

**THE INFLUENCE OF DHOLUO STRUCTURE ON ENGLISH COMPOSITIONS BY
PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN HOMA BAY COUNTY**

VINCENT OWUOR ONYANGO

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my work and has not been presented for examination in any other institution.

Candidate..... Date.....

Owuor Vincent Onyango

C50/72404/2014

This research study has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

Signature..... Date.....

Prof. Mrs. Lucia N. Omondi

University of Nairobi

Signature..... Date.....

Dr. Gideon R. Marete

University of Nairobi

DEDICATION

In memory of my father, Japuonj Edward Onyango Nyamondo, who instilled the germ of honesty, endurance and hard work in me at an early age.

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I acknowledge the Lord God the Almighty who has steadied me throughout this journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------|
| DECLARATION | ii |
| DEDICATION | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | iv |
| LIST OF TABLES | viii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | ix |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS..... | x |
| ABSTRACT..... | xi |
| CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background to the study | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Language situation in Kenya..... | 1 |
| 1.1.2 The place of English in Kenya | 2 |
| 1.1.3 Area of the study- Pala Zone..... | 3 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem | 4 |
| 1.3 Research Objectives..... | 4 |
| 1.3.1 Introduction | 4 |
| 1.3.2 General objective | 4 |
| 1.3.3 Specific Objectives | 5 |
| 1.4 Research Hypotheses | 5 |
| 1.5 Rationale | 5 |
| 1.6 Scope and Limitation | 5 |
| 1.7 Definition of terms..... | 6 |
| 1.8 Literature Review | 8 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1.8.1 Negative and positive transfer | 9 |
| 1.8.2 Developmental sequences..... | 11 |
| 1.8.3 Studies related to this research | 15 |
| 1.9 Theoretical framework | 17 |
| 1.9.1 Some Important Notions in Interlanguage Theory | 19 |
| 1.10 Methodology | 21 |
| CHAPTER TWO : A TYPOLOGY OF SYNTACTIC ERRORS FOUND IN THE DATA | 23 |
| 2.0 Introduction | 23 |
| 2.1 Raw data..... | 23 |
| 2.2 Article use | 27 |
| 2.3 Errors involving passive constructions | 30 |
| 2.4 Dholuo interrogatives | 33 |
| 2.5 Use of prepositions..... | 35 |
| 2.6. Conclusion..... | 40 |
| CHAPTER THREE : ANALYSIS OF ERRORS ARISING FROM TRANSFER OF DHOLUO STRUCTURE TO THE INTERLANGUAGE OF ENGLISH LEARNERS | 41 |
| 3.0 Introduction | 41 |
| 3.1 Acquisition of passives | 43 |
| 3.1.1 The English passive | 43 |
| 3.1.2 The Dholuo pseudo-passive..... | 44 |
| 3.2 Acquisition of articles | 48 |
| 3.3 Acquisition of the interrogative structure | 53 |
| 3.4 Acquisition of prepositions | 60 |
| 3.5 Conclusion..... | 63 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER FOUR : DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS | 64 |
| 4.0 Introduction | 64 |
| CHAPTER FIVE : SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 68 |
| 5.0 Introduction | 68 |
| 5.1 Summary | 68 |
| 5.2 Conclusions | 69 |
| 5.3 Recommendations | 69 |
| References | 70 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Errors of omission of articles..... | 28 |
| Table 2: Article overuse..... | 29 |
| Table 3: Errors involving a mix-up of the indefinite article..... | 30 |
| Table 4: Summary of errors involving use of passives..... | 31 |
| Table 5: Errors involving the use of passives..... | 33 |
| Table 6: Summary of Dholuo interrogative errors..... | 34 |
| Table 7: Errors involving interrogative constructions..... | 35 |
| Table 9: Summary of prepositional errors..... | 36 |
| Table 9: Missing prepositions..... | 37 |
| Table 10: Wrong preposition; preposition correct in Dholuo..... | 38 |
| Table 11: Preposition redundant but mandatory in Dholuo..... | 39 |
| Table 12: Wrong preposition; Dholuo no preposition..... | 39 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Error per grammatical area. | 24 |
| Figure 2: Errors per class..... | 24 |
| Figure 3 : Deep Structure Representation of WH-movement | 56 |
| Figure 4 : Surface Structure Representation of Subject Verb Inversion | 57 |
| Figure 5 : Deep Structure Representation of Subject Verb Inversion | 58 |
| Figure 6 : Surface Structure of WH-movement | 59 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 1SG | First Person Singular |
| 2SG | Second Person Singular |
| 3SG | Third Person Singular |
| 1PL | First Person Plural |
| 2PL | Second Person Plural |
| 3PL | Third Person Plural |
| PERF | Perfective |
| PROG | Progressive |
| PST | Past Tense |
| IMP | Imperfective |
| OBJ | Object |
| SUBJ | Subject |
| TSC | Teachers Service Commission |
| L1 | First language |
| L2 | Second language |
| SLA | Second language acquisition |
| NP | Noun phrase |
| IP | INFL projection |
| WH | Question word |
| COMP | Complementizer |

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of Dholuo syntactic interference on the interlanguage of learners in upper primary, specifically classes six, seven and eight in Pala Zone of Homa Bay County. The study used interlanguage theory by Larry Selinker, which sees errors as typical of learner language, even useful, in diagnosing the areas which the learner has most problems in learning the target language as well as the stage of learning he/she is in. The data was collected in five primary schools whereby pupils wrote compositions which were marked for errors. The errors were explained in terms of their source – interlingual (native language interference) or intralingual (target language learning strategies). It was found that not all errors arose as a result of first language interference even though these were a majority. An almost equal number of errors were intralingual – arising out of the target language or its learning processes. This study is significant as it can be used by teachers in teaching, researchers involved in cross-linguistic research and students in their study to find out the source of their errors and focus more attention to the areas which need most attention.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Dholuo language is spoken by the Luo ethnic group of Kenya and Tanzania. In Kenya, the Luo speakers are predominantly found in Nyanza region, around Lake Victoria in the south western part of the country. They are also found spread in all the major urban centres. In Tanzania, they are mainly found in the Mara province, north of the country.

According to the 2009 population census, the Luo number 4,044,440 in Kenya and 923,000 in Tanzania. According to Ochieng (1988:35), their cradle land is Bahr-el-Gazhal in South Sudan along Rivers Sue and Jur around Wau. Dholuo speakers belong to the River-Lake Nilotes of the Western Nilotic group of the Eastern Sudanic speakers of the Nilo-Saharan group of speakers (Grimes 1962:2). Their language sisters are spread all over Eastern Africa: Shilluk, Dinka and Alur in South Sudan; Acholi, Lango and Padhola in Uganda.

According to Ochieng (1990:10) the Luo emigrated from Sudan through Uganda into Kenya. Cohen (1974) says that they settled in Kenya between 1500 and 1550 AD.

Dholuo language has two regional dialects: the South Nyanza and Trans Yala dialects. (Stafford, 1967) and Owino (2003) confirm that the South Nyanza dialect is the more standard dialect and the more thoroughly researched. It is spoken in South Nyanza, Siaya and Kisumu. Trans Yala dialect is spoken in Alego, Yimbo, Ugenya and parts of Gem. The South Nyanza dialect has been used in the Dholuo bible, in primary readers, and has been more extensively researched. Okombo (1996) says that the languages are mutually intelligible but are distinct phonologically and lexically. For the purposes of this proposal, Dholuo language refers to the South Nyanza dialect.

1.1.1 Language situation in Kenya

Dholuo in Kenya is considered a minority language in terms of functional domain, according to Skandera (1991). English and Kiswahili are official languages. They are used for communication

in government, religious, and business circles. Skandera (1999:20) lists the domains in which English is used and includes parliament, the courts, civil service, education, radio, television, the press, creative literature, advertisement, traffic signs etc. He sums up that English is a minority in terms of speakers but a majority in terms of function. Abdulazziz (1991) opines that English has spread very widely because of its role in commerce, administration, and modernization.

Sure (1991) says that Dholuo speakers are largely multilingual because of its limited functional domains. The ordinary Kenyan speaks three languages: the ethnic language, Kiswahili and English. Schmied (1990:220) asserts that some speak up to 5 languages. Sure (1999:20), estimates that many Kenyans though are still monolingual

1.1.2 The place of English in Kenya

English in Kenya was introduced in the late 19th century by the British missionaries. Sure (1991) says it was subsequently used during Kenya's colonization, and after independence, it remained the official language and the medium of instruction in schools. The Phelps-Stoke Commission recommended the use of English in schools as from standard four and as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. Local languages were to be used as the medium of instruction up to standard three. The practice has remained to date and has led to English being very widely spread.

Schmied (2004), categorizes English in Kenya as a second language variety and uses Gorlach's description of second languages which uses the following criteria:

1. It is used in international functions,
2. It is used in intranational functions,
3. Has no or next to no native speakers.

Schmied quotes Sure (1991b:133) who asserts that it's a language of international communication as well as being a lingua franca among educated Kenyans of diverse backgrounds.

As explained above, a country's language policy as regards a second language determines its spread and the users' proficiency in it. In Kenya, proficiency in English by the speakers is

determined by the level of education attained by the speaker in question. University graduates are almost as proficient as the native speakers save for their pronunciation. According to Mwangi (2003), lexical and grammatical features show no obvious traces of deviance. Those with primary education have a basilectal level of proficiency, also commonly referred to as broken English.

Another factor that determines the proficiency in English by Kenyan speakers is the geographical region one is in. Rural speakers and learners are comparatively deficient in it. This is often attributed to among other factors, the shortage of qualified teachers in these areas; the use of mother tongue by the teachers while teaching; the prevalence of mother tongue use in the schools and outside the school leading to lack of adequate exposure to English and opportunity to practice forms by the pupil (Mwangi 2003). Another factor in my opinion that promotes the deficiency in English by rural speakers is the fact that villages lack a diversity of ethnic communities. The residents therefore find no need to explore other languages because their communication needs are easily satisfied by the local language in all their communication. English is therefore only used in few domains such as at school by the pupils and teachers.

1.1.3 Area of the study- Pala Zone

Pala Zone is found in West Karachuonyo Division, Rachuonyo North District of Homa Bay County. The residents of the division speak Dholuo as the first language. A majority speak some Kiswahili and English as the other languages. The area is geographically set in a rural area. The residents mainly practice farming, fishing and trading as the main economic activities. The Dholuo dialect spoken in the region is the South Nyanza dialect.

The pupils in the schools are supposed to speak English and Kiswahili in school. English is officially the language of instruction in school as explained before. Pupils from classes one to three speak Dholuo as the language of instruction and communication while in school and outside. However in practice, the policy is not adhered to. Pupils rampantly speak Dholuo, the native language, in school to ease communication and more so because the teachers are not strict in enforcing the language policy. The fact that the school is set in a rural area limits the pupils' exposure to English as they only interact with it during the English lesson and in text books.

Teachers themselves are also known to resort to the use of the language to explain concepts that the pupils find difficult to grasp in the course of their teaching. Not only is this done during teaching, but even in other communication in the course of the day in the school.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Pupils in primary schools usually make a lot of errors in their written English. These errors lead to incompetence in communication. Touchie (1986) gives the sources of errors as varied including poor models, the learning environment, inherent difficulties in the target language, organization of learning materials, inadequate exposure, code switching, avoidance and first language influence. Indeed Corder (1967) lists interference errors alongside intralingual errors and developmental errors. He then distinguishes error from mistake. He says that error arises from incompetence while mistake arises from failure of performance. According to Mackay (1967), other sources of error include transfer, analogy with an aspect learnt in the second language, lack of accuracy, memory lapse, and pupils making a wild guess.

It is with this in mind that the study sought to investigate structural errors that are caused by the influence of Dholuo on the structure of English written by Dholuo learners. The study, it was hoped, would be of value to learners, teachers and researchers as it will help improve the competence of second language learners of English.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Introduction

The objective of this study was to investigate the transfer of the structure of Dholuo to the interlanguage of second language learners of English.

1.3.2 General objective

1. To contribute to an understanding of the nature of transfer of Dholuo syntax to English and to use the knowledge so gained to improve the methodology of teaching English as a second language.

1.3.3 Specific Objectives

1. To establish the role of Dholuo transfer in the learning of wh-interrogative constructions.
2. To investigate if the lack of articles in Dholuo affects its acquisition in English.
3. To investigate the transfer of Dholuo pseudo- passive in the acquisition of the English passive.
4. To find out the effect of the comparatively fewer prepositions in Dholuo on the learning of English prepositions by Dholuo speakers

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. Dholuo interrogative structure is transferred during the acquisition of wh- interrogative constructions by Dholuo L1 speakers.
2. The lack of articles in Dholuo causes its absence in the interlanguage of English by Dholuo L1 speakers.
3. Dholuo pseudo passive is transferred to the interlanguage of second language learners whose L1 is Dholuo.
4. The comparatively fewer prepositions in Dholuo leads to missing prepositions and misused prepositions in the interlanguage of Dholuo learners of English.

1.5 Rationale

The study aimed to investigate the role of Dholuo structure in the acquisition of the same by second language learners of English. The knowledge will possibly give an insight that could inform the teaching methodology that could be used by researchers, curriculum developers, teachers and students in the learning process. It will help curriculum developers in the development of teaching materials; the teachers in the teaching process; and the learners in the knowledge of and the actual learning process to quicken and ease their learning.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The study was limited to 14 public primary schools in Pala Zone of West Karachuonyo Division. The zone had a pupil population of 3507 and a teacher population of 97 employed by TSC. All the schools had an average number of 3 teachers employed by the communities the schools are located in. this number was usually fluid as the teachers quickly migrated to other schools where

they would be offered better salaries. The public schools included Sanda, Wagwe, Kagai, Kingii, Oindo, Kanjira, Siala, Ngolo, Adhiro, Mirengo, Otaro, Kibaga, Ajigo, and Ndhole. The privately owned schools included Pala-Kojwang, Kaluga, Nyamila-Sopheno, Konyimbo and Good Hope. The research did not investigate all aspects of syntactic influence of Dholuo structure on English but only those mentioned above namely:

1. Transfer of the Dholuo interrogative structure to the interlanguage of pupils learning English
2. Absence of articles in the interlanguage of second language learners of English who are Dholuo native speakers
3. Transfer of the Dholuo pseudo-passive to the English passive in the interlanguage of Dholuo native speakers who are second language learners of English.
4. Errors in the interlanguage arising from the influence of Dholuo preposition

Not all structural aspects of transfer to the interlanguage of the learners were investigated. The study confined itself to influence in the syntactical forms of the target language aiming to investigate the instances of transfer of the learners' native language, that is, Dholuo, on the structure of the English they write in their compositions and explain the process from the perspective of interlanguage theory. It was hoped this study will give insight into runaway interference in the structure of spoken and written by upper primary learners of English.

