The Syntax of Pronominal Features in English and Izon Languages

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Abstract

Pronominal references are significant in syntactic studies for their role as substitute NPs. Being categorized under nominal elements, this paper surveys the grammatical feature of pronouns which are valued and checked along with their clausal verbs for the convergence of syntactic computations. The theoretical demand of the study is satisfied by the minimalist thesis of Chomsky whose analytical emphasis features checking, sharing or valuation hinged on the three syntactic operations of Merge, Agree and Move. This is research in comparative syntax involving English, an Indo-European language and Izǫn grouped under the Ijoid phylum of the Niger-Congo family. Therefore, the data for the work was derived from textbooks written in English and Izǫn, from recorded participatory observation with native speakers of Izǫn in Foropah community as well as from introspection of the authors. The findings suggest that English pronouns, unlike the full NPs, are valued as interpretable by a matching probe and are checked before Spell-Out (overt morphological inflexion to denote case). On the other hand, pronouns in Izǫn as well as the full NPs mark case abstractly; the Agreement and case features are uninterruptable, hence are checked after Spell-Out. The study has been able to highlight the cross-linguistic differences and homogeneity of pronominal references in the two languages.

Keywords: Pronouns, comparative syntax, grammatical features, syntactic operations, checking, sharing, valuation

Introduction

Studies in universal grammar as propagated by Chomsky (1986) have continued to attract attention among scholars of linguistics. The theory of universal grammar as a theory of language acquisition postulates universal features common to all natural languages as well as a recognition of language-specific features sometimes called idiosyncratic or peripheral features. The concept thus lays the theoretical foundation for cross-linguistic variations. Tallerman (2011) affirms that the common properties shared by languages form one of the current trajectories in syntactic studies.

This paper is a comparative study of pronominal references in the Indo-European English language and the Ijoid Niger-Congo language, Izǫn. Specifically, the study adopts the Foropah dialect of Izǫn spoken by the Foropah community on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. It needs to be stated from the outset that English and Izǫn are structurally different. Whereas English is an SVO language, Izǫn is an SOV language. Moreover, Izǫn is a head-final language while English is a head-initial language.

Izǫn is the language spoken by the Izǫn people, also known as Ijo and Ijaw people. Put differently by Williamson and Blench (2000), Izǫn is the dominant Ijoid language spoken by a

majority of the Ijaw people settled along the coastline in the southern part of Nigeria. Izọn is a language with many dialects. The dialectal clusters are outlined below in the order presented in Kwokwo (2012) in Table 1. The Kolokuma and the Mein dialects of Izọn have been the focus of study out of the dialects of Izọn. Out of the two, the Kolokuma dialect is more widely proclaimed as the standard variety dialect which has been widely used in the media. The Bayelsa State Teaching of Indigenous Languages Law of 2018 also recognises it as the standard variety. The various dialects of Izọn are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Izọn Dialect Clusters along the Niger Delta Coastline

Izọn			
South Western Cluster	North Western Cluster	North Central Cluster	South Central cluster
Idiwuni Ogulagha Oporoza Arogbo Egbema Olodiama West Furupagha[1]	Tarakiri West Kumbo Kabo Mein Seinbiri Tuomo Operemo	Ekpetiama Gbarain Kolokuma	Apoi Bassan Olodiama East Oporoma Boma Ohiakiri Ogbein Tarakiri East Ikibiri

Statement of Problem

Much study has been carried out on pronouns and pronominal features in English. The scholarly interest in pronouns is not misplaced considering their importance as one of the parts of speech and a key referential element. Indeed, pronouns constitute one of the major cohesive discourse features, and their grammatical significance as substitute NPs cannot be ignored. However, not much scholarly attention has been paid to this important linguistic facility in the Izọn language; much less scholarship has been done on Agreement and Case features embedded in pronouns in Izọn. This study, therefore, looks at the various grammatical features of pronouns in English and Izọn to identify universal and idiosyncratic features.

