LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 14:2 February 2014 ISSN 1930-2940

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A Contrastive Analysis of Negation in Language and Its Implications for Mwaghavul and English

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Abstract

This paper is an endeavor to contribute to the field of contrastive analysis of Mwaghavul-English languages. It compares negation in language of the two languages in

contact at the syntactic and lexical verb levels. The focus of the paper is restricted to the six personal pronouns in the sentence context presented in English and Mwaghavul in the present simple, simple past and future simple negative tenses.

1. Introduction

The importance of language among human beings cannot be over emphasized. The Oxford Concise English Dictionary (2008) defines language as the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. It also particularly states that the system of communication used by a particular community or country. Nwafor (1997) asserts that language is a human activity that varies without assignable limit as we pass from one social group to the other, because it is purely a historical heritage of all creative effort varies not as consciously, perhaps, but nonetheless as truly as do religions, the beliefs, the customs and the arts of different people.

The above definitions of language posit that the functionality of language can in no way be laid off human existence in general as it covers virtually everything that concerns us; Communication, verbal or non-verbal, music, education, environment, culture. It can easily be understood how linguistic uses may vary according to the natural environment, economic systems, types of social relationships and what could be called the world pictures of different cultures. Lexicon, grammar rules, codes and rules of linguistic communication are all entirely formed by these elements, that is to say, by the anthropological features of the speakers' community (Dei, n.d.). Therefore, it is of great importance for people to communicate and understand one another in a language acceptable to them.

When we talk about language, it is also necessary we take into cognizance the fact that there is usually mother tongue interference for the learner of English as a second language, because of various reasons. Olagoke (1979) states why it is important to allow a child to use his mother tongue at the early stages of learning; this is in agreement with National policy on Education (2004). He states that, psychologically, the proper development of a child is closely bound with the continued use of the language he has spoken from birth, the language of his parents, his brothers and sisters, friends and people he is used to. It is the language in which he has acquired his first experiences of life, the one in which he dreams and thinks, and in which he can easily and conveniently express his feelings and emotions. To ignore this familiar language and begin to teach him in a foreign and unfamiliar language as soon as he comes to school is like taking the child away from home and putting him among strangers. As language is the most powerful tool of learning, the child will learn very little until he has mastered the language of instruction.

There is also considerable linguistic confusion on the part of the child as he thinks in his mother tongue but tries to express himself in a foreign language. The attachment of a child to the mother causes interference among several African languages in relation to the study of English as their second language. This is because the way the learner thinks in his language; the fix structures in the first language are usually transferred to the second language.

English language in Nigeria as a second language and the fact that it is the official language, it becomes imperative that when the time comes for a second language learner of English to learn, it is important to analyze the predictable difficulties and possible remedies that will help the learner use the second language in communication, interaction, educational pursuits to mention a few. Over the years, it has been found out that the school system has fail in its duty to give learners proficiency in English. This is

evident in the fact that at all levels of the educational system; many students are unable to express themselves in both spoken and written aspects. Oyetunde and Muodumogu (1999) stated that a number of factors have been blamed for the poor standard of English in schools. Some of them are poor methodology, inadequate preparation of teachers, government's lack of commitment, and the examination system. The above explains why teachers of English need to use methods of teaching and materials from findings on contrastive analysis of the first language and second language which is also the focus of this paper, targeting Mwaghavul and English with particular reference to negation.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Contrastive Analysis

Farsi and Zarei (2013) said that, "Contrastive analysis", or contrastive linguistics, as Fisiak states, may be roughly defined as a sub discipline of linguistics concerned with comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them"(1981:1). Lado (1957) has been reviewed by several researchers as a staunch initiator of contrastive analysis. He saw this field as a tool to aid second language teaching and learning. It enables a careful study of the structures of languages with the intention to compare and contrast. In his view similarities in the structures of languages do not pose difficulty in second language learning but the area of differences will do so. He further stated areas of language structures that can be compared and contrasted as: the phonetic, phonemic, morphological, syntactic and semantic structures. The Contrastive Analysis was the result of the need to teach a Second Language (L2) in the most efficient way, as R. Lado makes clear in R. Ellis (1985, p. 23): "The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them. The origins of contrastive analysis, therefore, were pedagogic". (Uzoigwe, 2011; Saeed & Fatihi, 2011& Abushihab, 2012). According to

