Contrastive Analysis of the Use of Determiners in English and Esan Noun Phrases: Implications for Esan Learners of English as a Second Language in Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
  	This study is a contrastive analysis of English and Esan noun phrases, focusing on the use of determiners, and its implications for Esan learners of English as a second language in both urban and rural settings in Edo State, Nigeria. Guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses, this research emphasises the key concepts of contrastive analysis, noun phrases, and determiners. Utilising Lado's theory of contrastive analysis (1957), the analysis indicates observable predictions that form the foundation of the proposed test items. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with a population comprising 80 public senior secondary schools and 4,435 SS2 students in Esan land. A sample size of 24 public senior secondary schools and 351 SS2 students was selected through multistage sampling. Data was collected using the "Test of Use of Determiners in the Noun Phrases of English (TUDNPE)" developed for this study. Reliability was assessed through the t-test method and Pearson product-moment correlation, yielding a reliability index of 0.68. The research questions were addressed using mean percentage scores and standard deviation, while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed a significant difference in the performance of Esan learners, in the use of determiners in English noun phrases in urban and rural areas. Structural differences in the noun phrases of both languages posed substantial learning difficulties, which were evident in students' performance. It is recommended that teachers enhance instructional strategies to address these differences. *Keywords: Contrastive analysis, Noun phrases, mother tongue, Second language, Determiners, Pre-determiners, Post determiners, Esan Learners of English, Rural and Urban Areas.*

Introduction

Within English grammar, a phrase is an assemblage of two or more words that collaboratively convey meaning in a sentence or clause. It is a group of words that does not make complete sense (Murthy, 2007). It occupies a grammatical space between a word and a clause and it consists of a headword that determines its grammatical function and one or more modifiers. While traditionally, a phrase is understood to contain multiple words, modern schools of syntax may regard a single word as a phrase if it appears in a specific syntactic position, such as subject or object position (Lockwood, 2002). If the most important part of the phrase, that is, the head, is an adjective, the phrase is an Adjective phrase; if the most important part of the phrase is a noun, the phrase is a Noun phrase, and so on (Elly, 2002).

It is pertinent to underscore the point that noun phrases, whether in language in general or English in particular, are one of the pivotal topics in formal linguistics. Discussions related to their definitions, internal structural patterns, syntactic functions, and semantic roles have been discussed through various types of approaches; some examples include the generative transformative grammar approach which emphasizes form (Chomsky, 1957; Thomas 2005) the functional approach (Millaku, Millaku, and Kafexholli, 2022; Thomas, 2005), and the systemic functional linguistics approach, which focuses on the ideational meta-

function, specifically on experiential and logical structures (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

A comparison of two languages is discussed under the theory of contrastive analysis. Contrastive analysis rests on the premise that there are structural differences between L_1 and L_2, and these differences generate difficulties that a contrastive analyst tries to predict (Onuigbo & Eyisi, 2009).

Determiners are essential in the structure of both English and Esan noun phrases, serving to specify nouns and provide contextual information. Notably, the usage of determiners varies significantly between these two languages, which could create challenges for Esan learners of English as a second language. This study aims to highlight the differences in noun phrase structures between English and Esan languages, particularly regarding the use of determiners among Esan learners in urban and rural Esan lands. Determiners in English include articles, demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers, and ordinal and cardinal numerals (Quirk et al., 1985).

A primary distinction between English and Esan determiners is the use of articles. English recognises definite article ('the') and indefinite articles (a and an) to denote noun specificity, while Esan lacks these forms, relying primarily on context to convey meaning. For example, in English, one articulates, "I saw a dog," whereas in Esan, the equivalent is "I see dog," or "idaghe awa."

Demonstratives also differ between the two languages. English employs demonstratives (this, that, these, those) to denote proximity, with a similar functionality in Esan. For instance, "this" and "these" in English translate to "onan" and "enan" in Esan, respectively, indicating nearness.

Possessive expressions exhibit further divergence; English utilises possessive determiners (my, your, his/her, our, their) to indicate ownership, while Esan often employs distinct constructions. For example, where English states "my brother's car," (imonto non so obhiobhen nokpia) which means, by direct translation in Esan: *car belonging to my brother*. Esan has no grammatical markers to show ownership as it is in English language.

The implications of the contrasts above are significant for Esan learners of English. Understanding the structural variances in the usage of determiners can contribute to targeted pedagogical strategies that address the challenges faced by these learners (Odumuh, 2010; Bamgbose, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

Esan learners struggle with the mandatory inclusion of determiners in noun phrases, a requirement that does not correlate with the syntactic rules of their native language. In Esan, determiners such as articles are seldom employed, leading to frequent syntactic breaches when learners attempt to apply English grammatical rules. This disparity results in sentences that are often ungrammatical, particularly when the noun phrase fails to relate accurately to other elements within the sentence. The Chief examiner's report for May/June 2019 WASSCE summarised the performance of candidates in the English language as follows: "Grammatical/syntactic errors marred the quality of answers of almost all the candidates, thereby significantly diminishing their marks." The Chief examiner recommended that "candidates should pay more attention to the study of grammar and structure of the English language." The continued prevalence of such errors, as documented in WASSCE reports over several years, underscores the significance of addressing this issue within language instruction. It is pertinent to note that despite the importance of determiners in effective communication, limited research has explored the specific difficulties faced by Esan learners in this area. Without a systematic contrastive analysis of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases, educators lack evidence-based strategies to address these challenges, potentially hindering Esan learners' proficiency in English.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to contrastively analyse the English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners and examine their implications for Esan learners of English as a second language in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. establish the difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas

ii. Determine whether or not the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners constitute learning difficulties to Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

i. What is the difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas?

ii. Do the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners constitute

learning difficulties, as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1. There is no significant difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English noun phrases in Urban and rural areas.

