

The Syntax and Semantics of Negative Markers in Idómà and English: A Cross-Linguistic Investigation of Variation and Universals

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Abstract

Negative markers vary across human languages posing significant challenges to linguistic theory and language acquisition. Specifically, Idómà and English display distinct differences in their negative marking systems, with implications for cross-linguistic teaching and learning. Existing studies focused mainly on the comparison of English and major Nigerian indigenous languages, neglecting Idómà, being a minority and an understudied language. This paper, therefore, investigates the syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idómà and English languages, identifying the similarities and differences. Although, Idómà and English belong to different language families, they share areas of convergence and divergence. The study adopted the Chomskyan theory. Principles and Parameters Theory as an advanced theory of universal grammar explains that languages are different in their parameters but similar in their principles. English language data was obtained from English grammar texts relevant to the study whereas Idómà language data was collected purposively from competent native bilinguals. The Otúkpò dialect of Idómà was adopted being the central and standard dialect. Findings show that Idómà and English share a similar SVO word order but differ in negative constructions. Idómà places its negative marker after the verb whereas English usually places its negative markers before the main verb. Basically, in negative constructions, Idómà uses a SVONeg word order whereas English uses a SNegVO word order. Other negative markers or affixes are morphologically present in English but differ in Idómà. These differences are crucial and require critical attention for L2 learners to avoid ungrammaticality.

Keywords: Syntax, Semantics, Negative makers, variation, Universals



1. Introduction

Negative construction is a fundamental idea in human language that allows speakers to communicate denial, refusal and disagreement. Negative makers or linguistic features used to express negations are essential parts of language structures and meanings. Particularly in the study of sentence structures and meanings, negative markers are essential parts (words or morphemes) that indicate negations (sentential, semantic or constituent negations). Despite the significance, negative makers have received little or no attention in the study of Nigerian languages such as Idómà language, being a minority and an understudied language.

Idómà, a Nigerian language, is part of the Niger-Congo language family, specifically, the Benue-Congo branch. Its syntax and semantics are formed by its distinct cultural and historical environment, and they differ greatly from those of European languages like English. English, a Germanic language, has a well-documented negation system or negative constructions with negative markers (words: not, no, never, none), (prefix: un-, non-, anti-) or (suffix: -less, -free), etc. playing important roles in its semantics and syntax. The use of negative markers cut across both languages but differs in nature and distribution. This is in line with the belief of Chomsky in his theory of universal grammar that all human languages have the same set of principles that cut across but, they may be distinct with respect to certain variables and this is called parameters.

English and Idómà belong to different language families. Idómà is the second lingua franca spoken in Benue State and it belongs to the Idomoid language family, which is part of the Benue-Congo language family. Umaru (2016:3) states that Idómà is primarily spoken by the Idómà people living in Benue State. According to National Population Commission (2006 census), Benue State has a population of 4,253,641. Idómà speakers numbered 1,307,647 at the time. The Idómà language consists of dialects such as Agatu, Edumoga, Otúkpò, Otukpa, Orokam, Akpa, Agila, Utonkon, Etilo, and Iyala. The Otúkpò dialect of Idómà was adopted for this study being the central dialect recognized and widely spoken as the standard dialect.

English is an Indo-European language. It is a West Germanic language descended from Anglo-Frisian languages spoken in numerous places throughout the world. Kachru (1997) suggests three circles to partition the English-speaking globe. He discusses the historical context of English, the language's position, and its functions in diverse places. According to Kachru, the Inner Circle includes native English-speaking countries such as England, the United States, and Canada. The Outer Circle includes former colonies or post-colonial speaking countries such as India, Ghana, and Nigeria, followed by the Expanding Circle, which includes countries such as China, Japan, and Turkey where English is becoming an important language in business, science, technology, and education. English has assumed a global status as a result of its widespread usage by many countries. The English language is the first language in some countries while other countries use it as a second language or as a foreign language. In the world today, the English language is regarded as a major lingua franca of international communication transcending geographical boundaries, spoken worldwide and serving as the primary language of science, technology, business, law, media, education, etc. Awonusi (1994) concludes that in terms of speaker's population, it is noted to come after Chinese and that a fair estimate put the



number of English speakers between 400 and 700 million. Odebunmi (2001) asserts that English language like most other languages performs transactional and interactional roles. Today, English has become the language of global tool for global understanding and its impact is shaping the global culture, identity and language in the world. In Nigeria, for instance it is the language of government, commerce, politics, education, mass media, law, and as medium of instruction in schools especially in secondary and tertiary institutions.

