

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERLANGUAGE OF IGBO-ENGLISH BILINGUALS: FOCUS ON ENGLISH NOUN PHRASE

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzed a sample of Igbo-English bilinguals' interlanguage to determine evidence of cross linguistic influence (transfer), using Prator's hierarchy of difficulty in CA procedure as possible predictor. Data were generated from Igbo-English translation of a passage from an Igbo text, using 150 randomly selected first year university students. Data were analyzed with focus on English noun phrase. The analysis consisted, first of all, of classification of the negative evidence into four groups which were described in terms of frequency and percentages of occurrence. The four error groups were collapsed into three to determine whether or not there is evidence of transfer, using Prator's hierarchy of difficulty as a predictor. The findings revealed two levels of difficulty in the Prator's scale—Levels 3 (re-interpretation) and Level 4 (over differentiation). While Level 4 tallied with evidence of transfer, Level 3 appeared to be variable by showing evidence of transfer in some cases and none in other cases. The study concluded that Level 4 of the difficulty scale, given the evidence from our data, is a most probable predictor of transfer in interlanguage studies. The study recommended that the sole aim of CA should be to predict cross linguistic influence, using the difficulty scale.

KEYWORDS: Language Transfer, Cross Linguistic Influence, Interlanguage, Errors