Ho_2. The structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners do not constitute learning difficulties to Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas.

Literature Review

The Concept of Contrastive Analysis:

Contrastive analysis rests on the premise that there are structural differences between L_1 and L_2, and these differences generate difficulties that a contrastive analyst tries to predict (Onuigbo & Eyisi 2009). Contrastive analysis (CA) is a research methodology used in linguistics to compare and contrast two or more languages. The primary goal of CA is to identify similarities and differences between languages, with a focus on the implications for language learning and teaching (James, 1980; Krzeszowski, 1990). CA involves a systematic comparison of linguistic structures, including phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics. By examining the linguistic differences between languages, researchers can identify potential areas of difficulty for language learners (Lado, 1957; Stockwell, Bowen, & Martin, 1965; Maisamari, 2005).

One of the key applications of CA is in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). CA can help researchers understand how learners' native language (L1) influences their acquisition of a target language (L2) (Odlin, 1989). CA can also inform language teaching practices. By identifying areas of linguistic difference, teachers can develop targeted instructional materials and strategies to help learners overcome these differences (Ellis, 2008). For instance, a contrastive analysis of English and Esan might highlight differences in word order, which could inform the development of teaching materials that focus on sentence structure.

Despite its potential benefits, CA has undergone various criticisms and revisions over the years. Some researchers have argued that CA is too narrow in focus, neglecting the social and contextual factors that influence language learning (Bley-Vroman, 1983; Kasper, 1992). Others have suggested that CA should be integrated with other research methodologies, such as error analysis and discourse analysis (Taylor, 1975).

CA has its historical roots in the 1950s and 1960s when linguists like Lado and Fries developed the concept as a way to predict and explain language learning difficulties (Lado, 1957; Fries, 1945). Since then, CA has undergone various revisions and criticisms, but it remains a valuable tool for language teachers, researchers, and learners (James, 1980; Odlin, 1989). In recent years, CA has undergone a resurgence of interest, driven in part by advances in corpus linguistics and computational methods (Granger, 2003; Gilquin, 2006). These new approaches have enabled researchers to conduct more nuanced and detailed comparisons of linguistic structures and to explore the implications of these differences for language learning and teaching.

This study perfectly captures the essence of CA. by comparing and contrasting the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases, with a view to identify the similarities and differences that could inform language teaching and learning practices. This study provides insights into the challenges faced by Esan learners of English as a second language in using determiners, both in urban and rural areas, and informed strategies for improving language instruction and learning outcomes.

The Concept of Noun Phrase

A noun phrase or nominal (phrase) is a phrase that has a noun (or indefinite pronoun) as its head or performs the same grammatical function such as a phrase (Crystal 1997). Noun phrases are very common cross-linguistically, and they may be the most frequently occurring phrase type. According to Murthy (2007), a noun phrase is a group of words which does the work of a noun. He gave examples of noun phrases to include the following: early to bed, to win the race, teaching English, reading books, playing cricket, and eating rice. When these phrases are turned into sentences, they will occupy the position of a noun; that is, occurring in the subject or object positions by coming before the verb or after the verb in the sentence, respectively. Murthy (2007) gave the examples of the following sentences with the noun phrases underlined: Early to bed is a good habit (NP in the subject position). Reading books gives us knowledge and pleasure (NP in the subject position). My friend likes playing cricket (NP in the object position). Bayo hates eating rice (NP in the object position). He has a strong desire to win the race (NP in the object position). Noun phrases often function as verb subjects and objects, as predicative expressions, and as the

complements of prepositions. Noun phrases can be embedded inside each other; for instance, the noun phrase "some of his constituents" contains the shorter noun phrase: "his constituents". A string of words that can be replaced by a single pronoun without rendering the sentence grammatically unacceptable is a noun phrase. In the domain of syntax and grammar, the noun phrase (NP) is a central unit in both spoken and written discourse. A noun phrase typically consists of a head noun and may include premodifiers such as determiners, adjectives, and other elements. These, determiners serve crucial grammatical functions, providing specificity, definiteness, and quantity to the noun they modify. The placement and selection of determiners play a fundamental role in structuring noun phrases (Quirk et al., 1985).

Determiners in English and Esan Languages

A determiner is a word that introduces a noun. It always comes before a noun in a noun phrase, not after, and it also comes before any other adjectives used to describe the noun. According to Kolln and Gray (2014), determiners signal nouns in a variety of ways: They may define the relationship of the noun to the speaker or listener (reader); they may identify the noun as specific or general; they may quantify it specifically or refer to quantity in general. Determiners show how the noun is used in a noun phrase. They show whether the noun is used in a specific or general way, as shown below. In phrases like: The house - onu uwa; my house - uwa nọnsẹbhen; this house - onu uwa nan; which house? Uwa nea? That one – ọni; their house – uwa nọnsele; the words, 'the' (article), 'my' (possessive determiner), 'this' (demonstrative determiner), 'which' (interrogative determiner), 'that' (demonstrative determiner), and 'their' (possessive determiner) denote specificity; in other words, their referents, or what they refer to are specific. Similarly, determiners can also relate to the noun generically as shown in these examples: a boy – usẹnbhokhan; a student – okhin siku; many girls - imanbhẹn nebunbun, several people - ẹbho nebun. In the examples above, the determiners 'a, 'an (indefinite articles), 'many', and 'several' (quantifiers) refer to the noun in a general way. A boy and a student do not refer to any specific boy or specific student, respectively. Also, 'many' and 'several' in the other examples do not refer to any specific number of people. It should be noted, however, that where the articles *a* and *an* were used in the examples so far, the Esan language used the zero article. Determiners are functional elements of structure and not formal word classes because the group of words contain some items that are nouns, some that are pronouns, and some that are adjectives explain that determiners are sometimes called limiting adjectives in traditional grammar (Kolln & Gray, 2014).