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:2 February 2014

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2.2. The Need for Contrastive Analysis

Nigeria is one among the multilingual countries in the world, and by implications each linguistic group is bound to have peculiar problems of its own. The focus of this paper as already stated above is the Mwaghavul ethno-linguistic group from Plateau State. This particular group is from the Afro-Asiatic stock of the "Chadic" family. As its common with these languages (Angas, Tangale, Hausa etc), they have some similarities in their syntactical presentations. However, these languages have their own independent structures and predictable difficulties for second language learners of English.

Looking at the multilingual nature of Nigeria and the need to encourage integration among the nationals, the need to incorporate English into the Mwaghavul learners is important. This therefore, gave birth to the need for this contrastive analysis in the aspect of negation in language.

2.3. English as a Second Language: Nigeria's Context

The place of English as earlier stated cannot be overemphasized in Nigeria. Its status is so high in the society, such that an individual needs fluency in English for most official communication, business, education, international relations, law, executive and the judiciary. It is the language of science and technology and so on. It is therefore most important that English should be taught and learnt in our schools.

The learning of English has for a long time pose problems seriously to the learners of the language as L^2 . This is because it is taught as a first language. This poses difficulties to the learner who directs all structures learnt in his L^1 straight into the learning of English. According to Olagoke (1979), English language has the tendency of being taught straight as a child comes into the school setting without minding the background experience of the mother-tongue. The reason for this is, of course, the enormous prestige of English success in the language is the key to decent employment. Admission to post primary institutions, including Universities, depends on one's performance in English, which is the medium of instruction from elementary school to the university. This study therefore is concerned with looking at grammatical features at the syntactic and lexical verb levels, similarities and dissimilarities of both the English and Mwaghavul verbal systems considering the modality of negation in the active and in the following aspects, present, past and future tenses.

2.4. A Brief Overview of the Mwaghavul Ethno-linguistic Group

Plateau State is the twelfth largest state of Nigeria, and is roughly located in the center of the country. It is geographically unique in Nigeria because its boundaries totally surround the Jos Plateau, having the Jos Plateau totally in its central and northern part. Its capital is Jos (Wikipedia, 2013). The report further submits that the state has over forty ethno-linguistic groups, among them are Mwaghavul group found in Mangu Local government council as can be seen in the Plateau state map presented in the appendix. Güldemann (2008) explains that the distribution of logophoricity across African languages and lineages has been determined as completely as possible. The Mwaghavul language is said to be from the "Chadic" family of the Afro-asiatic stock. In the submission of Daapiya, Blench and Bess (2008), the Mwaghavul language falls into the group of endangered languages where if care is not taken will die a natural death. This is due to the simple fact that those people who are supposed to speak and promote the use

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This paper is concerned with the contrastive analysis in language negation and its implications on Mwaghavul and English. Literature has very limited materials on negation aspect of the Chadic family languages in general and Mwaghavul language specifically. Some few examples are the effort of researchers like; Newman (1971) who analyzed the Hausa negative markers by providing a systematic account of the markers found in modern Hausa in terms of their historical analysis presented and its implications for synchronic studies of negation in Hausa, it does not purport to be a generative/transformational description of the language as it now stands. Blench, 2010 (Mwaghavul plural verbs) and Daapiya, Blench and Bess, 2008 (Mwaghavul-English Lexicon).

Furthermore, Elly van Gelderen reviewed the book titled "Negation Patterns in West African Languages and Beyond", authored by Norbert Cyffer, Erwin Ebermann and Georg Ziegelmever in 2009. They pointed to the fact that, "There are a number of negation patterns in West Africa that the book identifies, namely an incompatibility between negation and focus, the use of the prohibitive and different negation patterns dependent on certain Tense-Aspect-Moods, a lack of negative indefinites, and 'double negation". Wolff (2012) in a workshop on post-verbal negation focused his attention on the Chadic family and more related to this paper is the focus on Hausa language from the West Chadic group. Mwaghavul language negation marker **kas** which is also from the Chadic family in most cases appear at the final position of a sentence similar to the Standard Hausa post-verbal negation marker **bá** which tends to occur in clause-final position (with certain exceptions allowed); this is not necessarily the case in "northern" dialects. However, in the case of the Mwaghavul negative intensification, the marker **ba**