100 Pupils were sampled using random sampling from 5 of the 14 schools in the zone. They then wrote compositions that were searched for the issues named above.

1.7 Definition of terms

Interlanguage: An interlanguage is a language used by a second language learner of a target language who has not yet mastered the language. The learner incorporates aspects of both the first and target language in his interlanguage.

First Language: The first language a child acquires immediately he/she is born before he/she learns any other language. In multilingual communities, a child may be exposed to more than one first language at the same time leading to more than one first language.

Second Language: This is a language that a child learns after having acquired his/her first language.

Universal Grammar: Principles of language that are accepted by linguists as true for all natural languages. Linguists hold that it is innate in every human being and is tuned to the parameters of the language one is exposed to as he grows up.

Language Acquisition Device: A hypothetical device in humans enabling one to acquire any language he/she is exposed to

Target Language: A language other than the first language which a person is learning.

Error: The use of a feature of language that deviates from the norm of the use due to lack of competence on the part of the speaker.

Error Analysis: A theory of second language learning in which a learner's speech is analyzed for errors and the sources of the errors hypothesized

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis: A theory of second language learning in which the target language is contrasted with the first language. Where the languages contrast, it is assumed that learning will be difficult and so teaching of such forms need to be enhanced. Where there are similarities, it is assumed that learning will be easier.

Markedness: Marked features of a language are those unusual constructions of the language which are taken not to be part of the core grammar of the language

Relativization: The acquisition of relative clauses. It depends on the position of the relative clause and how it is encoded through relative pronouns. Its acquisition follows a hierarchical order.

Pseudo-passive: A sentence that appears to be a passive but does not have all the components of a true passive such as NP movement and case assignment.

True passive: A passive construction whose formation involves NP movement and case assignment.

Agentless passive: A passive sentence that lacks an agent.

Wh-movement: A type of movement operation in interrogative sentences in which a wh- word moves from a base position in the deep structure to an A' position in the surface structure.

A-position: A position in a sentence that can be assigned the grammatical function of subject or object. They are argument positions in the sentence.

A' position: A position in a sentence that is not an argument position and as such cannot be assigned a theta role.

Interference: Negative transfer. Where features of the first language are transferred to the second language leading to errors.

Negative transfer: Where features of the first language that are different from the second languages are transferred leading to errors.

Transfer: A process through which learners of a second language carry over forms and meanings of the first language to the target language

1.8 Literature Review

Crystal (2008) says that 'interference' is used in Second Language Acquisition to refer to errors a speaker introduces into one language as a result of contact with another.

Bussmann (1996) defines interference as negative transfer which is occasioned by the 'faulty application' of L1 structures to another language.

Ellis (1995:51) defines interference as transfer that the first language exerts over the second language.

According to Ellis (1995) transfer is determined by the stage of development and cognitive factors such as perception.

According to Webster (1986) transfer is derived from a Greek word 'transfere', which means 'to carry' or 'bear'. It is used to mean the generalization of 'acquired responses' from one area of study to another area in the application of knowledge or ability. This can be taken to mean transfer of knowledge. In second language acquisition, it could mean transfer of knowledge of the structures of the first language to the second language.

Similarly, Liu (2000) says that linguistic transfer means the generalization by learners of their knowledge about their native language to help them in learning a target language.

1.8.1 Negative and positive transfer

Transfer can either be positive or negative. Doughty and Williams (1998) opine that a learner's previous linguistic knowledge influences the learning of a new language in a principled way, either positively or negatively.

Liu (2000) says that transfer is considered negative when certain native-based transfers coincide with errors in the interlanguage of the learners.

Lee (1997) says that the knowledge of the first language can also be of help in learning the second language. The second language learner already has the structure of the first language from which he then transfers to the second language. He modifies it in light of the input from the second language. This is also positive transfer according to Lee.

In the event that structures of the two languages are similar, learning can either be enhanced or impeded. If learning is enhanced due to similarity in the structures of the two languages, positive transfer is in effect.

However if the two languages have completely different systems, target language acquisition can be impeded. This is negative transfer.

Studies on transfer

The issue of transfer was implicitly pioneered by Lado and Fries. Lado (1957) came up with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis in which two languages had their linguistic features compared. Where the structures were different, it was hypothesized that negative transfer (interference) would occur. Learning these structures would be more challenging. However, if the features were similar, positive transfer would occur and learning would be easier.

Other researchers who considered such possibilities included Stockwell and Brown (1965); Corder (1969; 1971).

Transfer was also discussed by Selinker (1969) and its role in understanding learner errors and interlanguage as a whole. Richards (1971) showed that transfer was only partially responsible for learner errors. Jain (1974) agrees with Richards on the partial role of transfer in errors.

Corder (1974) came up with Error analysis to validate Lado's hypothesis and to help improve on learning. In this hypothesis, he set out to collect second language learner errors and study the errors and come up with a hypothesis as to the causes and the solution. However Error Analysis revealed that not all errors originated from L1. Furthermore, positive and negative transfer that had hitherto been taken to arise from similarities and differences between the two languages did not necessarily rise out of the similarities and differences. Moreover, some errors did not even arise from the languages in question but came from the learning process. It led to a diminishing of the prominence that had hitherto been given to the role of transfer in second language learning.

Both Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis were thus criticized by applied linguists as inappropriate in describing L2 errors. They claimed that CA is only predictive at the phonological level. However, at the syntactic level, no language had then been thoroughly compared to another.

Chomsky in 1959 set in motion a re-evaluation of the claims of the behaviorist theories. He strongly questioned transfer and claimed that stimulus and response, the central tenets of behaviorist theories, were not sufficient to explain the complexity of language acquisition. In *Poverty of the Stimulus*, he explains that the child learning his first language quickly produces and understands much more complex utterances than he has ever been exposed to. The input that the learner is exposed to, is also coupled with errors: slips of the tongue; incomplete sentences, hesitations, yet the child by a certain age has acquired native speaker fluency. Furthermore, parents rarely correct their children's error at all the linguistic levels- mainly correcting pronunciation and truthfulness of utterances- thus casting doubt on the significance of reinforcement. Chomsky (1965), proposed the existence of a language faculty in the human biological make-up. He argues that universal grammar is a part of this biological make-up.

White (2003:2) concurs that universal grammar provides a genetic guideline of what grammars can or cannot be like. Universal grammar consists of principles- rules followed by all natural languages; and parameters –settings which vary from one language to another. The parameters are binary, and each language chooses from the available set. The options allow for variation across languages.

Chomsky, with his theory of universal grammar, brought the focus to the role of universal grammar in second language acquisition

The Ann Arbor Michigan Conference on Language Transfer of 1984 revived interest in the role of transfer. Language scholars and teachers considered theoretical and empirical data and agreed that transfer indeed played a vital role in second language learning. It is now accepted that transfer occurs at all levels of language, though it is more prevalent at some levels than others.

Current studies on transfer

Researchers such as Kellerman and Sherwood Smith (1986), underscore the importance of transfer, though they also agree that universal grammar as well plays a fundamental role in second language acquisition. Universal grammar plays a significant role especially in L2 syntax. The greatest amount of work in recent years has been based on the role of universal grammar.

Alonso (1997), following Chomsky (1965), argues that most researchers base their research on the hypothesis that Universal Grammar constrains language acquisition- both L1 and L2. It is argued therefore that interlanguages are as well constrained by Universal Grammar

However, other researchers, among them White (2003), are of the view that Universal Grammar only constrains L1 acquisition. When it comes to L2, they say that learners come equipped with L1 structure which they now only restructure depending on the L2 input they encounter. In other words, the whole L1 structure is initially transferred to the L2 and then modified as more L2 input is experienced. These two extreme ends have brought about the existence of two dichotomies.

1.8.2 Developmental sequences

Pienemann (1998), says that some properties of L2 are acquired following a predictable implicational order that is the same for all L2 learners irrespective of their L1. He says that a lot of research on interlanguages identify sequences of development. The interlanguages follow rules in patterned ways. The patterns can be clustered into interim grammars which are called developmental sequences. The patterns are not language specific. They are universal and reflect the learners' attempt to manage and process L2 input.

Morpheme Accuracy Order

Teresa Pica (2005) cites research done by Dulay and Burt (1973; 74) that showed sequences followed by second language pupils in acquisition of grammatical morphemes such as the plural morpheme; the copula; the progressive morpheme; acquisition of articles; regular past tense morpheme; the third person singular. Follow up studies were done by Krashen (1977), on spoken and written samples with similar results, notwithstanding formal instruction.

Group 1: progressive (...ing); plural (.....s); copula

Group 2: articles; progressive auxiliary; past irregular; past regular; third person singular; possessive.....s

The grouping showed variability within the groups e.g. variability for progressive (..ing) was higher than for plural(...s)

The consistency added to the view that L2 learning was not merely based on rule knowledge but on an innate capacity for L2 learning

Verb and phrasal negatives

Teresa Pica (2005), claims that negatives follow a similar sequence of development across many languages, involving the negative particle; verb tense and number marking.

1. In the first step, the learners juxtapose the negative particle e.g. 'not' with the verb giving rise to constructions such as ...I no like Jane.
2. The learner later comes to restructure the particle to mark tense and number e.g. He doesn't like Jennifer.

Question formation

Huang and Hatch (1978); Raven (1974); Pienemann, Johnstone and Brindley (1988) all concur that question formation follows stages. The stages are different for Yes/No and Wh- questions. The stages involve fronting and inversion movements

Relativization

Relativization is the acquisition of relative clauses. It depends on the position of the relative clause and how it is encoded through relative pronouns.

Relativization follows a hierarchical order. Learners show greater accuracy the relative clause in this order:

1. subject relativization
2. direct object relativization
3. indirect object relativization
4. object of preposition relativization

Language Universals and Transfer

Language universals are used to explain second language acquisition processes and to predict its outcomes. This is because Language universals reflect consistencies in typological features of languages. A feature present in one language typology is expected to be present in all the language types.

Furthermore, language universals comprise 'markedness'. The presence of a marked feature entails the presence of the unmarked counterpart. The relative clause formation described above follows an order that is consistent with the markedness principle in its accessibility hierarchy. The direct object relative clause is the most accessible, followed by the indirect object relative clause, and lastly object of preposition. They are implicational ordered such that the object of preposition can only be acquired after the direct object and indirect object. The presence of the object of preposition thus implies the presence of the direct object and the indirect object preposition.

This relationship apparently holds among interlanguages. Eckman, Moravcsik and Wirth (1989) have shown implicational relationship between question type and the process of its development. The process is consistent typologically and developmentally.

Eckmann et al (1989), argue that the presence of Yes/No inversion implies the presence of Wh-inversion. Wh- inversion on the other hand implies Wh- fronting. Developmentally, Yes/No questions emerge after Wh- questions.

1. Who are you?
2. Are you a teacher?

Markedness and Transfer

Eckmann (1977) and Hyltelstam (1989) have shown that an L2 feature will be difficult if it's more marked than the L1 counterpart. Indirect object relativization will be more difficult if L1 is limited in scope of relativization. However, if the feature is absent or marked in the target language, it will be easy as long as it is unmarked in L1.

Research done on English L1 learners of Chinese as L2 shows that the learners are able to suppress relative clause formation for object of preposition.

Markedness can be used to explain why some features in interlanguage are more difficult to notice and why they are not used in conversation.

Markedness can also be used to explain parameters in universal grammar. Parameters have marked and unmarked settings. In learning L1, one constructs a core grammar and sets parameters in tune with L1. If the input is pro-drop, L1 learners set the parameter in the unmarked setting. If the input is non pro-drop, the learner sets the parameter in the marked setting.

The marked setting is also seen where the pronoun has no meaning e.g.in the dummy pronouns *it* and *there*. These pronouns are mere slot fillers for structural reasons and have no semantic value to the sentences in which they are used. They are marked in the languages in which they occur.

1. *It* worries me that you don't pick my calls
2. *There* is a fire burning

1.8.3 Studies related to this research

Dholuo passive

Perlmutter (1983) says “The Dholuo passive appears to be a passive construction. However, NP movement in its case is not motivated by case assignment unlike a true passive. This is because the moved NP receives accusative case.”

Ochola (1999:45) outlines the characteristics of the Dholuo passive as:

1. A pronominal object is fronted. The fronted object co-occurs with an object clitic on the verb. Because the fronted NP is co-indexed with an object clitic, or a null marker in an object position, it inherits accusative case from the right-most member of its chain
2. The fronted NP moves to a different place from a wh- moved element. Under head to head movement, the fronted tense moves under COMP. If the fronted NP moves outside of IP as in a topicalized NP or WH moved NP, tense moves along with it and the full form of the past marker should occur, not just the contracted form with the expletive agreement inflection. This does not happen in the Dholuo case showing that the NP remains inside the IP and adjoins to the specifier of IP. She concludes that Dholuo, like some other languages does not have a true passive but a pseudo-passive in which the fronted patient is a proposed object adjoined to the IP. She does not go into the consequences this has on the learning of English passives by a native speaker of Dholuo.