The following items are analysed under determiners: *articles, demonstratives, possessives, interrogatives and quantifiers.*

Structural analysis of the use of Articles in English and the Esan language:

Articles are words used in front of nouns as premodifiers. There are two types of articles: the indefinite and definite articles. There are three articles in English*: a, an* and 'the'. The indefinite articles are *a* and *an*; while the definite article is 'the'. The indefinite articles are used when the noun is describing something in general. They appear with only singular nouns. While *an* is used with words that begin with vowel sounds - (an egg, an orange), 'a' is used with words that begin with consonant sounds - (a book, a child). The definite article describes something or somebody already identified or talked about. The definite article can be used before countable and uncountable nouns, whether the nouns are masculine or feminine, singular or plural. It is used with certain adjectives to denote all members of a class (the rich, the poor). Articles belong to the closed system items in English, in the sense that they cannot normally be extended by the creation of additional members. It requires no great effort to list all the members in a closed system and to be reasonably sure that one has made an exhaustive inventory (especially, of course, where the membership is so extremely small as in the case of the article). Articles are said to constitute a system in being (i) reciprocally exclusive: the decision to use one item in a given structure excludes the possibility of using any other (thus, one can have the book or a book; but not "*a the book"); and (ii) reciprocally defining: it is less easy to state the meaning of any individual item than to define it in relation to the rest of the system (Quirk et' al, 1973). The individual meaning of the articles *a, an* and *the* will be difficult to mention when they are not used to pre-modify other items, such as a noun or an adjective. The following noun phrase structures will exemplify the claim above:

i. A boy: it means one boy and not two boys (imposition of countability), any boy anywhere (a sense of indefiniteness), a singular and not the plural noun (boys). These are possible significations of the use of the article *a* in the noun phrase above.

ii. In Esan, a boy = usẹnbhokhan, = boy; the article *a* is not used with the noun.

iii. One boy = usẹnbhokhan ọkpa = boy one = is what is in use in Esan (cardinal numeral)

iv. An orange = anume = orange, but two oranges = anume eva = orange two; instead of two oranges in English.

Orange in Esan has no plural; countability can only be done through the use of numerals (Oboh, 2025).

References and the Article:

It is essential when discussing the article to make a distinction between specific and generic references. If we say: A lion and two tigers are sleeping in the cage, the reference is specific, since we have in mind specific specimens of the class 'tiger'. If, on the other hand, we say: 'tigers are dangerous animals' the reference is generic, since we are thinking of the class 'tigers' without special reference to specific tigers. The distinctions that are important for count nouns with specific reference, disappear with generic reference. This is so because the generic reference is used to denote what is normal for members of a class. Consequently, the distinctions of number and definiteness are neutralized since they are no longer relevant for the generic concept. Singular or plural, definite or indefinite can sometimes be used without change in the generic meaning, though plural definite occurs chiefly with nationality names (Quirk et al., 1973).

a. The German is a good musician
b. A German is a good musician
c. The Germans are good musicians
d. Germans are good musicians

The following three forms can be used generically with a count noun:

e. The lion is a dangerous animal.
f. A lion is a dangerous animal.
g. Tigers are dangerous animals.

But with non-count nouns, only the zero article is possible in English (Quirk et al., 1973).

In Esan, the zero article is prominently used. Also, the definite article is in use. The Esan language, like English, can use the definite and the zero articles specifically and generically.

a. The lion in the forest = ọno oduman nọn ribhẹ ẹgbo = the lion in the forest

b. *Lion in the forest = oduman nọn ribhẹ ẹgbo = lion in the forest

c. A lion in the forest = oduman nọn ribhẹ ẹgbo = lion in the forest

d. The lions in the forest = eno oduman ne ribhẹ ẹgbo = the lions in the forest

e. Lions in the forest = oduman ne ribhẹ ẹgbo (Oboh, 2025)

Detailed analyses of the Esan generic noun phrases above:
NP (a): The noun phrase (a) above shows that the definite article 'the' is present and pre-modifies the noun lion as it is in English.

NP (b): The second noun phrase, which has the asterisk, is not acceptable in English because, since lion is a singular count noun, it ought to be preceded by a determiner. The phrase is correct in the Esan language because where articles that mark out singular items in English are used, the Esan language uses zero articles. Hence, a *goat* in English showing one goat would be interpreted as *goat* in Esan without the article *a.*

NP (c): This NP is the correct version of NP (b) in English, but it makes no structural difference in Esan as can be seen in the example above.

NP (d): The plural marker 's' added to lion, to make it plural, is not available in Esan. The noun 'lion' - 'oduman' cannot be pluralised in Esan, but the determiners are used to show pluralisation. So, instead of 'ọno oduman' - 'the lion', it will change to 'eno oduman' in which 'eno' indicates more than one lion.

NP (e): Lions in this NP have a zero article for both English and Esan. However, Esan does not have any grammatical *'s'* markers to indicate plural number in lions. The plural is introduced by 'ne', making the noun phrase mean, "Lion that are in the forest" (Oboh, 2025).