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2.5. Synopsis of Negation

Horn (2001) establishes that the capacity to negate is the capacity to refuse, to contradict, to lie, to speak ironically, to distinguish truth from falsity--in short, the capacity to be human. Blanco and Moldovan (2011) clarifies that negation is present in all languages and it is always the case that statements are affirmative by default. Negation is marked and it typically signals something unusual or an exception. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) cited by the same authors, stated that unlike affirmative statements, negation is marked by words (e.g., not, no, never) or affixes (e.g., -n't, un-).

UsingEnglish.com (@copyright 2002-2013) says a negative structure can show the absence of a noun any other substantive, the non-performance of the action described by as verb. An adverb or adjective can equally be negated so that it expresses the absence of the quality or characteristic described by a verb, or non-existence in case of a stative verb. An adverb or adjective can equally be negated so that it expresses the absence of the quality characteristic described to break the linking function of a preposition so that the items governed by it are shown to be separate. Negation in language functions in a contradictory way: it invokes a connection, action, modification, etc. only to then deny it. However, a negative nearly always creates a ghostly presence of the very thing it is saying is absent, something may well not be green, but in learning that our image and understanding of whatever it is colored by the green whose absence is a characteristic. This ingenious mechanism common to all languages is one of the driving forces of creativity and generators of meaning. Through it we have access to one of the primaries and most fundamental of all tools for creating shades of meaning.

Anonymous (2003) states that some common (mis) uses of words demonstrate that negation is a subtle (abstract) concept at the edges of human comprehension.

1. Often a speaker will negate the negation (not sensing what a multiplicative of effect is in such a use word).

Example:

He hasn't got no food on his plate.	English.
* Ba ri khi bise kaa daa khi ri kas.	Mwaghavul
No he with food on plate his not	direct translation

2. But negation is used as a simple notion, there is no multiplicative effect.

Example:

He hasn't got food on his plate.	English.
*Ri bise nkaa daa khi ri kas.	Mwaghavul.
He food on plate his not	direct translation.

Nowadays there are utterances containing instances commonly called metalinguistic (or sometimes 'paradoxical') negation. Horn (1985) defined this type of negation as a Meta linguistic device for registering objection to a previous utterance (not proposition) on any grounds whatever? Metalinguistic negation does not operate upon the semantic content of the sentence, but upon the manner in which the sentence was expressed, the utterance.

Example:

"I didn't manage to trap two mongeese - I managed to trap two mongooses.

This sentence is objecting to the form of the plural. This is objection of the original proposition.

Quirk, GreenBaum, Leech and Svartvik (1980) give the different functions of negation as summarized below: Negation with operator and do periphrasis, Abbreviated negative, Non-assertive forms and negative forms, Negative intensification, Initial negative element, More than one non- assertive form, seldom, rarely, etc., Scope of negation, Clause, local, and phrasal negation, Focus of negation and Main verb negation. Furthermore, there other functions given as Statements, questions, commands, exclamations below:

a) Formal classification, b) Functions of discourse, c) Questions: Yes - no type, d) Yes - no questions, e) Positive orientation, f) Negative orientation, g) Tag questions, h) Declarative questions, i) Yes no questions with modal auxiliaries, j) Questions: Wh – type, k) Presuppositions, l) Pushdown Q Element, m) More than are Q element, n) Alternative questions and p) Rhetorical question.

As can be seen above, the scope of negation is very wide in English and will certainly pose problems for the Mwaghavul learner of English as a second language. Some forms of negation in English may not occur in the L^1 ; Negative markers in English come at different positions in given statements and depending on the type of negation. But in Mwaghavul, the negative mostly come at the end except for maybe a case of double negation in a sentence.

Negation with Operator and Do Periphrasis

That is the negation of a simple sentence is accomplished by inserting the word <u>not</u> before the operator and the predication.