Aim of the Study

This paper aims at describing the grammatical features of pronouns in English and Izọn. Secondly, the study aims at identifying universal features and parametric variations concerning pronouns in English and Izọn. This work intends to study the cross-linguistic differences and

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[1] Furupagha is also widely used in place of Foropah in many other publications

similarities of English and Izọn languages concerning pronominal references. The paper focuses on the personal pronoun subset out of the five subsets of pronouns: reflexive, interrogative, demonstrative and indefinite pronouns. Constraining the study to the personal pronouns is impelled by the need to avoid being unwieldy

Methodology

This work relied on the standard orthography of Izọn as presented in Kwokwo (2020b). Research has proven that dialectal variations are mainly inflectional and lexical but not orthographical. This standard Izọn orthography has been developed from the various dialects of Izọn. It is an improvement on previously available orthographies by other linguists as well as the Izọn Readers Project (1988). The latter was an assemblage of numerous eminent personalities chosen as representatives of all dialectal groups of the Izọn language as members of the Izọn Language Committee.

The data for this work was derived from both Standard textbooks in English, available books in Izọn as well as introspective sources. The research is competence-based. Additionally, the recorded random discussion in the Foropah dialect between the researchers and three native speakers of the dialect was used as data for the Izọn language.

Theoretical Framework

A Minimalist program is a derivational approach to syntactic study. It imposes restrictions on the range of syntactic relations used in linguistic description. The minimalist program generally emphasizes the checking and licensing of morphological features of syntactic arguments and verbs for convergence and grammaticality of derivations. In the minimalist thesis, as argued by Radford (2004), φ-features are already valued before coming into the derivation but with unvalued case features. Case features are valued during the derivation via the case assignment operation. Similarly, the finite T possesses interpretable tense features predetermined at the lexicon before the computation but not with φ-features. The φ-features of the finite tense are also determined during the derivation via a feature copying operation. It is the general understanding in the literature that Agr (element) and T(tense) functional heads, according to the minimalist framework, contain morphosyntactic features which check lexical output for appropriateness.

The need for feature checking motivates the movement of constituents in a syntactic derivation but the strength and interpretability of features determine whether checking takes place before or after Spell-Out. Interpretable and strong features of NPs and verbs are checked before Spell-Out. According to Chomsky (1995), interpretable features considered strong remain active and relevant even after feature checking by contributing to semantic interpretation. On the contrary, uninterruptable features are weak features; they are inactive and irrelevant for the domain of spelling out, and are hence eliminated, according to Radford (2004) in the course of the syntactic derivation since they are supposedly not legible to the semantic component.

Data Analysis/Discussion

Noun phrases (NPs) are in three categories: R-expressions with fixed reference are independent of other NPs in the structure according to Principle C of the binding theory; anaphors with a dependent referential relationship with other antecedent linguistic elements, according to Principle A, and the third pronominal group are personal pronouns which have inherent referential specification under binding Principle B. They are only specified for their phi- and **case** features. Their reference is not completely dependent because it can be construed from the context or deictically.

Pronominal NPs are functors which lack descriptive or semantic content but are used to replace lexical NPs in syntactic transformations. Their descriptive content or semantic reference is derived from their antecedent such as a previously mentioned NP in the clause structure. Linguists have delineated them into pronominal quantifiers, pronominal determiners and personal pronouns. Pronominal quantifiers usually denoted as Q-pronouns have no NP following them. Its converse representation is the prenominal quantifier, a case of an NP preceding quantifier expression. A related terminology is the determiner pronoun (D-pronoun). The third class of pronominal, which are the personal pronouns, posited in traditional grammar are our central focus in this paper.

