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ANALYZING LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS BASED ON SELECTED TRANSFORMATIONAL GENERATIVE GRAMMAR THEORETICAL ISSUES

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Abstract
Every language should give adequate attention to these varying facets: Phonology, Syntax, Semantics and Morphology. A fastidious trend of scholarly writings have characterized syntactic considerations of language over the years, resulting in a good number of syntactic theories .Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) as a theory has advanced the consideration of syntactic structures, to establish grammaticality, acceptability and disambiguity, using Transformations. In ascertaining these ideas, theoretical transformations were applied to selected data; a newspaper editorial headline: "Towards Enduring Peace in the Niger Delta" ;to assess the linguistic roles of transformations in language and communication .It was discovered that the elements of the Transformational Generative Grammar and its transformational rules can be applied to linguistic entities, as well as all forms of printed materials such as newspaper and novels.

Résumé

Chaque langue devrait accorder une attention adéquate à ces facettes différentes : phonologie, syntaxe, sémantique et morphologie. Une tendance fastidieuse des écrits scientifiques a caractérisé des considérations syntaxiques de la langue au fil des années, ce qui entraîne un bon nombre de théories syntaxiques. La grammaire générative transformationnelle, en tant que théorie, a avancé l'examen des structures syntaxiques, pour établir la grammaticalité, l'acceptabilité et la désambiguïté , en utilisant des transformations . Pour déterminer ces idées, des transformations théoriques ont été appliquées aux données sélectionnées; au titre éditorial d'un journal: «Vers une paix durable dans la région Niger Delta " , en vue d'évaluer les rôles linguistiques des transformations dans la langue et dans la communication. Il a été découvert que les éléments de la grammaire générative transformationnelle et ses règles de transformation peuvent être appliquées à des entités linguistiques, ainsi qu'à toutes formes de documents imprimés telles que les journaux et les romans .

Introduction

Every language has its patterns and rules that govern and determine its use. These rules and patterns of language, referred to as the Grammar of the language, help the user to communicate in that language.

> Crystal in Otagburuagu(*et al* ,1) opines that Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others, use language. It can help foster precision ,detect ambiguity ,and exploit the richness of expression available in English.

Syntax is the level of grammar which examines the structural organisation of meaningful units of a language into a combinational sequence .It is also the study of the interrelationships between elements of sentence structure, and the rules governing the arrangement of sentences in sequences. Yule defines Syntax as the structure and ordering of components within a sentence ,.....what is technically known as the syntax of a language (100).In the same vein, Crystal defines Syntax as the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language.(471). Stork also sees Syntax as the area of linguistic description which is concerned with the way in which words are put together in larger units such as a sentence. (19).

Since Syntax is about the rules that govern correct and grammatically accepted constructions, default or misappropriation of these rules would definitely result in erroneous constructions. The analysis of a syntactic structure takes account of the following factors: the order in which words occur, how they combine to form larger units, syntactic classes to which the words belong, and the specifically syntactic relations amongst the words or other units, such as the relations referred to by the label subject and modifier. These factors go hand in hand to ensure appropriate syntactic structure, and anything short of their proper application, depicts errors (Wikipedia,2016).

Syntax and Language Analysis

The analysis of language from a syntactic dimension was a sharp departure from the erstwhile philosophical postulations of language in the era of the Traditional or Classical Grammarians. Notable scholars in this approach include Plato, Aristotle and others.

According to Anagbogu *et al* ‘’The traditional Grammarians did not progress beyond the definition of grammatical forms.....It limited sentential analysis to the division of subject and Predicate.(56). Otagburuagu *et al,* further opined that the traditional Grammarians approached language from a prescriptive point of view; with strong emphasis on the application of rules as they apply to Greek and Latin, relegating other languages to the background. Their point of reference was the written, rather than the spoken form of language (9).

This approach became monotonous and this led to Ferdinand de Saussure’s revolutionary approach called the Structural Grammar. Structuralism or Structural Grammar was founded by Saussure with other notable contributors like Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf.

