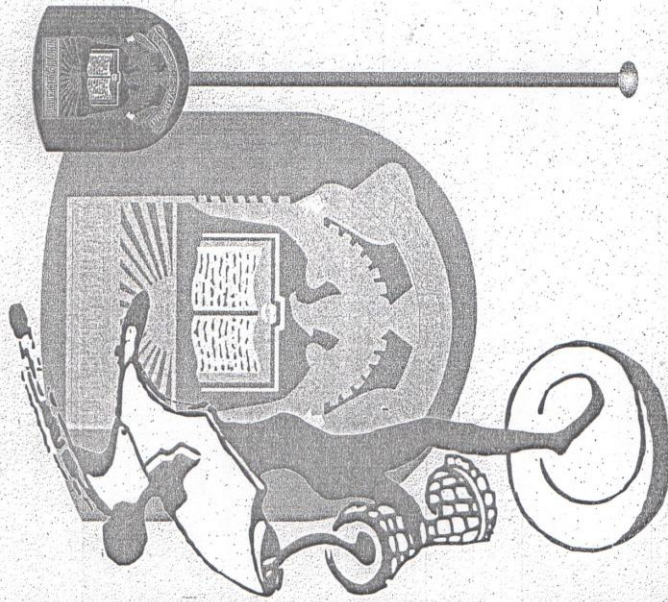


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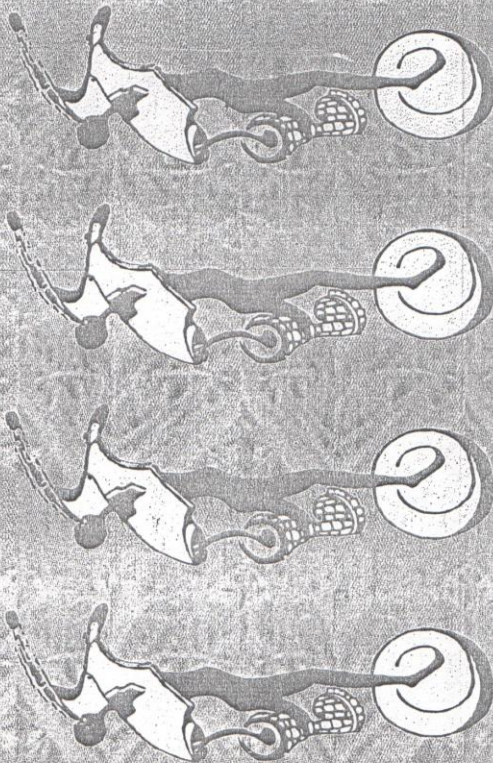
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A Grammatical Analysis of Subtitling in Yoruba Home Videos

By

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Abstract

This paper carries out a grammatical analysis of subtitling in Yoruba home videos. Using a descriptive approach, it examines the grammar of the language used in English subtitles of Yoruba home videos. Three Yoruba home videos subtitled in English are randomly chosen for this study. It is discovered that most subtitles are ungrammatical; errors permeate most of the subtitles. Words, phrases and sentences were analysed and various levels of errors were discovered. Some of the errors revealed outright lack of knowledge on the part of the person that did the subtitling while some revealed errors on the part of copy writers and also poor editing. Great efforts need to be made to improve these subtitles. It is recommended that the services of very good translators, grammarians and copy editors should be engaged. This will go a long way in enlarging the coast of the movies and make the Yoruba home video industry and by extension the Nigerian movie industry otherwise called Nollywood a money spinner that it should be. It will also help in positioning the Yoruba movie industry in the rightful position where it can favourably compete with Hollywood.

Keywords: Grammar, Yoruba Home Videos, Subtitles, Nollywood.