Features of Personal Pronouns in English

In the English language, personal pronouns or pronominal NPs are distinguished from lexical nouns in their morphological behaviour. Whereas personal referring NPs (R-expressions) are not overtly case marked in their nominative and accusative functions and are hence referred to

as marking abstract case, these pronominal NPs are overtly case marked. In other words, personal pronouns in English, depending on their distribution, are case-marked nominative, accusative and genitive forms (Aarts, 2008). In the words of Radford (2004)

> personal pronouns like *he/him/his* and R-expressions like *John/John's* change their morphological form according to the position which they occupy within the sentence, so that nominative forms *he/John* are required as the subject of a finite verb like *snore,* whereas the accusative forms *him/John* are required when used as the complement of a transitive verb like *find* (or when used as the complement of a transitive preposition), and the genitive forms his/John's are required (*inter alia*) when used to express possession: these variations reflect different case forms of the relevant nominal lexical items (p.**38)**

The different categories of words have different morphological and syntactic properties. The word class of noun possesses Agreement or phi-features and case feature. Personal pronouns which are substitute nouns similarly possess these features. Consequently, personal pronouns encode the grammatical properties of person, number and gender as well as case Technically speaking, they are expressions whose reference includes the person(s) speaking: the speaker(s), the addressee, the person(s) being spoken to; and the person(s) spoken about. These are encoded syntactically as the first person, second person and third person respectively (Anurudu, Priye and Okoye, 2019). The Second property of pronominal NPs is number (singular/plural),a third being gender (masculine/feminine/neuter), and lastly case (nominative/accusative/possessive).*Person, number and gender* are referred together as phi-features in their syntactic use.

Person/Number	Case		
	Nominative	**Accusative**	**Possessive**
1st Person singular	I	Me	Mine
1st Person plural	We	Us	Ours
2nd Person singular	you	you	Yours
2nd Person plural	You	You	Yours
3rd Person singular	He/She/It	Him/Her/It	His/Hers/Its
3rd Person plural	They	Them	Theirs

Pronouns carry agreement and case features which are significant in syntactic derivations. According to Kwokwo (2020a:49) "Agreement is a bundle of features consisting of person, number and gender also collectively known as phi-features" and that "Agreement is perhaps the most compulsive syntactic process for a derivation to converge and be grammatically well-formed". The domain of Agree functional head is therefore significant for valuing the phi-features

of T as well as the case features of pronominal NPs. In other words, Agreement involves a c-command relation between a probe and a goal in which unvalued φ-features on the probe are valued by the goal, and an unvalued case feature on the goal is valued by the finite tense features of the probe via a feature copying operation (Chomsky, 1999).

Pesetsky and Torrego (2004) also assert that Agreement features play a crucial role in movement operations Indeed, Agreement features motivate the movement of constituents in the minimalist thesis. A nominal goal which moves from its VP root to Spec-TP based on Pollock's(1989) VP-internal hypothesis must first agree with T in person and number. According to Chomsky (1999), Agree can only apply when the probe and goal are both active. Radford (2004) accentuates this position in his remark "… a constituent α (whether probe or goal) is active only if α contains one or more uninterruptable features.

The Case Feature of Pronouns in English

Nouns and pronouns possess cases and both the nominative and possessive cases of pronominals are checked and licensed in the spec-head configuration in English. The case checking head in nominatives is the INFL or AgrS functional head; a preposition assigns and checks the case of its NP complement in a PP, while the possessive case is assigned and checked by the possessive determiner or genitive ['s]. The accusative case of an English pronoun is checked and licensed by AgrO. R-expressions or full NPs in English possess abstract case. They do not inflect to mark case overtly. Nevertheless, full NPs still move to functional heads (finite T of the probe) to value their features for licensing and convergence. English full NPs are described as having weak and uninterruptable features. This is why movement of NPs such as in [1]

[1] **John** loves **James**

is subject to procrastination as they are checked after being spelt out. The personal names (masculine), ***John*** in the nominative case environment and ***James*** in an accusative case-marked position do not exhibit overt inflexion for case. However, English pronouns inflect to denote case assignment following the relevant case assignment operation. We illustrate the inflexion for case in the following sentences.

[2] He loves him.
[3] They love them.

[4] She loves her.