A study of the interlanguage of Dholuo second language learners of English will find out the effect of the Dholuo pseudo passive on the learning of the true passive in English.

Quin (2015) conducted a study on the acquisition of passives among primary school pupils. She conducted the study on 11 year old pupils to find out the acquisition profile and if age has an effect on acquisition. She is of the view that age, gender and first language indeed interfere in the acquisition of English passives.

Zdorenko and Paradis (2011) conclude from their research that first and second language acquisition of articles is slow and encumbered with difficulties. The errors made by learners are

both developmental and transfer-based. Developmental errors are a majority though. The errors are mostly omission and substitution of article and difficulty in choosing the appropriate article.

Ladiere (2004) found that most learners are more proficient in the definite than the indefinite article and he supposes that this is because of the fact that the indefinite article takes number thus rendering it more complex.

Little research has been done on the subject of transfer from a Dholuo perspective using interlanguage theory and this study seeks to fill that gap.

Omondi (1982), says that Dholuo word order is SVO. The order is thoroughly constrained and even for interrogatives, there is no change in the order. However, as Ojwang, (2002) says movement can occur to express focus.

Ogutu (1989), discusses wh- movement in Dholuo question words *nango*, *nade*, *ang'o*, *ng'a* and just like Omondi (1982), argues that the deep and surface structure forms are unchanged in Dholuo, unlike in English.

However, Omondi (1986), says a fronting movement can take place bringing a verbal element before the wh- question word, followed by optional deletion of the verbal element.

Alternatively, Onditi (1987), says that the complementizer *ma* must be present whenever the question word is fronted.

There is so far no research done on the interlanguage of Dholuo learners of English as a second language with respect to wh- questions.

Omondi (1982), says that Dholuo language has no articles. Demonstrative adjectives and particles are used for emphasis. Particles such as 'e', the quantifier 'moro' and the demonstrative of reference 'chande', are used to perform the function of quantifiers in Dholuo.

Article acquisition for Dholuo learners is especially problematic for this reason and also because article acquisition is generally difficult for learners.

Lee (1997) argues that this is so because articles have no semantic function and even native speakers at times delete them when they are not considered to be absolutely necessary.

In Kenyan schools, the English article system is learnt using the traditional grammar method.

No study has so far been done on the use of articles by Dholuo learners of English as a second language. This study intends to fill this gap.

1.9 Theoretical framework

Bussman (1996) defines interlanguage as a systematic transition from initial knowledge of a language to a near native proficiency as one acquires a second language. It often occurs as an ‘unstable set of productive characteristics’ that picks rules of both the first language and the target language plus others that belong to neither the two but manifests universal principles inherent in language learning.

Crystal (2008) on the other hand defines interlanguage as the linguistic system created by a foreign language learner, different from both the target language and the first language and reflects how the system of rules evolves and results from a variety of processes like first language influence; contrastive interference from the target language and overgeneralization of new rules.

Tarone (1988) adds that it is both linked to the first and the target languages by interlingual identifications in the perception of the learner.

Corder (1967) called it the idiosyncratic dialect –each learner has his or her unique interlanguage because their experiences are unique.

Cooper (1976) called the phenomenon Hypothesis Testing Theory and

Nemser (1971; 74) termed it ‘approximate language.’

Even though Tarone (2006) feels that second language learners can attain native like competence if their need for learning is great enough, Selinker (1972), says this is not possible and the second language learner will always remain at the interlanguage stage. However it is agreed that fossilization occurs in some levels more than others. For instance phonology is usually more likely to be fossilized than morphology and syntax.

All these factors point to the fact that learners use the system for testing hypotheses they form about the language they are learning.

Tarone (2001) sees interlanguages as systems having their own internal consistency

Faouziati (2011), says that interlanguages gradually and progressively approach the target language system.

What these definitions emphasize is that interlanguages are neither the systems of the first languages nor the second languages but take from both and from other sources. The interlanguage occurs when the learner expresses his competence in the language they are in the process of developing. Selinker (1972) describes it as a transitional process between the native language and the target language but is observable and can be explored.

Corder (1981) thinks that interlanguages are dialects because they share grammar with the target language.

Interlanguage theory developed out of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis, developed by Lado and Corder, respectively. The term ‘interlanguage’ was coined by Larry Selinker (1974), though the idea that L2 learner language was different from both L1 and the target language had gained traction at the time.

While Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis are behaviorist in approach, Interlanguage is mentalist according to Tarone (2001). Most of its assumptions are taken from mentalist theories. The rules are a kind of mental grammars and they form the learner’s interlanguage system. These internal grammars are exposed to external and internal influences. External influences include continued exposure to input, while internal influences mean internal processing. The learner keeps changing this interlanguage by deleting rules, adding rules and tinkering with the whole system as he gathers new knowledge until the target language is shaped. Tarone (2001) calls the process interlanguage continuum.

Corder says in McLaughlin (1987) that the language is unstable and may be invaded by the first language.

Core assumptions of interlanguage theory

Mitchell and Myles (1998); and Larsen Freeman (2003) give the core assumptions of interlanguage theory:

1. Second language acquisition is a sequence of heightening conformity to the target language.

2. Second language learning is a step by step development towards the target language. The sequences are progressive and predictable- one structure. Learners cannot acquire what they are ready for even though they may at times give the impression of having acquired it. Initial structures must be acquired before the learner can move to the next. Few acquisition sequences though, have been described so far
3. A separate linguistic system of rules – neither L1 nor L2 is developed by the learner at each stage of the target language learning
4. The process of forming rules entails continuously forming and testing hypotheses
5. L2 learner errors are natural.

The term ‘interlanguage’ has evolved to acquire three popular meanings:

1. A chain of interconnected but evolving system of language.
2. A system of language observable at a point in a learner’s language development
3. Particular first and second language combinations

The study takes into account the three meanings that have evolved from the definition of interlanguage. The theory will guide the study in the analysis of the data in terms of Dholuo and English structures. It is hoped that the study will generate data on Dholuo influence on the structure of English spoken and written by primary school pupils

1.9.1 Some Important Notions in Interlanguage Theory

Fossilization

It is the permanent retention of a second language learner’s habits which when taken together, constitute the learner’s interlanguage. Bussmann (1996). Selinker (1972:215) says they are linguistic rules, items, systems and subsystems of the native language which L2 learners keep in their interlanguage irrespective of age or L2 input. It can occur at any stage of the learning process. Birdsong (2004), claims that 95% of L2 learners fail to reach the end of the interlanguage continuum because they get bogged down by some form of fossilization in the course of the learning process.

Tarone (2006), however says that if the need for learning the second language is strong enough, the learner will continue until near native- like competence is attained.

Psycholinguistic processes that lead to fossilization

According to Selinker (1972:56) the processes that lead to fossilization include:

1. Transfer of learning
2. Strategies of L2 learning
3. Strategies of communication
4. Overgeneralization of both L1 and L2 linguistic rules

Language Transfer

This is where fossilisable rules or subsystems are transferred from L1 to the interlanguage. It is also called interference or L1 influence. Especially in the early stages, L1 learners rely on their first language for items or structures for various reasons. Kellermann and Sherwood- Smith (1986), studied and drew a distinction between ‘transfer’ and ‘cross- linguistic influence’. They argued that transfer is what is incorporated from L1 into interlanguage without ‘capturing other interlingual effects’ like avoidance, L1 constraints on L2 learning, performance and different directionality of interlingual effects. Odlin (1986), suggests correctly that transfer occurs at different linguistic levels: phonological; morphological; lexical; grammatical; semantic and even pragmatic.

Characteristics of Interlanguage

According to Tarone, there are 4 characteristics

1. Stability

The consistent use by learners of a form or rule over time. The learners will use it over a period of time and so it can’t be explained away as a slip.

2. Systematicity

Interlanguages follow a system of rules. Though there is variability, one can detect the rule-based nature of one’s use of L2. Kasper (2001); Kasper& Dahl (1991); Tarone et al (1976; 97) all agree that interlanguages show an internal consistency in the use of forms at all points in the course of development. Interlanguages have a smaller range of styles than native language speakers. Chang (2005); House (2000; 05)

3. Mutual intelligibility

Adjeman (1976:300) says that interlanguages can be used by the speakers for communication. Because dialects are mutually intelligible, Darling, Hammond and Young (2002) claim that the mutual intelligibility between them and interlanguages make them dialects of the same language. If the interlanguage speakers cannot communicate with native speakers then it is not an interlanguage yet.

4. Backsliding

It means that mastery of the form is followed by either loss, misuse or non-use of the form. Butler-Tamaka (2000) Selinker (1974), says that it occurs when the speaker focuses on meaning and uses a previously learnt interlanguage form. Ellis (1994), however, says that backsliding is the use of fossilized forms which continue despite correction, explicit grammatical instruction, and even if eradicated, might occur again in spontaneous production.

According to Selinker (1972), interlanguages consist of four characteristics:

3. Permeability
4. Dynamism
5. Systematicity
6. Variability.

1.10 Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis

The study used a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. The main data instrument was pupils's written compositions. Grammar- translation method is commonly used in schools. Pupils are trained more in reading and writing and are known to perform better in written tasks than in speaking and listening evaluation. It was therefore my view that written compositions would better reflect the pupils' performance than oral tasks.

A cross- sectional data collection method was employed. A longitudinal method would have been preferred because it could effectively trace the pupils' interlanguage development process over along a period of time. However due to time constraints, it is not possible to use.

Five out of fifteen public primary schools were randomly selected from Pala Zone of West Karachuonyo Division of Homa Bay County. A minimum of three compositions were selected from each class. The compositions were written by pupils from standards 6 to 8, that is pupils who had learnt English for 6 to 8 years. Pupils in the same class were asked to write an imaginative composition within a time span of forty minutes. Each class in each of the five schools produced a minimum of three compositions thus a total of fifteen compositions per school was collected. Therefore a total of forty five compositions were used in the study.

The compositions were marked for lack of or inappropriate use of articles; inappropriate question word movement or its lack thereof and errors involving passives and prepositions that are attributable to first language influence. All the pupils selected were Dholuo native speakers with a relatively similar background. The pupils had no previous knowledge of the topic or the task.

The purpose was to elicit the structure of their developing interlanguage. It was specifically to find out whether lack of articles in Dholuo language is transferred to learners' interlanguage. Problems with passives were also checked if they are attributable to Dholuo influence. Excerpt method was used to select from the compositions the errors which were then compiled into five pages. The excerpts are the areas where the errors are most concentrated. These are then attached to the appendix.

It is my hypothesis that such ungrammatical sentences are likely to be found in the learners' interlanguage showing transfer of Dholuo structure. Such ungrammatical structures are collected from the pupils' compositions and explained in terms of transfer.

Summary

The chapter introduces the study by defining the research problem, objectives, scope and justification for the study. Interlanguage theory was used as the guide that chaperoned the study. It is hoped that this study will be invaluable to learners, teachers, linguists and researchers.

CHAPTER TWO

A TYPOLOGY OF SYNTACTIC ERRORS FOUND IN THE DATA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the data collected on the errors of syntax made by standard six to eight primary school pupils in Pala Zone. The raw data is first listed below. These errors are subsequently classified and analyzed in other chapters. The errors are categorized in terms of the grammatical areas of passives, interrogatives, use of articles and use of prepositions. With the use of tables, the errors are pointed out and further discussed in chapter three. There are obviously other types of errors but only the mentioned will be discussed in this study. Some errors occur more frequently than others showing that they are more prevalent in the pupils' writing.

2.1 Raw data

The constructions below are ungrammatical sentences that were collected from compositions written by primary school pupils from Pala Zone in Homa Bay County. The data reveals that the pupils have numerous challenges with the structure of the interlanguage they are in the course of developing. The issues range from interference by their first language Dholuo to problems with the target language features. Matters are not helped by the environment in which their learning is contextualized. Yet there is some learning going on in spite of these numerous challenges. The data is grouped as passives, interrogative constructions, article errors and prepositional errors for ease of explication.

The data has been summarized in figure 1 and 2. Analysis and discussion of the data is done in chapters 3 and 4.

Figure 1: Error per grammatical area.