Introduction

The importance of communication in every facet of life cannot be overemphasised. This is because language forms an essential part of a people's culture. When language does not communicate, people are likely to lose interest in whatever speech act is being performed. This is evidenced in the subtitling of movies, the essence whereby is to make it available to a wider audience, who do not speak nor understand the

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language used in the production of the movies or people with language impairment. Good pictures, videos and the subtitles are the most recognized links that help such audience to follow the movies. However, when this is poorly done, an audience can easily be put off. Shoddy subtitles can completely alter a viewer's understanding of a film (Wagner, 2012). Oyevo (2003, p. 145) also concludes that language is 'a vital contributive factor to the success and acceptability of the various genres of the video films production'. Subtitling has become a herculean task in foreign films and Nigerian movie industry in particular. The Nigerian movie industry has come a long way with very good movies coming from its stables. However, many of the movies are sub-standard not only in storyline, visual and audio quality but also in subtitles; subtitles have acted as a barrier to quality appreciation of film contents (Ugochukwu, 2013).

The Yoruba home video industry produces movies which are sourced from the Yoruba cosmological space with Yoruba language as the linguistic choice (nigeriafilms.com, 2009). To make these movies available to non-Yoruba speakers, they are subtitled in English. A mere perusal of Yoruba home videos shows that most of these subtitles are error-filled. These errors include violation of basic rules of concord, semantic misapplication, spelling errors, wrong lexical choices, malapropism, stylistics infelicities, etc. (nigeriafilms.com, 2009). For example, right from the beginning of most Yoruba films, one discovers errors. In *Yemiwo*, the plot summary exposes some of the grammatical errors that translators/interpreters make:

He who live in a glass house should not throw a stone, Yemiwo is a story of some girls who used charm on men in other to control them this prompt Funsho Adeolu's wife to seek for protection from an habelist over her husband in other not be harm by the so called girls, what become of this women? (sic)

Thus, the aim of this research is to carry out a grammatical analysis of Yoruba home videos subtitles. This paper has restricted itself to the grammatical errors of the subtitles; actual translation of the messages was not treated.

Subtitles are captions at the bottom of a movie, video, or television screen. While subtitles are the dialogue in written format, these make videos more powerful, more global and more searchable (Amara, 2012). Although, Yoruba home video subtitles have almost made these tasks almost unachievable, the linguistic inadequacies also make it difficult for

audience to understand. The linguistic gap of such subtitling is addressed in this paper. This mirrors Olatunbosun (2011) that belittling the subtitles is to belittle our image as a people beyond our shores.

Grammar is a set of rules that generate language (Carnie, 2002). Grammatical rules govern the composition of words, phrases and sentences. Since grammatical rules generate language, they govern the dialogues in the video as well as the subtitles. Grammar equates the knowledge of native speakers and since most of the actors in Yoruba home videos are Yoruba native speakers, the dialogues are assumed to be okay. However, subtitles, which are done in English and at times French, are fraught with errors due to the fact that English is learnt as a second or even third language. Writing is also a skill that needs to be properly learnt.

Methodology

Home videos refer to recorded media produced for home entertainment. They are either sold or rented in video format to the public. Most home videos come in Video Home System (VHS), Video Compact Disk (VCD) and Digital Versatile (Video) Disk (DVD) formats. Three Yoruba home videos subtitled in English were randomly chosen for this study. The movies are *Atobiju*, *Yemiwo* and *Eko Funfun*. Each of the subtitles in the movies was written and those found with errors are pencilled down for analysis. About one hundred and fifty (150) sentences constitute our database. Adapting Masterson and Apel (2005), it is believed that a corpus of 150 should be able to capture the various patterns of errors attested in Yoruba home videos. Each sentence is analyzed for different types of grammatical errors. Some are at the word level and these are characterized as either errors or mistakes on the part of the editor or typographical and copy editing errors. At the morphological and syntactic levels, various errors were discovered and these were appropriately recorded.

