing Hausa as a lingua franca. Eventually, in the 1990s, a local inspector of education, Ayuba Nyagham, introduced a number of changes to the letters of the Tera alphabet, matching it closer to the Hausa, which the whole educated population could read. Moreover, another local teacher, in person of Jauro Maila advanced Tera literature to broadcast news in Tera on the radio in the 2000s with some papers using alphabet that resembled Nyagham's. Another notable attempt was recorded by a graduate student called Isioma Jideonwo during her national Youth Corps program. She published a book in English, "Let's Develop Nyamatli Language" in 2004, which delves into the history, culture and language of Tera people. Equally, the alphabet she uses resembles those of Nyagham and Maila. In another

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remarkable attempt, the Bishop of Gombe moved for production of Bible translations in the local languages of Gombe State which include Tera. This effort eventually led to orthography workshop held in 2004, at which Tera was represented to produce their 'working' orthography.

Nevertheless, the most recent published linguistic study on Tera language was carried out in 2018 by one Rebecca Yunusa Walker entitled "Alternation of the Velar Phonemes of the Tera Language". The researcher examined the alternations that occur in the velar fricatives of Tera. Among other discoveries, the result of her finding showed that the velar phonemes of Tera undergo labialization. Of all the studies reviewed above, the researchers are however yet to find any study devoted to explore the morphological processes of Tera language, neither do anyone discusses second language leaning situation of Tera students. It therefore becomes interesting for the researchers to conduct this study, aiming at filling the research gap identified through their interaction with the existing literature.

Problem Statement/Justification

The advancement of education and globalization phenomena led to a fast growing need for good communication skills in order to achieve the goal of raising communication abilities. It is also quintessential that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning by appropriate construction of words and sentences. Notably, many researches have been conducted on second language learning, looking at various perspectives. While some scholars focus on teaching and assessment of the learners' proficiency, others pay attention to the challenges connected to the mother tongue influence. For instance, the studies in Nigeria have dwelled reasonably on the interference of the native languages but mostly centered on the three major languages as Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages respectively. This trend of scholarship disregards the minority languages like Tera of insight to their peculiar challenges. The deposition that Tera people use Hausa as language of wider communication does not prevent their real mother tongue interference in learning English. Tera as one of the minority languages in Nigeria did not receive appreciable number of linguistic studies especially, around the morphology and syntax, talk more of influence of the concepts on their ability to learn English as a national language. This research therefore sets to explore the extent of inference Tera people have in learning English language through morphosyntax.

Research Methodology

This section presents the procedures used in carrying out the study which comprise the research design; area of study; population; sampling techniques and procedure; method of data collection and analysis, as well as the research instruments with justification of their validation.

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Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey design. This research design is robust and flexible enough to enable the researcher obtain information from a selected sample that the findings can be used to represent the entire population for the purpose of generalisation (Nwoga, 2006; Nwoke, 1999). The design is considered suitable here since the research seeks information on the influence of mother tongue morphosyntax of some Tera students on their ability to construct English words and sentences in both reading and writing to make a generic inference on the entire Tera students.

Population of the Study and Population Area

The population for the study comprises Tera students in tertiary institutions in Gombe state. The population of public tertiary institutions in Gombe state are nine (9). The institutions comprise Gombe state university, Federal college of education, Gombe State College of Education and Legal Studies Nafada, College of education Billiri, Federal Univerisy of Kashere, State polytechnic Bajoga, Federal college of Horticulture Dadinkowa, Gombe state Nursing school and Federal polytechnic Kaltungo.

Sample and Sampling technique

The study employed multistage sampling technique using first stage simple random sampling technique to select 70% of the students from the nine (9) public tertiary institutions in Gombe state through hat and drawn. This technique allows each tertiary institution equal probability of being selected. The second stage, proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted to select sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection

Instrument for data collection are structured questionnaire, where the students were asked to transform some words and sentences written in both the Tera and English language respectively. This instrument were supplemented with verbal interview to verify some information from the respondents.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument were subjected to face and content validity process through expert judgment. Copies of the instruments were given to experts in educational pedagogical research. These experts have reviewed the items, comment on suitability before some copies are produced and used for the pilot study and the main research.

Reliability of the Instrument

The researchers conducted a pilot study to obtain the internal consistency reliability of the instrument. Fifty (50) copies of the instruments were first administered to fifty (50) sampled Tera students at the tertiary institution not part of the sampled schools for the

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study. The data that was generated through this trial testing was computed using the Cronbach Alpha method. Upon getting satisfied with result of the pilot study, the research proper was successfully conducted thereafter hence, the result have been obtained.

