

Aspects of the Syntax of Modification of Open Class Items in English and Anaang Languages: A Creative Analysis

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Abstract

This work focuses attention on Aspects of the Syntax of Modification of Open Class Elements in English and Anaang carried out from the view point of Creative Analysis. It discusses the syntactic issues and tries to account for possible difficulties and departures arising from dissimilarities or want of correspondences where such element is markedly absent in Anaang. The purpose was to establish a relationship between the modification systems of the open class items of English and Anaang languages. To achieve this purpose, one hundred Anaang speakers of English from the eight major local government areas where Anaang is spoken in Akwa Ibom State were selected by a stratified random sampling technique and studied. Thirty of the informants were from secondary schools, ten from Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, ten from Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, twenty each from the University of Uyo, Uyo and Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden and ten from Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, Uyo. These respondents were required to write freely on a given essay topic which ranged from narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative. The essays were analysed on the rank scale of syntactic structures of the English language. The results show that most subjects have little or no difficulty in identifying nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives modifiers in the two languages except in few instances. The study therefore, shows some similarities as well as differences, one of which is because Anaang language is an agglutinating language while English is not. It was concluded that their good performance in the modification of the open class items especially in Anaang language is expected and is of course unavoidable since they are Anaang speakers.

Key words: Syntax of Modification, Anaang languages, Pattern modification, Akwa Ibom State

Introduction

Language is a learned, shared and articulatory system of vocal symbols through which human beings in the same speech community interact and hence, communicate

Black boy this is child my (variation in word order)

In the above example, **this black boy** is the noun phrase which constitutes the headword that occupies the subjective position of the sentence. The researchers of this work wish that the noun phrase in Anaang language, whether it occupies the **subject** or **object** position, contains the main noun which is surrounded by modifier, which usually come after the word (Enang, E. 2023b). Let us look at these other noun phrases (underlined) as in the following sentences:

- 3a. **Mr. Johnson marries an extremely beautiful woman.** (Object position) Or **An extremely beautiful woman is married by Mr. Johnson.** (Subject position).
- 3b. *Ete Johnson ado akpatureujai iban.* (Object position). Or *Akpatureujai iban ke Ete Johnson ado.* (Subject position).
- 4a. **The book seller is a very huge man.** (Object position)
- 4b. *Agwoanyamngwed ade ade eka ukrong ukrong iden.* (Object position)
- 5a. *Iwuo ufan ade ade aben iwuo aben eku or iwuo ugwomoeto.* (Object position)
- 5b. **That boy carries an extra large head.** (Object position).
- 6a. *Udobong abop atai ekamba ngwo nda ufok.* (Object position).
- 6b. **Udobong builds a remarkably big house.** (Object position).

As can be seen from the above instances, the difference in the word order of the two languages- English and Anaang poses a serious morpho-syntax related problems to an Anaang learner of English in identifying correctly the modifiers in English mostly where the type of noun phrase, whether in the subject or object positions, is a complex one (Enang, 2023), (Urujzian, V. (2018).

Consequent upon the above explications by Enang, E, Urujzian, V. and Udoka, S. (2013) and Okono, U. M. (2020), “the differences and similarities of the syntactic structure of the two languages- English and Anaang, the research work has as its objectives the realization of the following”:

- (i) exploring some aspects of open-class modification in English and Anaang sentences.
- (ii) examining the open-class classification in both English and Anaang languages.
- (iii) identifying the modifier elements and the order of modification of the two languages.
- (iv) sorting out features of similarities and differences in open-class modification and accounting for them.
- (v) investigating to determine the extent to which the difference within and across the open-classes constitute learning problems for Anaang learner of English.
- (vi) examining whether the similarities facilitate the learning of open-class items in English by Anaang learner of English. This work will be examined within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar Model. This is because the modification of open-class elements in Anaang Language can be best described in context rather than in its individual words, (Okono, U. M. 2020).

On the Term: The Structure of Open Class Modification in English

According to Enang, E. & Urujzian, V. (2012). cited in Enang (2017)

Open class elements are items in a given language which combine easily with each other in the structure of a given utterance... it is commonly known that practically, all

nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs can undergo various forms of inflectional changes- additions and modifications to reflect various conditions- possession, plurality, time and nature of reference, among others.