The errors were summarized per grammatical area as shown in the figure below. Articles had the most errors at 38% followed by prepositions at 32%, passives at 24%, and lastly interrogative constructions at 9%

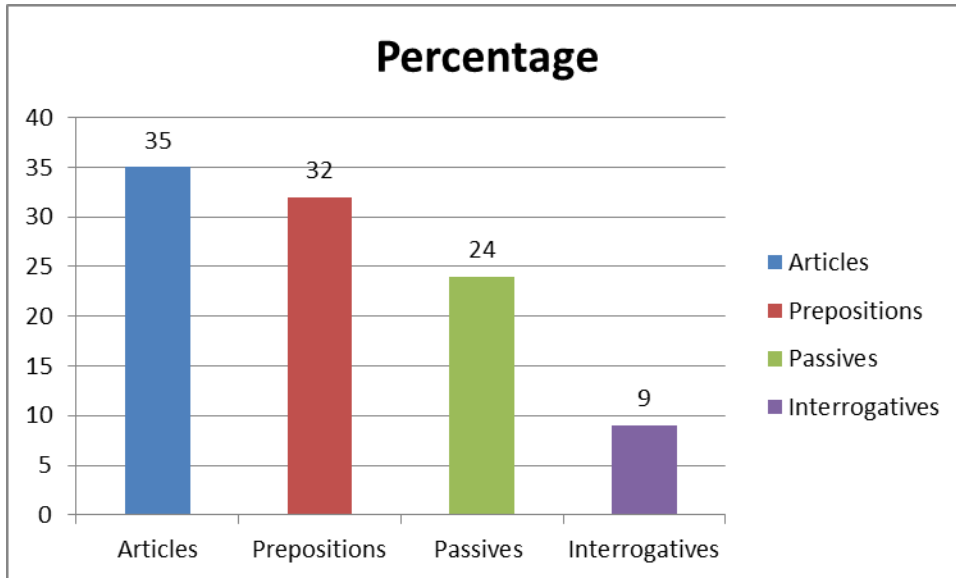
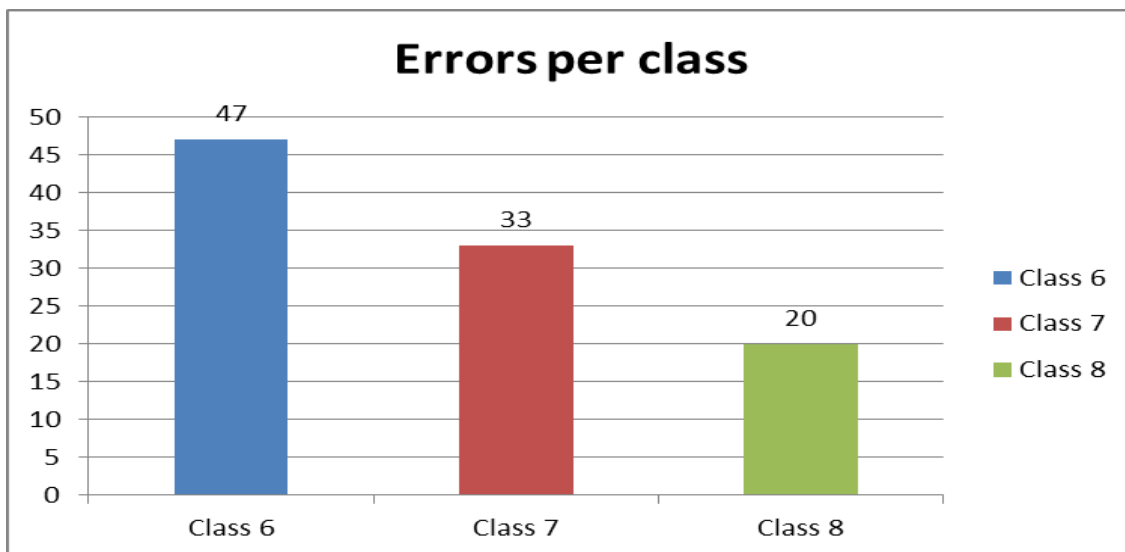


Figure 2: Errors per class

The same errors were also summarized per class as shown in the figure below. Class six had the most errors with 47% followed closely by class seven at 33% and lastly class eight at 20%.



Raw data

The list below is of the errors that were collected from the pupils' compositions. They are structural errors in the grammatical areas of articles, prepositions, passives and interrogatives. Here they are merely listed in no particular order. Analysis and discussion is done afterwards.

1. *When reaches month of March.
2. *Can I offer you lift?
3. *When our games teacher came to assembly
4. *In school I'm obedient girl with good words
5. *Teacher told us to move out
6. *It was chilly morning when it dawned on me
7. *The teacher on duty was head teacher
8. *He is bad boy he is taking cigarettes
9. *The flood swam the houses of people
10. *Some children were modelling the toy
11. *I saw an oncoming vehicle that had lost the control
12. *Everything was as white as a snow.
13. *Thoughts raced up my mind like fire eating up a dry grass
14. *There was as cold as a ice.
15. *The food was as sweet as a honey.
16. *Flower girls wore a red dress with a yellow flowers.
17. *We went to have a breakfast at the time the ceremony started.
18. *There was as large as a ocean.
19. *Down there near the lake I would like to build an university.
20. *The villagers were already cultivated their land.
21. *So they were waited the rain.
22. *I got when our games teacher was already prepared the team.
23. *I was woke up very early in the morning
24. *I was taken to the chief and he was explained what had happened
25. *The sheets of his roof had been blown away with the win
26. *fish cooked

27 *The bird was flown away
28 *I was woke up
29 *I immediately got in and the journey was kicked off
30 *By nine o'clock all visitors were arrived
31 *An accident was occurred near the junction to Kanyadhiang'
32 *My friend asked those people are saying what?
33 *Me I have gone to Nairobi. You also tell us you have gone where?
34 *It is who that you are crying?
35 *You want to go where?
36 *My parent asked me what I'm crying
37 *My mother asked me, "You are going?"
38 *The people who were waiting the rain.
39 *Our team from different schools were waiting us on the road.
40 *When I sent him market he took money for mother.
41 *My father started talking himself like a mad man.
42 *He sounded very happy so I stood to wait him.
43 *It forced me to wait her to tell me what she was excited about.
44 *When they heard the news that I was being searched by the police
45 *My mother moved for him the clothes that he wore and wear for him clean ones.
46 *The prefect explained for the head teacher what had happened in the classroom.
47 *They asked me to enter the house so they could pray for God.
48 *Boys were needed by jingles.
49 *It was now at midnight.
50 *My father started explaining for me what had happened.
51 *The door was locked with outside
52 *I ran home to go and show for my mother how I had done in the exam.
53 *The men in a uniform were there chasing at him
54 *We were organizing at how to bring her home for burial
55 *It took us five hours to get at Maasai Mara

As seen above, there were a total of 55 errors that covered the above mentioned grammatical areas. Articles had 19 cases, prepositions had 18 cases, passives 13 and interrogatives 5. These accounted for 35%, 34%, 24% and 9% respectively.

2.2 Article use

Introduction

All languages have a way of relaying the information encoded in articles. Research shows that the zero article is the most frequently used article followed by the definite article and the indefinite article in that order. Master (1997) reports that article choice errors occurs even in very proficient learners showing that a series of steps are involved in its acquisition. In this data, article omission accounted for a majority of the cases involving articles. Article errors sampled in this study are presented in the following manner:

1. Omission of articles (8cases).
2. Article overuse (9 cases)
3. Wrong use of the indefinite article (2 cases)

Omission of articles

Out of a total of 19 errors involving articles, omission accounted for 8 cases in the data. There were 4 cases involving omission of the definite article and 4 as well involving the indefinite article. Class six pupils accounted for a majority of the article cases with 4 cases out of 8. Class 7 followed with 3 out of 8 and class 8 had 1 case out of 8.

1. *When reaches month of March.
2. *Can I offer you lift?
3. *When our games teacher came to assembly
4. *In school I'm obedient girl with good words
5. *Teacher told us to move out
6. *It was chilly morning when it dawned on me
7. *The teacher on duty was head teacher
8. *He is bad boy he is taking cigarettes

Table 1: Errors of omission of articles

This table lists the errors in which either the indefinite or the definite article is missing in the sample sentence. The sentence is given in the first column, glossed in the second column and the error pointed out in the third column.

| 25. Sample sentence | gloss | error noted |
|---|--|--|
| *when reaches month of march is when rain started falling | When it reached the month of March, rain started falling | Missing article (month- the month) |
| *Can I offer you lift? | Can I offer you a lift? | lift- a lift |
| *When our games teacher came to assembly | When our games teacher came to the assembly | assembly- the assembly |
| *In school I'm obedient girl with good words | In school I'm an obedient girl with good words | obedient girl- an obedient girl |
| *Teacher told us to move out | The teacher told us to move out | teacher-the teacher |
| *It was chilly morning | It was a chilly morning | chilly- a chilly |
| *The teacher on duty was head teacher | The teacher on duty was the head teacher | was head teacher- was the head teacher |

In the table above are seven sentences with errors. The definite article misses in four sentences in which its use is mandatory. The indefinite article misses in the remaining three sentences.

Article overuse

In these cases, the learner uses the definite or indefinite article instead of the zero article. The definite article is overused in 3 cases while the indefinite article is overused in 6 cases. Here, a majority of the cases come from class 7 with 5 cases out of a total of 9. Class 6 had 2 cases and class 8 had 2 cases

1. *The flood swam the houses of people
2. *Some children were modelling the toy
3. *I saw an oncoming vehicle that had lost the control

4. *Everything was as white as a snow.
5. *Thoughts raced up my mind like fire eating up a dry grass
6. *There was as cold as a ice.
7. *The food was as sweet as a honey.
8. *Flower girls wore a red dress with a yellow flowers.
9. *We went to have a breakfast at the time the ceremony started.

Table 2: Article overuse

The table below lists errors on overuse of articles. As in the table above, the first column has the sentence with the error; the second column has the gloss and the third column has the error pointed out.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| *Some children were modelling the toy | Some children were modelling toys | Definite article not required |
| *I saw an oncoming vehicle that had lost the control | I saw an oncoming vehicle that had lost control | The definite article not required |
| *Everything was as white as a snow | Everything was as white as snow | Indefinite article not required |
| *Thoughts raced up my mind like fire eating up a dry grass | Thoughts raced up my mind like fire eating up dry grass | Indefinite article not required |
| *There was as cold as a ice | There was as cold as ice | Indefinite article not required |
| *The food was as sweet as a honey | The food was as sweet as honey | Indefinite article not required |
| *Flower girls wore a red dress with a yellow flowers | Flower girls wore red dresses with yellow flowers | Indefinite article not required |

In the table above the definite article is overused twice and the indefinite article six times.

Errors involving the indefinite article

In the data, there were cases in which the learner used a instead of an and vice versa as shown below. One error was made by a standard 6 pupil while the other was made by a standard 8 pupil.

1. There was as large as a ocean.
2. Down there near the lake I would like to build an university.

Table 3: Errors involving a mix-up of the indefinite article

The two sentences in table 3 below had the case of using the indefinite article *a* where *an* should have been used and vice versa. The cases involved a class six pupil and a class eight pupil respectively.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| *There was as large as a ocean | There was as large as an ocean | Indefinite article <u>a</u> used instead of <u>an</u> |
| *Down there near the lake I would like to build an university | I would like to build a university | Indefinite article <u>an</u> used instead of <u>a</u> |

2.3 Errors involving passive constructions

Introduction

The passive is a structural way of giving prominence to the object by making it the subject of the sentence. (Quin 2015). A sentence featuring the passive voice is called a passive sentence and a verb phrase containing a passive verb is also called a passive verb. However, true passives are distinguished from pseudo- passives. The English passive is considered a true passive unlike the Dholuo passive which is considered a pseudo- passive by several researchers.

Some errors noted in the data included apparently passive sentences in which movement had not occurred and as such failed the case filter. Apparently these errors were failed attempts at passivization due to lack of knowledge or probably due to interference. The data is listed below:

Sample sentences

1. The villagers were already cultivated their land so they were waited rain
2. *And when all teams were arrived we began with Sanda and Wagwe

3. *I went with it in the bathroom I got when my games teacher was already prepared the team
4. *I was woke up very early
5. *By nine o'clock all visitors were already arrived and waiting for ceremony to be started
6. *I could not believe that the sheets of his house had blew away with the wind
7. *I immediately got in and the journey was kicked off
8. *An accident was occurred near the junction to Kanyadhian'g.
9. *I was taken to the chief and he was explained what had happened
10. *Fish cooked
11. *The accident was occurred near the junction to Kanyadhiang'
12. *The bird was flown away

A majority of the errors are made by the standard six pupils followed by the standard sevens and eights in that respective order summarized in the table. The data can be grouped as follows:

1. Passives lacking case
2. Passives with instrument instead of agent
3. Transfer
4. Unaccusatives passivized

Table 4: Summary of errors involving use of passives.

Table 4 below gives the number of errors per class in the use of passives. The errors are further grouped into case, instrument, transfer and unaccusatives.

| CLASS | TOTAL | CASE | INSTRUMENT | TRANSFER | UNACCUSATIVE |
|-------|-------|------|------------|----------|--------------|
| 6 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Class 6 had the most cases of error in this category, followed by class 7 and lastly class 8. Errors of sentences lacking the nominative case were the most prevalent (8 incidents), followed by unaccusatives (5 incidents) and lastly instrument and transfer (1incident each)

a) Passives lacking case

- 1.* The villagers were already cultivated their land.
- 2.* So they were waited the rain.
3. *I got when our games teacher was already prepared the team.
- 5.* I was woke up very early in the morning
6. *I was taken to the chief and he was explained what had happened

b) Instrument instead of agent.

- 1.* The sheets of his roof had been blown away with the win

c) Other malformed passives

*fish cooked

d) Unaccusatives

1. The bird was flown away
2. I was woke up
3. I immediately got in and the journey was kicked off
4. By nine o'clock all visitors were arrived
5. An accident was occurred near the junction to Kanya dhiang'

Table 5: Errors involving the use of passives.

The data above on the use of passives is presented in the table below. As explained above, the errors include sentences not assigned the nominative case, use of an instrument instead of an agent, unaccusative sentences and transfer of the Dholuo agentless pseudo passive.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|--|---|---|
| *The villagers were already cultivated their land | The land was already cultivated by the villagers | <u>Their land</u> lacks case |
| *The villagers were waited the rain | The villagers waited for the rain | Attempted passivization of unaccusative |
| *I got when my games teacher was already prepared the team | The team was already prepared by my games teacher | The team lacks case |
| *The sheets had been blown away with the wind | The sheets had been blown away by the wind | Instrument used instead of agent |
| *So that we can start the work which was wanted to be done | So that we can start the work which was wanted done | |
| *I was taken to the chief and he was explained what had happened | I was taken to the chief and it was explained to me what had happened | The clause what had happened lacks case |
| *Fish cooked | Fish was cooked | Transfer from Dholuo |

In the table above, there are three constructions that lack case; one unaccusative and one case of transfer from Dholuo. In the raw data above, there were 13 cases of passives but the 5 above adequately highlight the issues in all of them.

2.4 Dholuo interrogatives

In the Dholuo interrogative structure, the question word remains in situ. Muriungi et al (2013) says that Dholuo applies full movement, partial movement as well as in situ. The data

below shows the various samples of erroneous sentences that were sampled and grouped as follows.

- a) Wh- word in situ
- b) Partial wh- movement
- c) Inversion

Table 6: Summary of Dholuo interrogative errors.

