

HIERARCHY OF DIFFICULTY IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING ON RIGWE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH: WAY OUT

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Abstract

The learning of a second language could be very frustrating, especially when the structural rudiments of the Native Language are different from the ones in the Target Language. There a lot of works on the hierarchy of difficulty in learning second languages like most developed languages in the world like English, French, German and others. However, little has been done on the hierarchy of difficulty Rigwe learners of the English language are likely to encounter. And this is gap this study sets out to fill. The study aimed at investigating the hierarchy of difficulty in second language learning on Rigwe learners of English, and to proffer possible solutions to the difficulties observed in the course of the study. Norm Chomsky' (1981) X-bar module of the Principles and Parameters Theory was adopted as the theoretical anchorage for the study. The Rigwe data for this study were derived from two sources: first, the recording of expressions made by people in social and informal gatherings, Rigwe New Testament Bible and also from "How to Read and Write Rigwe by Gya. Likewise, some relevant English structures were borrowed from the English syntax materials. Based on the results of the study, gender pronoun falls under the hierarchy of difficulty split because the pronoun "àà" is used in the source language as she, he and it. Possession is not shown in Rigwe using 's' but ni which is equivalent to "of" genitive or through noun-noun construction. This constitutes level 2 (underdifferentiation) of hierarchy of difficulty. The differences in the use of adjective and determiners falls under level 3 (reinterpretation) of hierarchy of difficulty because both adjective and determiner exist in the mother tongue but need to be given new shape in the TL. Lastly, the area of difficulty observed in the use of negation is that Rigwe sentences can have two negative markers: one coming at the beginning of the sentence, while the other one at the end of the sentence. A Rigwe learner of the English language would have to coalesce the two items to become one in the target language. This falls under level I (coalescence). In conclusion, teachers of the English language in Rigwe community must learn to identify each difficulty and design a way to help learners with the appropriate structures in the target language (English)

Keywords: Hierarchy, Difficulty, Rigwe, Contrastive Analysis, second language, Nigeria

Introduction

The right use of English in the Nigerian society poses a lot of problems as the influences of Nigerian indigenous languages inhibit the learning

and teaching of the English language. Universal Grammar believes that humans have the ability to learn a language but the learning of another language, however, is hindered by the differences

that exist between the Mother Tongue of the learner and the target language. Radford (2009:12) says that Chomsky’s ultimate goal is to devise a Universal Grammar (UG) which generalises from the grammar of particular I-language to the grammar of all possible natural (i.e.) I-languages. This is to say that there should not be a difference between the grammar of a language and other languages. On the contrary, learning of second language has been quite taxing for second language learners, in which Rigwe learners of the English language are not exempted. Those areas of difficulties could be observed at all the levels of language (Amale, 2018). But in the current study, only the syntactic level is investigated. It was believed that by identifying points of similarity and difference between the LI and the TL, a more effective methodology could be developed to account for all the problems encountered by language learners (Fries 1945; Lado, 1957). Lado (1957:2) points out that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some of its features quite easy and others difficult.

Charles C. Fries was the one who formerly established contrastive linguistic analysis as an integral component of the methodology of target language (TL) teaching. Contrastive Analysis is credited to Lado (1957) as the lead components. Lado’s practical findings were based on his own experiences and family background being an immigrant to the USA and a native of Spanish (Obadan, 2016). Dirvin and Verspoor (2004:250) opine that:

It was assumed that within the target

	↑	L1	L2	
Harder	↕	0	Obligatory	
		0	Optional	
		Optional	Obligatory	
		Obligatory	Optional	
		Obligatory	0	
		Optional	0	
		Optional	Optional	
Easier			Obligatory	Obligatory

Table 1: Stockwell and Bowen’s (1965) Hierarchy of Difficulty

However, in this current study Prator’s (1967) Hierarchy of difficulty is used in the classification of each difficulty likely to be encountered by Rigwe learners of English. According to Prator (1976) the following are

language, i.e. the foreign language being learnt, those features which significantly diverge from the mother tongue or source language would represent a serious obstacle in the learning process, and that they should be submitted to a specific learning effort.

The quotation above is emphasizing that difficulty in second language learning occurs when the linguistic features in one’s source language interfere with the linguistic features in the target language. The features of the L1 are always visible in the L2.

1.1.1 Hierarchy of difficulty

Hierarchy of difficulty was derived from Lado’s (1957) Contrastive Analysis hypothesis by Stockwell and Bowen. The hierarchy seeks to predict likely difficulties to be encountered by second language learners based on the effect of their first languages. Stockwell and Bowen (1965) considered the work of Lado (1957) which asserts that the ‘easiness’ or ‘hardness’ is the level of difficulty. This implies that level of difficulties is seen as the way learning the structure of a second language is either difficult or easy.