The sources offer the following instances:

7. **Imaobong reads carefully.**

(*noun + verb + adverb*)

8. **Enobong is industrious.**

(*noun + verb + adjective*)

9. **Iniobong is a budding engineer.**

(*noun + verb + nonspecific modifier + adjective + noun*)

On their parts, Enang (2017) and Oluikpe (1975), say that structures of modification are those modifiers derived from embedded sentences. The sources also cited some examples with English sentences and noted that there are two types of those structures. The first are post-modifiers that are characterized by relative clauses. The sources go ahead to provide the following examples, which are underlined.

10. **Teachers who work hard are seldom promoted.** 11. **The man who was standing there is intelligent.** 12. **The goods that were ordered have arrived.**

The second types, according to Enang, E, Urujzian, V. and Udoka, S. (2013) are pre-modifiers marked by attributive adjectives. They are usually derived by adjective shift transformation from relative clause. Examples: “good, kind, generous, tall, dancing, laughing, crying, retired, wanted”. He discussed each of these structures of modification beginning with pre-modifiers referred to as relativization and notes that those relativized structures are derived from embedded sentences and adds that the major contrast between the two languages is that English relativized structures are marked by a feature transfer rule not found in Igbo, a next door neighbouring language to Anaang with the same experience. According to Enang (2017), the feature transfer rule:

Wh (w + human)	(who, that)	(N- human)	(which, that)
(N + place)	(where)	(N + Time)	(when)

The other major contrast is that English distinguishes between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. The major differences between the two forms are:

- (i) Restrictive relative clauses delimit their antecedent; non-restrictive relative clauses complement their antecedent
- (ii) Non-restrictive relative clauses are marked by commas, whereas restrictive relative clauses are not.
- (iii) Only non-restrictive relative clause can modify a proper noun.
- (iv) Non-restriction relative clause can only have the pronouns 'who' (for human) or 'which' (for non-human), whereas, restrictive clause tolerates “who” (for human), 'which' (for non-human), and 'that' (for either). The restrictive relative clause is a form of relative clause often found and used in Anaang language. There are two structures underlying relative clauses in Anaang: these are the subject and object relative clauses, Urujzian, V. (2018). The subject relative clauses are those whose verbs immediately follow the relative marker so that

the subject of embedded sentence becomes deleted by equi-NP deletion rule. In addition, Tone rule applies and by the Tone rule, all segments dominated by auxiliary and the verb take a step tone (Utin, I. 2016) and (Edenowo T. Enang, Vero-Ekpris Gladstone Urujzian And Susanna Timkamauduo Udoka 2013).

On the other hand, object relative clauses are those whose relativized noun phrase may either be a time/place or non time/place noun phrase as in the following examples:

13. *Anye, mmajib ebodami nkedebe.* He stole **the goat I bought.**
14. *Alice ama adia afere angketeme mkpong.* **Alice ate the soup I cooked yesterday.**

Urujzian, V. (2018) while collaborating Oluikpe (1975) and Enang, E. (2023) further noted that if on the other, the relativized noun phrase is a time/place noun, the noun phrase is shifted to the initial position of the embedded sentence where it becomes either 'itie' or 'nde' (**place**) depending on the nature of the noun phrase as in:

14. Ubong akeka nnana akam kende or itie nte nyie agwo.

Ubong went for a tarry night **where he had somebody.**

The researchers of this work have also discovered that one of the reasons for the bulk of the wordiness or verbosity of the usage pattern of most Anaang learners of English is traceable to the markedly absence of pronoun relative clauses in Anaang language, hence, the over use of reducible relative clauses, Okono, U. M. (2023). Secondly, because of the paucity of adjectives in most background languages (L1) in Nigeria (Anaang inclusive), an Anaang learner of English fails to exploit the inventory of adjectives in L2, a result of which is vagueness of expressions where precision or brevity is required because he is heavily influenced by L1 devices. Therefore, structures of modification that are not found in the first language repertoire are marginally used which results in ambiguous and monotonous expressions or structures (Utin, I. 2016) cited in Enang, E. (2023).

Structure or Pattern of Modification with Annang Nouns

A noun modifier is a word which cannot be used alone in the minimal noun phrase. An Anaang noun phrase normally takes any of the following: a noun, a pronoun, a noun modified by determiner, a noun modified by an adjective, a noun modified by another noun, an adjective with a determiner and or a relative clause as opined by (Urujzian, V. (2018)).

