Syntactic Reconciliation of Conditional Tenses in English and Anaang at Distributional Equivalence

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Abstract

This paper attempts a look at Conditional Tenses and the types existing in English and Anaang languages. It tries a reconciliation of the tenses and types at a distributional equivalence with a proof of adequate similarities and dissimilarities (if any) through the use of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis instrument as a theoretical framework in the syntactic rank scale. To achieve this purpose, thirty (30) sentences were constructed and administered on eighty (80) respondents who were selected by simple stratified random sampling technique at (10) each from the eight (8) local government areas in Akwa Ibom State whose native language is Anaang. The respondents were required to change a given tense type to the other two types in each case such that (2,400) sentences were finally generated from the three types of conditional tenses. From the data collected, it was revealed that the three types of conditional tenses which exist in English are also available in Anaang and operate at an absolute distributional equivalence. Conclusions were drawn that an Anaang learner/user of English would not encounter any problem in his use of English conditional tenses and vice versa in a second language situation. It was recommended among others, that this study be replicated using other language families in other sections of the country while areas of difficulties should be made to serve as a basis for the selection of Instructional materials by curriculum planners for remedial programmes.

Keywords: Conditional tenses, English and Anaang languages, Distributional Equivalence

Introduction

When it comes to considering the position occupied by English as one of the world languages and the status of English in the national life of

Nigerians, it is an established fact that English is widely spoken that it has tended to be referred to as a Global Language (GL). This is because it either serves as native language to native speakers or as second language to speakers that speak other languages by use of English as an official language like it is in Nigeria. One of the factors that determine international acceptability of a language is its functional load in those countries where it is spoken. For instance, English is very important as an international language and it plays an important role even in countries that are not Anglomania or are not under the British colony. It is studied as the principal foreign language in most schools in Western Europe, in places like Japan, South Korea and China. English forms an essential part of the school curriculum and is increasingly seen as desirable by billions of speakers. According to Akwanya (2004:11):

> For international intelligibility to be achieved, English must be used in writings of books. This is because every literary form is the seat of an encounter in language. In the field of science where a common language brings efficient gains, English plays a vital role in achieving such a goal.

Therefore, English is a world language because it is the only language that has gained ground for the assessment of international intelligibility both in the world of business, commerce industry, technology, science and literature, there is no controversy then that English is used as a world language. English occupies a central place or position in the national life of Nigerians. English is a second language in use in Nigeria and one of the most important legacies from British to Nigeria (cf, Ugwuanyi, 2012:2). It is the language of government, business, education and the mass media. It serves as an indispensable tool for internal and external communication. It has helped to reduce the problem of mother tongue interference, lack of correlation between spelling and pronunciation of English words, over generalization of grammatical rules which exist as a result of the linguistic differences of the heterogeneous ethnic nationalities which were squeezed together like a jack-saw puzzle or geo-political entity known today as Nigeria.

In Nigeria, for instance, English can be seen as one of the most important legacies from the British; its colonial master. It is the language

of government, business, education and the mass media. It serves as an indispensable tool for internal and external communication and in so doing has helped to reduce the burden of mother-tongue interference, lack of correlation between spellings and pronunciation of the English words, over generalization of the grammatical rules which exist as a result of the linguistic differences of the heterogeneous people that make up the geo-political entity known today as Nigeria.

Scholars like Eyisi (2003:14) and Ezema (2002:19-20) maintain that "education in Nigeria is considered synonymous with good command of the language. It is no longer viewed as a temporary borrowed language but has been accepted as part of our linguistic property by the majority of Nigerians". Ezema (2002:19-20) further identifies three grounds under which English is taught in schools in Nigeria as follows:

> *It is the official language of the country; it is the official medium of instruction at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in the country; many of the learners need proficiency in the language of their career.*

The role played by English language in Nigeria can not be glossed over as this will not permit justice to be done to it where it really deserves such justice. Therefore, the researchers have decided to carry out this study in order to investigate the assumptions that the conditional tenses in English do not have their equivalence in Anaang language as they affect the teaching and learning of English in a Second Language Situation by the Anaang bilinguals (Enang and Urujzian, 2013).