When hierarchy of difficulty was proposed, it was meant for the investigation of how the learning of the sound of a second language would be through the following: (1) sound substitution, (2) phonological processes, (3) underdifferentiation, (4) overdifferentiation, (5) reinterpretation of distinctions, (6) phonotactic interference, and (7) prosodic interference. The table below shows the initial proposal on hierarchy of difficulty by Stockwell and Bowen (1965)

the hierarchy of difficulty:

1. **Level 0:** no difference or contrast. In this level, there is no difference in both the first language and the Target Language
2. **Level 1: Coalescence:** this is when two items in a Native Language coalesce into essentially one item in the Target Language
3. **Level 2: Underdifferentiation:** an item in Native Language is absent in Target Language
4. **Level 3: Reinterpretation:** An item in Native Language is given new shape or distribution in Target Language.
5. **Level 4: Overdifferentiation:** new item entirely, bearing little if any, similarity to native language
6. **Level 5: Split:** one item in native language becomes two or more in Target Language

1.1.2 The Rigwe language

The Rigwe language is one of the minority languages spoken in Bassa and Riyom Local Government Areas of Plateau State and Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna State in Nigeria (Amale, 2018). According to Ronku (2015) as cited in Amale (2018:5), Rigwe has 183,460 speakers and this excludes those who live outside the Rigwe towns and villages. According to Simons and Charles (2008:1) Rigwe belongs to the Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo and Plateau West Central Nigeria. There are lots of contradictions to Simons and Charles' classification but there is no tangible research to validate that argument. The maps provided show that Rigwe is spoken in two states in Nigeria. That is Kaduna and Plateau States. The second map shows local governments areas and districts covered by Rigwe.

Figure 1: Map of Kaduna and Plateau States

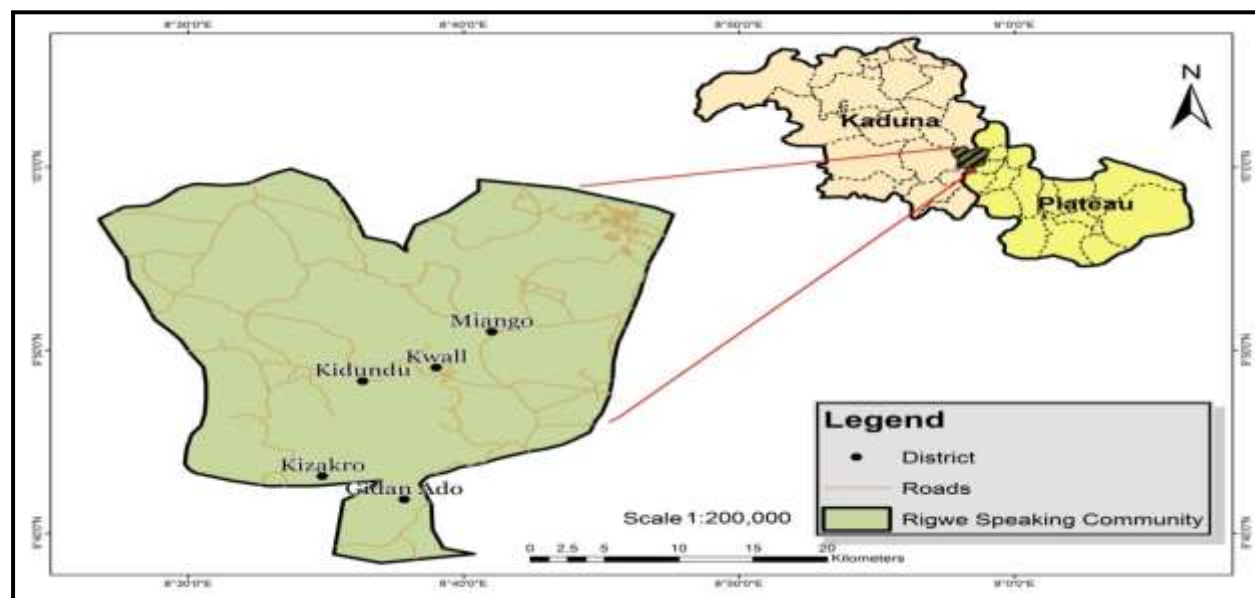


Figure II: Linguistic Map of Rigwe

A number of studies have been carried out on the Rigwe language. These studies have examined various aspects like how to read and write Rigwe (Gya, 2009); on Rigwe pronouns (Blench & Gya, 2009); focus in Rigwe syntax (Gya, 2012) and phonology (Blench & Gya, 2018), but none of the works examined the clause structure of the language and how this can affect Rigwe learners

of English. Despite there are works on the contrastive analysis of English and Rigwe (Amale, 2018; Amale (2021a) and Amale 2021b), little has been done on the hierarchy of difficulties Rigwe learners of English would encounter, considering the level at which each problem likely to be encountered falls. This is the gap that this current study sets out to fill.