Example:

Positive

We may win the match. **Mu mak se koghorog khi tan disi* We may eat winner of match this English Mwaghavul direct translation

Abbreviated Negation

In circumstances where it is possible to abbreviate the operator by the use of a contracted form enclitic to the subject, two colloquial forms of negation are possible. It is to note that in Mwaghavul and most African languages, you cannot contract the operator or abbreviate.

Examples:

1.	Someone's not coming	someone is not coming
*	Me gurum khi ji <u>kas</u>	Me gurum khi ji kas
2.	We aren't ready	We are not ready
*	Mu dak sun kas	Mu dak sun kas.

Non-assertive Forms and Negative Forms

The negative particle **not** or **n't** is frequently followed (not necessarily directly) by one or more of the non-assertive items.

Examples:

Positi	ve	Negative
1.	We've had some lunch	1.We've had no lunch
*	Mu khi ten sise puus	*Mu khi ten sise puus kas
2.	I've bought something	2. I haven't bought anything for you
	for you	
*	Wan ghin seet me nbi wag	gha *Wan ghin seet me nbi wagha kas

Negative Intensification

Is also looked at by quirk et al. Saying, there are various ways of giving emotive intensification to a negation.

Examples:

- 1. I'll never, go there again.
- * .Wan kyam ba so npemini zak kas
- 2. I don't care a damn whether we win or lose.

*wan kak ni kas kyet mu se koghorong ah mu pal

Initial Negative Element

The non-assertive form associated with negation cannot proceed <u>not</u> in the sentence: therefore there is no alternative construction to the simple negative form when that form occurs in a subject or initial adjunct.

Examples:

Negative Subject

1. No one listens to me	* Me gurum le kom wan <u>kas</u>
2. Nothing came of it	*Me nbii put dibut <u>kas</u>
3. None of us were ready	*Me me funu dak sun <u>kas</u>

Negative Adjunct

1. Not until yesterday did he change his mind

*Ka ba a te doghon kas dang ri she putuhup khi ri,

As can be noted in the examples under negative subject, it further goes to confirm the placement of negative marker in Mwaghavul statements in most situations at the final position

More Than One Non-assertive Form

If a clause contains a negative element, it is usually negative throughout, from the occurrence of the negative to the end, or at least until the beginning of a final adjunct. This means that after a negative, the non-assertive forms must normally be used in place of every assertive form that would have occurred in the corresponding positive clause.

Examples:

- I've never traveled anywhere by air yet.
 *Wan ghin kiam so mwan khi jirghi deng kas.
- 2. No one has ever said anything to either of us.

*Men gwe khi kiam saat membi meme funu kas.

The non-assertive forms even occur in positive subordinate clauses following a negative in the main clauses.

Examples:

1. Nobody has promised that any of you will be released yet.

* Me gurum khi le po ne memefu put aku kas.

- 2. That wouldn't deter anyone who had any courage.
 - * Minin ci me nguputuhup kas.

Assertive forms, however, are equally likely in such cases, and more generally, assertive forms do occur follow a negative, as long as they fall outside the scope of negative.

Scope of Negation

Scope of negation is seen in the relationship between negative words and the nonassertive words that they govern. A negative forum may be said to govern (or determine the occurrence of) a non-assertive form only if the latter is within the scope of the negative that is within the stretch of language over which the negative meaning operates. The scope of the negation normally extends from the negative word itself to the end of the clause, or to the beginning of a final adjunct. The subject and any adjuncts occurring before the predication, normally lie outside it. The operator is something within, and sometimes outside, the scope.

Examples:

- 1. I definitely didn't speak to him ('It's not definite that I did not).
- 2. I didn't definitely speak to him ('It's not definite that I did').

Focus of Negation

It is important to identify not only this scope of negation, but the information focus. A special focus of contrastive nuclear tress falling on a particular part of the clause indicates not only that the contrast of meaning impact implication on the rest of the clause can be understood in a positive sense.

Example:

HARRY didn't attack the labor Government. (i.e. someone attacked... but it wasn't Harry).

The emphasis is on negation. And it is also to be taken into consideration that the Mwaghavul child will not understand the shift in stress in English because it is not present in his mother-tongue and so he is bound to face difficulties.

Tag Questions

Another kind of negation is seen in the tag question is appended to a statement.