Contrastive analysis (CA) began with Robert Lado's work in 1957. Lado (1957) identifies contrastive analysis as a significant concept in second language acquisition process. CA is a systematic study of two or more languages to identify their structural differences and similarities. CA aims at comparing and establishing the convergence and divergence, focusing on the differences. This approach is significant in the fields of second language acquisition because it explicate the features of a target language, establish language genealogies and for the purpose of predicting language difficulties. Since, English and Idòmà languages belong to two distinct language families, it is therefore, important to compare syntax and semantic of negative markers in the two languages in order to establish the convergence and divergence in line with the universal grammar. Previous studies have compared English and major Nigerian languages. This contrastive analysis of negative makers in Idòmà and English languages offers essential insights to negative constructions, explores the universal and language-specific aspects of negations in the two languages.

Previous Studies

Some linguistic scholars have compared English and major languages in line with contrastive analysis thereby establishing the principles and parameters in human languages. Onmoke (2016) worked on parametric variation of personal pronouns in English and Ebira languages. The study revealed that despite the common ground of pronouns in English and Ebira, there are striking differences between the nature and operation of Ebira personal pronouns and those of English personal pronouns. Similarly, Kwokwo (2017) investigated the universal syntactic head parametric variation in English and Izon Languages. He submitted that English is a head-initial language while Izon, being an SOV language and minus some exceptions, is generally a head-final language. Ojo and Omolaiye (2020) examined a comparative investigation of English and Okpameri inflectional morphemes. They conclude that the realisation of inflectional morphemes in words varies in languages. For instance, English and Okpameri are morphologically marked for plural but their realisations in words differ.

Statement of the Problem

Negative markers exist in human languages but differ in nature and distribution. The variation of these markers across languages, pose a significant challenge to linguistic theory and language acquisition. Idòmà language is spoken in Nigeria and English as a global lingua franca display distinct differences in their negative marking systems with implications for cross-linguistic pedagogy. Previous studies have focused mainly on the comparison of English and major Nigerian indigenous languages, with little or no attention given to Idòmà, being a minority and an understudied language. Therefore, a comprehensive contrastive investigation of the syntax



and semantics of negative markers in Idòmà and English is overdue as it is needed to establish the principles and parameters that govern their usage, and to provide insights into the development of more effective language teaching methods and linguistic theories that can account for the universal and language-specific properties of negation in both languages which is crucial for L2 learners to avoid ungrammaticality.

Aim and Objectives

The study aims to examine a comprehensive cross-linguistic investigation of the syntax and semantics of negative markers between Idòmà and English languages and to provide insights into both the variation and universals that exist in the two different languages. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. to identify and describe the nature of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages
2. to analyse the syntactic and semantic properties of negative markers in both languages.
3. to establish the points of convergence and divergence of negative markers between Idòmà and English languages and
4. to suggest solution to difficult areas of negative markers between Idòmà and English languages for L2 learners.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages?
2. How are the syntactic and semantic properties of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages expressed?
3. Are there points of convergence and divergence of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages
4. Is there solution to difficult areas of negative markers between Idòmà and English languages for L2 learners?

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages. Syntax of Idòmà and English languages is examined to identify the nature and position of negative markers in both languages. Specifically, Otúkpò dialect of Idòmà language and the British English (BrE) variety are adopted for the purpose of this study in line with the establishment of universal grammar.

Significance of the Study

This study provides insights into the syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages. It advances language teaching, learning, cross-linguistic communication, natural language processing and cognition. The study also contributes to the development of linguistic theories, such as universal grammar and the syntax-semantics interface, by identifying universals and language-specific features of negative markers. The findings shed light on how