Observation:
The articles 'an' and 'a' are omitted in the Esan translation of the words with the
Articles in English.

Predictions:
1. Esan learners of English are likely to write sentences with or without indefinite articles because they are not in Esan as they are in English.

2. The Esan learners of English will find it easy to use the definite article. Unlike English, the definite article is spelt differently according to the vowel at the initial position of the noun; hence ọne ebe (the book) and ọno okhuo (the woman).

The Use of Interrogative Determiners in Esan and English

Determiners are a closed class of words that provide information such as familiarity, location, quantity, and number about a noun or a noun phrase. Interrogative determiners are used in asking questions. The three interrogative determiners in English are: 'what', 'which' and 'whose'. These interrogative determiners formulate direct and indirect questions and exclamations. Like other determiners, interrogative determiners perform the grammatical function of determinative (Laurel & Brinton, 2010).

Use of Interrogative Determiners in Asking Direct Questions

i. English: Which school do you attend? Esan = Isiku nea uwẹ yo? Direct translation = school which do you attend

ii. Whose bag are you holding? Esan = ẹkpa nọnsọa uwẹ mubhọẹn? Direct Translation (di) = bag whose you are holding?

iii. What power do you have? Esan = ahu bea uwẹ bhọẹn? DT = Power what do you have?

Use of Interrogative Determiners in Asking Indirect Questions

i. You attend which school? Esan = uwẹ yi siku nea? DT = You attend school which?

ii. You are holding whose bag? Esan = Uwẹ mu ẹkpa nọnsọa bhọẹn? DT = You hold bag whose?

iii. You have what power? Esan: Uwẹ bhon ahu ebea? DT = You have power what? (Oboh, 2025)

The Use of Demonstrative Determiners in English and Esan

There are two types of demonstratives: demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners. This group is a part of the closed system items of English, as there are just four words in it. The demonstratives have number contrast and can function both as determiners and pronouns. The general meanings of the two sets can be stated as 'near' reference: this - singular, these - plural; and the 'distant' reference: that - singular, those - plural (Quirk et al, 1973). These words, whether used as pronouns or determiners, point out where something is in relation to us. When a demonstrative pronoun points out the noun it is referring to, it makes clear to the listener which nouns the pronouns are replacing. For example, if someone says: (a) "Look at that"; the listener may ask: (b) "Look at what?" (c) "That mirror over there." The word 'that' in 'sentence' (a), is a pronoun pointing to the noun mirror, which it replaced. But in sentence (c), the word 'that' is used before the noun mirror to introduce it; therefore, the word 'that' in sentence (c) is a demonstrative determiner. The difference between demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners is in their usage. A determiner comes before a noun to introduce it or tells us something about it. But a pronoun takes the place of a noun when we don't want to use the latter. So, whereas pronouns replace nouns, determiners introduce them. In Esan, demonstrative pronouns are realizable as in English: "Look at that" = ghọ ọni = 'Look that' or = 'see that'; but with the omission of the preposition 'at'. It is also very possible to use demonstrative determiners in Esan as it is in English, and to distinguish their uses in terms of 'near' reference: this mirror = ọnu ughegbe nan = the mirror this; and distant reference: that mirror = ọnu ughegbe ni = 'the mirror that'.

Demonstrative determiners provide additional information about the proximity of the word or phrase. The four demonstrative determiners in English and Esan are: this = ọnan; that = ọnin; these = enan; those = enin (Oboh, 2025). According to Laurel and Briton (2010), demonstrative determiners are determiners of literal and figurative distance, meaning the distance in physical (special deixis, referring to physical space) or affective (discourse deixis, referring to emotional space, including space resulting from time). Demonstrative determiners perform the grammatical function of determinatives. The first demonstrative determiner in English is 'this' = ọnan; which is the singular proximal demonstrative determiner; singular refers to number, which means the antecedent refers to only one person, place, thing, or idea. Proximal means very near or close to; as illustrated by the following example:

i. This beautiful house = Esan: ọnu uwa nọn mọn ose nan DT = the house beautiful this

The second demonstrative determiner in English is 'that' = Esan: ọnin, and is the singular distal (remote or distant from) demonstrative determiner. The following example illustrates it:

ii. That child = Esan: ọno ohkan nin = DT: the child that

The third demonstrative determiner in English is the plural proximal 'these' = enan, as in the following example:

iii. These houses = enu uwa nan = the house these

The fourth demonstrative determiner is 'those', which is the plural distal demonstrative. An example of its use includes the following:

iv. Those men and women = Esan: enin ikpia bi enikhuo nin = DT: the men and the women those

(Oboh, 2025).

Observation

In Esan language, the demonstrative determiners do not come before the nouns they point out; they come after them. There is the use of the definite article before any noun modified by the demonstrative determiners in the examples above.

Prediction

Esan learners of English will most likely use the definite article *'the'* in the place of demonstrative determiners.

The Use of Possessive Determiners in English and Esan

Possessive determiners are used to show who owns or possesses something. Some traditional grammars of English refer to them as possessive adjectives, though they do not have the same syntactic distribution as bona fide adjectives (Huddleston & Pullum 2002). Examples in English include the possessive forms of the personal pronouns: *'my, your, his, her, its, our, their;* but excluding those such as mine, yours, ours, and theirs that are used as possessive pronouns, not determiners. Possessive

determiners may also be taken to include possessive forms made from nouns, from other pronouns and noun phrases, such as John's, girl's, somebody's, the King of Spain's, etc. Possessive determiners, as used in the English language and Esan, imply the definite article. For example, 'my car' implies the car that belongs to me (imoto non sebhen). Other examples of possessive determiners are: *his* car, *her* book, *your* pen, its tail, *our* house, *their* school,

While some classify the words my, your, her, his, our, their, and its, as possessive adjectives, the differences noted above make others not consider them adjectives; at least not in English, which prefers them as possessive determiners - Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan (1999).