Examples:

- 1. The lady has left, hasn't she?
- 2. He knows you, doesn't he?
- 3. He doesn't like his job, does he?

Statements

Statements are primarily used to convey information. It is usually given in declarative form which can be change into interrogation and negative. Here the subject is always present and generally precedes the verb.

Examples:

Declarative

John will not speak to the boss today *John ri kat po ngu ki kyen ni cicinsi kas

From the various examples given in the literature review, it is to be noted that because of habits already formed in the mother tongue students find it difficult to transform sentences from the declarative to negative correctly. Therefore in learning English as a second language, it is very necessary that students are taught to use different structures and declarative, interrogative and negative. For the purpose of this study the focus is on the contrastive analysis in Mwaghavul and English on negation only.

3. The Statement of the Problem

English and Mwaghavul assumed to be two unrelated languages. Therefore, even before looking into the study one may not be wrong to say there will be structural differences grammatically in both languages. This is capable of linguistic interference to a Mwaghavul learner of English as a second language.

4. Purpose of the Study

This paper is concerned with identifying the problems faced in the teaching and learning of the English negation to the Mwaghavul learners which the opportunity to:

- 1. Determine the structural differences and similarities between English and Mwaghavul verbal system in the aspects of negation in English active tenses (present, past and future).
- 2. State the predictable difficulties to be encountered by the Mwaghavul learner.
- 3. Suggest remedial drills to be used by curriculum planners and teachers of English language particularly in Mwaghavul dominated area.

5. Research Questions

- 1. Does negation of the English active has any similarities to that of Mwaghavul active?
- 2. Are there significant differences between the English and Mwaghavul languages in the three active aspects, that is, present, past and future?
- 3. Are there any remedial drills to assist teachers and learners?

6. Significance of the Study

The findings and suggestions of this study will serve as a source of help to teachers and learners that are from the Mwaghavul ethno-linguistic group using English as a second language.

Language curriculum planners in a second language or multilingual settings like Nigeria will find this study useful.

It will also give fellow researchers from Mwaghavul ethno-linguistic group to carry out empirical studies of these target learners in same field.

This study will also assist other researchers in the field as they can also conduct a contrastive analysis of their mother tongue and English.

Furthermore, the teaching and learning of English in our schools will be more interesting; especially Mwaghavul dominated areas with the help of further findings and recommendations.

7. A Contrastive Analysis on Negation in Language, in Contact and Implications

This contrastive analysis is considering Mwaghavul and English. It is to find out similarities and differences in grammar structure of the two languages in the negation.

The six aspects of personal pronouns will be used. These are: (I, you (singular), he/she, we, they, and you (plural). The analysis will take into cognizance the lexical verb and syntactic structures in sentence context presented for the purpose of this paper as seen in the following distributions.

English Mwaghavul **Direct Translation** I do not work Wan cin dak kas I do work not You do not work Ah/yi cin dak kas You do work not He/she does not work Ri/Ra cin dak kas He/she do work not We do not work Mun cin dak kas We do work not They do not work Mu cin dak kas They do work not You do not work Wu cin dak kas You do work not

 Table: 1 Present simple - negative

Commentary

a. In English language, the syntactical arrangement of the sentence in the present simple (negative) follow this rule:

S + Aux + Neg + Main verb.

- b. The negation is realized by introducing the negative marker "not" at the medial position of the sentence chain just between the auxiliary (do/does) and the main verb "work".
- c. Five out of the six personal pronouns (i.e.) I, you (singular Plural), we and they take the Aux + Neg "do not" in the medial position to form the negative.
- d. The third person singular which phonetically will be pronounced as / iz / allomorph is orthographically written or spelt as (es).
- e. In addition, English language has a contracted form for the negative aspect in speech and informal contact. This is done by joining the auxiliary "do / does/ and the marker "not" together and adding an apostrophe to the deleted parts .Thus:
- i. I do not work I don't work
- ii. He/she does not work- He/she doesn't work.