There were a total of five interrogative constructions with errors. Four of them had wh- word in situ and one had subject- auxiliary inversion errors. Standard six pupils had a majority of the errors with 3 while standard seven and eight had one apiece.

| Class | Total | In-situ | Aux inversion |
|-------|-------|---------|---------------|
| 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 5 | 4 | 1 |

Interrogative constructions had the fewest errors as compared to the other grammatical areas. Below are listed the actual sentences constructed by the pupils.

1. My friend asked those people are saying what?
2. Me I have gone to Nairobi. You also tell us you have gone where?
3. It is who that you are crying?
4. You want to go where?
5. My parent asked me what I'm crying
6. My mother asked me, "You are going?"

d) Inversion in Yes/No questions

Yes/No questions have the auxiliary base generated under I but move to the empty COMP position leading to a co-indexed trace. In Dholuo questions, movement does not take place. Questions and declarative sentences are distinguished by tone. This appears to be the case in the interlanguage of the learners as exemplified in the sentence below taken from the data.

Table 7: errors involving interrogative constructions.

The errors include the question word remaining in situ as explained above. Other errors include lack of subject- auxiliary inversion in Yes/No questions.

| Sample sentences | gloss | Error noted |
|---|--|---|
| *My friend asked those people are saying what | My friend asked, “What are those people saying?” | Question word not moved |
| *It is who that you are crying | Why is it that you are crying? | Movement and inversion lacking |
| *You want to go where? | Where do you want to go? | Question word not moved |
| *My parent asked me what I’m crying | My parent asked me why I was crying | Wrong question word used Wrong tense |
| *My mother asked me, “You are sick?” | My mother asked me, “Are you sick?” | Lack of subject auxiliary inversion |

These errors above are explained in more detail in chapter three.

2.5 Use of prepositions

Quirk (2000) defines a preposition as a word that shows relations of time, position, direction, and mental and emotional states. Ravina (1982) says that studies have consistently found that prepositions are extremely difficult for students.

An error according to James (1998) is the failure if performance. It is the deviation from a norm of language performance. James (1998) introduces a grouping of error that we shall adopt for our study of prepositional errors:

1. Incorrect preposition
2. Missing preposition
3. Redundancy

There were found numerous prepositional errors in the data. In total, there were 18 errors involving the use of prepositions summarized in the table below.

Table 9: Summary of prepositional errors

This table is a summary of prepositional errors grouped as missing prepositions; wrong preposition in L1 but correct in L2; redundant in L2 but mandatory in L1; wrong preposition in both L1 and L2; and finally wrong in L2 but L1 no preposition. The errors are also grouped per class with class six taking a majority of them.

| CLASS | Missing preposition | Wrong L2 Correct L1 | Redundant MandatoryL1 | Wrong in both L1,L2 | Wrong L2 L1 no pp |
|-------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 6 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 7 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| total | 8 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 1 |

The actual sentences are in table 9 below.

The errors can be classified as follows:

1. Missing prepositions- in these cases, the Dholuo translation had no preposition in an equivalent construction.
2. Wrong preposition
 - A) In some cases in the data, the wrong preposition was correct in a similar construction in Dholuo.
 - B) In other cases, the wrong preposition was also wrong if used in Dholuo or
 - C) Missing in Dholuo, or still
 - D) Was not needed in both.
3. Preposition redundant- in the cases observed, the Dholuo translation had a mandatory preposition.

Missing preposition

1. *The people who were waiting the rain.
2. *Our team from different schools were waiting us on the road.
3. *When I sent him market he took money for mother.
4. *My father started talking himself like a mad man.
5. *He sounded very happy so I stood to wait him.

7. *It forced me to wait her to tell me what she was excited about.
8. *When they heard the news that I was being searched by the police

Table 9: missing prepositions.

The sentences in the table have a missing *for* or *to* as shown in the sentences. 5 sentences have *for* missing while two have *to* missing. Class six pupils had three errors while class seven and eight had two each.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| *The people who were waiting the rain | The people who were waiting for the rain | Preposition <i>for</i> missing |
| *Our team from different schools were waiting us on the road | Our teams from different schools were waiting for us on the road | Preposition <i>for</i> missing |
| *When I sent him market he took money for mother | When I sent him to the market he took money from mother | Preposition <i>to</i> missing |
| *My father started talking himself like a mad man | My father started talking to himself like a mad man | Preposition <i>to</i> missing |
| *He asked me a glass of water | He asked me for a glass of water | Preposition <i>for</i> missing |
| He sounded very happy so I stood to wait him | He sounded very happy so I stood to wait for him | Preposition <i>for</i> missing |
| It forced me to wait her to tell me what she was excited about | It forced me to wait for her to tell me what she was excited about | Preposition <i>for</i> missing |

This data is analyzed in detail in chapter three.

Wrong preposition but preposition correct in Dholuo

1. *My mother moved for him the clothes that he wore and wear for him clean ones.
2. *The prefect explained for the head teacher what had happened in the classroom.
3. *They asked me to enter the house so they could pray for God.

4. *Boys were needed by jingles.
5. *It was now at midnight.
6. *My father started explaining for me what had happened.
7. *The door was locked with outside

Table 10: Wrong preposition; preposition correct in Dholuo.

The table has constructions which are ungrammatical because of the preposition used but which would be perfectly grammatical were they to be translated to Dholuo. The explanation for the errors is done in chapter three.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|--|---|---------------------|
| *The prefect explained for the head teacher what happened in the classroom | The prefect explained to the head teacher what had happened | *for instead of to |
| *They asked me to enter the house so they could pray for God | They asked me to enter the house so that they could pray to God | *for instead of to |
| | | |
| *Boys were needed by jingles | Boys were needed with jingles | *by instead of with |
| *I was shocked with what I saw | I was shocked at what I saw | *with instead of at |
| *My father started explaining for me what had happened | My father started explaining to me what had happened | *for instead of to |
| *It was now at midnight | It was now midnight | *at redundant |

Classes six and seven made three of the errors each while class eight had one. Like in the other cases, the errors are explained in chapter three.

Preposition not needed but mandatory in Dholuo

- 1 *I ran home to go and show for my mother how I had done in the exam.

Table 11: preposition redundant but mandatory in Dholuo.

The preposition in this construction is superfluous. The sentence becomes grammatical if the preposition is removed. However in Dholuo, the preposition is mandatory and the sentence becomes ungrammatical without it.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| * I ran home to go and show for my mother how I had done in the exam | I ran home to go and show my mother how I had done in the exam | *for redundant in the sentence |

There was only one sentence in this category.

Wrong preposition in both languages

1. *The men in a uniform were there chasing at him
2. *We were organizing at how to bring her home for burial

Wrong preposition, Dholuo no preposition

*It took us five hours to get at Maasai Mara

Table 12: Wrong preposition; Dholuo no preposition.

The ungrammaticality in the constructions in the table below is due to the use of a wrong preposition. The corresponding construction in Dholuo also lacks a preposition. The explanation for the possible cause, like in the previous cases is done in chapter three.

| Sample sentence | gloss | Error noted |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| *The men in uniform were there chasing at him | The men in uniform were chasing him | Preposition *at not needed |
| *We were organizing at how to bring her home for burial | We were organizing how to bring her home for burial | Preposition *at not needed |
| *It took us five hours to get at Maasai Mara | It took us five hours to get to Maasai Mara | Preposition *at used instead of to |

The tables above summarize and list ungrammatical constructions; give their glosses and point out the errors in the constructions. The errors have their possible causes explained and discussed further in chapters three and four. The use of the tables is only for purposes clarity.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter we have presented the data on errors of syntax made by primary school pupils from Pala Zone who are native speakers of Dholuo and are learning English as a second language. Some errors are occasioned by interference of Dholuo on the interlanguage they are in the course of developing. However a majority of the errors are Intralanguage in nature, coming from the target language itself. It is instructive to say that this list is by no means conclusive. There are numerous other errors that have not been accounted for as it is not possible to account for all errors of syntax in one study. Further study is recommended to thoroughly and conclusively analyze all the errors that arise as a result of Dholuo syntactic interference on English and those that come from the target language and the learning process.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF ERRORS ARISING FROM TRANSFER OF DHOLUO STRUCTURE TO THE INTERLANGUAGE OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

3.0 Introduction

James (1998) quotes Corder's definition of an error as failure of performance. It is a deviation from a norm of standard of performance. Error analysis according to Corder involves the steps of identification, description, categorization and explanation. Mackay (1967:3) argues that errors have several sources including transfer, analogy with the target language, vague memory of the correct form, guesswork, inadequate proficiency among others. In addition to these, Touchie (1986) lists environmental factors, inherent difficulty in the target language features, and overgeneralization as other causes of errors among learners. Therefore as can be seen, error permeates language learning and especially so second language learning.

Error from an interlanguage perspective

This study uses interlanguage theory by Larry Selinker to analyze, describe and explain the structural errors made primary school pupils in Homa Bay County, specifically Pala Zone.

James (1998) says that errors found in interlanguage may be:

1. Interlingual (occurring across languages, that is transfer) or
2. Interlingual (occurring within the target language).
3. Caused by communication strategies.
4. Induced errors.

It will be noticed that these errors coincide with interlanguage processes that include fossilization, strategies of second language communication, strategies of second language learning, transfer and transfer of training.

Interlingual errors

These are errors caused by transfer of features of the first language to the second language or word for word translation. Pupils sometimes resort to translating directly from their first language or they may unconsciously transfer features from the first language whenever they encounter aspects that are not familiar. This is more prevalent especially at the earlier stages of the second language acquisition. Indeed, Master (1987) finds out that as soon as learners master their use of articles, they transit from making transfer- based errors to intralingual errors. Later on they become more proficient in the language. Indeed their grammar at this stage is a hybrid of the first language and target language grammar. As they move up the interlanguage continuum, the language increasingly approximates the target language.

Intralingual errors

These are errors that have their origin in the second language itself. The errors cannot be traced to the first language but also don't match the target language. They include faulty overgeneralization, incomplete application of a target language rule, false analogies, hypothesis of false concepts, misanalysis, exploiting redundancies, misselection of a target language rule etc. (Corazon 1997).

Communication strategy based errors

This is resorting to a near equivalent when a learner lacks the correct item from the target language. It is a form of faulty overgeneralization and misapplication of the rules.

Induced errors

These are errors caused by the teaching strategies and materials e.g. mnemonic devices.

From an interlanguage theory perspective, error is not necessarily bad or unwanted. Error is looked at positively because it helps the teacher or the language researcher know what stage the learner is at considering the kind of errors he makes.

The data presented in chapter two on interference of Dholuo on the structure of English writing by Dholuo native speakers is analyzed in this chapter. The errors arising from the interlanguage data are discussed and analyzed using interlanguage theory by Larry Selinker.

3.1 Acquisition of passives

3.1.1 The English passive

Elizabeth (2015) argues that the passive is a structural way of giving prominence to the object by making it the subject of the sentence. She quotes Bryant (1960) who in their research found passives to occur more in expository writing as compared to narrative writing.

Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) conducted a research that found that children of 3-5 years understood and produced different types of passives. Therefore standard six to eight who are involved in the study are expected to have acquired the first language passive pretty well and should have no age-related problems acquiring the English passive.

Haegemann (1994) characterizes passivization as entailing the following:

1. Obligatory movement of the object noun phrase to the subject position so as to be assigned case
2. Absorption of external theta role
3. Morphology of the verb is altered.
4. The structural case of the verb is absorbed

Siewierska (2010) gives some characteristics of passives as listed below

1. Showing contrast with its counterpart active construction
2. The subject is not overtly expressed and if it is, it correspond to a non- obligatory oblique phrase
3. The subject corresponds to the direct object of the direct object of the active counterpart
4. The passive shows a special morphologically marked verb

5. The subject is pragmatically restricted relative to the verb.

Elizabeth (2015) gives a characterization of the English passive as;

1. Having a form of the verb 'to be' followed by the past participle of the verb in question
2. Passivization affects the relationship between the verb and both the subject and object
3. The agent is often not mentioned. If it is, then it follows a preposition in a prepositional phrase.
4. Auxiliary words are used in passives. Examples include modal auxiliaries, the simple present, present perfect, present progressive and simple past.
5. If the active counterpart takes two objects, then the personal object is usually made the subject of the passive sentence. The impersonal object is only made subject for emphatic reasons.
6. Past participles and past perfect forms when used in the passive give rise to two meanings: to show the action and the result e.g.

The gate was closed.

3.1.2 The Dholuo pseudo-passive

It has been variously argued by a number of scholars that Dholuo does not have a true passive but rather, a pseudo-passive. Omondi (1986) argues that Dholuo passives are agentless sentences which is the closest they get to passivization. Ochola (1999:48) is of the view that true passives have movement motivated by case assignment. The moved element in the Dholuo pseudo-passive is assigned Accusative case and not nominative case and as such cannot be said to be a true passive. She gives some characteristics of the Dholuo pseudo-passive

1. Has an impersonal O- attached to the root of the transitive verb
2. In the progressive aspect, the O- is replaced by I-
3. The impersonal O- is a marker of an indefinite generalized subject.

Errors noted in the data

The data had errors that the research team deemed suitable to be selected as malformed passives. Sentences containing passive verbs were considered passives even if the passivization was incomplete. For instance a verb in the past participle preceded by an auxiliary verb was considered passive even if the object had not been moved. The pupils' compositions had errors that were grouped as follows:

1. Interlanguage errors
2. Intralanguage errors
3. Overgeneralization of passive markers with unaccusatives e.g.

Interlingual errors

These are cases of transfer. The first language is either translated directly by the learner or he unconsciously applies aspects of the first language to the target language. The English passive is considered a true passive unlike the Dholuo passive which is listed alongside other related languages as a pseudo passive.

In the true passive, the NP which is assigned the internal theta role of the active verb undergoes movement from the VP internal position to the spec IP where it can be assigned NOMINATIVE case by the auxiliary verb.

[Awuor killed a dog]

[A dog was killed by Awuor]

The Dholuo passive

The Dholuo passive differs from the English passive in a number of features notably that it has an impersonal pronominal o- attached to the verb in perfect tenses and i- in the imperfect tenses. Dholuo being a pro-drop language, the o-prefixed to the verb can optionally stand for the subject of the sentence. In passives, the object can move and co-occur with the pronominal o-.