learners acquire the syntax and semantics of negative markers, word order, convergence and divergence in Idòmà and English languages. Its findings have pedagogical implications for teaching English and Idòmà, enabling language instructors to design more effective curricula and materials. The study serves as a notable addition to scholarly work and as a documentation of Idòmà language and it preserves the endangered language from adulteration, intrusion and extinction.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design and contrastive analysis of data gathered from the two distinct and different languages. Idòmà language data was gathered through structured questionnaire and oral interview from competent native speakers who are bilinguals in Idòmà and English languages. Purposive sampling was adopted and the respondents translated the words and structures from English language to Idòmà language in natural language to guide against instances of interference and adulteration. The native speakers were selected from Otúkpò because Otúkpò dialect is central and generally accepted as formal medium of communication and instruction among the people. English language data was obtained from English grammar texts: *Aspects of Chomskyan Grammar* by Lamidi (2008) and *A Contemporary Functional Grammar of English* by Ojo (2011). Secondary method was adopted at the time of carrying out this study because native speakers were not available to supply primary data. The researcher selected these texts because they were published empirical studies which are relevant to syntax and semantics of the English language which are works of researchers in the field of grammar. The data collected were analysed and contrasted in line with principles and parameters theory to establish the area of convergence and divergence in Idòmà and English languages.

3. Theoretical framework

This study adopted the Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT) also known as Government and Binding Theory. PPT was developed within the Universal Grammar (UG) and as a theory of UG, it consists all the principles and parameters that are common to all natural languages. UG, a theoretical concept proposed by Noam Chomsky in (1986), describes the human innate ability to acquire a language. Chomsky (1986:3) defines UG as the system of categories, mechanisms, and constraints shared by all human languages and considered to be innate. Similarly, Chomsky (1995:131) believes that while human languages appear to be different, they share some fundamental similarities or underlying commonalities, which are due to innate principles unique to language: that deep down, there is only one human language. UG views human languages as a whole and innate, that is, all human languages are characterised by Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which explains that human brain contains an innate mental grammar or mechanism that helps humans to acquire language. LAD is conceived to be a biological endowment of all normal human beings that enables them to acquire any language in their immediate environment. That means normal human beings are born with the instinct or 'innate facility' for acquiring language. UG spells out the characteristics of all natural languages in PPT. It sets the linguistic principles and features common to all human languages. It spells out two central components that characterize all natural or human languages. The principles encapsulate the elements or features that are common to all languages while the parameters capture the features or the elements that



behave differently in each language due to their peculiarity. The periphery is the parametric variation among languages and this study is set to examine the variation of syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idómà and English, identifying the similarities and differences.

PPT posits that a large portion of the grammar of any particular language is common to all languages. It describes syntax by using principles and parameters. The principles are universal while the parameters are language-specific. PPT explains the similarities and variations between natural languages which are determined by the parameterised choices that languages make in different dimensions include, head directionality, word order, Null-subject or pro-drop parameter, wh-parameter, negative makers, etc. Therefore, adopting the framework of PPT in this study provides insights into the parametric variation of negative markers in the two different languages. The framework was adopted to analyse negative markers in English and Idómà languages by examining how the parameters of negative markers are set in each language.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Word order is a general term used to refer to the arrangement of words in a given linguistic structure to convey meaning. It is the order of the syntactic constituents of a language. Words may be strung together differently in languages which result in different word order. Word order in human language affects sentence meaning, emphasis and grammaticality. Greenberg (1966:76) cited in Sanusi & Oyewole (2019) identifies the first three word orders (SVO, SOV and VSO) as the most commonly found among human languages. Lamidi (2011) asserts that languages have specific word order. He submits that English and Yoruba languages have SVO sentence pattern, while Izon language has SOV sentence pattern.

	S	V	O
English:	Adam	loved	Eve.
Yorùbá:	Ade	re	ata.
	Ade	harvest	pepper.
	‘Ade	harvested	pepper’.

	S	O	V
Izon:	Okoro	oboribei	batei.
	Okoro	goat	kill.



‘Okoro killed a goat’.

(Lamidi 2011:8).

Likewise, Okwokwo (2017) asserts that Izon has a SOV word order. Word order can substantially determine the meaning of a sentence and changing the order of words can equally affect meaning.