In the examples, the pronoun 'he', 'they 'and 'she' possess nominative case feature along with varying phi-features. Similarly, the pronouns 'him', 'her' and possess accusative case and also with varying phi-features
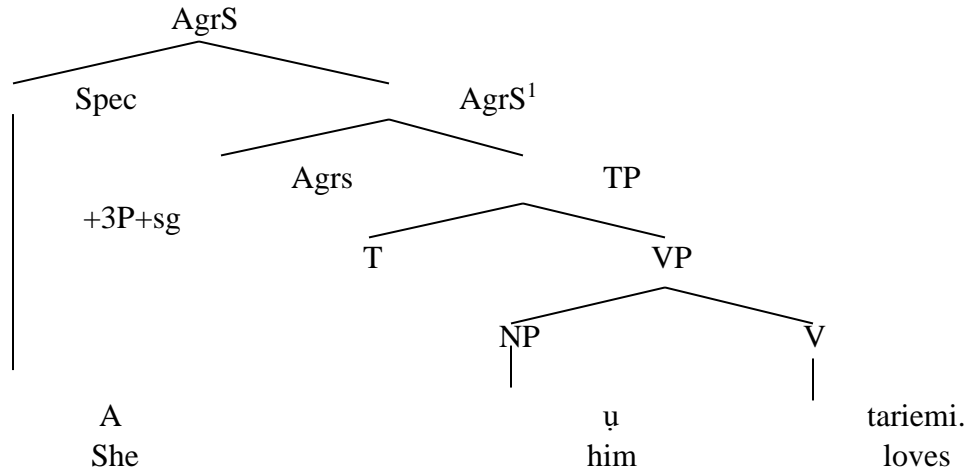
Table 2: Agreement and Case Features of Pronouns in English and Foropah-Izon

	Nominative		Accusative		Possessive	
Person/number	English	Foropah-Izon	English	Foropah-Izon	English	Foropah-Izon
1st Person singular	I	Ẹ	Me	Ẹ	Mine	Ẹ-niye
1st Person plural	We	Wo	Us	Wo	Ours	Wo-niye
2nd Person singular	you	Ị	you	Ị	Yours	Ị-niye
2nd Person plural	You	Ọ	You	Ọ	Yours	Ọ-niye
3rd Person singular	He/She/It	Ụ/A/Iye	Him/Her/It	Ụ/A/Iye	His/Hers/Its	Ụ-niye/A-niye/iye
3rd Person plural	They	Ụn	Them	Ụn	Theirs	Ụn-iye

Pronominal NPs in Foropah-Izon

Foropa-Izọn like other Izọn dialects has an unmarked constituent order of subject + object + verb (SOV) in simple clauses, unlike English which has (SVO) constituent order. This word order presents the subject (nouns and pronouns) first, followed by the object before the verb in Izọn such that the object NPs have structural contiguity with the verbs as can be seen in the diagrams below.

5.   A ụ tariemi.
"She loves him."

```
                          AgrS
                 _____
              Spec                  AgrS¹
                             _____
                          Agrs               TP
             +3P+sg                   _____
                                    T                 VP
                                              _____
                                           NP                 V
                                            |                  |
              A                             ụ               tariemi.
             She                           him               loves
```

The Foropah dialect of Izọn has referential pronouns like other natural languages in place
of full NPs. Pronouns in the dialect possess Agreement features of person, number and gender but
lack case. Pronouns in Foropah-Izọn language do not inflect to mark case like the referring NPs
which also do not. Case marking, therefore, is covert or abstract. However, the possessive case is
morphologically marked on the pronouns in the dialect. We demonstrate below with structures
with pronominal NPs being discussed, first in the nominative and accusative forms [6a-f]and then
in the possessive forms (7a-d).

6a. A ụtariemi.
   She him love
"She loves him."

6b.Ụa tariemi.
He her love
 "He loves her."

6c. **Ụn** bịratụa wo pịrịmị.
   They help   us give
  "They helped us." OR "They gave us help."

6d. Wo bịratụa **ụn**piri.
   We help them give+modal
 "We should gave them help" OR "Let us help them"

6e. Ị ẹ kị werimẹnẹ?
    You me *foc* insulting
"Is it me you are insulting?"