The Conditional Tenses and Sentences
As it is typical for many languages the world over, conditional sentences in English are made up of a condition clause or *protasis* which specifies a condition or hypothesis, and a consequence clause *apodosis* and also specifying what follows from that condition. The conditional clause is always a dependent clause, most commonly headed by the conjunction "if", whereas the consequence is often contained in the main clause. By this justification, either of the two clauses may come first. It should be noted that the different types of conditional sentences depending largely on whether they refer to a past, present or future time frame, require

the use of particular verb forms (tenses and moods) to express the condition and the consequence.

The chief use of Conditional tense is in the main clause when a condition is made in a dependent clause or an infinitive phrase. This is due to the fact that the distinction between *should* and *would* is fast disappearing as preference is given to ought to be done in the use of *should* while preference is given to the use of *'d* instead of would in *I'd*. The sentences below are in the main clause and infinitive phrase respectively:

1a. We *would* consult the doctor *if the laboratory technician came*.
    (Main clause)   (Conditional clause)

1a. Ajid *ikpa* ikud Awia *ibok akpede ke owo annisidongo mkpo idem agwo amali*
    (Main clause)   (Conditional clause)

2a. To abandon the child now *would be* a mistake.
    (Infinitive phrase)   (Conditional clause)

2a. Itop ajen nsiok idahaam *akpede* nludue.
    (Infinitive phrase)   (Conditional clause)

Most people now use *Would* for all persons, though purist grammarians insist on *Should* with *I* and *We*. Most of the times, the condition could be understood but not expressed. A very common instance of this – and one that leads to many mistakes – is in expressions like:

3a. I *would like* to introduce my Head of Department.
3a. Ami mkpaama ibene annida iwuo itie utom ajid ngwod
In (3a), *I would like or I should like* and *I'd like* can be expressed to mean *If I have your permission*, or *If you will allow me to.* They are understood although they would never be expressed. *I would like*, *I should like* and *I'd like* are polite ways of saying *I wish* and can never be shortened to *I like*.

Kinds of Conditional Tense

There are three kinds of conditionals in English language.

(1) Open or Likely (Amma) Condition: It tells us that something will take place if a certain condition is fulfilled. This conditional slot refers to a pattern used in the predictive conditional sentences i.e. those that concern consequences of a probable future event. In it, the condition is expressed using the present (simple) tense (conveying the future meaning in this context), and the consequence using the future construction with the simple future indicators "will" and "shall".

Pattern: **"If" clause + Subj. + Simple Present, + Subj. + will/shall/can/may + Verb**

"If" Clause (Amma) Present + Subj.	Main Clause (Ndak'idem) Simple + will/shall/can/may + Plain Infinitive [Verb]
4a. If Uwakmfon **goes** to London,	he **will** study Cardiology.
4a. Uwakmfon amaka London	anye ala kod ngwed ibanga echid agwo
5a. If Edidiong **comes** early,	we **shall** begin the work on time.
5a. Edidiong amabak ili,	ajid ila ilak itongo utom ade.
6a. If we **teach** them well,	they **can** speak good English.
6a. Ajid amaikpep ammo ne afon,	ammo ekeme isem eti iko mbakara
7a. If rain **falls** early this year,	farmers **will** plant their crops.
7a. Elim amalak ileb k'isua am,	metoinwang ela etoo mkpo
8a. If you **tell** the truth in this case,	I **may** help you out of the matter.
8a. Afo amatang akpaniko k'ikpe em,	ami mekeme unyanga fien nsio ke mfanaam.
9a. If we **forget** the money,	we **shall** not go to Lagos again
9a. Ajid imaifire akpoho ade,	ajid iboho ika aba Lagos.
10a. If Jerry **lives** early,	he **can** arrive Kaduna before 5pm.
10a. Jerry amalak idaka,	ala dook Kaduna nte mia nkanaika ition nluwi

2. Unlikely, Improbable or Imaginary

This second condition refers to a pattern used for describing hypothetical, typically counterfactual situations with a present or future time frame. In the normal form of sentence constructi on in this condition, the conditional clause is always in the past simple tense; while the consequence is expressed using the **conditional future construction** with the modal auxiliaries *would* or *should*.