Word Order in Idómà

Umaru (2016) and Sanusi & Oyewole (2019) assert that the word order in Idómà is essentially SVO. What this means is that Idómà sentence pattern is SVO (subject - verb - object); the subject is usually preceded by the verb, and the verb is followed by the object in most cases. This can be exemplified as in the following sentences:

1a. Idómà:	Èném	hè	òlọ
English:	my mother	cook	soup
	S	V	O
	‘my mother cooked soup’		
b. Idómà:	Òchè	rè	ìhì
English:	Òchè	eats	yam
	S	V	O
	‘Òchè ate yam’		
c. Idómà:	Ofítẹ	mó	egwa
English:	Hunter	kills	snake
	S	V	O
	‘Hunter kills snake’		
d. Idómà:	Énechojọ	rà	ẹda
English:	Énechojọ	buy	shoe
	S	V	O
	‘Énechojọ bought shoe.’		



e. Idòmà:	Enenche	ju	okpa	li	Agbo
English:	Enenche	gives	book	to	Agbo
	S	V	DO		IO

‘Enenche gave a book to Agbo.’

f. Idòmà:	Èli	kpo	ènyi
English:	Èli	fetch	water
	S	V	O

‘Èli fetched water.’

g. Idòmà:	otote,	nmó	adágba
English:	NP	kill	elephant
	S	V	O

‘The hunter killed an elephant’.

h. Idòmà:	Audu	hí	íhì
English:	NP	cultivate	yam
	S	V	O

‘Audu cultivates yam’

Each of the above sentences (a-h) exhibits the SVO word order. This shows that Idòmà language can be said to be SVO word order and this is in line with the common word order of human languages.

Word Order in English

English language has a SVO word order (subject-verb-object) relatively fixed and there are exceptions and variations. The subject (S) comes first, the verb (V) comes second and the object (O) occupies the third position. Word order in English is used as a typical method to construct sentences without ambiguity. SVO is the most common word order in English, however, English word order can be flexible and variations are possible for the purpose of emphasis, topicalization or stylistic purposes. This can be illustrated below:



- 2a. The boy (S) chased (V) the ball (O)
- b. He (S) eats (V) breakfast (O)
- c. She (S) tore (V) the book (O)
- d. The cat (S) catches (V) mice (O)
- e. The student (S) wrote (V) essays (O)
- f. The chef (S) cooks (V) dinner (O)
- g. The musician (S) played (V) the guitar (O)
- h. The scientist (S) conducts (V) experiments (O)

The sentences above illustrate the basic word order in English. The subject (S) performs the action described by the verb (V), and the object (O) receives the action. This is the most common word order in English and it is used to convey basic information in a clear and straightforward way.

Contrastive Statement

Convergence exists between English and Idòmà languages in terms of word order. The word order in Idòmà language which is usually subject-verb-object (SVO) is also the basic word order found in English language. The two languages are SVO languages as exemplified in data (1a-h) for Idòmà and (2a-h) for English. However, English word order can be flexible and variations are possible for purposes of emphasis, topicalization or stylistics.

5. Negation

Negation in languages is also known as negative construction. In linguistics, negation is a crucial and fundamental aspect of language that plays a vital role in constructing meaning, negotiating or resolving conflicts. Negation is also used to confirm or distinguish truth from falsehood. The capacity to negate is the capacity to refuse, to lie, to speak ironically and to distinguish truth from falsity (Horn 2001:1). Horn argues that negation is a universal feature of human language that can be found in all languages and they are essential for communication. Such negations are standard negation (not), metalinguistic negation (no) and scalar negation (not very), etc. Likewise, Dahl (1979) sees negation as a linguistic operation that reverses the truth value of a proposition or assertion. That is, it is a way to deny or contradict a statement, making it false or invalid. Dahl explores the typology of sentence negation across languages focusing on its semantic and pragmatic properties, exploring how negation functions in language to convey meaning and facilitate communication. Also, Hulse (2010) asserts that negation is a cognitive operation that involves the mental representation of the absence or reversal of a concept, property, or state. In other words, negation is a process of thinking about what is not the case, or what is opposite of a particular concept or situation. Lindstad (2007) also submits that negation is a language universal that can be found in all known languages and unique to human languages. Crystal (2008:323) submits that “negation is a process or construction in grammatical and semantic analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence’s



meaning’’. Therefore, in light of the above assertions and definitions, negation is then a grammatical construction that contradicts or negates all or part of the meaning of a sentence. Divergence occurs in Languages due to the syntactic position of the negative markers in grammatical sentences. Different languages have different ways of expressing negation through negative makers.