6f. ẸỊ kị derịmẹnẹ.
    I you *foc* laughing
  "It is you I am laughing at"

The pronouns in the sentences in [6] above possess different phi-features and could be distinguished from one another by these features. For instance, in [6a], the nominative case pronoun 'A' (she) carries 3rd person, singular number and feminine gender features. On the other hand, the accusative case pronoun 'U' (him) carries 3rd person, singular number and masculine gender features. However, because Izọn language operates an agreementless syntax regarding subject-verb agreement (see Kwokwo 2012), they do not exert any serious impact on the grammaticality of the sentence. Same pronouns are also used in [6b] but they are performing different grammatical functions and possessing different cases. The pronouns 'Ụn' (they)and'wo' are found in sentences [6c] and [5d]. 'Ụn' has the phi-features of 3rd person, plural number and general gender while 'wo' possesses the features of 1st person, plural and general gender. Each of them assumes different cases in the two sentences. Finally, in [6e] and [6f], the pronouns 'Ị' (you) and 'ẹ' (me) also exhibit the phi-features of person, number and gender.

    In each example, the pronouns could assume either the nominative or accusative case without necessarily undergoing morphological change or inflexion. It is obvious then that pronouns in Foropah-Izọn have weak features. This suggests that the movement of the constituents in the C_{HL} would be subject to procrastination because checking would only take place after Spell-Out.

    The possessive case in Foropah-Izọn, as hinted above, is morphologically marked with a suffix "nị" which acts like the genitive in English. It marks the possessive relationship between two NPs, either an R-expression or a pronominal expression in which one NP assumes ownership of the other. The data in [7a] – [7d] demonstrate the expression of the possessive/genitive case.

    7a. **Awo-ni** warịbomẹnẹ.
        She **our** house coming
        "She is/will come to our house."

7b. Diri-mị**a-nị ye**.
     The book **her** own
"The book is her own." (hers)

7c. Wo **Ụ-ni**agbaka kundei.
We hisshoe taken
"We have taken his shoe."

7d. **Ụn-ni** moto seiemi.
Their car bad is
"Their car is bad."

Agreement Relations in Foropah-Izọn

Although there are several types of agreements, nominal concord which is analysed as sharing of phi-features is significant to nominal and pronominal element structurally. In other words, the phi-features of the nominal items which enter into the derivation from the lexicon are checked and valued by the functional head for copying onto the probe. The data described below illustrates the fact that verbs inIzọn syntax do not inflect (morphologically) to match the number feature encoded on the subject nominal/pronominals unlike in English (third person present tense). Kwokwo (2020a:8) technically called them "agreementless syntax". This assertion can be confirmed from the phonetically uninterruptable representations of the past, present and future tense marking verbs and also the aspectual, progressive and perfective, denoted in the structures below.

8a. **Ụ** bomo.
3-pers sg
He   come
 "He **comes**."

8b. **Ụn** bomo.
3-pers pl
They   come
"They **come**."

8c. **A** seimene.
She dancing
"She **is** dancing."

8d**. Wo** seimene.
    Ist Per Pl

We dancing
"We **are** dancing."

In English, the V(erb) is inflected to mark agreement with the plural pronominal denoting subject-verb agreement, but such does not apply to the Izọn language as evident in the data above. There is no overt morphological realization of Agr between the pronominals of Izọn and the verbs. The verb in Foropah-Izon has the same form irrespective of what the person and number of the subject pronoun interprets. The Izọn number features on pronominal NPs are distinct in that they not only mark singularity and plurality but also mark definite/indefiniteness in references (Kwokwo,2020a). He added that these dual values are subject to checking operation.

9a.Ebi **comes** home often.

9b.Ebi and Keme **come** home often.

The full NP nominals (above) of English possess the Agr feature of number (singular in*9a* and plural in *4b*) while the verbs *comes* in*9a*and *come* in *9b* possess T feature and number feature of Agr allowed for the (3rd Person). The presentation in *4a*encodes the singular (number) *Ebi* nominal in agree relationship with the singular verb *comes*. Similarly,*9b* encodes the plural (number) nominal *Ebi and Keme* in Agr relationship with the 3rd person plural number verb *come*. These phi-features are interpretable and strong. In terms of feature checking of valuation, the minimalist thesis posits their (lexical items) entrance into the derivation from the lexicon fully inflected. They submit themselves for checking in the computation. The morphological inflexions they have projected from the lexicon are checked. A syntactic movement operation of the nominal and the verb to spec-TP and head T respectively takes place following which the derivation is licensed as convergent and grammatical or ungrammatical.