Anagbogu *et al further* states that Structuralism contends that the position of the traditional Grammarians that a sentence is made up of the subject and the predicate is not enough.....Each of these two parts can further be divided to smaller constituents, depending on the type of structure .....It developed a way of reducing sentences and other structural forms into their different parts (156).

In terms of language usage, this approach also came up with the concept of *La Langue and La Parole* representing language as a concept and its actual use respectively. In addition, the idea of signifier and the signified in language was equally introduced in this approach.

Structuralism also initiated rule formation in the area of Syntax. They believed that every language should be analysed on its own terms because languages vary. This approach disregarded meaning and classified words into parts of speech, according to their forms rather than function. However,

Structuralism could not take care of areas like connotations, contrast, metaphorical utterances, ambiguity in language use and transformations like passivity, use of interrogation etc.

As a result of the short comings of the Structural Grammar, Noam Chomsky developed another approach to the syntactic analysis of grammatical elements known as Transformational Generative Grammar often referred to as TGG.TGG promoted the universality of language ; with the argument that all languages have specific similarities (core) and differences (peripherals).It talked about the ability of a speaker to generate an infinite number of correct language expressions using transformations .This approach does not make provision for situational variables in language and also based its analysis solely on English language .However, in the area of syntax, TGG is popular for its contribution of rule – reduction in language. Its concept of Competence and Performance gave an insight into the areas of language usage. Nonetheless, in every proposition, there is bound to be criticisms.

TGG was faulted in some aspects of language as cited above, and this gave rise to subsequent theories or approaches of linguistic analysis as it concerns the area of syntax. Theories such as Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar which argued that language use is purely dependent on context; and the Case Grammar developed by Fillmore which saw language as constituting grammatical cases or slots, depending on their functions in a sentence such as agentive, instrumental, dative functions.

Purpose of the study

This paper aims at:

i. Identifying several sentence structures, using transformations.

ii Achieving a fuller understanding of changes in sentence structure

ii. Ascertaining that all sentences have a common origin and similar semantic representation.

iii. Establishing meaning preservation in the use of transformation.

Transformational generative grammar

This is a theory of Grammar derived from the descriptive approach to grammar. This model is a revolutionary system of language analysis that establishes the relationship amongst the various elements of a sentence; and how existing sentences can be transformed into possible related patterns (Otagburuagu et al, 16).For example, a sentence like the mother of the girl is beautiful, is related to the pattern – The girl has a mother; The woman is beautiful.

Transformational Generative Grammar is essentially a device for generating sentences in a language. It generates only the well-formed or grammatically correct sentences since it centres on the ability of the human mind to generate an infinite number of correct sentences using a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), inbuilt in the brain. TGG formulated the idea that learning language is marginally dependent on intelligence and motivation since the child is naturally programmed with a perfect knowledge of the Universal Grammar and a fixed schematism (LAD) which enables him acquire language independently.

Apart from the use of correct sentence structure, TGG analyses the words with reference to its underlying thought (Wikipedia 2016). The Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) promoted the Universality of Language, using defined operations called transformations to produce new sentences from existing ones. Akwanya quotes Katz –Postal Hypothesis on Transformation as meaning preserving in the following sense: If two surface structure derive from exactly the same surface structure and if their derivation differ only in that an optional transformation has applied in one but not in the other, then they must have the same meaning (90).

Emenanjo in Anagbogu *et al, 167* further observed that ‘’Prior to the level of surface structure there are certain changes which takes place whose end –products are the spoken forms. While the changes are taking place, certain lexical items change their syntactic positions; some get deleted, some get substituted while others get added. These pre-surface structure activities form what is called

transformation.'' TGG was able to accommodate certain deficient areas in Structuralism. Areas like connotations, metaphorical utterances, contrast, transformation and meaning. This model has three essential characteristics namely:

- *The meaning or semantic interpretation of a sentence determined from its deep structure.*
- *the pronunciation or phonetic interpretation of a sentence determined from its surface structure.*
- *the role of transformations as seen from converting the semantic level of sentence into the phonetically relevant level.*

However, Chomsky's transformational process can be summarized by **adding**, **deleting**, **moving** and **substituting** of words. These changes in a grammatical constructions are effected through specific rules, called transformational rules. Noam Chomsky contradicted the widely held notion of Structuralism at the time, that every language is unique.