2.1 Literature review

Some studies related to the current study would be reviewed. These include Blench and Gya (2009), Blench and Gya (2018), Amale (2021a) and Amale (2021b). Blench and Gya (2009) studied the Rigwe pronouns. They discussed the various types of pronouns in Rigwe and how they can be used in various contexts. This study will help the current study immensely when using pronouns as subject or object. However, the focus of this research work is not on pronouns. Gya (2012) did a study on *focus* in Rigwe syntax. The study reveals that pronouns are repeated in Rigwe in order to indicate *focus*. It also reveals that when a pronoun is used as object, it occurs as pre-verbal, that is, with the word order SOV. The object comes before the verb which is against the English language word order of SVO. Furthermore, the study reveals that ordinary subject pronoun is repeated after the determiner.

Gya (2014) studies the effect of semantics valence and transitivity in Hebrew and Rigwe verbs and how they can affect Bible translation from Hebrew to Rigwe. The study centres on translation. It is theological in nature unlike the current study which is viewed from the angle of linguistics. However, it relates to the present study on verb transitivity, positions of verbs and argument in Rigwe and also looks at the order of verbs, complements and adjuncts in Rigwe. Perhaps not all the components of the clause were considered in the study but none of the works emphasised on the structure of the language and how this can affect Rigwe learners of English.

Amale (2021a) looked at heads directionality in English and Rigwe. The study adopted the X-bar sub-theory of Chomsky's Principles and Parameters. The Rigwe data for this study were primarily derived from two sources: the first was the recording of expressions made by people in social and informal gatherings (festivals, local pubs, churches and markets) and the secondary source was from Rigwe New Testament Bible and How to Read and Write Rigwe. Likewise, some relevant English structures were borrowed from the English syntax materials. The following are the findings: NPs function as subject, object and complement in English and Rigwe language; both languages have specifiers. The heads of NPs of

both languages could be nouns or a pronoun and both languages' head of NPs could be qualified by adjectives. However, There are differences whereby English takes its determiners and adjectives pre-nominally whereas Rigwe takes its post-nominally; Rigwe pronouns functioning as heads do not indicate gender; Rigwe has double subject, but the second subject is a resumptive pronoun; where common nouns serve as heads in Rigwe they do not take determiners whereas in English, common nouns occur with determiners. Also, Rigwe NPs do not have complex NP structure. The specifiers of the adjective phrase of both languages are adverbs of degree. The head of Adjective Phrase in English comes last in English whereas in Rigwe it comes first with some exception.

Amale (2021b) investigated the functional-based sentences and negation in English and Rigwe. The aim of the study was to observe how areas of differences in English and Rigwe would constitute a learning challenge for Rigwe learners of English and English learners of Rigwe as well. The study like Amale (2021a) used X-bar sub-theory of the Principles and Parameters by Norm Chomsky, and combining it with Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis. The results of the study show that Declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory and negative sentences were extracted. Relevant English structures were borrowed from English textbooks. In Rigwe, an object of a sentence can be deliberately omitted, and grammaticality would be maintained. In the aspect of imperative sentences, both languages share similarities, but Rigwe can make use of two independent clauses without coordinating conjunction in order to give a command. Furthermore, both languages indicate the use of Yes/No or WH-questions; however, WH-words move to the beginning of a sentence in English as in the case of auxiliary verbs, while in Rigwe it can be either at the beginning or at the end of a sentence. Exclamatory sentences can be realised through the use of WH-words in English, but it is not so in Rigwe. It should be noted that Rigwe has WH-words but they are not used in exclamatory sentences. Command can only be realised in the tone of the speaker in Rigwe statement. On the aspect of negation, it has been observed that

English has many negative markers, while Rigwe has only two which can either appear at the beginning of a sentence or at the end of a sentence. Finally, negative markers come immediately after auxiliary verbs in English, while it is not so in Rigwe

3.1 Theoretical anchorage

The X-bar module of the principles and parameter theory was adopted as a theoretical anchorage for the study. Principles and Parameters Theory started at early 1980s and later developed in 1981 (Radford, 2004). Lamidi (2003:65) said that, “the PPT (i.e. GB) is an offshoot of Chomsky’s competence grammar which deals with the acquisition and learnability of a language. The Government and Binding Theory is considered relevant to this research work because it will enable the researcher to examine structural similarities and differences in the use of tense,

aspect and modality in the two languages under study.