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study was collected directly from the respondents by the researchers through personal contact and also the services of the research assistants who were employed to assist in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires to the respondents. However, a verbal interview was equally conducted.

Method of Data Analysis

The method of analysis in the study is both quantitative and descriptive qualitative for the purpose of inferential analysis. While the quantitative method helps the researchers understand the students' performance numerically, the qualitative guides in judging their areas of strength and weakness in the obtained information. The descriptive method is mainly concerned with describing events information or knowledge as they are, without any manipulation of what caused the event or what is being observed (Ali, 2006). The method provides that a sampled data would be used to generalise inference about the general data under a study. Therefore, the researchers firstly analyse the data obtained from the field, before making remark on the strength and weakness of the students in learning the English words and sentences. A skim was prepared with the aid of experts in Tera language, hence used in assessing the responses. The performance is categorized in to grades. Outstanding grade ranges between 80-100, Excellent 70-80, Very good 50-70, Good 40-50, fair 30-40 and low with 0-30.

DATA ANALYSIS

Having stated earlier in the methodology that the research uses both quantitative and qualitative method, the analysis is therefore carried out in the both approaches. Diagram and tables are used to present the respondents' performance quantitatively, while linguistic inquiry will further explain the performance on the perspectives taken on the questionnaire qualitatively. We present the analysis on the two approaches below.

Quantitative analysis of the respondents' performance distribution

The quantitative analysis is being classified into three major sub-categories according to the sequence of headings on the questionnaire. The data obtained from the field is organised and presented under histogram and simple statistical tools for logical presentation hence interpreted and analysed. The histogram is used to provide the summary of the responses according to the perspectives taken in the questions and extraneous variable manifested in the cause of data collection. Also simple tables have been used to further present the distribution of the respondents' performance based on

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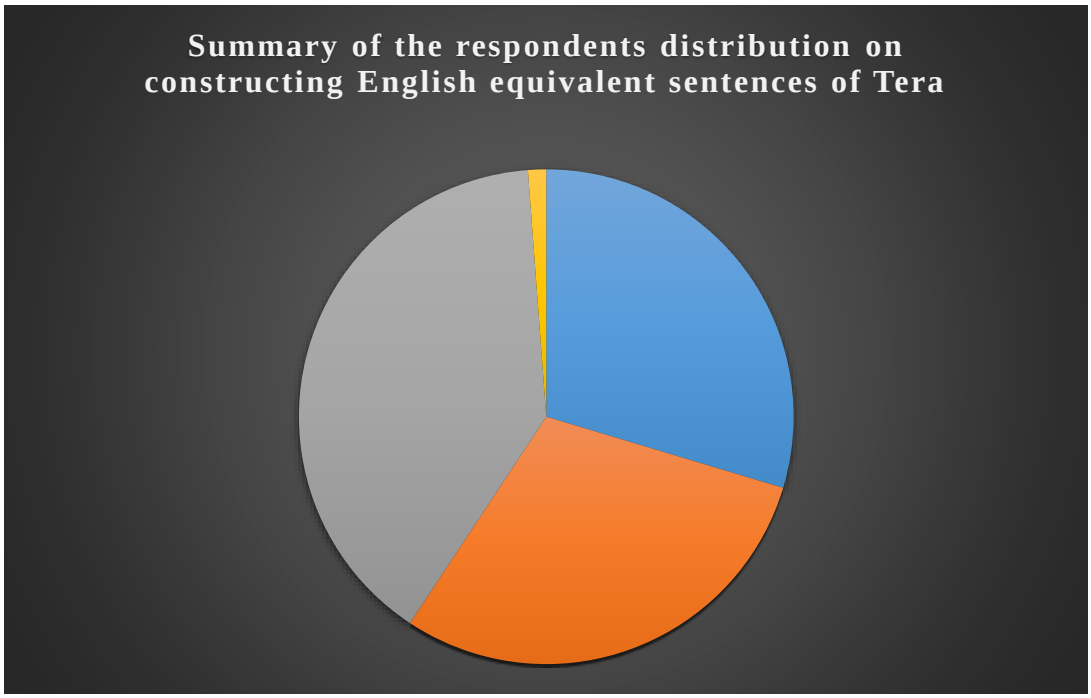
three broad classes of questions as contained on the questionnaire. The first category presents the aspect of the data obtained on sentences in simple present tense, the second category presents the responses on future tense and concord while the third part covers the responses in interrogation forms. We take these in succession below.

Figure 1: the histogram showing the summary of respondents' distribution on constructing English sentences from Tera samples



The diagram above presents the responses of Tera students obtained from the field. The ash colour which dominates 39% represents the responses for questions on the sentences in simple present/past tense, while the blue represents the responses on sentences in future tense and concord test with 33% and, 24% that is coloured gray stands for other sentences in interrogation forms. The thin yellow in-between the ash and blue with 4% represents some Hausa interference experienced by some students. The distribution for each category is further presented in tables below.