Anagbogu *et* al opined that ''The TGG was propounded to take care of the lapses of the phrase structure grammar. The inspiration of the transformational grammar arises from the observation that it is not always that all the elements that give a sentence its meaning appear at the level of the spoken form. It is argued therefore that a level must be which specifies all the elements that propel the full meaning of a given utterance (162).

Other central ideas attributed to the Transformational Generative Grammar include:

1. **Phrase Structure Rules**: The idea that Grammar consists of phrase structure re-write rules which has two components, basically the noun phrase and verb phrase from which all transformations are made possible (Anagbogu et al, 158).
2. Semantic and phonological representations which refers to of the **deep** structure (meaning) and the **surface** structure(sounds) inherent in language.(Crystal,394)
3. **Universality of Language** which is made possible by an innate device naturally programmed in the individual as a language acquisition device(**LAD**).This implies that in spite of surface

differences ,all human languages have very similar underlying structures in phrases and transformation.(Wikipedia, 2016).

4. **Distinction between Competence and Performance:** The goal of TGG is to capture the tacit (in born)knowledge of the native speaker.(Olanrewaju,34).Whilst Performance refers to the use of language with linguistic errors ,Competence refers to the innate knowledge that allows a speaker to construct grammatical sentences as inherent in the native speaker of a language.
5. **Grammaticality:** TGG places emphasis on the correctness of Grammar. It does not subscribe to possible linguistic errors that may occur in the speech process.(wikipedia,2016)
6. **The concept of Internal language(I-Language) and External language(E-Language):** Every fluent individual in a language community has an Internal language ,which is the innate linguistic knowledge of the individual. The External language is the actual use of this innate language repertoire of the individual to produce a potentially infinite number of correct sentences. E-language is therefore epiphenomenal- resulting from the I- Language.(Wikipedia,2016).

In spite of the criticisms about Transformational Generative Grammar, it is undoubtedly clear that it has contributed significantly to the area of Syntax, especially in the areas of transformations and meaning preservation.. This work therefore tries to analyse the process of transformation in the structure of sentences in relation to meaning. The linguistic theory as propounded by Noam Chomsky will therefore serve as the theoretical foundation for this analysis.

Methodology

The data used for this analysis is *New Waves newspaper* editorial with head line- ‘’Towards Enduring Peace in the Niger Delta’’.

The grammatical construction of this text was analyzed based on the transformations that have been applied to the basic phrase structure of the sentences as formulated by Transformational Generative Grammar. Basic transformations like movement, deletion, insertion and substitution.(Anagbogu et al,170), will be applied to the data. Other consideration will include the impact of both the surface and deep interpretation of the text to establish transformations.

The frequency of occurrence of all the identified types of transformations was represented in tables with the corresponding percentages.

In addition, the percentage breakdown was represented on a statistical chart to achieve an over view of the overall distribution trends of these transformational types as seen in the text.

Analysis of data

The data was analysed based on the types of transformations evident in the text. Below is the summary of the distribution evident in the data analyzed:

Transformations	Frequency Distribution	Average	Sub-type
Movement	**3**	**18.75%**	**Passivity** **Affix-Hopping**
Deletion	**4**	**25.0%**	**Equi-Np deletion** **Dative movement deletion**
Insertion	**6**	**37.s5%**	**Extraposition**
Substitution	**3**	**18.75%**	**Pronominalization**

1. **Movement Transformation**: This is any structural change involving the movement of some elements from their deep structure position to some other position within the sentence.(Anagbogu et al,170). Movement transformation can either be topical (change to an initial position)or extraposed (at the latter position). Example of extraposition is change from active to passive

constructions. Example of Movement transformation include: **Whereas the creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta and the appointment of the Ledum Mitee-led Technical Committee on Niger Delta are pointers to fresh initiatives in tackling the lingering and protracted crisis, consequent matters arising remain.** Paragraph6**.**

What seems to be in contention however is what is what route the path of peace should take...Paragraph 1.

This type of transformation involves movement of the subject to the object **position** in terms of changing an active sentence structure to a passive one.