In the Foropah-Izọn language, α, the finite verb is still φ-complete even as it does not overtly mark agreement with the subject in person, number and gender. This represents the position of Radford (2004) when he delineated φ-completeness in languages in the comment "in a language like English where finite verbs agree with their subjects in person and number (but not gender), α is φ-**complete** (i.e carries a complete set of φ-features) if it has both person and number features (p200).The gender feature of pronouns is distinct and interpretable in Izọn generally. as it is with their counterparts in English.

7.2. Valuation and Licensing of Case in English Pronouns

According to Wurmbrand (2006)., the purpose of case is to encode an NP's function in a derivation, and in Chomsky (1981), case assignment is an obligatory syntactic requirement. This may be overt or covert, except for subjects of infinitival clauses. Even in languages without morphological case, the need to recognize grammatical relations is evident in the syntax (Tallerman,2011). Case features are not inherent in the nominals/pronominals. They are acquired during the derivation process via the case assigning operations: Nominative, accusative and null case assignment (Chomsky 1995a) are assigned accordingly to avoid failure of the derivation. Case licensers are different for different languages. In English, it's either Agr (INFL), the verbs or prepositions that license case whereas, in some other languages, case licensers can be adjectives and nouns. Licensing NPs is a property of functional heads: finite T and V. The case feature on an NP is checked against a corresponding case feature on the case licensing head. In a situation where the case feature on the two participants in a checking relationship, probe and goal, do not match up then there won't be convergence in that structure, hence the structure would result in ungrammaticality. Case participants may be recognized as unmatched if one of the participants is nominative and the other is accusative or if the case features on more than one NP. In other words, nominative subjects may be case marked by the head T. Radford (2004) also affirms that there is a two-way systematic relationship between a finite T probe and a nominal goal: T-agreement and nominative case assignment, where a finite T probe agrees with a nominal goal which it c-commands and the nominal goal is assigned the nominative case.

The computation of a derivation may progress to the head T position of a TP and require an Agreement with an appropriate nominal within the working structure. Adhering to the c-command relation in line with the Earliness principle of Pesetsky, and Torrego, E. (2004) which supports the early application of operations in derivations, the T, as posited by Chomsky (1988, 1999, 2001) will serve as a probe which searches for an active nominal goal to agree with. And the unvalued phi-features on the probe will be valued by the goal, and the probe will in turn value the unvalued case feature on the goal via a feature copying operation. Thereafter, the feature deletion operation, which applies at the formation of the structure, is employed. Phi-complete goal values and deletes the uninterpretable phi-features and case features of the probe and goal respectively are eliminated. The compulsory [EPP] feature of the T is lastly deleted after attracting the closest nominal subject goal with matching features it c-commands. Consequently, the structure will converge and be spelt out at the phonetic component.

7.2.1. The Case feature of Agree in pronominals of Foropah-Izon

Foropah- Izọn dialect does not mark case for both full NPs and pronominal elements in the nominative and accusative forms. What is seen is the ordinary root uninflected form of the noun or pronoun in all nominal grammatical relations. Case is not marked synthetically (case marked using morphologically complex words) nor analytically (case marker is not an affix). However, the possessive form is affixal case-assigned. The case feature of Foropah-Izon pronominals is weak and uninterpretable as they do not inflect to denote their distribution as the English pronominal system. Whereas, the English pronominal would inflect to show the different distribution, for instance:

10a. He hit him with his shoes.

