



A COMPARISON OF ENGLISH AND HAUSA SYLLABLE STRUCTURES AND HOW THEY IMPACT TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A SELECT FEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The major goals of this study are to examine how the syllable structures of the English and Hausa languages differ and what that implications for teaching and learning. The study's goals are to identify points where the fundamental syllable structures of English and Hausa diverge, to identify potential areas of difficulty for Hausa English speakers, and to provide guidance on how to help Hausa ESL students get through these challenges. For this, 40 respondents were chosen at random from four secondary schools in Kaura Namoda, Zamfara State, and were subjected to an oral interview exam. The chapter students were required to read placed a strong emphasis on how the auditory system interprets sounds in relation to the English syllable structure. This was recorded digitally. The passage's start, medial, and terminal consonant clusters of two to four were among the ten (10) tasks (words) selected for observation. The strong hypothesis theory was applied for the investigation's aims. The internalization of the English syllable pattern by Hausa secondary school pupils was shown to be a substantial learning barrier when consonant clusters, whether initial, medial, or final, were present. This was made evident by the results from the four schools.

Key Words; Syllable structure, English and Hausa languages, teaching and learning

INTRODUCTION

Interference can happen when two different languages interact, especially when the first and second languages (L1 and L2) are involved. Susan and Jacquelyn's (1989:54) assertion that "the substantial difference between adult foreign language learning and child's language development stems from the fact that in adulthood, the Language Acquisition

Device (LAD) ceases to operate and that knowledge of the first language and general problem solving serve as inadequate substitutes" lends further credence to this." They also assert that "knowledge of an existing language interferes with the acquisition of a subsequent language" Comparing the syllable structures of English and Hausa is crucial when discussing "The L1 Interference Hypothesis" in this context. The syllable structure "is at the heart syllable logical representations," according to Katamba (1989). It is the hierarchical structure of phonological systems. We assume that such a study would be a successful linguistic endeavor because there appear to be differences between the two syllable structures (English and Hausa).

Background to the study

It is crucial in this situation to compare the syllable structures of English and Hausa. Katamba (1989) asserts that the syllable structure "is at the heart syllable logical representations." It is the hierarchical structure of phonological systems. We assume that such a study would be a successful linguistic endeavor because there appear to be differences between the two syllable structures (English and Hausa). It is crucial in this situation to compare the syllable structures of English and Hausa. The syllable structure "is at the heart syllable logical representations," according to Katamba (1989). It is the hierarchical structure of phonological systems. We assume that such a study would be a successful linguistic endeavor because there appear to be differences between the two syllable structures (English and Hausa). The three time eras into which English history is commonly categorized are old, middle, and early modern. The ancient English era started in the middle of the 5th century, when German immigrants came to England. The Middle English era began in 1066 with the Norman conquest of England following their victory at the Battle of Hastings. The development of printing by William Caxton in 1476 marks the end of this era. starting in the sixteenth century the Great Vowel Shift came to an end, English grammar became regularized as a result of the loss of the language's prior inflectional morphology, and vocabulary grew by incorporating words from classical languages. Priles and Co.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to compare the English and Hausa syllable structures and their implication for teaching and learning

The following objectives are at the core of this study:

1. To discover areas of differences between the Basic English and Hausa syllable structures.
2. To discover possible areas of difficulties for Hausa learner of English.
3. To make recommendations that will help Hausa ESL learners to overcome the difficulties.

Theoretical framework

This inquiry is built on the Contrastive Analysis (CA) methodology. One of the key theories that is relevant to CA analysis is the one that adheres to "strong hypotheses." According to this theory's proponents, interference from the learner's L1 source language is the main cause of difficulty in learning L2, and CA can anticipate some, if not all, interference problems. Furthermore, it asserts that educational resources can be substantially selected based on CA, ranked in order of increasing difficulty, and presented in an audio-lingual manner with a minimum amount of phonological pairs. The author Richards (1981) claims who makes this point, "interference from the mother tongue is clearly a major source of difficulty in learning a second language, and CA has proven valuable in locating areas of inter-language interference" Benathy (1969), Stockwell et al., Tragger and Waddle (1966), Wardaugh (1970), and Benathy (1969) are some of the prominent proponents of this hypothesis. For a list of further proponents of this hypothesis, see the literature reviews on CA and its role in ESL.