Negation in Idómà

In Idómà, the negative marker ‘nó’ occurs at the sentence-final position to express negation. Although, Idómà language is SVO in word order but does not conform to the general hypothesis that languages with SVO word order usually have their negative marker pre-verbally. ‘Nó’ in Idómà language is the usual and common marker used to express denial, opposite or disagreement in sentences. The following examples illustrate the use of ‘nó’ in Idómà language.

Positive Statement	Negative Statement
3a. Ayẹbe rẹ ọnihi	Ayẹbe rẹ ọnihi a nó
Ayẹbe eat pounded yam	Ayẹbe eat pounded yam the neg
S V O	S V O
‘Ayẹbe ate pounded yam.’	‘Ayẹbe did not eat pounded yam.’
b. Énechojọ rà ẹda	Énechojọ rà ẹda nó
Énechojọ buy shoe	Énechojọ buy shoe Neg
S V O	S V O
‘Énechojọ bought shoe.’	‘Énechojọ did not buy shoe.’
c. Òchẹ ju òkpa li Abah	Òchẹ ju òkpa li Abah nó
Òchẹ give book to Abah	Òchẹ give book to Abah neg
S V DO IO	S V DO IO
‘Òchẹ gave a book to Abah.’	‘Òchẹ did not give book to Abah.’
d. Èli kpo eyin	Èli kpo eyin a nó



Èli	fetch	water		Èli	fetch	water	the neg
S	V	O		S	V	O	
‘Èli fetched water.’				‘Èli did not fetched water.’			
e.	otọté,	nmó	adágbà	otọté,	nmó	adágbà	nó
NP	kill	elephant		NP	kill	elephant	neg
S	V	O		S	V	O	
‘The hunter killed an elephant’				‘The hunter did not kill an elephant’			
f.	Audu	hí	íhì	Audu	hí	íhì	nó
NP	cultivate	yam		NP	cultivate	yam	neg
S	V	O		S	V	O	
‘Audu cultivates yam’				‘Audu did not cultivate yam’			

The negative marker **nó** occurs at the sentence final position in all the above negative constructions. We can therefore say that Idómà despite being an SVO language, the negative marker occurs post-verbally as exemplified in data (3a-f).

Negation in English

There are negative markers in English language which are used to express absence, opposite, reversal of something or to negate all or part of the meaning of affirmative sentences. The most commonly used negative marker in English is the particle ‘not’. ‘Not’ is usually positioned after the first auxiliary in a verb phrase and English being an SVO language usually have SNegVO structure. Negative markers in English language could be classified into three. These are: (negative adverbs: not, no, hardly, barely, scarcely, never, hardly ever, seldom, etc), (negative pronouns: neither, none, no one, nobody, nothing, etc.) and (negative determiners: no, neither, etc.) They are used to negate a statement, form a negative question or emphasize a negative point. Other negative markers are morphological negation (negative affixes) which negates the base word without grammatically affecting the remainder of the sentences. The negative affixes are negative suffix (-less, -free, etc) and negative prefixes (un-, dis-, anti-, mis-, di-, non-, ill-, a-, ex-, de-, counter-, mal-, in-, etc). SVO languages usually place their negative markers pre-verbally, occurring at the position before the main verb but this is different in Idómà language despite being an SVO language. The following examples illustrated the use of negative markers in English:



- 4a. I am **not** going home.
- b. I do **not** like coffee.
- c. Samuel does **not** like ice cream.
- d. I do **not** like flattery.
- e. **No one** is perfect.
- f. **Nobody** knows the answer.

Other morphological negations (negative affixes) are illustrated below.

Negative prefixes:

- 5a. The news was **un**predictable ("un-" means "not").
- b. She is **ir**responsible ("ir-" means "not").
- c. He is **non**committal ("non-" means "not").
- d. The machine is **ine**fficient ("in-" means "not").
- e. The student was **dis**obedient ("dis-" means "not").
- f. 10. The plan was **im**practical ("im-" means "not").

Negative prefixes above ("un-", "ir-", "non-", "in-", "dis-", and "im-" are used to indicate the opposite or negation of the words' meanings.

Negative suffixes:

- 6a. The patient was penni**less** ("-less" means "without").
- b. The decision was fruit**less** ("-less" means "without").
- c. The effort was use**less** ("-less" means "without").
- d. The result was worth**less** ("-less" means "without").
- e. The attempt was futi**le** ("-ile" means "unable to").
- f. The park is stress-**free** ("-free" means "without").