2. **Deletion**-This involves the elimination of certain linguistic constituent from the deep structure. Forms of deletion include dative, imperative (command),Equi-VP deletion etc. Examples of the deletions found in the data include dative and Equi- Vp deletion respectively. Examples: ‘’**Notwithstanding these initiatives, the budgetary provisions of over N400 billion for armaments in the 2009 budget, while the ministry itself on whose platforms**, **the development of the region lies has less than N100 billion to tackle its assigned portfolio**, **is quite remarkable**’’. Paragraph..7.

Example 2: **Similarly, the continuous onslaught by the Military in the region under the aegis of the Joint Task Force (JTF) has led to great militarization, wide-spread destruction and displacement of whole communities while attacks on oil facilities and collateral state of insecurity has continued. -P8.**

In the above extract from the newspaper, the first sentence example involves a dative type of deletion which is the interchange of position between the direct and the indirect objects; as well as main versus subordinate elements .For example, the phrase, not- withstanding these initiative comes

before the subject- the budgetary positions...which is a transformation from the basic structure of noun phrase + verb phrase =sentence.

In the last sentence example, we find Eqip-VP Deletion type of Transformation, where a verb phrase is deleted because it is identical with another verb or verb phrase with which it is compounded in the same sentence.

In this case, we see a deletion of the verb phrase **has led** in wide-spread destruction, and also before displacement of whole communities, because the use of that phrase in great militarization in that sentence suffices for other identical entities in the sentence.

Interestingly, in spite of these deletions, the sentences still have their meanings preserved, and this is a significant attribute of transformations in TGG.

3. **Insertion:** This is the transformation type that involves the addition of some constituents in the sentence, while retaining the same meaning. Types of insertion include Extaposition, there-insertion, do-support etc.

Examples of insertion in the data are: **.....What seems to be in contention however is what route the path of peace should take for it to be enduring.** Paragraph 1

It is therefore necessary for utmost constraint to be exercised by all interest groups as a way of building confidence and reducing mistrust....P4.

Judging from the two examples of insertion from the data ,one can see that insertions like **however, therefore** which seem to distort the basic sentence structure ,do not affect the meaning of the sentence. instead they help in generating more sentence types ,different from the conventional type which is one of the objectives of transformations.

4. **Substitution**: In this transformation, all kinds of nominal constituents are substituted for pronouns. Example of Substitution in the data include: ...**various shareholders and the interest they stand for...P2.**

Other sentence examples include**: Without holding brief for the govt and those who claim to be freedom fighters.**...Paragraph12.

President Umar Yar Adua has his recognition of **peace in the region**.....paragraph 5.

In this case of substitution, we see the nominal constituents- various shareholders; the freedom fighters and President Yar 'Adua being substituted for t**hey**,**those** and **his** respectively, without the sentences losing their meanings.

Findings

Judging from the above data, it is evident that transformations have enhanced the syntactic considerations of linguistic entities, including printed materials and all genres of language literature**.**

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it has been established that linguistic theories, especially with regards to transformations as propounded by Noam Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar is imperative in syntactic considerations.

TGG was able to accommodate certain deficient areas in Structuralism like handling connotations, metaphorical utterances, contrast, transformation and meaning. It also promoted the Universality of Language using universal principles that cut across all types of language.

Noam Chomsky' s version of the Transformational Grammar introduced in 1957, has undergone a lot of modifications and revisions by linguists over the years, resulting to the emergence of sub -theories to those propounded in Chomsky's book, Syntactic Structures of 1957. These theories include

Standard theory (ST) which states that meaning is complete before transformation starts; and the recognition of deep structure as the sole determinant of meaning.

Extended Standard theory (EST) which recognizes the synergy of the surface and deep structure in the construction of meaning.

Reserved Extended Standard theory,(REST)-which holds the view that meaning can only be determined through face surface structure.

Government and Binding theory (GB)which emphasizes on the different subsets of grammatical construction.

Minimalism- The most recent of the TGG version with its principles of economy of derivation and representation.

Further research can be developed from these new theories of TGG for a more comprehensive and richer syntactic interpretation of linguistic structures.

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