The English Syllable Structure

The syllable structure can be thought of as the arrangement of segmental sounds and the allowable order in which they can exist inside a single syllable. Adetugbo (1993: 72) asserts that as a result, the syllable structure of the English language is commonly characterized as C0-3V C0-4. This definition states that an English syllable must have an obligatory vowel at the peak, no consonants or a maximum of three consonants at the onset, and no consonants or a maximum of four consonants at the coda.

The Hausa Syllable Structure

Hausa has three permissible and possible syllable structures as identified by some researchers e.g. Jaggar(2001) and Caron (2013). Jaggar, (2001:23) states that all the syllable structures of Hausa are consonant initial, examples of these structures are as follows: Syllable Structure= no consonant cluster occur within a syllable. Three types of syllables are possible: CV (light), CVV (VV can be two vowels or diphthong), and CVC (heavy).

CV - *ma.ce/ma.tfe/* - 'woman', *ci.ki /tʃi.ki/* - 'inside'

CVC - *rum.far /rum.far/* - 'The stall', *has:ken /has:Ken/* - 'the light'

CVV – *yaa.roo/ja.ro:/* 'Boy', *ai.ki /ai.ki/* - 'work'

Kager (1999), describe some languages that have a different dimension of complexity of syllable margin, that is, although onsets and codas are allowed, they must be simple. Put differently, complex onsets and codas are not permitted. Therefore, only one consonant can be found in the onset and coda of syllable. Hausa is one of these languages which do not allow a CC or CCC syllable structures i.e. consonant cluster. In contrast, English language allows CC and CCC syllable structures i.e., consonant cluster. E.g., prove/pru:v/, school/sku:l/, street/stri:t/ etc.

Contrastive Linguistics and Its place in ESL

CLA is one of the earliest theoretically supported methods to linguistic errors. We believe it's appropriate to review it first as a result. CA involves "a systematic comparison of specific linguistic characteristics of two or more languages" in order to identify areas of structural similarity and difference between the native languages (NLs) and the target languages (TLs). Numerous articles have been written about the CLA values. Lado's "Linguistics across Cultures" (1957), Fries (1945:9), and Benathy's work on the "Potentials and Limitations of Contrastive Linguistics Analysis" are a few instances. In Fries' opinion the "most effective materials" are those that are founded on a scientific description of the language to be learned and are meticulously contrasted with a description of the learner's native language. Fries (1945:9) is cited in Freeman and Long (1991):51–52. CA proponents assert that individuals frequently transfer the forms and meanings of their native languages and cultures into new languages and civilizations. He will find it simple to acquire aspects that are similar to his native language and difficult to master those that are different, according to Fries et al (1945). The CA proponents' theory that linguistic differences can be used to anticipate learning difficulty is known as the "Kontrastive Analysis Hypothesis" (CAH). "Where languages are similar, positive transfer will occur; where they are different, negative transfer or interference will result," assert Freeman and Long (1991:53). Three important issues are on the minds of CA's supporters, they claim. It first clarifies the similarities and differences across languages. Second, it clarifies and predicts difficulties with second language (L2) teaching and learning. Not to mention, it suggests a process for developing training courses that would help with the creation of course materials for language instruction.

Error analysis

The primary school is the one that is against C.A. So, in order to examine the other side of the story, we think it is acceptable to review it. A careful examination of learners' errors might disclose the 'built in' systematics of the language learner, according to Corder (1967), one of the key proponents of EA, who is quoted in Littlewood (1984). EA's proponents also view it as a study of how language learners, particularly those learning a foreign language, misuse words. Strevens (1970), Rivers (1970:7–10), Corder (1971:74–1590), Gradman (1971:74–77), and Gradman (1971) are a few references to consult. They claim that a range of errors, including those caused by incorrect learning, poor instruction, inaccurate guessing, poor recall, the influence of a mother tongue, and faults made during the learning process, result from EA. They define EA as a linguistic strategy for identifying, categorizing, and methodically interpreting the substandard forms produced by someone learning a foreign language. It uses any rules and principles offered by linguistic theory.