Observations

My = is used for both male and female in English and Esan.

His = is used for masculine gender in English; but no gender change in Esan.

Her = for female gender in English; no gender change in Esan.

Its = neuter gender in English, but absent in Esan. Esan would rather mention the name of the thing/or animal that owns what is referred to.

E.g., 'dog's tail' = ẹrunbhun awa = 'tail dog'; its tail = ẹrunbhun nọn ọsọle = 'tail belonging to it' 'ọsọle' generally refers to anyone who owns something (in the singular sense).

The English plural possessive determiners have their equivalent in Esan.

Predictions:

Third-person singular possessive pronouns can create confusion for Esan

learners of English as they are not gender distinguishable in Esan. "ọsọle" can refer to his, her, or its.

Esan learners will effectively use the plural possessive determiners, as it is used the same way as English.

The Use of Predeterminers in English and Esan

In grammar, a predeterminer is a type of determiner that precedes other determiners in a noun phrase. In other words, (pre) means 'before', and pre-determiners mean before determiners; so, they occur in a noun phrase before determiners, such as the articles and other determiners, to give even more information about the noun that comes after. Predeterminers are also called predeterminer modifiers. Predeterminers are used to express a proportion (such as all, both or half) of the whole indicated in the noun phrase. Like determiners, pre-determiners are functional elements of structure and not formal word classes. The special quantifiers 'all', 'both', and 'half' are the core

members of predeterminers. Other fractions and multipliers are marginal members.

This set of quantifying elements is distinct from ordinary quantifiers such as many, some, much, and the cardinal and ordinal numerals (Payne, 2011).

Classification *of Predeterminers with Structural Examples:*

The core pre-determiners (all, both, and half)

The core determiners - all, both and half, can occur only before articles or demonstratives but, since they are themselves quantifiers, they do not occur with the following 'quantitative' determiners: every, either, neither, each, some, any, no, enough. 'All', 'both' and 'half', have *of*-constructions, which are optional with nouns and obligatory with personal pronouns (quirk et' al., 1973).

i. All (of) the meat = ọne elanbhẹn rebhe = the meat all = the *of*-construction is not realizable with nouns in Esan.

ii. All of it = ọrebhe = all = the *of*-construction is not realizable with personal pronouns in Esan as it is in English.

iii. Both (of) the students = enin ibhokhin isiku veva = the students both = no *of*-construction.

iv. Both of them = ele eveva = them both = no *of*-construction

v. Half of the time = ukhiọnbhọn ọneghe = half the time = no *of*-construction

vi. Half of it = ukhiọnbhọn bhọ = half of it = of-construction is possible when half is used with personal pronoun in Esan; unlike using both and all, with personal pronouns.

All and both (but not half) can occur after the head, either immediately or within the predication (quirk et' al., 1973).

i. The students all passed their exams. = eni ibhokhin isiku rebhe lunọnsẹn bhi

idọnbhegbe = The students all did well in their exams. The occurrence of all and both after the head 'students' is perfectly in order in Esan.

ii. They both passed their exams = ele eveva lunọnsẹn bhi idọnbhegbe = they both

Pre-determiners - Multipliers (double, once, twice, three/four/ten…times, etc.)

The second type of predeterminers includes double, twice, three times, etc, which occur with non-count and plural count nouns; and with singular count nouns denoting number, amount, etc.

i. Double their salary = osa nan hae ele gbe yeva = their salary double

ii. Twice his strength = izezele nọn sọle bhi ijian eve = strength his twice

iii. Three times this amount = ọne ekanan bhi ijian ea = this amount three times/three places

Three, four, etc., times as well as once can co-occur with determiners a, every, each, and (less commonly) per to form 'distributive' expressions with temporary nouns as head (Quirk et al, 1973).

Observation: multipliers are used the same way in Esan as in English.

Prediction: Esan learners are likely to be well disposed to the use of multiplier pre-determiners.

Pre-determiners -Fractions

The fractions one-third, two-fifths, three-quarters, etc., used with non-count and with singular and plural count nouns, can also be followed by determiners, and have the alternative "of-construction":

i. He did it in one-third (of) the time it took me (Quirk et al, 1973).

ii. In one-quarter (of) an hour = obọkpa bhi uriagogo bhi ijian enẹn = one part of an hour into four.

iii. one-fifth of the goods = obọkpa bhe enihẹ bhi ijian isẹn = one part of the goods into five

Observation: Esan fraction predeterminers do not have the exact interpretative similarity with English.

Prediction: It will be relatively difficult for Esan learners to use these types of determiners, which do not have a similar interpretation in Esan language.

Pre-determiners -Intensifiers

They include predeterminers such as: quite, such, what, and rather. They express surprise, disappointment, pleasure, or other emotions. According to Quirk et al, (1973), Intensifiers can be divided into three semantic classes: emphasizers, amplifiers, and down toners, intensifiers are not limited to indicating an increase in intensity; they indicate a point on the intensity scale which may be high or low. Emphasizers have a general heightening effect; amplifiers scale upwards from an assumed norm; down toners have a lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm. The three classes are shown with their subclasses:

Emphasizers (e.g., definitely)

Amplifiers (maximisers (e.g., completely)

(Boosters (e.g., very much)

Down toners] Compromisers (e.g., kind of)] diminishers (e.g., partly)

] minimisers (e.g., hardly)

] approximators (e.g., almost)

Most of the common intensifiers are adverbs, but there are also some noun phrases and a few prepositional phrases. This study is syntactic; it will therefore go into the semantic details of intensifiers but shall be focused on intensifiers that can be used within the noun phrase (Quirk et al, 1973).