The Home Videos

Atobiju is written, produced and directed by Olaide Olabanji while the executive producers are Ibraheem Akeem and Fareedah Akeem. The movie was produced in 2011 and run for one hundred and five (105) minutes. It tells the story of a man who accuses his wife of infidelity. Obsessed by the suspicion and in a bid to find out the truth, he sets up his wife by sending his friend to pretend as if he is interested in his wife. He believes that the response of his wife to his friend's overtures will confirm

her infidelity or otherwise. He does not stop there as he seeks out an herbalist to place *magùn* 'thunderbolt' on his wife. Unfortunately for him, the friend is a terrible player also seeking his own personal enrichment. He charms the woman, dupes her and also sleeps with her not minding the fact that he knows that the woman has been laced with *magùn*. It is payback time for the man and his friend. The friend eventually dies from *magùn* and the herbalist reconciles man and wife.

Yemiwo is written and produced by Afolabi Shonde while the editor is Yomi Akindede. The executive Producer is Sir Ayinde Lateef Goodluck. It is produced in 2010 and runs for one hundred and five (105) minutes. *Yemiwo* is also a convoluted story of retribution. It involves different layers of breach of trust and vengeance. The third video, *Eko Funfun* is written and produced by Kudirat Oreniwa while the editor is Segun Oshoko. The executive producer is Olajide Ibiwoye. The movie, produced in 2011, runs for sixty (60) minutes. The story revolves around a lady who was in search of the right man to marry. When she eventually gets her choice, she encounters a problem in the mother of the would-be husband. They eventually overcome the hindrance created by the woman and got married.

Spelling Errors

English spelling is a complicated matter and learners around the world have trouble getting the letters right (Akbar, Szalac and Che Lah, 2011). The complexity of the spelling of English compared to Yoruba which has phonetic spelling system cannot be overemphasized. Different spelling errors are discovered in the subtitles of the selected movies. There are instances of addition, deletion, substitution and transposition of alphabets. These are exemplified below:

- **Addition:** extraneous alphabets are inserted.

among	among
where	were
thought	thought
Youn	you
world	word
struff	stuff

- **Deletion:** alphabets are deleted
- | | |
|--------|----------|
| torrow | tomorrow |
| remove | removed |
| been | being |

her within we work minutes interested
 • Substitution: alphabets are substituted.
 useless advising those checked seat competent important patient word
 competence importance patience work

- Transposition: this is a case of reordering of alphabets.

this work detect quiet

While different patterns of errors are detected, it is noted that some of them are mistakes or typographical errors as there are instances where the correct forms of some words are equally used. Also, it is discovered that some are actually not spelling errors, but grammatical errors. For example the use of *been* instead of *being*, *remove* for *removed* are grammatical errors.

Grammatical Errors

Grammar is concerned with the principles governing the derivation and interpretation of words, phrases and sentences. It is all about morphology and syntax. Grammatical errors therefore refer to both morphological and syntactic errors. Any native speaker knows his language; knows how to derive and interpret vocabularies. This is however not the case in second language situations, hence grammatical errors. It has been discovered that most second language users have problems with the grammatical categories. These are categories that deal with tense, case, number, gender, aspect, etc. The categories are responsible for the well-formedness and grammaticality of sentences.

Many errors in the subtitles are detected in this area. Tense and number errors especially were discovered.

Tense Errors

Tense has to do with notion of time in relation to the actual event. It shows the relation that exists between the speaker and the event he is relating. It could also be seen as the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973). Yoruba language does not mark tense overtly, it is implied. This means that the verb in Yoruba does not change, it cannot be inflected. On the other hand, English uses inflection to mark tense. One discovers tense errors in declarative and interrogative sentences in the selected movies. The examples below show some of the tense errors in the subtitles:

- a. That was all I said and she start insulting me.
 - b. The she start insulting me.
 - c. My mother refuse to believe me
 - d. I will checked back on you.
 - e. It is this order that you have you to spoilt everything.
- a. Did you told mommy that a man dropped her at home?
 - b. Didn't your husband told you?
 - c. Did you father did the right thing?
 - d. When did they brought it
 - e. When did you became a drinker Segun?
 - f. Where did it reacted

The examples in (5) show tense errors in declarative sentences. The underlined verbs in (5a-c) should be in the past tense while the underlined verb in (5d) should not have the -ed inflection. The presence of the auxiliary 'will' indicate that the sentence is in the future.