Transfer and Interference

Littlewood (1992) explores both the advantages and disadvantages of transfer. It is a good transfer, in his words, when L1 habits help to form L2 habits and assist them in doing so. When L1 interferes with the learner's ability to master second language (L2) there will be negative transfer or interference. He concludes that the transfer phenomenon has a substantial role in learning difficulties and errors. The enormous impacts interference has on L2 instruction are highlighted by Littlewood and Lado. Some of the consequences they list are as follows: "We can get at a contrastive analysis of languages through the study of transfer and interference; from the distinctions seen through the CA, hypotheses can be generated. This will allow us to anticipate the language items that will be challenging and the mistakes they will be likely to make; from the hypothesis, we can anticipate which items will require special attention in the courses or materials we write; once we have identified the areas of concentration based on the hypothesis, we can use specialized techniques like drills, repetition, etc. to overcome the difficulties. The three types of choices we can make using the aforementioned method are further listed by Littlewood as "no choice at all; optional choice; and obligatory choice", in Littlewood (1992:18). Expectedly, the lowest level of difficulty happens when there is an obligatory choice in both languages, while the highest level of difficulty comes when the L1 learner of L2 is given no choice in L2, i.e., when there is no similarity between his L1 and L2.

Nickel (1971:103) analyzes this issue from the perspectives of contact and interference in a manner similar to this. He claims that "when two languages are taught and learnt, as well as in other contexts, they may come into contact. When considering important language teaching concerns and developing appropriate teaching materials, it is

important to take into account this contact and the ensuing interference of the native language with the second language. He continues by saying that one of the main duties of foreign language teachers is to neutralize the restrictive effects of L1 on TL internalization.

We believe there is a close relationship between behavior and language development. Therefore, the interference/transfer theory is supported by this approach of language instruction. Despite the legitimate concerns of EA proponents, interference is fundamental to CA and has unquestionable effects on L2 learning.

Methodology

The study used a sample size of forty (40) respondents randomly selected from four selected secondary schools: GTC K/Namoda, GSS K/Namoda, Govt. Namoda Secondary School and Progressive Science Secondary School respectively. The respondents are between the ages of fourteen (14) and twenty-two (22). There were five (5) females and thirty-five (35) males, respectively. The data was obtained from a formal source. The selected respondents were given a passage to read: "There are twenty-six students in a progressive secondary school. The school proprietor is not happy about the number of students because it could lead to the closure of the school by the zonal education inspectorate office. The proprietor therefore developed a trick in order to increase the number of students by asking his messenger to place a notice at all strategic places in which he explained that there would be a fifty percent discount in the school fees for the term, and the emphasis was on auditory perception of sounds in relation to the English syllable structures.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper's data analysis and explanation of conclusions were based on surveys administered to 40 respondents (students) in the seven secondary schools in western Nigeria that were chosen at random.

Table I: Distribution of Respondents in the four Schools

Schools where interview was carried out	Total number of Respondents	No of Boys	No of Girls	SS3	SS2	SS1
Government technical college K/Namoda	10	10	-	10	-	-
Govt. Sec. Sch. Kaura Namoda	10	-	10	-	05	05
Namoda Secondary School	10	10	-	-	10	-
Progressive Science Secondary School	10	05	05	-	04	06

Table II: Distribution of Interview in each School

Schools where interview was carried out	No. of items tested on the respondents	No. of Items responded to by the respondents	percentage of response
Government Technical College K/Namoda	10	10	100%
Govt. Sec. Sch. Kaura Namoda	10	10	100%

Namoda Secondary School	10	10	100%
Progressive Science Secondary School	10	10	100%
Total	40	40	100%