Like English, Anaang adjective modifiers of nouns always precede the noun they modify as in:

<i>Etokagwo,</i>	<i>Ekambaufok,</i>	<i>Iliokagwonwan,</i>
Good person,	Big house,	Bad woman,
<i>Etiagwonwan,</i>	<i>Ujai or Ekambaiban,</i>	<i>Anwenwen eto</i>
Good woman	Beautiful or big woman.	Black tree

There are very few instances where Anaang adjectives come after the nouns they modify and this pattern has to be applied with adequate care as any careless presentation will affect grammaticality (Enang, E. & Urujzian, V. (2012).. Let us look

at these two instances in each case:

Ibanujai = *Ujaiiban*,

Woman of beauty = beautiful woman

Afumeto = *Eto afum* = **Wind breaker**

Agwouko = *ukoagwo*,

Man of gallant = gallant man

Pattern of Modification with Annang and English Nouns

Urujzian, V. (2018) identified two major modifiers outside determiners and adjectives, that pattern with English nouns. These are the specific modifier with '**the**' as an exponent while the other is the non-specific modifier with '**a**' and '**an**' as exponents. They are also sometimes referred to as articles. These two types of modifier elements pattern freely with

(i) Common Nouns as in:

(a) The man, the book, the celebration. (b) A man, a book, a celebration. (c) An egg, an orange, an answer.

(ii) Collective Nouns share a similar characteristic of patterning with modifier elements as in:

(a) The family, the congregation, *the crowd*. (b) **A family** (*ekpok*), **a congregation** (*ijoho*), **an audience** (*mbonuche mire*).

(iii) Abstract Nouns. With regard to abstract nouns, the specific modifier is the (a) (*ebohoawasi*), **a congregation** (b) (*atuagwo*), **a crowd** (c) **An army** (*Urimekong*), an assembly main partner, for example, **the beauty, the brilliance, the happiness**, the annoyance, etc.

From the above explications on the modification of English nouns, it is fully established that most adjectives as modifiers of nouns in English and Annang come before the nouns they modify, for instance: *Enyongideen* = **tall** man, *Etiiban* = **good** woman. Some other examples of determiners that fall within the same group are: **a am, 'this'**, *akemi*, **'my'**, *akemo*, **'his/hers'**, *akoo*, **'those'**, *ade*, **'the'**. Others are some qualifiers like *nsogho*, **'some'**, *ibatibat*, **'few'**, *akpaimmo*, **'all'**.

According to Okono, U. M. (2023) "There are instances of some modifiers of a more elaborate group generally referred to as determiners- closed system elements which pattern generally with nouns". There are of three categories: predeterminers- (all, both, half and such), determiners proper- (a, an, the - articles, that, this, those, these- demonstrative, my, our, your, his, her, their - pronouns) and post determiners (other, same such, complete, entire, usual, special). All these determiners (both central and peripheral) pattern with nouns while sensitive ones do same by selecting nouns of particular features Enang, E, Urujzian, V. and Udoka, S. (2013)

Just like the English, Anaang adjectives come before the nouns they modify. Similarities in the areas of numerals, there is also correspondence in both languages eventhough the specific (the) and non-specific (a, an) determiners are entirely lacking in Annang language. It should be noted that for areas that do not have the same pattern of occurrence, the Annang bilinguals are bound encounter problems in the identification of the modifiers in English especially with determiners that are markedly absent in Annang language (Okono, U. M. 2023).

Patterns of Modification with Anaang and English Verbs

According to Igbokwe (2003) cited in Enang, E, Urujzian, V. and Udoka, S. (2013) (2013), “a verb is “a word that can change its form to reflect tense, aspect, voice, person and or number and which can occur as the only element in a minimal predicate of a sentence”. The same sources went further to say that a verb can change its form in relation to changes in time- (*akwo* - **sing**, *amakwo*- **sang**) (*kpa* - **die**, *ammakpa* - **died**). The Anaang verb slot is made up of verb (root/s), suffixes and enclitics. These three items can be monosyllabic or disyllabic with a **C V** structure (Urujzian, V. (2018). However, according to Urujzian, V. G. (2012):

The verb can be used as an obligatory element in a verbal slot while the suffix and the enclitics cannot be used as the only element in the verbal slot. That is to say that suffix and the enclitics can serve a modifier to the verb, the enclitics would occur in other places in the verbal slot in addition with or after non-verbs. Suffixes in Anaang are mainly two: Derivational and Inflectional. Derivational are used mainly as meaning modifiers since they are capable of extending the meaning of the verbs to which they are affixed.

The items below further support the position of the articulation in the above extract.

15. Ami meka Calabar *akang ked*. I have been to Calabar *once .ked (once)*, here, the suffix *ked* is derived from the root *akang*, which is mainly the carrier of the meaning in the sentence. The inflectional suffixes on the other hand help with or without other elements to mark the different aspects or verb forms (Enang, E. & Urujzian, V. (2012).. For instance, they may act as signals to show which verbs form is being used without being an important part of it.