According to Carnie (2010: 92), “X-bar approach started off as a series of statements that restrict the form of phrase structure rules, but eventually developed into an independent system which allows us to capture generalizations not available with simple PSRs. Carnie further explains that the X-bar theory serves both as an extension to phrase structure grammars and places a number of restrictions on the form that Phrase Structure Rules (PSRs) can take. Also, Carnie (2010: 113) asserts that, the requirement that a phrase bears the same category as its head is known as “endocentricity”. Using the variable X to stand for any category, this is the simple requirement that a phrase (XP) be of the same category as some semantically prominent word (the head) in it. The X here is the “X” in “X-bar Theory”

The X-bar Schema

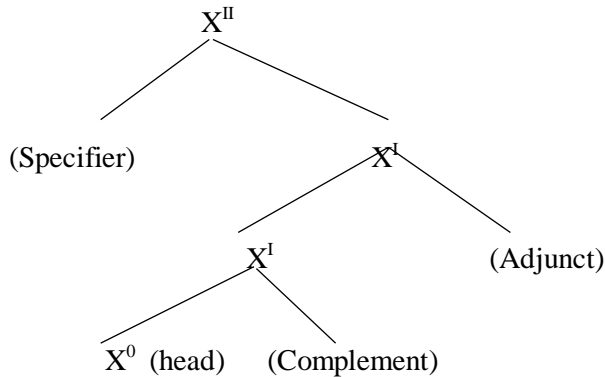


Figure II. X-Bar Schema (Okolo, 2008:63).

This schema can be explained as follows: X can be taken as variables representing N, V, A, P, etc. which are lexical heads of their own phrase. A very important principle of the X-bar theory is *uniformity* or *endocentricity* (Okolo, 2008:63). All the satellites converge on the head; hence, each phrase has a head from which it derives a name. Thus, the head of a noun phrase is an N; verb phrase, a V etc. (Okolo, 2008).

The essence of choosing the X-bar sub-theory of the Principles and Parameters Theory is the realisation of the structural difference in the use of tense, aspect and modality; are the tense, aspect overt or covert in their realization and their morphological change. While the use of Contrastive Analysis is to pass assessment on what is observed from the structural differences given by X-bar tree.

4.1 Methodology

The variety of Rigwe used in this research work is the standard Rigwe which is spoken in Kwall and Miango Districts of Plateau State. The Rigwe data for this study were primarily derived from two

sources. The first was the recording of expressions made by people in social and informal gatherings (festivals, local pubs, churches and markets) where Rigwe is predominantly used as a means of interaction in Kwall and Miango districts of Bassa

Local Government Area of Plateau State. The secondary source was from *Rigwe New Testament Bible* and also from a book titled, *How to Read and Write Rigwe* by Gya (2006) which served as a useful guide for correct transcription of the data and also for placing tone marks. Likewise, some relevant English structures were borrowed from the English syntax materials. Parts of speech, sentence types, tenses, word order, agreement and

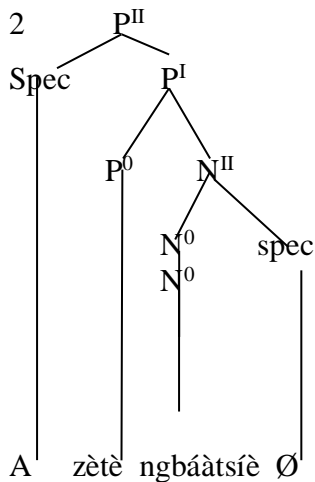
negation were the focus of the study. Data were syntactically analysed using tree diagrams.

5.1 Analysis

As earlier stated in the methodology, parts of speech, possession, gender marking, agreement and negation would be analysed in this segment to ascertain the level of hierarchy of difficulties Rigwe learners of English would likely encounter.