Table III: Scoring Table

Task	Correct	Intermediate Score	Not Correct	Scores	Total 100 Marks
1	No Insertion of /u/	Insertion of /u/ not clear	Clear insertion of /u/	10 marks	100%
2	No Omission of /K/	Omission of /K/not clear	Clear omission of /K/	10 marks	
3	No Omission of the Clusters in /stj-/ initial and /-dnts/ final and no insertion of /u/ & /e/	Omission of /j/ sound in /stj-/ and insertion of /e/ sound in /dnts/ not clear	Total omission of /j/ sound in /stj/ and insertion of /u/ & /e/ in /dnts/	10 marks	
4	No Insertion of /u/ and /i/	Insertion of /u/ and /i/ not clear	Clear insertion of /u/ and /i/	10 marks	
5	No insertion of /u/	Insertion of /u/ not clear	Clear Insertion of U	10 marks	
6	No Insertion of /u/ and /i/	Insertion of /u/ and /i/ not clear	Clear insertion of /u/ & /i/	10 marks	
7	No Insertion of /i/	Insertion of /i/ not clear	Clear Insertion of /i/	10 marks	
8	No Insertion of /i/	Insertion of /i/ not clear	Clear insertion of /i/	10 marks	
9	No Insertion of /i/ and /i/	Insertion of /i/ and /i/ not clear	Clear insertion of /i/ and /i/	10 marks	
10	No Omission of /k/ and no insertion of /i/	Omission of /k/ but no insertion of /i/ not clear	Clear omission of /k/ insertion of /i/	10 marks	

Marking scheme

1. A correct answer = 10 marks

2. An intermediate answer = 05 marks
3. A not correct answer = 00 mark
4. Total obtainable score per respondent per task = 10mks
5. Total obtainable score per respondent for the overall ten tasks = 100 marks

Table III: Raw scores of Respondents from the four schools

S/No	Schools where interview was carried out	Tasks and Scores Per Task										
		/twenti/ /siks/ /stju:dnts/ /prɔ̃gresiv/ /sku:l/ /prɔ̃prɔ̃ɔ̃ita/ /trik/ /inkri:s/ /strati:dzik/ /ikspleint/										
1.	Government Technical College K/Namoda	25	50	05	10	30	00	35	45	00	00	200
2.	Govt. Sec. Sch. Kaura Namoda	15	30	00	10	35	00	15	40	00	10	155
3.	Namoda Secondary School	20	35	05	05	45	05	00	20	00	15	150
4.	Progressive Science Secondary School	00	25	05	00	15	00	05	25	10	15	110

Analyses and findings of raw scores of respondents from the four schools

The respondents scored 60 marks in task No. 1, 135 marks in task No. 2, and managed to score only 15 marks in task No. 3 and 25 marks in task No. 4, while 120 marks were scored by the respondents in task No. 5, respectively. The respondents scored only 5 marks in task No. 6, 55 marks in task No. 7, and 130 marks in task No. 8. They also scored 10 marks in task No. 9, while 30 marks were scored by the respondents in task No. 10, respectively.

Table VI: Overall hierarchy of difficulty for the four Schools

Government Technical College K/Namoda	Govt. Sec. Sch. Kaura Namoda	Namoda Secondary School	Progressive Science Secondary School	Hierarchy of Difficulty	Level of difficulty
06	03	07	01	03	Most difficult
09	06	09	04	09	
10	09	03	06	04	
03	10	04	03	06	
04	04	06	07	10	Intermediate level of difficulty
01	01	10	09	01	
07	07	01	05	02	
05	02	08	10	07	Least difficult
08	05	02	02	05	
02	08	05	08	08	

From the table above, the task that became the most difficult for all the respondents from four schools is task No.

3. This is followed by tasks 9, 4, and 6, respectively. This is based on the number of times they occurred in the hierarchy of difficulty for each school. The intermediate categories are tasks 10, 1, 2, and 7, respectively. While tasks 5 and 8 constituted the least difficult problems accordingly. It is interesting to know that tasks 3 and 9 are consistent in their ranking as the most difficult of the four schools. This is because their occurrence in the most difficult column superseded others. This may not be unrelated to the fact that they possess the entire English syllable structure, which includes a maximum of three starting consonants (students, strategic), and for students again, a maximum of four final consonants (-dnts), following the initial three consonants (stj-) and the required vowel. In a similar line, task 08 consistently emerges as the least challenging. This is due to the fact that it remained the last of the four institutions. The fact that it is one of the assignments with only two consonant clusters in their syllables may not be unrelated to this.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for the Teacher

The results indicate that a poor application of the linguistic technique is largely to blame for students' inability to master the correct form of spoken English, particularly at the secondary school level. This will enable both professors and students to assess how successfully the kids are picking up new material.