Observation: a word like 'such' can be interpreted as 'like that' or 'like this', which infers that the word 'such' cannot be pinned down to one-on-one interpretation with the English meaning.

Again, small and little are used together with food, to achieve the phrase 'quite a little food'. It infers that there is no individual word to explain 'quite' in the Esan language.

Prediction: Esan learners of English may not use intensifiers like such, rather, and quite correctly, because there is no exact one-word interpretation for each of them in the Esan language.

The Use of Post-Determiners as Modifiers of the Noun Phrase in English and Esan: (Cardinals, Ordinals and Quantifiers)

Post-determiners are used after determiners and before adjectives in a noun phrase structure. Quirk et al. (1973) listed the following items under post-determiners: ordinal and cardinal numerals and *quantifiers*.

Table 1 Ordinal and Cardinal Numerals in English and Esan

English Number	English cardinal (Show quantity)	Esan Cardinal	English ordinal (Show order)	Esan ordinal	Ordinal abbreviation
1	One	ọkpa	first	Ihẹnhẹn	1st
2	Two	Eva	Second	ọze eva	2nd
3	Three	Ea	third	ọze ea	3rd
4	Four	enẹn	Fourth	ọze enẹn	4th
5	Five	isẹn	Fifth	ọzi isẹn	5th
6	Six	Ehan	Sixth	ọze ehan	6th

7	Seven	ihiọn	Seventh	ọzi ihion	7th
8	Eight	elẹnlẹn	Eighth	ọze elẹnlẹn	8th
9	Nine	Isilin	Nineth	ọzi isilin	9th
10	Ten	Igbe	Tenth	ozi igbe	10th

Use of Cardinals as Post Modifiers in English and Esan Noun Phrases:

Apart from one, which can co-occur only with singular count nouns, all cardinal numerals (two, three, …) co-occur with plural count nouns:

a. One boy and three girls = usẹnbhoghan ọkpa bi imanbhẹn ea = boy one and girls three

b. The two black shirts = enan awegbe eva ne bhili = the shirts two black

c. These four bottles and six cups = enọn ọgor enẹn nan bi ukpu ehan = the bottle four these and cup six

Observation: In English, cardinals come after determiners, but before adjectives to pre-modify the noun in a noun phrase structure, as in the second example above. In Esan, however, the cardinal comes after the noun it modifies, and before the adjective, which also post-modifies the noun in a noun phrase structure.

Prediction: The Esan learner is likely to use cardinals to post-modify the noun in a noun phrase structure.

Use of Ordinal Numerals as Post Modifiers in English and Esan Noun Phrases:

According to Quirk et al. (1973), Ordinal numerals, except first, co-occur only with count nouns. All ordinals usually precede any cardinal numbers in the noun phrase:

i. The first three planes… = aropele ea nihenhen = aeroplane three the first

The general ordinals: last, next, (an)other may be used freely before or after cardinals, according to the meanings required:

ii. His last two books = ebe eva nekike nesole = book two last his)

iii. His two last books = ebe eva nekike nesole = book two last his)

More examples of the use of ordinals in English and Esan

i. The second boy = onu usẹnbhokhan nọn zeva = the boy second

ii. The first and the second girl were awarded = ọnọn ọmanbhẹn ni hẹnhẹn bi ọnọn zeva = the girl first and the second…

iii. The sixth person in the race was a girl = onọn mu ukpazehan bhọ ọnu une = the person who was sixth in the race…

Observation: The ordinal post modifies the noun in a noun phrase; it is interpretatively descriptive of the noun in the context in which it modifies such a noun.

Prediction: It might be a challenge for Esan learners to pre-modify nouns in a noun phrase using ordinals. Also, the word order in the above constructions, as in previous examples, is extremely different and even bizarre.

Use of Quantifiers as Post Modifiers in English and Esan Noun Phrases:

Quantifiers are the third listed post-determiners of the noun phrase (Quirk et al, 1973). According to them, there are two small groups of closed-system quantifiers:

i. many, (a) few, and several co-occur only with plural count nouns:

- The few words he spoke were well chosen. = eni ikpọta khere… = the words few…

ii. Much and (a) little co-occur only with non-count nouns.

- There hasn't been much rain this year. = amẹn nọn bun bhasẹrọlọ inukpenan = rain much has not fallen this year.

A quantifier is a word or phrase which is used before a noun to indicate the amount or quantity: 'some', 'many', 'a lot of', and 'a few' are examples of quantifiers. Quantifiers can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

- There are **some** books on the desk = ibe eso ribhi tebu = books some on the table

- **Much** money and food…= ekutu igho bi ebae = much money and food

- He's got **more** friends than his sister = ọle bhiọn imuẹe no obhiọle no okhuo = He has friends more than his sister.

Observation: most of the quantifiers associated with countable nouns may have similarities in use in the Esan language, but those which are used with non-count nouns might be difficult because there is hardly any one-on-one

interpretative relationship with such words in the Esan language.