Predictable Difficulties

The differences observed in the Mwaghavul structure of negative are as follows:

- a. The Mwaghavul learner of English language will have problem with the placement of the negative marker as it appears in the medial position in L2 and at the final position in his language (L1)
- b. Possible contracted form in L2 which does not exist in his own language (Mwaghavul) will constitute problems to the learner.
- c. The static syntactic arrangement in Mwaghavul language is likely going to be transferred to English by the Mwaghavul learner. (i.e. there is the possibility of direct translation of Mwaghavul to English).
- d. The third person singular taking (iz) allomorph and the morpheme (es) is a likely source of difficulty and orthographically, it is be written as (es) or (s) depending on the environment.

Table: 2 Remedial drills

Ι	do not	dance
You	don't	sweep
We		eat
They		work
		teach
		beg
Не	does not	
She	doesn't	

Table: 3 Past simple – negative

English	Mwaghavul	Direct Translation
I did not work	Di wan cin dak kas	Since I do work not
You did not work	Di Ah/Yi cin dak kas	Since you do work not
He /She did not work	Di Ri /Ra cin dak kas	Since he/she do work not
We did not work	did not work Di mun cin dak kas	
They did not work Di mu cin dak kas		Since they do work not
You did not work Di wun cin dak kas		Since you do work not

Commentary

- a. The syntactical order of the English past simple is as follows:
 - S + past form of Aux + Neg + Main verb
- In English, the negative marker appears at the medial position while in Mwaghavul it appears at the final position.
- c. The lexical verb in English changes back to the base form while in Mwaghavul both the main verb and the word order remain static.

d. The negative form of the English can take a contracted form especially in speech or informal context just like the present simple. This is not the case in Mwaghavul.

Predictable Difficulties

- a. Mwaghavul learner of English Language is likely going to encounter some difficulties with the position of the negative marker "not" which takes the medial position in contrast to that of his L1, which comes at the end as in the present simple.
- b. English main verb changes back to the base form despite the fact that the tense is in the past becomes ambivalent as the learner expects it to be in the past, thus constituting a likely source of difficulty.
- c. The contracted form of the English language which is absent in Mwaghavul is a likely source of difficulty to the Mwaghavul learner of the English language.

Subject	Aux	Neg. marker	Main verb
Ι			Work
You			Dance
He /She			Sweep
We	did	not	Teach
You			Eat
They			Beg

Table: 4 Remedial drills

Table: 5 Future simple -negative

EnglishMwaghavulDirect Translation

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I shall not work	Wan yaghal cin dak kas	I later or (stand) do work
		not
You will not work	Ah/yi yaghal cin dak kas	You later or (stand) do
		work not
He/She will not	Ri/Ra yaghal cin dak kas	He/She later or (stand) do
Work		work not
We shall not work	Mun yaghal cin dak kas	We later or (stand) do
		work not
They will not work	Mu yaghal cin dak kas	They later or (stand) do
		work not
You will not work	Wun yaghal cin dak kas	You later do work not

Commentary

- a. The syntactical order of English is the same as in declarative except for the introduction of the negative marker "not" at the medial position. That is, S+Furure marker + neg+.main verb.
- b. The negative can be contracted in English unlike in Mwaghavul as the cases stated in the proceeding commentaries.
- c. In Mwaghavul, the word order is also the same as in the declarative except for the placement of the negative marker 'kas' at the final position to transform the statement to negative.

Predictable Difficulties

- a. The distinctive positions of the negative markers of English and Mwaghavul will constitute a likely problem to the Mwaghavul learner of English.
- b. The contracted form of English of the auxiliary verb will pose another problem to the Mwaghavul Learner because it is absent in his Language.

Subject	Aux	Neg. Marker	Main Verb
Ι	Shall /shan't		Work
You	Will / won't	not	Dance
He / She			Sweep
They			Eat
You			Teach
			beg

Table: 6 Remedial drills

8. Conclusion

This paper is essentially a contrastive analysis of language negation in Mwaghavul and English. The predictable difficulties highlighted and the suggested remedial drills will be of assistance to teachers of English of beginners' classrooms. This initial contrastive analysis will also hopefully serve as a motivational foundation for wider and empirical researches on the subject area.

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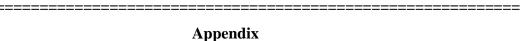
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Map of Plateau State showing 17 Local Government Councils

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