Furthermore, the results are an apparent example of how academics and a sizable section of Hausa speak given the frequency of the errors among the students. Thus, in order for English teachers in secondary schools to be more productive, they must carefully assess and revalidate their current teaching methods. This researcher is convinced that a CA will be extremely helpful to every English instructor in Nigeria (whether in Hausa land or elsewhere), considering the prevalence of these errors and difficulties among secondary language learners.

This is because interference from the mother tongue—one of the fundamental difficulties of learning a new language—affects pronunciation, syntax, and lexis on all levels, necessitating a correct linguistic approach to both languages. When a teacher has a comparative understanding of his or her own system and that of the second language, they are better positioned to correct these errors.

Having such a firm grasp would, above all, provide the language teacher a far better knowledge of what they are doing and increase the likelihood that they will be successful.

Given this, it is crucial for educators to comprehend the rationale behind teaching spoken English in Nigeria. This is because teaching spoken English to L1 students cannot have the same objectives as teaching L2 or FL (foreign language) students. Therefore, the objective of spoken English instruction in Nigeria, and in Hausa territory in particular, should be to "produce students who speak a form of English that is internationally comprehensible and who are capable of comprehending any L1 English accent that they learn" (Dunstan 1969:7).

In essence, the goal does not mandate that pupils speak English as a second language.

Implications for the Students

The study's results showed that many Hausa secondary school students pronounce English very differently from native speakers. The students aren't actually taught how and why to avoid such errors. It also demonstrates that the bulk of Hausa English instructors primarily offer theoretical teaching in oral English, and the graduates lack pronunciation knowledge for a significant proportion of English vocabulary. Rarely are taped materials or textbooks written with the appropriate explanation of the students' mother tongue and the target language, with the aim of identifying sources of error or interference, used in conjunction with the teaching. This renders the students defenseless and exposed, particularly during the WAEC, NECO, and SSCE exams. They are left with no choice than to commit fraud. Additionally, some students lose interest in taking English classes at a higher level.

According to the researcher's interactions with secondary school students, they appear to dread oral English exams in particular. Even after six years of secondary education, the majority of them assert that they have no understanding what it is all about. Others believe that no matter how hard they work, they will never succeed in passing the test.

This happens because the wrong linguistic approach was not used when teaching this particular language feature. Along with helping students who need it, ACA will facilitate teaching and learning. The likelihood of a student ever learning the same subject decreases if they keep repeating the same mistakes. He or she will start to feel uncomfortable and stop studying. The student loses interest as a result, feels defeated, and moves on without realizing that the main reason for the "failure" was bad instruction.

Conclusion

Our research has shown that when Hausa secondary school students absorb English syllable structure, consonant clustering, both beginning and terminal, is a substantial learning barrier. The results from the schools used as examples are dismal. That inadequate education stops students from correctly internalizing the English syllable structure is only served to be reinforced by this.

Although the study was done in Hausa territory, its conclusions can be applied across all of Nigeria. If the same study endeavor were carried out elsewhere, the researcher believes that similar, if not worse, results may be anticipated.

This calls for an improved, cutting-edge, and efficient method of teaching English in our secondary schools. Teachers must always remember the fundamental differences between the NL and TL frameworks.

These variations exist throughout the language, not just in the syllable. A CLA is a very valuable tool for overcoming or getting rid of faults. It has consistently shown to be effective in assisting with learning challenges.

Recommendations

In light of the results, I believe it is appropriate to offer the following suggestions that could enhance teaching and learning:

1. Teachers need new training to update and expand their knowledge. This will make it simpler for many teachers to adopt the current linguistic approach to language instruction. During the lengthy vacation, the retraining might be completed as a sandwich program.
2. The government should look into this situation in order to remedy the problems brought on by inadequate instruction at this level. The government ought to employ linguists from all discernible language origins, or at the very least those who might have an effect on education. Books about the interactions between their NL and TL in CA should be written by these linguists. This will significantly help to facilitate pedagogy. It will be extremely helpful for teachers and students with varied linguistic backgrounds.
3. Linguists should take up the challenge and write books based on a CA of their native tongue with the TL. Many people will benefit from this in the teaching and learning process, and it will improve their academic standing.
4. English teachers in our secondary schools should challenge themselves to take part in some kind of CA when they observe any common mistakes among their students. Even if it isn't on a large scale, a modest amount of CA will assist the instructors and students in fixing the majority of errors.

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