Pattern:
"If" clause + Subj. + Past Simple Tense, + Subj. + would/should/could/ might + Verb

"If" Clause (Akpedehe)	Main Clause (Ndak'idem) Subj. + would/should/could/might + Plain Infinitive [Verb]
Past Simple Tense	**Conditional Simple Tense**
11a. If Uwakmfon **went** to London,	he **would** study Cardiology
11a. Uwakmfon akpekaha London,	anye akpa akod ngwed ibanga echid agwo
12a. If Edidiong **came** early,	we **should** begin the work.
12a. Edidiong akpelakali,	ajid ikpailak itongo utom ade.
13a. If we **taught** them well,	they **could** speak good English.
13a. Ajid ikpikpebe ammo ne afon,	ammo ekpa esem eti iko mbakara
14a. If rain **fell** early this year,	farmers **would** plant their crops.
14a. Elim akpelaka alep k'isuaam,	metoinwang akpaelak ito mkpo ammo.
15a. If you **told** the truth in this case,	I **might** help you out of the matter.
15a. Afo akpetanga akpaniko k'ikpeem,	ami mkpaunyaña nsio ke mfana 'am.

3. Rejected Condition

This **condition iii**, is a pattern used to refer to hypothetical situations in the past time frame, generally counterfactual (or at least presented as counterfactual). This condition tends to be treated as a forgotten situation since it never took place in the past as a result of the failure registered in the second condition. Here, the conditional clause is often rendered in the **past perfect**, while consequence is expressed using the **conditional perfect.**

Pattern:
**"If" clause + Subj. + Past Perfect, + Subj. + would/should/
could/might + have + Past Participle**

"If" Clause (Akpede ke ama) **Past Perfect Tense**	**Main Clause** **Conditional Perfect** Subj. + would/should/could/might + have + Past Participle [Verb]
16a. If Uwakmfon **had gone** to London,	he **would have studied** Cardiology.
16a. Akpede k'Uwakmfon amaaka London,	anye akpakekod ngwed ibanga echid agwo
17a. If Edidiong **had come** early,	we **should have begun** the work.
17a. Akpede ke Edidiong amalak ili,	ajid ikpaikilak itongo utom ade.
18a. If we **had taught** them well,	they **could have spoken** good English.
18a. Akpede ke ajid ima ikpep ammo ne afon,	ammo ekpa ekesem eti iko mbakara.
19a. If rain **had fall**en early this year,	farmers **would have planted** their crops.
19a. Akpede k'elim amalak ileb isuaam,	mmetoinwang ekpa eketo mkpo ammo.
20a. If you **had told** the truth in this case,	I **might have helped** you out of the matter.
20a. Akpede ke afo ama tang akpaniko k'ikoom,	ami mkpa k'unyanga fien nsio ke mfanaam.

The explication for the above is that since the tenses above show the senses of every likelihood, unrealised past and rejected conditions, there are many possible variations on these tense sequences. It is advisable, however, to be very careful about using sequences other than those shown above.

Again, one should avoid the common mistake of thinking that the conditional tense is used in the conditional clause. The Conditional and Perfect Conditional are found only in the main clauses for Likely and Rejected conditions respectively. Let us look at the expression below:

21a. If he *would pay* my bill, I should be very happy.
21a..Akpede ke anye akpa ama ikpe akpoho ade inno nyien, ami mkpa ke nem echid

The **would,** *akpa ama* of the conditional clause is being used in a special way to mean *was willing* [if he was willing to pay my bill…].

It should also be noted that the conditional sentences containing a past perfect can begin with **HAD** followed by the subject; in this case no **IF** is used. For instance:
22a. *Had he* seen the hole, he would not have fallen into it.
22a Anye akpeke kude abe ade, anye ikpiki duoho idook
This expression is a reversed version of the rejected condition such as:
23a If he **had seen** the hole, he **would not have fallen** into it.
23a akpede ke anye amakud abe ade, ikpiki duoho idook

There are other words which can perfectly be used in introducing conditional tense clauses which require the above tense sequences. These words include: ***even if, suppose that, assuming that, on condition that, provided that, as long as, unless, etc,*** and they all mean almost the same as ***if not*** but rather on an emphatic basis. Notwithstanding the above, ***unless*** is extremely rare in rejected condition but could be used regularly in Likely and Unlikely conditions.