Predictions: The Esan learners of English, may be able to use modifiers associated with count nouns because of their similarity in use. They are likely to find difficulty using quantifiers used with non-count nouns because there is no one-on-one interpretative possibility between the words in both languages.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey research design. Creswell (2014), defines descriptive research as a design that aims to accurately describe a phenomenon or situation. The descriptive research design is appropriate for this study, as it enabled the researchers to sample Esan learners of the English language who are in SS2 and have acquired Esan as an L2 in noun phrase structures. The design also enabled the researchers to generalise the findings of the study by using the sampled Esan learners of the English language in SS2 to test the predictions of the learning difficulties.

The population of this study comprised 80 public senior secondary schools and 4,435 SS2 students across the five local government areas in Esan Land, Edo State.

The sample size for this study is made up of 351 students of SS2 taken from 24 public senior secondary schools across the five local government areas in Esan land. The sample size of 351 students was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample sizes from a finite population.' Thus, a population size of 4,435 SS2 students elicits a sample size of 351 SS2 Students.

The sampling procedure for this study is the multistage sampling technique, which is apt as it incorporates other sampling techniques. Firstly, the five local government areas in Esan land – Esan North East, Esan Central, Esan West, Esan South East, and Igueben- were purposively sampled because of the use of the Esan language in all the local government areas. Secondly, the simple random sampling technique was used to select the 24 sampled public senior secondary schools across the five local government areas in Esan land. This was to give every public senior secondary school an equal opportunity to be taken. Thirdly, the sample size of 351 students in SS2 was taken using the purposive sampling technique due to their characteristics, which suited the study. The use of this technique is justified by Crossman (2020), who stated that purposeful sampling is a non-probability technique; that is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objectives of the study. In addition, the proportionate

sampling technique was used to distribute the sampled 24 public senior secondary schools and 351 SS2 students across the five local governments in Esan land in order to achieve fair and even spread as well as proper representation.

The instrument developed for the study is called "Test of Use of Determiners in the Noun Phrases of English (TUDNPE). The TUDNPE is made up of four sections (A, B, C & D). Section A covers the demographic data of secondary school students in terms of school location (urban, rural). Section B contains 10 question items on students' use of determiners, Section C contains 10 questions on students' use of pre-determiners, and Section D contains 10 questions on students' use of post-determiners with the noun phrase structure of the English language. These sections tested students on use of determiners, which include the use of articles, demonstratives, possessives, and interrogatives, which are the different items that constitute determiners. It also featured questions on pre-determiners and post-determiners. The questions asked in these sections invariably confirmed or rejected the hypothesis made in these areas.

This article was peer-reviewed by experts in the field of English language education who validated the research instrument. The researcher was assisted by three research assistants, who were instructed on how to go about the administration of the test instrument. Thus, the Esan learners of the English Language were administered the test instrument, as drawn up by the researcher, to determine their use of determiners in a noun phrase structure.

The researcher adopted descriptive and statistical tools to analyse data from respondents. Research questions were answered using mean scores, standard deviation and item difficulty index. Thus, research question one was answered using mean percentage scores and standard deviation to establish the difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas. On the other hand, research question number two was answered using percentage analysis and interpreted based on the item difficulty analysis of values. To determine whether or not the mean size differentials between Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas were of significant effect, the researcher applied Cohen, (1988) Statistical power analysis to evaluate the mean differentials. According to Cohen (1988), the following effect sizes (mean percentage differences) can be considered as indicators of practical significance:

i. Small effect size: 5-10% (d = 0.2 - 0.3)

ii. Medium effect size: 10 - 20% (d = 0.5)

iii. Large effect size: 20 - 30% or more.

To determine the item difficulty analysis of value and the decision as to whether an item is Easy/Good or moderate/fair, Ebel (1965), education achievement measurement was used. According to Ebel (1965), the minimum figures for a decision of easy/good and moderate/fair are: Easy/Good: p-value ≥ 0.80 and moderate/fair: p-value between 0.40 and 0.79.

The null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance using the t-test statistic (being a test of significant difference between two sets of measurements).

The decision rule for accepting or rejecting any null hypothesis was as follows: accept the null hypothesis when the p-value is greater than 0.5 level of significance, and reject the null hypothesis when the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis and Interpretation

Research Question One:

What is the difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas?

Table 2: Analysis of Difference in the Performance of Esan Learners of English as a Second Language in the Use of Determiners in English and Esan Noun Phrases in Urban and Rural Areas.

Location of Esan Learners of L2	N	Mean Score (%)	Standard Deviation	Mean Diff. %
Urban	185	35.68	21.35	13.87
Rural	166	21.81	18.49	
Total	351			

The results in Table 2 show that the mean performance scores of Esan Learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases were 35.68 and 21.81 for urban and rural areas, respectively.

A mean differential of 13.87 was observed, which indicates that Esan learners of English as L2 in urban areas performed better than those in rural areas in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases.

Research Question Two

Do the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners constitute learning difficulties as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas?

Table 3: Item Difficulty Analysis of Structural Differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners by Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas.

Item number	Urban (n = 185)			Rural (n = 166)		
	n	p	Decision	n	p	Decision
1	158	.85	Easy/good	84	.51	moderate/fair
2	150	.81	Easy/good	79	.48	moderate/fair
3	164	.89	Easy/good	95	.57	moderate/fair
4	175	.95	Easy/good	92	.55	moderate/fair
5	163	.88	Easy/good	97	.58	moderate/fair
6	171	.92	Easy/good	94	.57	medium/fair
7	169	.91	Easy/good	86	.52	moderate/fair
8	174	.94	Easy/good	89	.54	moderate/fair
9	167	.90	Easy/good	93	.58	moderate/fair
10	159	.84	Easy/good	96	.58	moderate/fair
Average		.89	Easy/good		.55	moderate/fair

Table 3 shows that the average test item difficulty index of the entire items observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners were 0.89 and 0.55 in urban and rural areas, respectively.