The sentence above demonstrates three pronominals: *he* denoting a nominative third person singular masculine is inflected to *his*, a possessive third person singular masculine pronominal. Also, *him* denoting an accusative third person singular masculine pronominal is seen as the thematic agent in the structure. The Foropah-Izon pronominal would maintain the same form in all cases. For example:
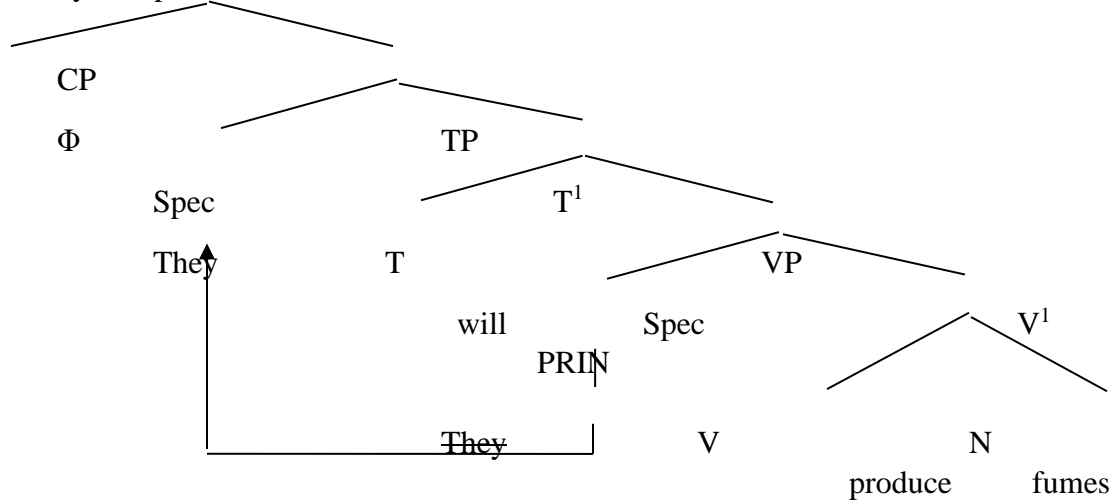
10b. Ụ ụ-nị agbaka mọ-kị u famu.

 He his shoes   foc   him hit

   "He hit him with his shoes."

The Izon structure here above shows that the third person singular masculine pronominal element *U* maintains its form in the nominative and accusative case with an affixal-inflexion denoting the possessive indicator of third person singular masculine pronominal *U-ni*. Here isanother example.
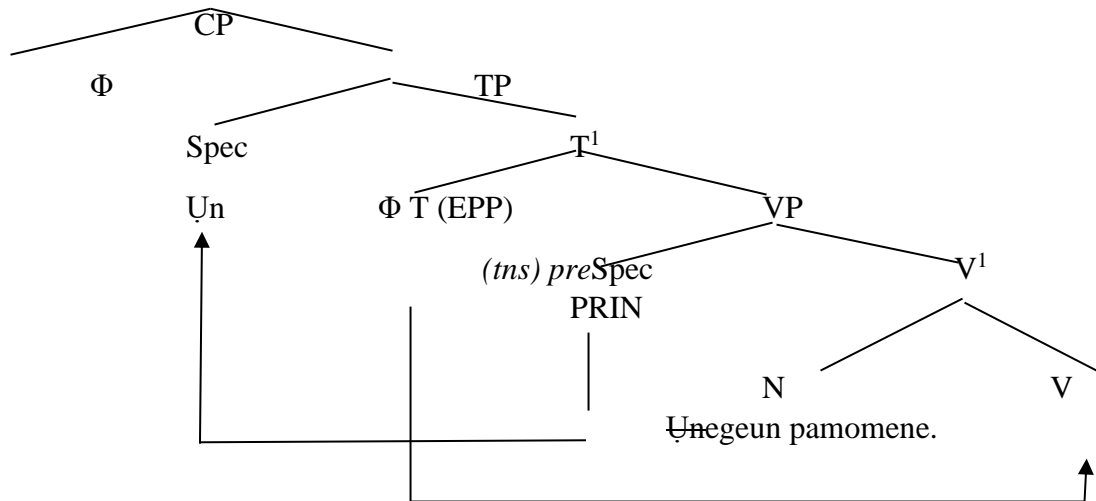
11a. They will produce fumes.

```
              CP
        Φ                        TP
          Spec              T¹
          They        T              VP
                     will      Spec          V¹
                     PRIN
                          They      V      N
                                    produce   fumes
```