The data in (6) are interrogative sentences, yes-no questions and wh-questions. There are peculiarities attached to the formation of these sentences which are not attested in Yoruba. Examples (6a-c) are yes-no questions. These types of questions require a *yes* or a *no* as an answer. In deriving yes-no questions and some wh-questions in English, the auxiliary verb along with tense moves and swaps positions with the subject NP. This is called the Aux-NP inversion. In situations where there is no auxiliary, a dummy verb, *DO* is inserted. This is called *DO-Support*. When that happens, *do* and tense move to swap position with the subject-NP. This means that the verb can no longer be inflected for tense as the

tense has moved, hence the ungrammaticality of the questions. The questions should rather read:

7. a. Did you tell mommy that a man dropped her at home?
- b. Didn't your husband tell you?
- c. Did your father do the right thing?
- d. When did they bring it?

The wrong use of the verb *Do* was also discovered in the subtitles. For example:

- Did you not sleeping
- this should read:
- Are you not sleeping?

Number Errors

Number has to do with distinction between singular and plural, indicating whether a noun is one or more than one. It also has a direct bearing on agreement between the subject and the verb. The grammar rule states that a singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject goes with a plural verb. Most errors discovered have to do with agreement between the subjects and the verbs.

10. a. They all has a price
- b. She said you is coming
- c. Your wife and I has an appointment by 4pm at Larry King hotel.

The underlined verbs in (10a-d) should carry the plural forms while the underlined verbs in (10e) should be singular. The determiner in (10f) should be plural as it is referring to a plural noun '*men*'.

Punctuation Errors

Punctuation marks have been confirmed to be symbols that indicate the structure and organisation of written language. The actual speech makes use of pauses, tones and intonations while the subtitles rely on punctuations. In standard writing, different types of punctuation marks are placed at different positions to signify the type of structure subtitled. It was discovered, however, that the subtitles are rife with punctuation errors. Most sentences end without a period; question marks that should indicate interrogative structures are oftentimes absent, commas are not placed where they are supposed to be, neither are colons or semi-colons used in most instances. The data in (11) and (12) exemplify these.

11. a. Her husband was sick, I went home to treat him, is

- b. that was all
- I say she cant leave tihs house
- c. I don't know why she stay long
- a. Did you not sleeping
12. b. What happening tell me

The data in (11a-f) are declarative sentences which should end in periods while (11g) is an exclamatory sentence that should end with an exclamation mark, these are obviously absent. Examples (12a-g) showcase interrogative sentences which are supposed to carry question marks but they are absent. In many instances the first alphabets of names and first words in a sentence are not capitalized. For example:

13. a. What happening? tell me
- b. Where is tinuke? is this good?
- c. she often speak about you that you are closer friends

Findings and Conclusion

Looking through the various errors discussed above, it was discovered that the differences between the source language (Yoruba) and the target language (English) would account for some of the errors noted. The system and structure of Yoruba language are transferred unto the subtitles. The fact the English sound system is complex also has a role to play. A major factor that could account for spelling errors is the inability to distinguish between the sound systems of the languages involved. Mispronunciation of words also leads to spelling errors as words are spelt as they are pronounced. This is a fact for Yoruba but impossible in English.

However, it is discovered that some instances of spelling, punctuation and capitalization errors are instances of typographical errors and by extension improper editing. Knowing and acknowledging the importance of subtitling a movie means that conscious efforts must be made to secure the services of very good typists, computer operators and editors who are well grounded and highly skilled. These people can actually make use of resources like spell-checker on the computer.