1. O-nyiedh dhiang

3sg-milk cow

The cow has been milked

2. Dhiang O-nyiedhi

Cow 3sg-milk

The cow has been milked

Ochola (1999:48) says that because of the co-occurrence of the subject and the pronominal O-, the movement is not motivated by case assignment and furthermore the element is not moved to the spec IP and thus retains its accusative case.

Such constructions appear to have been transferred to the interlanguage of the learners as seen in the sentence below:

1. Fish cooked.

Rech otedi

2. Our bull killed

Rwadhwa onegi

Intralingual errors

These are errors that are not traceable to the first language and can be explained by the target language. Brown (1994) observes that intralingual errors forms a big chunk of errors in interlanguage and this is confirmed by the data collected. According to him during the earlier years, most of the errors are due to interference by the first language. However as the learner gains traction in the target language, the errors shift to Intralanguage.

From the data, the following errors were sampled.

3. I was taken to the chief and he was explained what happened

4. The villagers were cultivated their land.

5. They were waited the rain.
6. Our games teacher was already prepared the team

The sentences are ungrammatical because the object has not moved to the spec IP to be assigned case. They are caseless and as such they break the case filter: all overt NPs must be assigned case. The learner makes the error due to an incomplete application of the rule of passivization that is movement of the object to the subject position for assignment of case. The same explanation suffices for the first four errors

7. The sheets of the roof were blown away with the wind

The learner uses an instrument instead of an agent rendering the sentence faulty. As explained earlier, in the passive sentence, the subject must correspond to the agent of the active verb. He misapplies the rule probably because both the agent and the instrument would be noun phrases and in this case both can be connected to the situation of blowing off the roof.

8. The engineer came to draw how the permanent house can be started its work

Overgeneralization of target language rules

The learner overgeneralizes the rule of passivization to unaccusative verbs such as intransitive verbs, unaccusative by their nature, cannot be passivized. The learner is yet to learn the exceptions to the rules and applies them arbitrarily to all situations. Yet passivization depends on thematic relations between the verb and both its subject and object. Intransitive verbs do not have objects

1. *The accident was occurred.

Gloss: The accident occurred.

2. The bird was flown away

Gloss: The bird flew away

The pupils are still at the lower levels of second language acquisition. They have learnt the rules of passivization as can be seen that the verb is passivized and there is an auxiliary verb. However, their interlanguage is still developing. They test and adjust the rules of passivization and change it with every new input. The above sentences are cases of overgeneralization of target language rules.

3.2 Acquisition of articles

Introduction

Articles include the definite article the and the indefinite article a/an. Ionin et al (2004) defines definiteness as uniqueness in the context of the hearer and speaker. He says, “If a noun is definite then the speaker and the hearer presuppose the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP.” In contrast, an NP is indefinite if the referent doesn’t exist in the context of the speaker and hearer, or if it does then it is not unique within the context. Definiteness as a unique category according to Ionin (2004), is a language universal.

Article acquisition in second language learning comes late as it is complex, complicated and dependent on the context. Master (1997) says that it occurs even in very proficient learners showing that a series of stages are involved in the acquisition. He lists some of the prevalent errors among second language learners as including omission and overuse. Ionin et al (2004) and Trenkic (2009) as well report article overuse as a problem that second language learners experience. Omission is reported by Huebner (1998) and Myers (1992)

It is generally agreed by researchers that the syntax of the first language affects the acquisition of articles by second language learners. Master (1987) argues that children with articles in their first language are more likely to achieve native-like proficiency in the use of articles. Those without it are likely to struggle in acquiring it, probably fossilizing at the interlanguage stage. Zobl (1982) confirms, saying that those with an article system like English are likely to master it more quickly.

The English article

Articles in English include the indefinite article a/an, the definite article the; and the zero article. The zero article is the most commonly used, followed by the definite article and lastly the indefinite article.

Some languages e.g. Dholuo, lack articles. However, even those languages that lack articles have a way of conveying the concept of definiteness and indefiniteness as definiteness and indefiniteness are linguistic universals as has been said.

Difficulty of article acquisition in L2

The English article system is complex. For one it doesn't have a one-to-one form and meaning correspondence. Master (2002) cites three of these problems with articles for these learners.

1. Articles are frequent in speech and writing. This frequency of occurrence leads to difficulty in crafting a rule from the numerous examples.
2. Being that articles are function words, they are not stressed and are unlikely to be noticed.
3. The article system has one morpheme for many uses (there's a one-to-many mapping between the article and its uses)

Other difficulties

- Complexity of noun classification
- Common nouns and proper nouns; mass nouns, count nouns; singular, plural etc. it is therefore necessary to master the distinctions in order to master the classification of the system.
- Information redundancy of the articles: articles work in addition to context. Those without articles cope very well without them, relying on context alone. Dholuo uses demonstratives in addition to context to express definiteness. Brown (1973) questions why we need them at all. English grammar defies the pragmatics dictates that definiteness is overtly expressed.

Mey (1993) posits that this violation of the principle of rational communication whose purpose is to enforce simplicity only confuses learners. Therefore the pupil wired in his first language will drop the definite article if he follows the pragmatic rule which requires information to be implicit in the context as much as possible.

- Ambiguity of the English indefinite

Fodor and Sag (1982:30) argue that indefinites are considered quantifiers even though they don't operate like other quantifiers. They are able to scope out of some scope islands as in their classic example:

- i) If a friend of mine had died in the fire, I would have inherited a fortune
- ii) If each friend of mine had died in the fire, I would have inherited a fortune

They are considered quantifiers, yet they don't work like ordinary quantifiers

- Ambiguity of the English definite

There are the attributive and referential uses of the definite according to Donnellon (1966) and he gives some examples:

Smith's murderer is insane (Smith was such a good person)

The murderer of Smith is insane (The speaker knows the murderer to be an insane person)

The errors collected from the data can be grouped broadly into four categories as shown below.

1. Missing articles
2. Misapplication of the definite article
3. Use of an article in a null article position
4. Wrong use of an article
5. Using a instead of an before a consonant sound (written with a vowel letter)
6. Using a instead of an

Missing articles

1. When reaches month of March
2. People started complaining for president to reduce the price of flour
3. Next day people saw the presence of rain
4. Can I offer you lift?
5. When our games teacher came to assembly all pupils cheered

6. After our games teacher had finished talking we went for weekend
7. In school I'm obedient girl with good words
8. Teacher told us to move out
9. In first half neither team had scored a goal
10. It was chilly morning when it dawned on me...
11. The teacher on duty was head teacher
12. He is bad boy he is taking a cigarette
13. The bell was rung and we all gathered at arena to wait for the head teacher.

Explanation for the error of the missing article

Transfer

The cases of missing articles in the data were attributed to transfer from the first language Dholuo which like in the data, has no articles. As explained earlier, the information of definiteness is available to the learner and he can express it without necessarily using an article. The article is redundant and going for the pragmatically simple option, he unconsciously omits it leading to the error of omission of a mandatory target language feature.

- a) Dholuo: Japuonj ne onyiso wa ni wawuog oko
 Teacher PST 3sg-told us that we-get out
 Gloss: The teacher told us to get out
- b) Dholuo: a-miy-i lift?
 1sg give you lift?
 Gloss: can I offer you a lift?
- c) Dholuo: O-nyathi ma-rach
 3sg-child that bad
 He is a bad child (boy)

In the above sentences, either the definite or the indefinite article is missing making the sentences ungrammatical. However in the learners' first language Dholuo, the sentences would be grammatical were they to be literally translated. This is because as has been explained above, Dholuo has no articles and uses demonstratives and other devices to point out things. This gives

credence to the hypothesis that the learners have unconsciously sought help from their native language structure.

Intralingual errors

a) Misapplication of target language rules

1. *Some children were modelling the toy

Gloss: Some children were modelling toys

2. *I saw an oncoming vehicle that had lost the control.

Gloss: I saw an oncoming vehicle that had lost control

The above two are cases of the definite article being used where the zero article would be appropriate were found in the data. The learner has learnt the use of the definite article as in both cases the indefinite article cannot be used. However, he does not distinguish the definite from the zero article. This can be attributed to misapplication of target language rules. The learner in the course of learning the interlanguage sometimes uses the rules correctly but at times applies them to contexts which are not appropriate leading to errors in the interlanguage. Eventually as the learner progresses he gets to know where the rules are applicable and where they are not.

b) Misapplication of the indefinite article

1. *There was as cold as a ice.

Gloss: The place was as cold as ice

2. *Flower girls wore a yellow dress and a yellow flowers

Gloss: Flower girls wore yellow dresses with yellow flowers.

3. *We went to have a breakfast at the time the ceremony started

Gloss: We went to have breakfast at the time the ceremony started

4. *The food was as sweet as a honey

Gloss: The food was as sweet as honey

5. *Everything was as white as a snow

Gloss: Everything was as white as snow

6. *Thoughts raced up my mind as fire eating up a dry grass.

Gloss: Thoughts raced up my mind like fire eating up dry grass

The learners use the indefinite article where it is not supposed to be used. Unlike the learners before, this learner appears not to have learnt the basics of the rule that is count and non-count

nouns. He is obviously at a lower stage of the interlanguage continuum. He also misapplies the rule to situations that are not acceptable. While this also cannot be a case of transfer, it is understandable in light of interlanguage theory.

c) a instead of an and vice versa

1. I would like to build an university
2. The town was as large as a ocean

Two cases of use of a instead of an and vice versa were found in the data. In the first sentence the learner appears to mistake the letter u in the word university for a vowel sound and so misapplies the indefinite article. This learner has mastered the use of the indefinite article. His only problem is pronunciation vis a vis orthography of the English language. The learner who produced the second sentence appears not to have mastered the use indefinite article and misapplies it to a vowel sound. His problem has nothing to do with orthography.

Conclusion

While there were found a good number of errors that were judged to have originated from the first language, a majority appear to have their source in the target language. The learners appear to misapply the target language rules in most of the cases and overgeneralize the rules in some other cases. Transfer majorly affected learners at the lower level, standard six and tended to ease somewhat as the pupils approached standard eight. In my opinion this is the case as the teachers concentrate more on standard seven and eight as they prepare them for national examinations. All school resources including text books, teachers and time are dedicated to themas compared to the lower classes. This is my hypothesis for the prevalence of intralingual errors in standard seven and eight.

3.3 Acquisition of the interrogative structure

Introduction

Fromkin et al (2013) affirm that it is a language universal that all languages have a way of asking questions. However all languages have a unique way of forming their questions. Some languages form wh- questions by full wh- movement; others involve partial movement while others still have wh-in-situ. In English, questions involve the use of full wh- movement and partial movement. Wh- in-situ is ungrammatical except in echo questions. Radford (1981:169) defines wh- movement as the movement of wh- consequents from a theta position in the deep structure

to a pre-sentence position (SPEC-CP) in the surface structure of an utterance. Comp is a non-theta position.

Omondi (1986) compares movement of the Dholuo question word to the English wh- words considering how they both phonetically and structurally resemble each other. They occur in the place reserved for the equivalent in the deep structure as in the examples below:

Anyango ywago ang'o?

Anyango cry-PROG what?

The question words in Dholuo include:

Ng'a - Who

An'go - what

Nang'o – why

Nang'o- how (where and how can be distinguished using tone)

Kanye or kure? – Where

Karango? – When

Some example of Dholuo questions follow below

1. Achupa otedo kanye?
Achupa 3sg-marry where?
2. Madhe otedo ang'o?
Madhe 3sg-cook what?
3. Awuor luongo ng'a?
Awuor call-PROG who?
4. Min Awuor owacho nang'o
Mother Awuor PERF-say what?

(Adapted from Ojwang, 2008)

Haegemann (1994) says that languages differ with respect to wh- movement. English applies movement as early as at surface structure while Japanese and Chinese wait until logical form.

In English movement begins from the deep structure and using transformation rules, end up in the surface structure.

Deep structure- transformation rules- surface structure.

In Dholuo, it is apparent that lack of movement at surface structure does not lead to ungrammaticality. In fact the default structure of the Dholuo question phrase is where the question word remains in situ. Fronting the question word in asking questions is usually done for emphatic purposes.

ma in Dholuo question phrases

ma is a relative pronoun in Dholuo equivalent to that. Onditi (1987) is of the opinion that question word constituent order changes require an obligatory relative pronoun ma if the question word is fronted.

Madhe otedo ang'o?

Madhe PERF- cook what?

Ang'o ma Madhe otedo?

What that Madhe PERF-cooked?

Omondi (1986) however is of the view that in Dholuo, the question word must come after the verb. If it doesn't, then a copular is introduced to which the question word becomes a complement. The copular is then optionally deleted. This is a form of clefting

En ang'o ma Awuoche otedo? / Ang'o ma Awuoche otedo?

It is what that Awuoche PERF- cook?

En ng'a ma iywago? / Ng'a ma iywago?

It is who that you- mourn-PROG?

Muriungi (2013) however is of the opinion that the ni (almost similar to ma) attached to the moved Kikuyu wh- word is a focal marker without which a question would be ungrammatical. The particle is diagnostic of movement in Kikuyu and Bantu languages.

Examples of errors in pupils writing

In pupils writing errors were found in forms such as seen below:

1. My friend asked those people are saying what?
2. It is who you are crying?
3. You want to go where?
4. My parent asked me what I'm crying
5. My mother asked me, "You are going where?"
6. Me I have gone to Nairobi. You also tell us you have gone where?

Explanation of the errors

1. Transfer

Dholuo interrogative structure is unlike English in that its question word optionally remains in situ whereas the English *wh-* word undergoes mandatory movement. In Dholuo, movement is also allowed with the mandatory accompaniment of *ma* in the question phrase discussed above. The availability of *wh-* phrase in situ which has been seen in the data in the interlanguage of learners of English points out the culprit as Dholuo interference. In English it would only be allowed were they echo questions.