Merge the active verb *produce* with the thematic complement of the verb fumes to form the V-bar *produce fumes.* The V-bar is thereafter merged with the subject DP *the cars* (itself formed by the merger operation on the determiner *the* and the pronoun *They*) to form the VP *They produce fumes*. The resulting VP is then merged with the future-tense auxiliary [T *will*], forming the T-bar *They will produce fumes.* In line with the Earliness principle, Pesetsky (1995), being the highest head in the structure and is active by its uninterpretable φ-features, serves as the probe. A finite T, the probe has an [EPP] feature which drives movement and requires T to have a specifier, a subject of its own. A finite T also carries a complete set of φ-features which were copied onto it by the goal during the derivation. It will search and find the closest active nominal goal it c-commands to value and delete its φ-features. The probe, in this case, the finite T *will* access the closest active goal and loca*tes They.* Because the goal is also φ-complete, The NP, *They* values and deletes the uninterpretable φ-features of the probe *will.* Having finite T features and φ-complete, *will* values the unvalued case feature of *They* as nominative, and deletes it. The [EPP] feature of the finite T is deleted by moving *They* to Spec-TP accordingly. This is the derivation process of the sentence in [11a]. The null declarative complementizer is thereafter merged into the structure for convergence and grammaticality. Find the derivation of a similar structure in the Foropah-dialect of Izọn below:

12b. Un egeun pamomene.

  They fumes produce+M+prog

 "They will produce fumes"

```
                        CP
          Φ                      TP
                    Spec                    T¹
                    Un          Φ T (EPP)          VP
                              (tns) preSpec              V¹
                                    PRIN
                                                    N              V
                                              U̶n̶egeun pamomene.
```

The complement of the verb *egeun* is merged with the verb *pamomene* to form the V-bar *egeun pamomene*. The V-bar is thereafter merged with the subject DP which originates from spec-VP following the VP-internal subject hypothesis (Pollock, 1989) to form the VP *Un egeun pamomene*. This is in turn merged with the abstract or null present tense affix to form the T-bar *φT Un egeun pamomene* in line with the generalized null T hypothesis. Radford(2004)asserts that "all finite clauses are TPs headed by an overt or null T constituent" (95). And because the tense affix in finite clauses, which is also the probe contains an [EPP] feature which attracts the closest nominal subject goal with matching features, it attracts the pronominal subject, *Un,* to Spec-TP for the [EPP] feature to be deleted. The T affix is null and (hence),weak. Therefore, it is uninterpretable and cannot trigger the movement of a verb from V to T; rather lowers the tense affix onto the main verb via the affix hopping operation in the PF component as it occurs in the derivations "They will produce fumes".

8. Conclusion

This work has brought to the fore some cross-linguistic variations as well as homogeneity between the two languages of the study in line with provisions of the minimalist thesis. Certain features of lexical items enter the derivation valued in advance: phi and Tense features on the goal and probe respectively. But the case feature on the goal and the phi-features on the probe are shared via feature copying operation during the derivation to allow for convergence and grammaticality.

A significant difference between English and the Foropah-Izọn dialect demonstrated by this work is the fact that English with an impoverished inflectional morphology seems better off than the Foropah dialect of the Izọn in terms of pronouns. English pronouns, unlike the full NPs, are valued as interpretable by a matching probe, and accordingly checked before Spell-Out (overt

morphological inflexion to denote case). On the contrary, in the Foropah dialect of Izọn, both pronouns and full NPs mark case abstractly. Since the features are uninterpretable, they are checked after Spell-Out. English also has a limited amount of agreement whereas the Foropa-Izọn l does not have an overt morphological nominal agreement at all.

These variations have implications for second language learning. Chomsky (1986) argues that Language does not exist in the world, but resides in the heads of individual users. The English language is parameterized for agreement while is agreementless. For this reason, an Izọn child learning English would have to cope with the presence of subject-verb agreement which is largely absent in Izọn. This feature would certainly be a debilitating factor in the language learning process.

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