5.1.1 Parts of speech in Rigwe

1. Tagó **ywìywíng** ngú shi t_{ah}wìè góndóó
 Shirt **black** his be+pres under bed
 ‘His **black** shirt is under the bed’
2. Àá sá énjìé a zètè ngbáàtsìè
 3sg keep+past calabash on top stone
 ‘S/he kept a calabash **on a stone**’

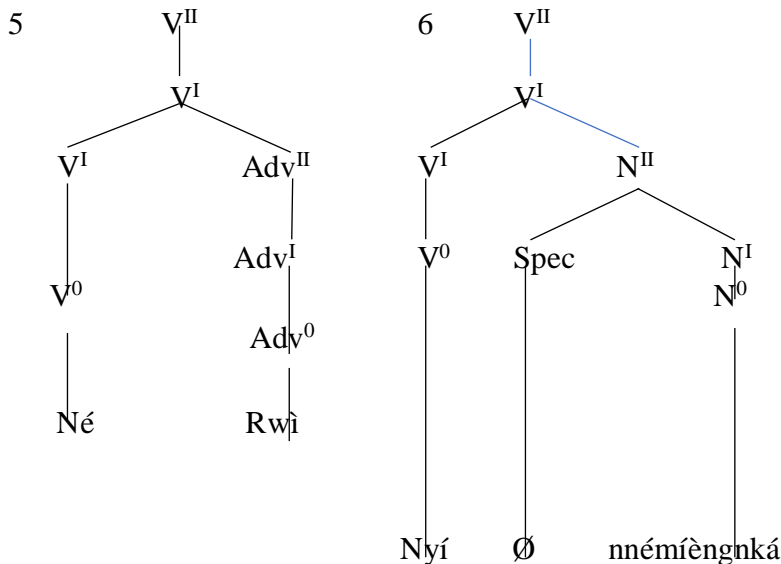


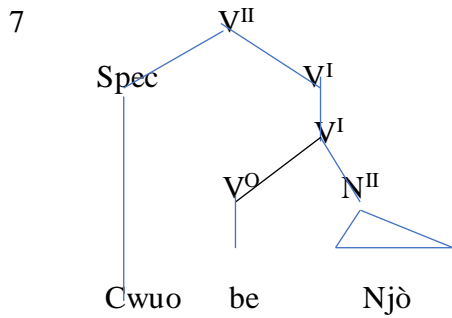
The head of prepositional phrase in Rigwe is a preposition and when there are two prepositions in the Rigwe PP, the first preposition becomes the spec of the second preposition. This can be seen in 2 where preposition *a* serves as the specifier of the preposition *zètè*. That is, making the second preposition the head of the phrase. In the aspect of pronoun and gender marking in Rigwe, sentence 2 indicates that Rigwe does not support gender marking. The same pronoun Àá can be used as she, he or it depending on the context of usage.

3. Wéà rááng
 Very calmly
4. Wéà músú
 So silently

The head of the adjective phrase comes after the specifier in Rigwe. This is seen in example 1. We observed that *wéà* in example 3 serves as an adverb of degree modifying the adverbs *rááng* and *músú* (4) which are the heads of the adverbial phrase. Rigwe has only one adverb of degree *wéà* used to modify other adverbs in AdvP. Example 5 below is the typical example of how the Rigwe Noun structure looks at in terms of the positions of the heads and the specifiers of noun phrases assumed. On the aspect of verb, examples 5-7 below are the formation of verbs in Rigwe

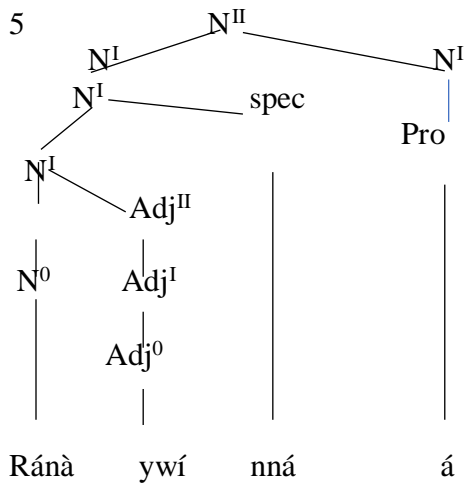
5. Mínkè né rwì
 Minke leave+past yesterday
 ‘Minke left yesterday’
6. Meli nyí nnémìèngnká
 Meli be+pres teacher
 ‘Meli is a teacher’
7. Á cwuo be Njò
 They is come+ Prog Jos
 ‘They are coming to Jos’





From the examples 11a and 11b, the head of VP in Rigwe is a verb. In 11a the verb *né* is the head of the phrase and has AdvP as its complement while in 11b the verb *nyí* is the head of the phrase but has NP as its complement. In 11c, the verb *cwuo* becomes the spec of the verb *be* which is the head of the VP.