Sample sentence: *Those people are saying what?

Dholuo translation: Jogo wacho ang'o?

Gloss: What are those people saying?

Figure 3 : Deep Structure Representation of WH-movement

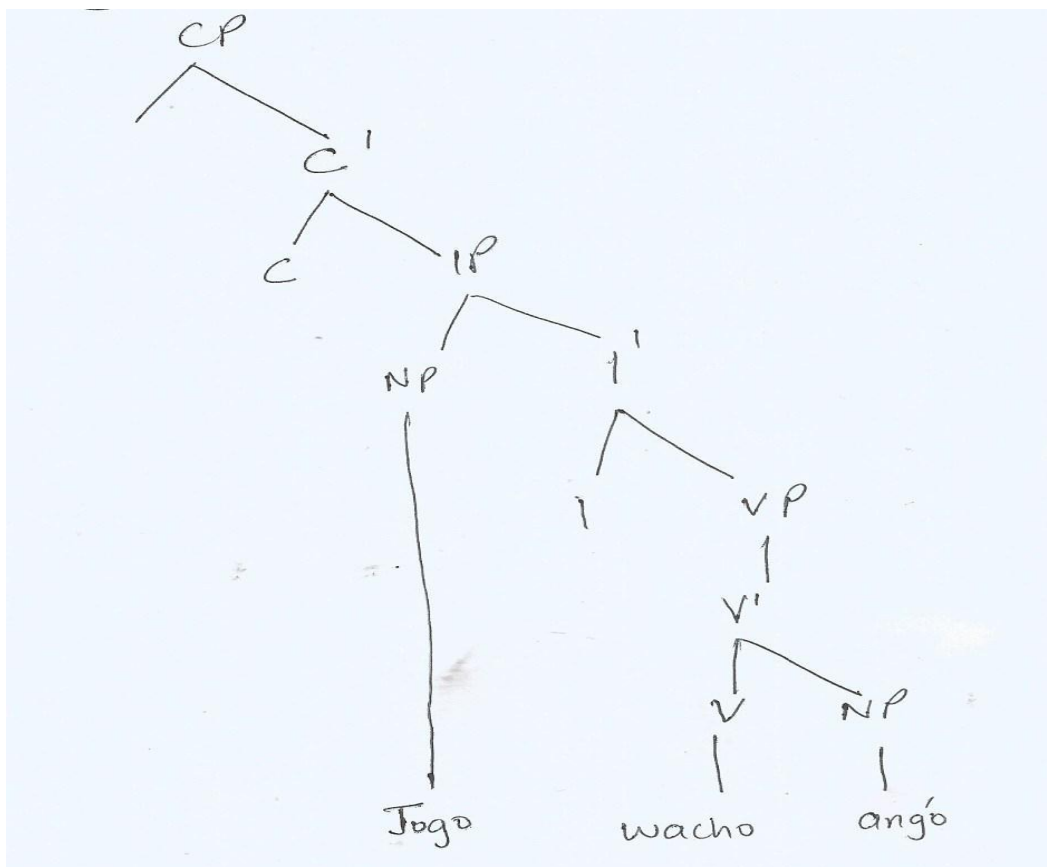
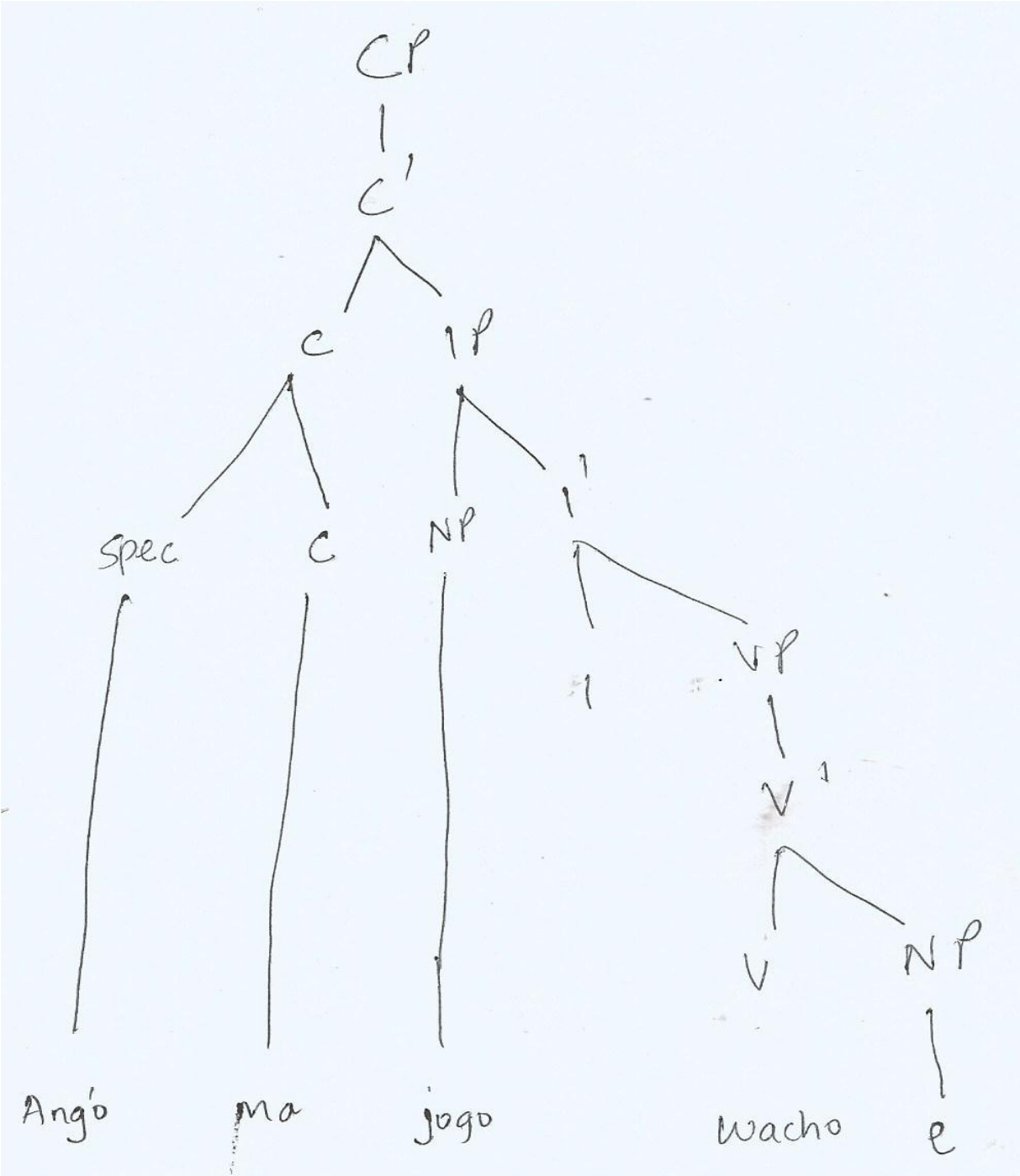


Figure 4 : Surface Structure Representation of Subject Verb Inversion



The other questions in this category are:

You want to go where?

Tell us you have gone where?

Also noted in the data is question 5 which is not an instance of movement but subject auxiliary inversion. No auxiliary inversion has taken place leaving the expression similar to what you would expect in Dholuo questions. This was interpreted to be due to transfer from Dholuo.

You are going home?

Idhi dala?

2sg-going home?

Gloss: are you going home?

Figure 5 : Deep Structure Representation of Subject Verb Inversion

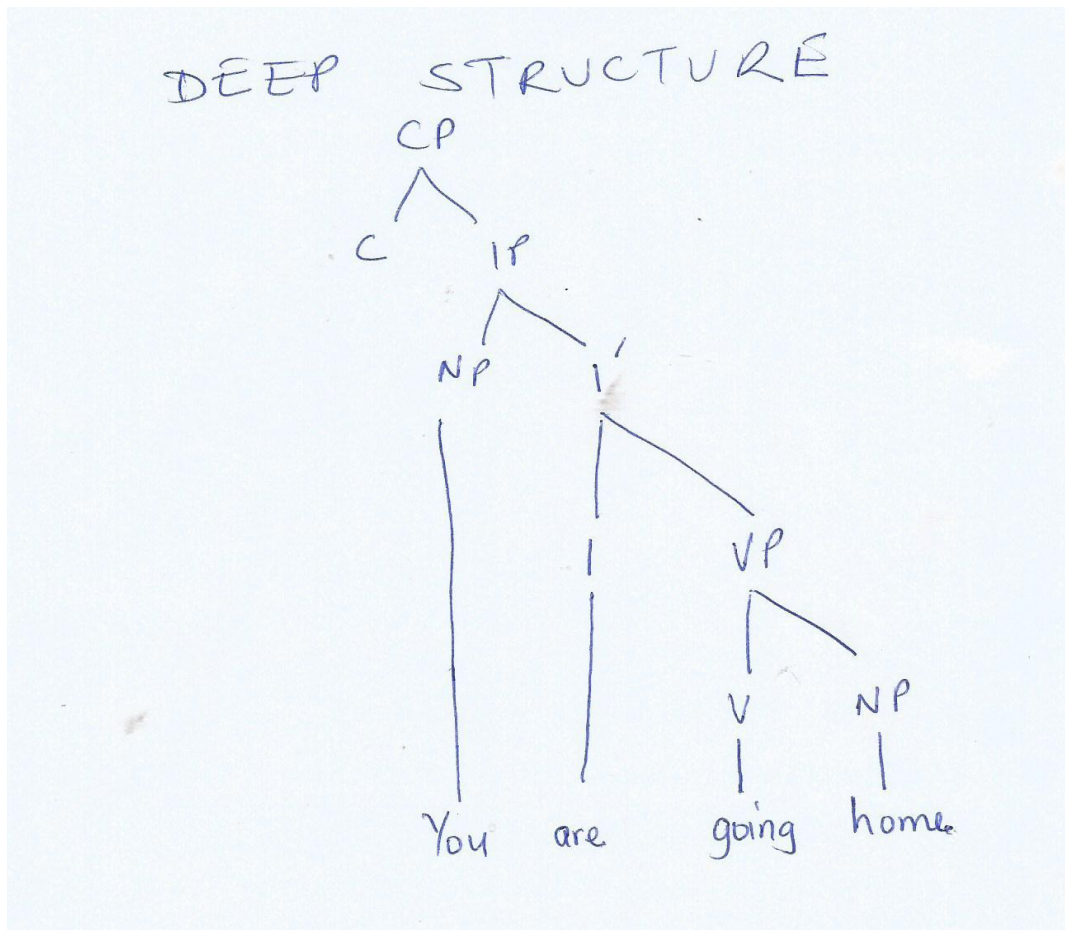
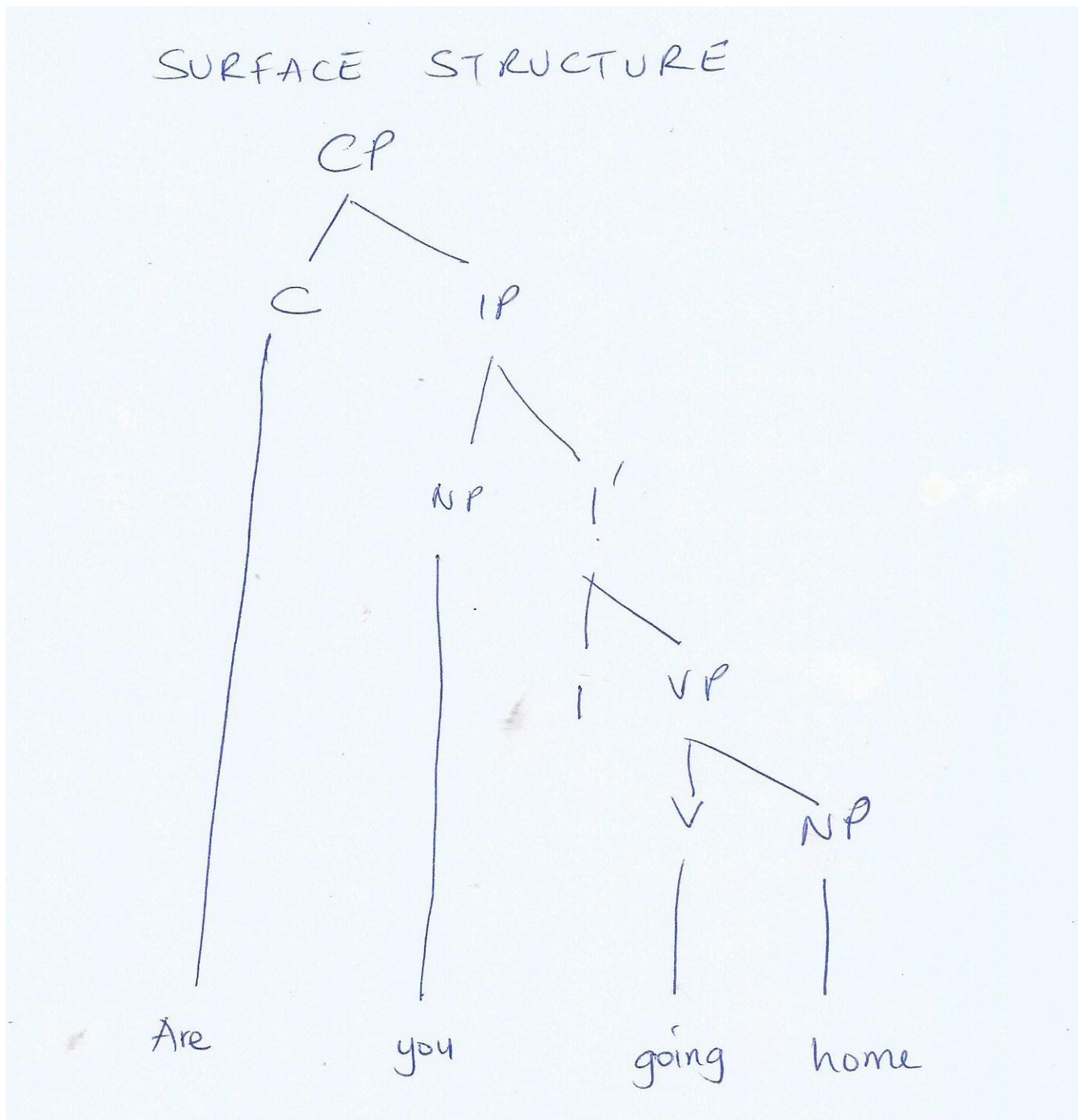


Figure 6 : Surface Structure of WH-movement



The interlanguage shows features of both movement and lack of the same showing transfer of the feature from Dholuo. The conclusion that can be made is that the learner probably assumes that just like in Dholuo, both forms can be used interchangeably. Dholuo transfer was concluded to

be responsible for the errors in the acquisition of the interrogative form among learners of English as a second language in Pala zone of Homa Bay County.