Table 1: the table showing the distribution of responses on constructing English equivalent sentences on simple present/past tense from Tera

SN	Categories of performance	Percentage
1	Outstanding	3%
2	Excellent	4%
3	Very good	21%
4	Good	34%

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5	Fair	29%
6	Low	09%
Total		100%

The table 1 above presents the distribution of responses provided on constructing corresponding English sentences to some Tera sentences in simple present/past tense by Tera students in Gombe state. The result shows that only 3% of the respondents were able to regenerate those sentences on outstanding performance that ranges between 80-100 marks. Those who responded on excellent grade are only 4% with 70-80 marks. Another class is that of the respondents who perform very good which is 50-70 marks that occupy 21% in the table. Next class is the dominant which is tagged good grade, with up to 34% that ranges between 40-50 marks. Fair class is the second top attained class with 29% that scores ranges between 30-40 which is the second least performing category.

Table 2: the table showing the distribution of responses on constructing English equivalent sentences in future tense and concord from Tera

SN	Categories of performance	Percentage
1	Outstanding	0%
2	Excellent	8%
3	Very good	16%
4	Good	39%
5	Fair	31%
6	Low	6%
Total		100%

The table 2 above contains the distribution of responses provided on reconstructing similar English sentences to some sampled Tera sentences in future tense and concord test by selected Tera students in Gombe state tertiary institutions. The result shows that all the respondents have not attain the outstanding grade which is left with 0%. Also for the respondents on excellent grade, only 8% of them were able to form the expected English sentences, scoring between 70-80 marks. Those on very good grade however are 16% that score between 50-70. Predominantly, the respondents on this perspective fall on good grade category which is 40-50 that occupy up to 39% on the table. The second top most attained class is the "fair grade" which is dominant with 31% whose score ranges between 30-40. Low class has 6% respondents whose scores fall between 00-30.

Table 3: the table showing the distribution of responses on constructing English equivalent sentences on interrogative froms in Tera

SN	Categories of performance	Percentage
1	Outstanding	1%
2	Excellent	5%

3	Very good	13%
4	Good	37%
5	Fair	34%
6	Low	6%
Total		100%

Table 3 above carries the distribution of responses of Tera students on forming equivalent English structures for some Tera interrogative sentences. The result shows that only 1% of the respondents attain the outstanding grade. However only 5% have met up with excellent grade, while 13% were able to get very good score. The categories with good grade are the dominant with 37%. Similarly, the respondents with fair grade comes next with 34% and finally, those on low grade are only 10%.

From the statistical report presented on the tables one to three above, fair and good is the most attained performance across all the tables. And also the respondents who attain 'good', whose scores ranges between 40-50 are the largest category. Besides good and fair, very good is the next attained performance according to the result presented on the tables. It is however noted that low class is the fourth attained performance. Excellent and outstanding class are proved to be least attained performance. While as low as 7% respondents attain excellent, only 1% have attain outstanding class with 0% performance in constructing sentences with future tense and Concord complications.

In view of the distribution above, the respondents have satisfactorily attempted almost all the three perspectives. It is however observed that very few of them (less than 8% performed excellently). This implies there are much areas Tera second language learners of English find easy transferring their knowledge of their L1 in learning English, as much other areas they find difficult to reconstruct English sentences from their experience of Tera. These challenges will be discussed under qualitative discussion below.

Qualitative Discussion of the respondents' performance

Having critically analysed the data collected, two issues have broadly been identified therein. While the sentence structure of both Tera and English is subject verb object (SVO), and their morphology is largely mixed type that comprise fusion, isolation and, agglutination, Tera exhibits some slightly different conjugation rules from English. For instance, Tera hugely forms its future tense by inflecting both the subject in pronominal and a noun form (e.g. cema ma shi yiri wuri - we will be travelling tomorrow). The auxiliary for future tense 'will' in English is represented by the morpheme "ma and dha" that are either inflected to both pronoun and nominal in singular or plural "cema and ngada" (meaning 'we will and I will') and 'shi' (to do verb i.e will in English) in Tera. This shows that future tense in English is introduced through independent word (e.g. will) while in Tera is always through inflection of the subject be it noun or pronoun (e.g. cema ma shi

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yiri, kada shi yiri etc.) and the verb, or through a separate word if the subject is noun (Musa kada bha, Jafar kada shi etc.).