Contrastive Statements

English usually places its negative marker pre-verbally occurring after the first auxiliary in a verb phrase with some exceptions. Although, Idòmà language exhibits SVO word order, it does not place its negative marker pre-verbally like English language. Idòmà negative marker occurs post-verbally contrary to the tendency that negative markers precede the main verbs in SVO languages. From the above data, in English language, the negative marker '**not**' occurs after the first auxiliary in example (4a-d). Idòmà language places its negative marker consistently at the sentence-final position, in the above negative constructions in example (3a-f). Therefore, it can be concluded that the pattern of negation in Idòmà is usually post-verbal negation while that of English is usually pre-verbal negation. Affix negations (prefixes: "un-", "ir-", "non-", "in-", "dis-", "im-" and suffixes: "-less", "-free", "-ile") which could be called morphological negations are not usually present in Idòmà language as they exist in English language.



6. Findings

There are clear convergence and divergence in syntax and semantics of Idòmà and English word order. It is observed from example (1a-h) data that Idòmà and English languages share convergence in word order. Idòmà and English have SVO word order. Just like the English language, Idòmà sentence pattern is usually SVO (subject - verb - object); the subjects preceded the verbs and the verbs preceded the objects in most cases. In example (1a-h) and (2a-h) the subjects preceded the verbs, and the verbs preceded the objects. Though, English word order can be flexible and variations are possible for emphasis, topicalization or stylistics purposes.

Negative markers in English and Idòmà languages are used to express absence, opposite, reversal of something or to negate all or part of the meaning of affirmative sentences. However, there are clear divergence in syntax and semantics of Idòmà and English negative constructions. It is observed from example (3a-f) that Idòmà despite being an SVO language, the negative marker “**nó**” occurs at the sentence final position. Therefore, Idòmà negative marker (“**nó**”) occurs post-verbally (SVONeg) as exemplified in data (3a-f) while the most commonly used negative marker in English is the particle “**not**” as exemplified in data (4a-d) positioned after the first auxiliary in verb phrases and English being an SVO language usually have SNegVO structure. Also, while negative affixes are not present in Idòmà, there are negative affixes in English as exemplified in data (5a-f) and (6a-f).

7. Conclusion

This study examined the syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages. The nature and distribution of negative markers in both languages differ. This is in line with the establishment of universal grammar which established that languages are different in their parameters but similar in their principles. Idòmà and English language share convergence in word order but differ in the distribution of negative markers. Idòmà is usually post-verbal negation by placing its negative marker (nó) at the sentence-final position, while that of English is usually pre-verbal negation and also uses negative affixes.

8. Hierarchy of Difficulties

Lado (1957) submits that the degree of divergence between two languages correlates with the degree of difficulty. It is possible that the degree of divergence between Idòmà and English syntax and semantics of negative markers determine the degree of difficulty and vice versa. Therefore, the aspects of similarities between Idòmà and English negative markers enhance learning and aspects of differences hinder learning or causes interference. If Idòmà-English learners or L2 learners transfer their L1 knowledge of negative markers in Idòmà to English, there would be an interference which would hamper performance. Therefore, Idòmà-English learners or L2 learners of English should pay attention to the divergence in these languages. Particularly, an Idòmà-English learner would have difficulties using negative constructions in English language because of his knowledge of the Idòmà negative construction SVONeg



(negative marker ‘nó’ occurs at the sentence-final position). Hence, there is a possibility for him/her to involve in cross-linguistic under-differentiation or over-differentiation because of the difference in nature and distribution of negative markers in both languages. Although, Idòmà and English share SVO word order, Idòmà negative marker occurs post-verbally (SVONeg) while negative marker in English usually occur pre-verbally (SNegVO). Therefore, L2 learners should pay critical attention to their convergence and divergence in order to avoid ungrammaticality.

9. Recommendation

The main aim of contrastive analysis is to do a systematic description of two languages, juxtapose the two languages and establish areas of convergence and divergence. CA is a systematic study of two or more languages with the aim of identifying their structural differences and similarities focusing on the differences and explaining the process of second language acquisition. This research paper focused on the contrastive analysis of syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idòmà and English languages. A single research work cannot claim to be exhaustive. Therefore, it is appropriate to recommend that more research be carried out on other aspects of the languages. This will equip second language teachers and learners with more literature on Idòmà and English languages.

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