On their own, auxiliaries in Anaang serve as meaning modifying verbs that can belong to close or open class items. In Anaang , the auxiliaries are hardly used alone just as it is with the English auxiliaries (Urujzian, V.G. 2012). The researchers of this work have identified six different auxiliaries in Anaang. These are:

- (1) Esok- / Ela-, Eeli-, Ema- (**shall / will, are, have**),
16. *Esukeli*. **They are coming.** *Ammo elaeli*. **They will/shall come.**
Eeli-gwuo. **They have arrived.** *Ima ili-gwo* . **We have arrived.**
- (2) *Nsook-* / *Nla-Mme-*, *Mma-* (**Shall / will, am, have**),
17. *Nsook nli*. **I will/shall come.** *Nla li*. **I will/shall come.**
Mme li gwo. **I am arriving.** *Mmali*. **I have come**
- (3) *Isok-* / *Ila-*, *Immi-*, *Imma-* (**We shall / will, are, have**):
18. *Isook ili*. **We will/shall come.** *Ila ili*. **We will/shall come.**
Immi li gwo **We are here.** *Imma ili*. **We have come.**

It is of interest to note that most auxiliaries in Anaang are meaning modifying verbs that belong to the close items. Unlike the English auxiliary verbs, they (Anaang language) auxiliary verbs are used in compulsory combination with a verbal derivative that makes them complete, inseparable and meaningful (Enang, E. & Urujzian, V. (2012)..

Patterns of Modification of English with Anaang Adjectives

Udondata (2006), established that Anaang adjectives can appear in different forms. The source has identified four categories of adjectives in Anaang as follows:

- (I) One word adjectives as in: *Iriokajen*, “**bad** child”, *Ujainwaan*, “**beautiful** wife”, *Ekambaikure*, “**big** compound”, *Imukagwo*, “**short** person”.
- (ii) a group of words can serve as an adjective in Anaang just like their English counterparts as in: *arionghongwedetokajen*, “**brilliant** child”, *anwana idem agwo*, “**struggling** man”, *sanghanaghamaabaikpa*, “**wayward** girl”, *agwoechidmbom*, “**kindhearted** person”.
- (iii) Reduplicated words as adjectives: *Nyiongyiongusung*, “**far** distance”, *enyongenyongiden* “**tall man**”, *Mfonmfoniban*, “**pretty** woman”, *Ndorondoroibok*, “**bitter** medicines”.
- (iv) Some nouns rankshift to function as adjectives just as the two nouns are placed side by side (juxtaposed) so that now serves as adjectives giving quality to the other noun as in: *Etoafum*, “**wind breaker**”, *akememmire*, “**game box**”, *Eto irok*, “**harvest stick**”, *agwo ufen*, “**suffering man**”.

Patterns of Modification of English and Annang Adverbs

Anaang adverb or adverbial like its English counterparts modify parts of speech like: adjectives, verbs, noun phrases, prepositional phrases and determiners (Enang, E. & Urujzian, V. (2012). Let us look at the sentences below:

19. *Uduak ase abangha akang ajiid*. Uduak comes our house **quite often**.
20. *Etim ake gwed mkpo ade iriokiriok*. Etim wrote it **badly**.
21. *Dan agwaad ukwak ami usok usok*. Dan, ride this bicycle **slowly**
22. *Alice drives her car extremely gently*. Alice agwaad amuto ammo **ataak usok usok**.

From the above examples, it has been shown that it is possible for the adverbs of the two languages: Anaang and English to perform similar functions and occupy the grammatically recognized three positions, the initial, medial and the final in sentences Urujzian, V. G. (2012).

Conclusion

This paper studied aspects of the syntax of modification of the open class elements in English and Anaang languages. It has taken time to sort out open class items in both languages and has carefully accounted for the modifiers of the elements on syntactic rank scale. The elements selected and used for the aspects of modification were the nouns, verbs, adjectives and the adverbs. From the view point similarities, the study has revealed that the positions occupied by these elements are characteristic of the two languages and so is centripetal in the syntax of the two languages (Urujzian, V.G.2012).. On the other hand, dissimilarities which are not much has also been sorted out and accounted for. From the foregoing therefore, the researchers have noted that the extent to which the differences within and across the open classes constitute little or no learning problems for the Anaang learners of English. It is therefore, concluded that all the affected learners should first of all master the differences in the structural patterns of the two languages to avoid carrying the knowledge of the syntactic of the

background language (Anaang) to that of English.

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