5. **Ránà ywí nná a ri rí nggwè**
 Girls black the they fut see king
 ‘The dark girls will see the king’



As see in the tree diagram representation of sentence 5, head of the NP above is captured in the N⁰. That is, the head of 2a is *Ránà* while the *á* is a resumptive pronoun referring to *Ránà* which is a common noun. Unlike the English language’s noun structure, the speciers come after the head of the phrase and after the adjective. In English, specifier comes first, followed by an adjective where there is one, and then the head of the phrase comes last.

5.1.2 Possession Marking in Rigwe

6. Zàmfarà fóng wrà ní Rúkú
Zamfara take+Past belt of Ruku
Zamfara took Rukus' belt.
7. Nzèékí Ríná hu á míncę
Donkey Rina die+past at morning
'Rina's donkey died in the morning'.

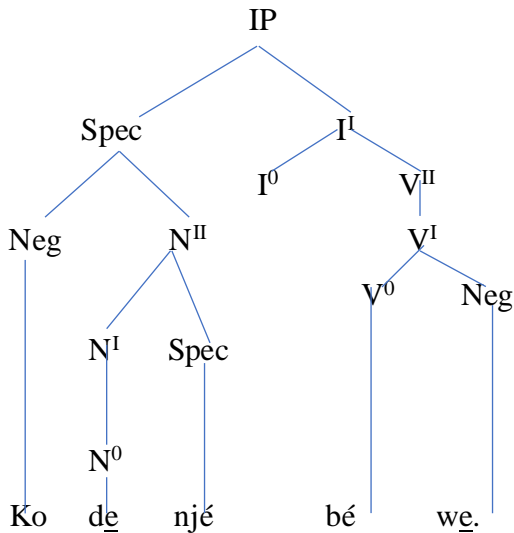
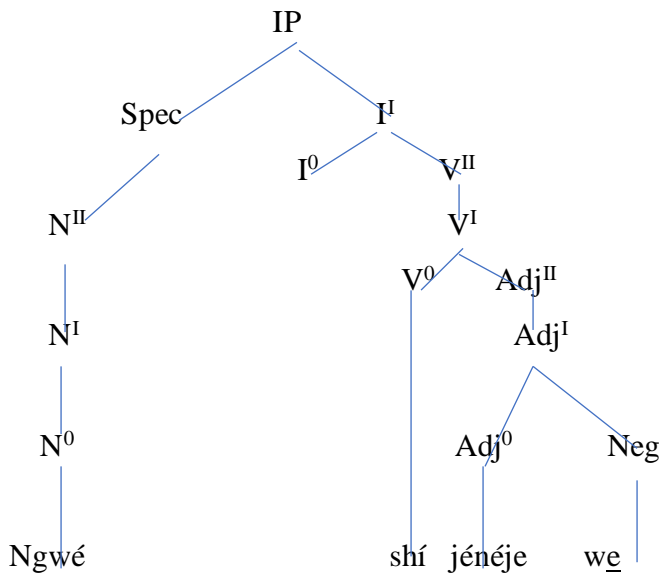
The *ní* in the sentence 6 shows that *wrà* (belt) belongs to Rúkú. However, it should be noted that the difference between the use of *noun-noun* in Rigwe to show possession and *ní* is that the *ní* is used when we have similar items. That means *Zàmfarà* could also have a belt or there could be two belts belonging to different persons, so the *ní* is used to indicate specifically whose belt has been taken. The *ní* is also used for emphasis. Another example can be seen in sentence 6 below.

5.1.3 Negative Sentence in Rigwe

Gya (2009, p.34) opines that word that express negations in Rigwe are written in isolation. There are two negative markers in Rigwe sentences: the first negative particle stands at the beginning of the sentence while the second negative particle stands at the end of a sentence. The following are the negative markers in Rigwe according to Gya (2009, p.34), *ko* used at the beginning of negative declarative sentence and *wę* or *wò* are used at the end of a declarative sentence, while *dę* at the beginning of an imperative sentence to show emphasis. For the end of an imperative sentence, *wę* or *wò* is used as in the case of declarative sentence. The following are the examples of negative sentences in Rigwe.

- 8 (a) Ngwé shí jénéje wę
2sg You are smart not
You are not smart
- (b) Ko dę njé bé wę.
Not mother my come not
My mother has not come.
- (c) Ko bé wó
Not come not
- (c) He has not come

Ko nyí hung we e?
 Not 2plyou know+pr.t not?
 Don't you know?