This implies that there was a good extent to which urban students have learned the content measured by the items, while there is a fair extent to which rural students have learned the content measured by the items in the use of determiners. Item 1:

measured the indefinite article, item 2 measured the definite article, item 3 tested demonstratives, item 4 = possessives, item 5 = interrogatives, item 6 = core determiners, item 7 = fractions,
item 8 = multipliers, item 9 = cardinal numerals, and item 10 = ordinal numerals.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of Determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas.

Location of Esan learners of Eng. L2	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	sig.	Decision
					t-test for Equality of Means		
Urban	185	35.68	21.35	349	6.492	.012	Rejected
Rural		166	21.81	18.49			

P < .05 = Significant Difference between Groups

The result of the test of the hypothesis in Table 10 shows that t = 6.492, df = 349, P = 0.012, indicating that the probability value (p) is less than the alpha level (p < 0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas.

Ho₂: The structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners do not constitute learning difficulties as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas.

Table 5: T-test Analysis of Structural Differences Associated with learning difficulties of Esan learners of English as L2 in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases in urban and rural areas.

Location of the Esan learners of L2	N	Mean	S.D	df	t	sig.	Decision
					t-test for Equality of Means		
Urban	185	.89	.253	349	14.85	003	Rejected
Rural		166	.55	.172			

P < 0.05 = significant difference

Table 5 shows that t = 14.85, df = 349, P = .003, indicating that the probability value (p) is less than the alpha level 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners constitute learning difficulties as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study provided valuable insights into the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in the urban and rural areas, shedding light on the challenges they face with the use of determiners in English noun phrases.

The study found that Esan learners of English as a second language in urban areas were better than those in rural areas in the use of Determiners in English noun phrases. This finding is based on the results of the analysis, which showed that there was a mean difference of 13.87% which is a medium effect size according to Cohen (1988), indicating a practically significant mean difference in language performance of urban learners when compared to those of rural areas.

The study found that Esan learners of English in urban areas had learnt the content measured by the test items in the use of Determiners better than those in rural areas. This is based on the result of the items' difficulty analysis, which yielded a result of an average result of 0.89 p-values for urban students and 0.55 p-values for rural students. According to Ebel, (1965) whose scale for measuring educational achievement puts the minimum figures for a decision of Easy/Good at a p-value of ≥ 0.80, Esan learners in urban areas had learnt the content measured by the test items to an Easy/Good extent when compared to Esan learners in rural areas, who have learned the content measured to a moderate/fair extent; having registered an average performance of 0.55; whose p-value, Ebel (1965) describes as moderate/fair.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in performance between the Esan learners of

English as L2 in urban and rural areas in the use of determiners in a noun phrase. The t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas in the use of determiners, showed a result of p-values less than the alpha level of 0.05; leading to the rejection of the hypotheses that indicate there is no significant difference between Esan learners in urban and rural areas in the use of determiners.

The study found that the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases, as observed in the performance of the Esan learners of English as L2 in urban and rural areas, constitute learning difficulties. The t-test analyses of structural differences associated with learning difficulties of Esan learners of English as L2 in the use of determiners, yielded results of probability values (p) less than the alpha level of 0.05; thus leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses that there is no significant structural differences between English and Esan noun phrase structure, in the use of determiners, that constitute learning difficulties as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as L2 in urban and rural areas.

The results of the analyses suggested that the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners constitute learning difficulties, as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in both urban and rural areas.

Conclusion

The study established that in the use of determiners in English and Esan noun phrases, there were significant differences in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas. The study also established that the structural differences in English and Esan noun phrases in the use of determiners constitute learning difficulties, as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in urban and rural areas.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, here are some recommendations:

1. To effectively teach determiners to Esan learners of English as a second language in public senior secondary schools in the rural areas of Esan land, the use of articles, demonstratives, interrogatives and possessives must be taught in detail with concrete examples that students can relate to. Unlike English, Esan does not attach indefinite articles to the noun. Instead of saying "a boy", "an orange", or "a goat", they would rather say, "boy", "orange" or "goat", respectively. This difference must be thoroughly taught by teachers of the English language, not only in the use of articles but also in the use of demonstratives, interrogatives and possessives. A thorough teaching of these concepts will bridge the learning gap between rural and urban learners in the use of determiners.

2. A comparative analysis indicates that Esan students in urban areas have acquired knowledge of determiners, to a greater extent than their rural counterparts, who exhibit a moderate understanding of these concepts. To ameliorate this educational disparity, it is essential to reduce the predominant use of the first language (L1) in rural public schools' communication, thereby mitigating the interference of the mother tongue with second language (L2) acquisition.

3. Policymakers must prioritise the provision of targeted training and support for teachers to effectively address the unique needs of Esan learners of English as a second language in rural contexts. Furthermore, stakeholders, including relevant authorities and philanthropic individuals, should ensure the availability of educational materials and internet access for students in these areas, thereby equipping them to engage in competitive learning and internalisation of determiners within English noun phrases.

4. To address the structural differences between English and Esan noun phrases, particularly in the use of determiners, which pose learning difficulties as observed in the performance of Esan learners of English as a second language in both urban and rural settings, it's essential to focus on the specific areas where these differences arise. Instruction should prioritise the use of determiners, including indefinite articles, demonstratives, interrogatives, and possessives.

5. Books and learning materials that deal emphatically with determiners within the noun phrases structure of English, should be made available for Esan learners of English as a second language for relatability.

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