3.4 Acquisition of prepositions

Introduction

Quirk et al (2000) defines a preposition as a part of grammar that shows relations of time, position, direction, and mental and emotional states. The site englishclub.com (<http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/prepositionlist.html>) gives the existence of over 150 prepositions in English which it proceeds to group in the following manner

1. Showing direction including to, toward and into
2. Showing location including in, at, on, by
3. Showing a spatial relationship including above, across, around
4. Showing relation of time and place including on, in, within, about, for

englishclub.com lists 9 most frequently used prepositions as at, by, for, from, in, on, to and with. Each of the prepositions has an overlapping meaning with other prepositions as one may occur in the time, space and location meanings; overlapping functions such as agentive function, dative function, benefactive function etc.

The huge number of prepositions and overlapping functions and uses leads to extreme difficulty in acquiring prepositions. It is especially so for the second language learner who is acquiring it in a formal school environment under restricted conditions. It is worse still if the second language learners are primary school pupils in a rural environment (with its challenges) who are also in the process of fully grasping their first language. Their encounter with prepositions inevitably will lead to errors as the data from their interlanguage shows.

Interlingual and intralingual errors abound in the data. The interlingual errors appear to have been caused by the fewer number of prepositions in Dholuo as compared to the huge number of English prepositions. The overlapping meanings and functions seems to have caused errors in learning the rules and exceptions.

Transfer errors

a) Missing prepositions

1. *The people who were waiting the rain

Ji ma ne rito koth

The people who were waiting for the rain

In the above case, the learner transfers the structure from Dholuo. In the equivalent construction in Dholuo, a preposition is not used after *wait*

Waiting rain

rito-PROG koth. This explanation applies for constructions 2, 5 and 6 which also have the verb wait.

2. *Our team from different schools were waiting us on the road
3. *When I sent him market he took money for mother.

Ka ne aore (e) chiro

e which translates to *to* is optional

In this construction, the underlined phrase has been translated from Dholuo which has an optional preposition *e* after the verb send. The learner takes it apparently that it is optional in English as well and omits it leading to ungrammaticality.

4. *My father started talking himself like a mad man
5. *He sounded very happy so I stood to wait him
6. *It forced me to wait her to tell me what she wanted
7. *When they heard the news that I was being searched..

Ka ne giwinjo ni imanya

The verb search collocates with *for* in English. However in Dholuo, the equivalent *manyo* is not followed by a preposition. The learner transfers this knowledge of Dholuo to his interlanguage and commits the error of omission.

He says..*I was being searched instead of

I was being searched for.

b) Wrong preposition in English – equivalent preposition correct in Dholuo

Such constructions were found in the data and were judged to have been occasioned by transfer from Dholuo.

1. *The prefect explained for the head teacher what had happened in the classroom.

Gloss: The prefect explained to the head teacher what had happened in the classroom
In Dholuo the equivalent of for *n-(3sg)* is used in contexts of speech as in the examples below:

Wach na

Tell n-1sg

Pim ne

Explain n-3sg

Wer nwa

Sing n-1pl

We propose that *n-* loosely translates to *for*. If this is the case, then the above ungrammatical construction together with number 2 and 5 below which has the verb explain and pray were caused by interference by Dholuo structure.

2. *They asked me to enter the house so they could pray for God.

3. *Boys were needed by jingles.

Boys were needed with jingles

Jowuoyi ne idwaro gi oyieke

Dholuo has one preposition *gi* that translates to both by (instrument) and with (together) the learner appears to take translate the preposition and misapplies it. The same explanation can be used in construction 6 below in which the preposition *gi* also means from. The learner translates the preposition and applies it in the wrong context.

4. *My father started explaining for me what happened

5. *The door was locked with outside.

- c) Preposition not needed but mandatory in Dholuo.

I ran home to go and show for my mother how I had done in the exam.

The morpheme *n-* for discussed above which translates loosely to *for* has been transferred in this case after the verb show. Since in this construction show would not be followed by a preposition in English and the equivalent construction in Dholuo has a mandatory equivalent, we take it that it is a case of transfer.

2. Intralingual error

a) Preposition incorrect in both languages

1. *It took us five hours to get at Maasai Mara.

Gloss: It took us five hours to get to Maasai Mara

The construction is ungrammatical in both English and Dholuo with the article *at*. Therefore Dholuo interference is ruled out. The culprit is in the target language. The right preposition *to* is a directional preposition while the one chosen is locational. The two prepositions are near equivalents and it can be argued that the learner not having the right preposition at hand opted for a near equivalent. This is a communication strategy –based error which is part of interlanguage.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that errors concerning prepositions found in the data are to a large extent traceable to the first language of the learners. Dholuo has fewer prepositions compared to English leading to a lot of difficulty in picking the right preposition. To lighten their work, the learners resorted to translating forms from Dholuo leading to ungrammatical constructions. However, not all cases of prepositions involved transfer. Some learners resorted to communication strategies to cope with the problem of communication also leading to ungrammaticality. However, it must be conceded that this is by no means a conclusive research on prepositions with respect to Dholuo and English. A different design for instance a longitudinal approach or research on a different level might give more insight into the problem of acquisition of prepositions.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter is a discussion of the findings from this research based on the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

1. Dholuo structure is transferred to the interlanguage of primary school second language learners of English who are Dholuo native speakers.
 - a) Dholuo pseudo- passive

From the data, it is evident that transfer of Dholuo structure accounts for a number of syntactic errors in the interlanguage of primary school learners in Pala Zone. The Dholuo pseudo-passive has an impersonal O-which represents an indefinite general marker. Learners transfer this to their interlanguage especially at the earlier stages of learning the language. They end up constructing passives without agents as has been shown in the data.

Other malformed passive constructions are those defying the case filter. The learners seem to have acquired important features of passives such as participles and auxiliary verbs. However movement operation is not done to have the agent assigned accusative case leading to malformed passives such as: *He was explained what happened. One possible explanation is that they have a level of difficulty with the -by phrase. Another possible explanation is the Dholuo pseudo –passive called the oblique passive construction in which the moved object co-occurs with a fronted subject before the subject. An example is the construction below:

Dherwa gari ogweyo

Our cow a vehicle has knocked down (adapted from Quin 2015)

Having both the object and the subject before the verb in such pseudo constructions could possibly confuse the learner and influence the failure to move. More research needs to be done to unravel the reason as to why this is a problem.

b) Lack of articles in Dholuo leads to interference in the learner's interlanguage as they often omit articles. They come from a background where there are no articles and context suffices in communicating definiteness. This is compounded by the complexity of articles as discussed elsewhere in this report. Furthermore pragmatic conventions demand that redundancy be minimized yet English article rules run contrary and demand that in addition to context, definiteness must be explicitly stated. This unnecessary difficulty leads the learner to opt for the simpler alternative and omit the article. We therefore agree with researchers such as Master who have argued that having a first language with articles gives one an advantage in acquiring the articles of the second language due to positive transfer whereas lack of an article leads to interference from the first language.

c) Dholuo interrogative structure is transferred to the pupils' interlanguage. This is because whenever movement occurs in Dholuo, other operations are involved such as clefting, deletion of *en* and introduction of *ma* as in the example below:

En nga ma ne onyisi wachno?

This makes the *in situ* form the default interrogative structure. Pupils especially at lower levels often leave the question word *in situ*- a form which if not in echo questions is ungrammatical. There are a number of questions found in the data in which the question phrase is not moved. However, the cases found mostly involved pupils from standard 6 leading us to the conclusion that it mostly affects pupils who have not thoroughly mastered the *wh-* construction. As one gets more exposed to the second language, the problem gets sorted out. It is my supposition that since Dholuo also allows full movement of the question word from the object position in the deep structure to the sentence initial position in the surface structure, positive transfer occurs. This probably explains the relatively bigger percentage of standard six learners with apparent cases of transfer

d) The complexity of English prepositions leads to transfer from Dholuo.

As explained in the report, the English preposition is very difficult to master especially for the second language user. We found that in Dholuo, a particle such as *gi* stands for a number of prepositions such as *by*, *for*, *with*; and *e* stands for *in*, *at*, and *on*. The learner erroneously transfers his first language structure of prepositions and ends up with an ungrammatical

sentence. In some cases the Dholuo equivalent has no preposition while in English, a preposition is mandatory. The learner transfers his first language structure ending up with a missing preposition in the interlanguage. In some cases, the Dholuo preposition differs from the English preposition. We found translations of the Dholuo preposition being used instead of the English one. These show a clear case of transfer of the structure of Dholuo syntax to English produced by learners.

Teachers should use situational learning approaches so as to minimize teaching the second language in the context of the first language. Less contact with the target language is one factor that makes interference so hard to deal with. Furthermore, situational learning will make learning the second language natural and more real for the learner. This will minimize the impact of transfer.

Further research needs to be done on the area of interference so as to find out to what extent it affects learning and which features are most affected. At the moment, it is not clear whether some errors are caused by transfer or the learning process.

Features that are more difficult to acquire such as articles and prepositions need to be isolated and taught intensively. For such features, they should use methods that can give results instead of being immersed in the rest of the curriculum yet they need special attention.

2. The target language is also a major source of error.

a) Articles

Article overuse that is using the definite or the indefinite article instead of the zero article was prevalent in the data. There were 9 errors out of 19 involving definite and indefinite articles used instead of the zero article. These were blamed on overgeneralization of target language rules by learners who have acquired the rule but are still not versed with the exceptions to the rules. In some cases, the zero article appear not to have been mastered by the learner so erroneously applied the article.

In one instance, a learner who appeared to have mastered the indefinite article still misapplied it owing to confusion with the orthography of a word. This calls for more

exposure to the second language and more opportunities for practice with the newly acquired features.

b) Passives

There were learners who appear to have acquired the use of passives extended its use to unaccusatives. Passivization of unaccusatives led to ungrammatical sentences. Misapplication of the rule is a form of faulty overgeneralization that shows a lack of in-depth acquisition of the rule.

c) Prepositions

There were found cases in the data in which prepositions were used which had no origin in both the first and second languages.

Example: *The men in a uniform were chasing at him

The source was not outright clear but they were more likely to have been misselection of the prepositions or a communication strategy based error. English prepositions are many and overlapping and need to have a lot of time dedicated to teaching them. Teaching techniques also need to take into account not only the structure but also the pragmatic functions of the features

d) The huge number of errors shows that the pupils are still at a lower stage of the interlanguage. This lower stage could be because of environmental factors such as lack of properly qualified teachers, few teachers, lack of adequate books, lack of good models etc. teachers therefore need to guard against fossilization by putting the learning process in context to make it relevant and putting more emphasis on communicative abilities.

e) More research needs to be done on the area of errors and interference. This research did not cover a wide enough area yet Dholuo is spoken in a much wider area. Its interaction with English in a variety of contexts needs to be researched and the results compared so as to improve learning of both languages.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This is the concluding chapter and here, the findings of the study are summarized.

Recommendations for further study on the topic of Dholuo transfer and influence in general is also made as this is by no means a conclusive research yet we have merely scratched at the surface. A general conclusion is also given in this chapter.

5.1 Summary

The research was on interlanguage analysis of Dholuo structural influence on the interlanguage of primary school pupils of Pala Zone in Homa Bay County. The objectives of the study were:

1. To establish the role of Dholuo transfer on the learning of wh- interrogative constructions.
2. To investigate if the lack of articles affects its acquisition in English.
3. To investigate the transfer of Dholuo pseudo- passive constructions in the acquisition of English passives.
4. To investigate the role of Dholuo transfer in the acquisition of English prepositions

The research hypotheses in line with the objectives were:

1. Dholuo interrogative structure is transferred during the acquisition of the English interrogative constructions.
2. Lack of articles in Dholuo causes its absence in the interlanguage of English learners whose first language is Dholuo.
3. Dholuo pseudo- passive is transferred to the interlanguage of primary school learners whose first language is Dholuo.
4. Dholuo prepositions are transferred to the interlanguage of primary school pupils

5.2 Conclusions.

The study was done to test the above objectives and hypotheses using interlanguage theory. In chapter two, we gave a typology of the errors we found during data collection and put them into groups of grammatical areas. In chapter three, we analyzed the errors, their sources and the possible reasons for their transfer. It was shown that the form of the pseudo-passive leads to transfer. It was also shown that the lack of articles in Dholuo leads to omission of the same in pupils writing alongside other errors. Dholuo interrogative structure both involves movement and remains in situ. This leads to both options being available for learners leading to errors in pupils writing and speech. The relatively fewer Dholuo prepositions as compared to English leads to transfer to the interlanguage leading to errors. Other syntactic errors were also discussed and found to be originating from the target language as well as the communication strategies applied by learners trying to cope with interlanguage input.

5.3 Recommendations

Not all aspects of Dholuo syntax were studied. Syntax is a wide area that overlaps with morphology, semantics and other levels. Further research is recommended not only on these and other areas of syntax but also on other levels and how they interact with Dholuo.

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