From the tree above, negation in Rigwe is realised either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence through the use of *ko* at the beginning and *we* at the end. Example one though did not make use of negation at the beginning but at the end. Another observation is, Negative sentence in Rigwe can have a null sentence.

5.1.4 Tense in Rigwe

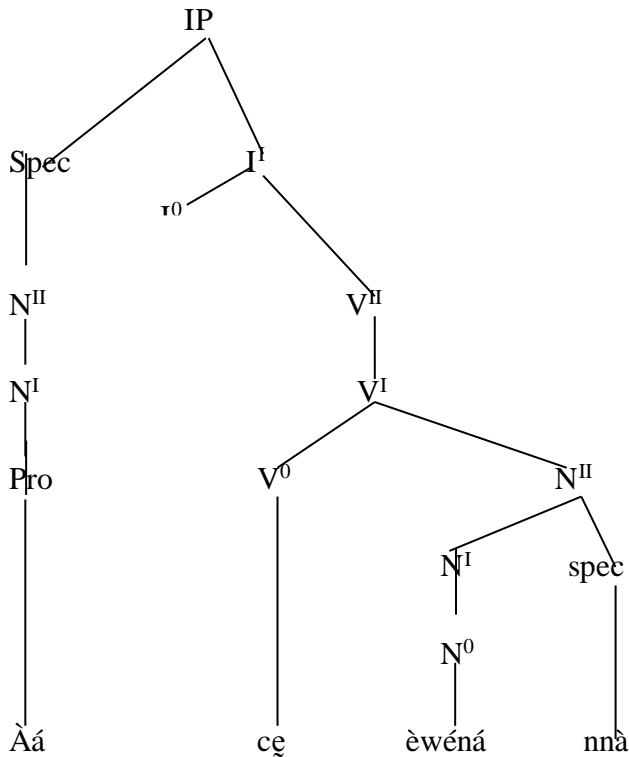
Tense is not morphologically marked in Rigwe. The following examples would be used to discuss

tense in Rigwe:

- 9a. Àá **ce** èwéná nnà
3sg **love+pres** girl that
'He **loves** that girl'
- 9b. Mángwá **fóng** mbruru a nyié
Mangwa **wed+pass** wife at day before yesterday
'Mangwa **got** wedded day before yesterday'
- 9c. Àá **cwuo** kpe nviato
3sg **go+pres** school
'He **goes** to school'
- 9d. Àá **nywá** kpéniátó
3sg **go+past** school
She **went** to school

We should note that *ce*, *fóng*, *yɛ*, *cwuo*, *nywà* can be used as present, simple present and past tenses but the only thing that indicates their past is the use of tone. In 9d, the verb *nywá* through the use of the high tone shows past tense while *nywà* which is used with a low tone is in the present. Tenses are not inherently identified in Rigwe. Rigwe does not show demarcation by using any reflection to show the tense of a verb. Past tense of a verb can be realised in Rigwe through the use of another verb. Example of such is *cwuo* in 9c shows the simple present tense of the verb *nywà*.

The schema below represents the 9a:



There is no overt morphological tense marker in Rigwe. Rigwe does not have inflections to indicate whether a tense is in the present or past.

From the examples 11a and 11b, the head of VP in Rigwe is a verb. In 11a the verb *né* is the head of the phrase and has AdvP as its complement while in 11b the verb *nyí* is the head of the phrase but has NP as its complement. In 11c, the verb *cwuo* becomes the spec of the verb *be* which is the head of the VP.

6.1 Discussion

Rigwe pronouns do not have gender marker although the aspect of the pronouns in object position was not considered, yet, learners may have problems of differentiating the masculine, feminine and gender in the both subject and object positions. For example in Rigwe, *áà* is used for *he*, *she* and *it*. There is the tendency to address a male as *she* and female as *he* by Rigwe learners of English as Rigwe does not have a way of differentiating these gender pronouns as English does. Gender pronoun falls under the hierarchy of difficulty *split* because the pronoun *áà* is used in the source language as *she*, *he* and *it*. So the learn must learn to differentiate the use of gender pronoun in the target language as one item is used to represent different gender in their SL.

Although Rigwe has prepositions, the richness in its preposition cannot be compared to that of English. The same preposition *a* in Rigwe

is used for *in*, *at*, *by* and *on*. Only the context and the complement of the preposition would determine whether it is indicating *in*, *on*, *by* or *at*. So this may constitute a problem to Rigwe learners of English. Teachers of English language in Rigwe speaking communities should make sure that preposition is well taught and learners put them into use to avoid interference from their L1. Preposition fall under hierarchy of difficulty *split* as the preposition *a* in Rigwe becomes *at*, *by*, *on*, *in* or *at* in English. Requiring Rigwe learners of English to learn how to make distinction when using preposition in English.