To clarify further the morphological contrast between Tera and English above, unlike English that has two options of constructing sentence in future mode as "we will be travelling tomorrow" or "we will travel tomorrow" (though the later is relatively noncannonical compared to the former), in Tera morphosyntax progressive mood is not formed by inflecting the main verb as "travel+ling" in English. The structure of main verb in future, present and past tense is the same in Tera morphosyntax. That can be seen in the structures like: "cema ma shi yiri" means "we will travel or we will be travelling", "cema yiri" (simple present/habitual action) and "cem wa shi yiri" "we travelled".

Furthermore, in English, the morphological process for possession provides for two options for objective and subjective pronouns (such as my own and mine, our own and ours etc.). But the process in Tera language provides for only one option which is inflecting the pronouns (e.g. bha+nga, bha+rem, bha+nu etc.). It has equally been learnt that demonstrative adjectives and determiners are both marked through the individual words being introduced or by a separate words. Past tense markers are mostly introduced through both inflection on the main verb or through separate words such as adverbs of place and time. Nonetheless, is evident from the analysis that the inflection of subject verb agreement for simple present tense in English does not apply in Tera language. While main verb of a sentence is inflected with the phoneme /s/ in English, in Tera grammar a word is independently employed to introduce such function. For instance, the English sentence "she calls him daily" in Tera is "wa ka qanda ha koci". Note also that unlike in English that starts with the subject, Tera starts with the verb in constructing such a structure in simple present tense.

On the interrogative forms, is observed that Tera and English have a great disparity in structure. While in Tera the subject (be it noun or pronoun) in either plural or singular comes at the beginning of a sentence, in English is the question type that determines that. However, Tera being a tonal language unlike the stressed English, in many cases there are certain morphological processes that operate on the main verbs besides whatever questioning device like (for instance WH, tag and the like markers). This can be seen in the expression like cema ma shi yira wuri mu? Are we travelling tomorrow? The main verb of the sentence is "yira" which means travel. The root word is "yiri" but that modification at the word end serves as a definite article of confirmation in the context. That is to say, if it were a translation, the Tera sentence, cema ma shi yira wuri mu? Would in sense to sense translation be read, is the travel for tomorrow possible? Or literally, we will do the travel tomorrow?

Summary of findings

Like many other second language learners of English language, Tera natives also face challenges in learning English emanating from various perspectives. While some of these

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challenges are purely linguistics as presented in the analysis of this study, many other challenges are proved to be sociolinguistics base. Among the major challenges realised in this research include the difference in morphological processes and syntactic rules. This study therefore corroborate the deposition of many other preceded studies that second language is learned easier when the L1 and L2 share linguistic rules in common, and may be difficult in an event they diverge linguistically. How closely or distant the languages relate determines the level of ease or difficulty the learners may have.

Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of L1 morphosyntax in learning L2 which situates on the situation of L1 Tera learners of L2 English. Students of selected tertiary institutions in Gombe state of Nigeria constitutes the sampled population of the study. The students were successfully examined on such perspectives as forming English equivalent sentences for Tera in simple present, past and future tense, concord and interrogatives. While the two languages in question commonly share a lot in their morphological processes, unique processes have been realised in Tera especially, when the transformed words are put in syntactic structures to form larger communication components. These consequences are said to be born of the peculiar restrictions Tera morphosyntactic order has, which are a bit distant from certain rules in syntactic structures of English language. No much differences exist between Tera and English morphological processes in making past and present tense, except the subject/verb concord agreement that provide inflecting /s/ morpheme on main verbs in English for simple present sentences (habitual actions). However, Tera being a tonal language, some tense are only expressed through tonal change. As instantiated in the analysis, for example, the Tera sentence "nga bha" could both function as either past or future tense to mean "I came or I will come". When the tone on the pronoun "nga" is raised, is future tense while falling renders the action in past. Equally, the major difference between Tera and English interrogative sentence structure is that in Tera it begins with the subject while English always begins its own by inserting the interrogative elements (e.g. WH, do or tag devices). It is therefore the conclusive view of this study that knowledge of Tera morphosyntax greatly influence learning English due to the large areas of similarity that exist in between the two languages. Notwithstanding, the similarity does not guarantee generalisation of the rules by L1 Tera in learning L2 English due to the exceptional divergence.

Recommendations

After carefully analysing the data and findings of the study, the researchers come up with the following recommendations:

First, more researches on Tera phonology and lexicography should be conducted to provide standardly codified Tera phonemes, and writing system for easy documentation.

As manifested in the analysis that many Tera students are faced with interference of Hausa language, sociolinguistic investigation is much needed to interrogate the situation of L2/L3 conflict.

It is further recommended that mass awareness should be organised for parent to intensify effort in teaching Tera language at home.

For Tera students, the researchers recommend they should try to learn and master the area of differences between the morphological processes and syntactic rules of the Tera and English language.

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