Equally worthy of note is the fact that a singular subject of a conditional clause can take ***were***:

24a. If John ***were*** not playing number 6, who ***would*** take his place?
   [***suppose*** John did not play number 6, who ***would*** take his place?]
24a Akpede ke John ikiwireke ajoho ite itioked, inyie akpe lad itie ammo?
25a. ***Were*** it not that Mark was known to me, I ***would*** sue him for unguarded speech.
   [***if*** Mark was not known to me, or ***suppose*** Mark was not known to me, I would sue him for unguarded speech].
25a Akpede ke Mark iki mkpereke idem, ami mkpe sio ngwed ke esop nno anye k'ukeng innua.

The use of ***"Was"*** would not be incorrect or ungrammatical. The use of ***were*** with a singular subject is mostly in the expression [if I ***were*** you]. This expression is used in a way in which ***"were"*** is not the plural but the relic of a verb form called the subjunctive, now happily almost vanished from the language.

On the Position that could be Occupied by the "If- Clause" in a Sentence
There are basically two major positions that could be occupied by the "If-clause" in a conditional tense sentence. These positions are not only grammatically determined, but also syntactically allowed because if an English language user/learner goes beyond these two positions, the construction/s will not only be a mix-up, but also grammatically incorrect. These two positions are:
1. "If-Clause" at the beginning of a sentence. This is a syntactic arrangement which allows grammaticality as in the following instances:

26. If I study hard, I will pass the exam. **Open or Likely Condition (Type 1)**

27. If I studied hard, I would pass the exam. **Unlikely Condition (Type 2)**
28. If I had studied hard, I would have passed the exam. **Rejected or Hypothetical (Type 3).**

2. "If-Clause" at the end of a sentence
29. I will pass the exam, If I study hard. **Open or Likely Condition (Type 1)**

30. I would pass the exam, If I studied hard. **Unlikely Condition (Type 2)**
31. I would have passed the exam, If I had studied hard. **Rejected or Hypothetical condition**
     (Type 3).

Conclusion
This paper has tried to sort out what constitutes the differences and the similarities in conditional tenses of both English and Anaang languages and has carefully accounted for each category. The paper has also carefully identified and maintained that the three kinds of conditional tenses that are found in English language are also prevalent in Anaang. It further juxtaposed the tenses that are operationally functional in the conditional tenses of both languages by means of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis [CAH] as propounded by Lado [1957]. With the CAH, it was possible to carry out a reconciliation of the syntactic categories and the linguistic units in distributional equivalence and concludes that the three types of conditional tenses which exist in English are also available in Anaang and operate at an absolute distributional equivalence. Conclusion was drawn that an Anaang learner/user of English would not encounter any problem in his use of English conditional tenses and vice versa in a second language situation.

Way Forward
As a way of facilitating research on the speaking and learning of Anaang, conditional tenses as a topic should be included in the school schemes of work.
i.   Parents should encourage their children to show more interest in the study of Anaang language as well as English so that a child can

properly master the language without making mistake of transferring the syntactic semantic structures of Anaang language to the English language and vice versa. To achieve this, the Anaang bilinguals has to develop personal interest in the source language by frequently engaging in spoken and written tasks that would enhance fluency in the use of the devices of the target language.

ii. Anaang speakers of English can learn to use acceptable sentence patterns of English by really speaking and consciously approximating the pattern. Doing this will consequently facilitate the learning of the English syntax by the Anaang learners of English in a second language situation.

iii. Tense selection and comparison ordering between the two languages (English and Anaang) are central issues in the current treatment of conditional tenses in Natural Languages (NLs). This aspect of syntax has direct links with semantics. Therefore, the inter-relatedness of morphology, syntax and semantics of English should be emphasized, and the specific aspects of relatedness and interaction, highlighted in the process of developing a second language.

iv. Finally, the teaching of English vocabulary should be taken more seriously than it is currently being done. It should be emphasized here that an effective acquisition of the syntax of a target languages is based upon a strong foundation in lexical knowledge. This a ntural expectation because words are generally regarded as "building blocks" of sentences. The idiosyncratic properties of words determine their patterning within phrase and clause structures of a particular language and, language acquisition is in essence a matter of determining lexical idiosyncacies in every natural language, (Chomsky 1966) in Cook 1993:204).

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