Tense and aspect are the major areas in which Rigwe learners of English may encounter difficulties. Our analysis shows that Rigwe learners of English may have difficulty in differentiating between the English present tense and past tense as these are not differentiated in their first language. Also indicate that Rigwe

aspects are inherently realised whereas English has aspect markers to show perfective, progressive and habitual aspects. English uses the *have* auxiliary verbs to indicate perfective; the *be+ing* to show progressive aspects and the morpheme *s* or the base form of a verb to show habitual aspects while Rigwe does not have such features. Rigwe learner of English may have a challenge in using the aspect markers in English as these are not present in his/her mother tongue. The hierarchy of difficulty that is observed on tense and aspect is *overdifferentiation*. That is the tense and aspect need to be learnt entirely by Rigwe learners of English as there is no similarity between the tense and aspect in his/her Mother Tongue and the Target Language.

The best solution to the problem on tense and aspect is to teach the learner the different verb forms in English and how inflection is realised on auxiliary verbs and lexical verbs. It is the responsibility of the English language teacher to differentiate the realisation of tense on the English verbs. Rigwe learners of English must practice how tense and aspect are realised in the target language as practice is said to lead to perfection. The Rigwe speaker must consciously avoid the inference of their mono-tense which does not show inflection overtly but covertly.

The use of determiners is another major problem discovered in this research study. Nigerians have been observed to use determiners wrongly (Eyisi, 2003). This is seen as a result of the influence of the Mother Tongue (MT) on learning of English. Rigwe speakers/learners of English may have problems with the use of determiners as a result of language interference. It has shown that Rigwe learners of the English language have problem using determiners in subject, complement and object positions. The hierarchy of difficulty that is related to the use of determiner by Rigwe learners of English is *level 3 (reinterpretation)*. Determiner exists in Rigwe but is given a different shape in English. To solve this problem, English language teachers in Rigwe speaking communities must go extra miles to see that the learner's orientation on the use of determiners is corrected. Grammar books that delve more into the appropriate use of determiners should be used and teachers must give students extra works related to the use of

determiners.

The problem with adjective is the structural arrangement. It comes after the noun in English. The difference in structural arrangement of English and Rigwe adjective may definitely constitute problem in the use of adjective by Rigwe learners of English. Teachers of English in Rigwe language communities should teach the accurate use of adjectives in the second language in order to avoid wrong usage as a result of the effect of first language (Rigwe). The differences in the use of adjective and determiners falls under *level 3 (reinterpretation)* of hierarchy of difficulty because both adjective and determiner exist in the mother tongue but need to be given new shape in the TL. Finally, possession is not shown in Rigwe using 's' but *ni* which is equivalent to *of* genitive or through noun-noun construction. This constitutes *level 2 (underdifferentiation)* of hierarchy of difficulty. The genitive *s* is absent in Rigwe so it might be avoided by Rigwe learners of English. Learners may have problem in using the genitive 's' to show possession in English as such feature is not present in their source language. So teachers of English should make sure that this is rightly taught to avoid wrong application as the learner's source language does not use it to indicate possession

Conclusion

So far, the work has considered the hierarchy of difficulty in the learning of the English language by Rigwe learners of the English language. The study had two sources of data: gatherings (festivals, local pubs, churches and markets). The secondary source was from *Rigwe New Testament Bible* and also from a book titled, *How to Read and Write Rigwe* by Gya (2006) which served as a useful guide for correct. Chomsky's X-bar Theory of the Principles and Parameters was used. The study concludes that Rigwe learners of English would encounter some difficulties in the learning of the English language. The study also brought out the level of difficulty each challenge identified falls in the hierarchy of difficulty. The study therefore recommends that: those who have a stake in English and Rigwe languages should know that these languages are of different origins and typologies. So, priority should be given in the areas of difference in order

to proffer solutions to likely problems Rigwe learners of English would encounter. Teachers of English in Rigwe speaking communities should be conversant with the structural differences in English and Rigwe. This would enable them to identify areas of differences in the two languages which might tend to be a learning challenge to Rigwe learners of English in order to proffer

solutions to the predicted problems. Finally, standard teaching materials that discuss the grammar of English should be consulted, especially books that dwell on parts of speech, possession marker, gender marking, negation and tense. This would enable the teacher to be well-prepared in order to avoid wrong transfer of knowledge to the learners.

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