The grammatical errors identified in the course of this research clearly show that most of the people involved in subtitling of home videos do not have the knowledge of grammar and so end up committing grammatical blunders. Following simple grammatical rules would have resulted in beautiful subtitling that would be appealing to the audience. It

is noted that as simple as these grammatical rules are, they cannot be used if one is not properly schooled in the art. For Yoruba home videos to endear itself to non Yoruba audiences, great efforts must be put in place to have beautiful subtitling.

There are some producers whose films are correctly subtitled; these producers also produce block-busters that meet export quality. Some producers are also trying to reach this height. This paper recommends that rather than restricting themselves to people in the movie industry they can actually get editors in the academic and publishing community. Services of very good translators, grammarians and copy editors should be engaged.

Home Videos

- Atobiju
- Yemiwo
- Eko Funfun

Appendix

Atobiju

That was all I said and she start insulting me.

The she start insulting me.

Should I keep quite?

Where is tinuke? is this good?

What sort of useless person is this?

Did you not sleeping

Her husband was sick, I went home to treat him, is that was all

What happening tell me

I say she cant leave this house

Did you told mommy that a man dropped her at home?

When did they brought it

I don't know why she stay long

Is this not tinuke that is been dropped outside?

My own wife is been dropped in a car

Is this good

What sort of useless person is this

Do you my want to send me out of my matrimonial home?

What happening? tell me

When did they brought it

Where you there. You destroyed her with your mouth

You ve remove her from her matrimonial home
She said you is coming

Yemiwo

I don't know why we will not able to open up to each other in a relationship.

We slept together you had nothing on.

It is as if you are punishing me.

Maybe she heard something about me, or she is not interested in me at all.

I am not just for anyman, if he want to marry me, let him take me to his house.

Lolade, he is protecting your interest. Hw want to marry you properly.

I want to promise you onething before the end of this week, I will take you to my house.

Before this weeked.

God will make me over come her.

Kemi don't interfere in my issue again, because I don't understanding you.

In those days when were young, she was the one that was attending to us.

Eko Funfun

Add 5 years to your age, your are getting older.

May that is how he wants it.

When did you became a drinker Segun?

Now I'm crazy and any girl that I falls into my trap will regret it.

I feel like drinking none stop

You may look at what I say as the work of a drunkard but I want you to look closely.

Where did I told you am going?

Sidi, give this men whatever they want.

Now you see that she is even worse then the last lady is.

Now listen, if I ever call me or I see you anywhere near my house, I will stab you...

Did you father did the right thing?

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The Creative Theatrical Oeuvre of Peace in Sunnie Ododo's *Hard Choice*

By

Tayo Simeon Arinde *

Abstract

In considering a more proactive alternative peace exerting institution, this paper identifies the theatre as that alternative paradigm, typified in Sunnie Ododo's theatrical oeuvre, *Hard Choice*. For this study, an analytical literary dissection methodology of the play script, *Hard Choice* is employed. Arising from this, we assert that entertainment, using the paradigm of the theatre seems to be an alternative model and a panacea of hope to restoring peace in our crises ridden society. We also draw inspiration from William Blake's (1757-1827) philosophy when he sees "peace as the human dress". In adopting that position therefore, we recommend that theatre should be employed to exert peace, which is the human dress in our society as celebrated in Sunnie Ododo's theatrical oeuvre, *Hard Choice*.

Keywords: Peace, Conflict, Theatre for Development, Blight.

Introduction

The most sought ingredient of development in our society today is peace. Paradoxically, peace has remained an elusive phenomenon in our society. Blake (1757-1827) underscores the importance of peace to society as "the human dress". The metaphor of dress used by Blake to describe peace therefore underlines the usefulness of dress as a protector for humanity, thereby underpinning the necessity of peace in the society. This in essence means that any society that adorns the garment of peace stands perpetually protected. This may be the reason why Rummel (1981, p. 3) describes peace as "an absence of dissension, violence, or war...concord, or harmony and tranquility... a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of powers". The desirability of peace in the

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