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Teaching and Learning English: A Contrastive Study of English and Èggón Sound System

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Abstract
This paper attempts to investigate the relationship that exists between English and Ẹ̀ggón languages at the level of sounds and its implication for teaching and learning for both teachers and learners in Ẹ̀ggón speaking communities. Data were generated from documented sources and introspection. The collated data were analyzed using the contrastive method in language learning and teaching. The paper compares and contrasts some phonological issues such as phonemes (consonants and vowels), tone, consonant clusters, and syllable structure in both languages. The investigations show that Ẹ̀ggón has fewer phonemes (38) comprising only 7 vowels, allows complex consonant clusters, operates open and close syllable structure which can have up to 5 consonants and is tonal. English, on the other hand, has 44 phonemes comprising 20 vowels and 24 consonants and uses stress. Some phonological processes attested in both languages include insertion, deletion and nasalization. The analysis shows that areas of similarities facilitate learning while areas of differences pose difficulties such as interference, poor production and articulation of some consonants in English, by Eggon speakers, such as, (/θ/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /ʧ/, /ɹ/, /Σ, /tΣ/, /ʃ/, /ɬ/) and vowels (schwa /ə/ and diphthongs). In addition, stress placement is also another problematic area for Ẹ̀ggón speakers in the learning and teaching of English as a second language. This paper serves as a guide for teachers and learners of English in Éggòn communities for more efficiency in English. It also provides a source of reference material for researchers and can be used for further study in linguistics.
Keywords: Contrastive Analysis, Ẹ̀ggón, English, Sound System, Phoneme

Introduction
Ẹ̀ggón is the name used to refer to both the language and its speakers. The language is spoken in Nasarawa. North Central Nigeria, where the majority of the speakers reside. The language belongs to the Niger-Congo Phylum of the Western Benue Congo Plateau group of African languages (Williamson & Blench 2000). The language has twenty-six dialects, out of which only one is not mutually intelligible. Wana dialect, which is the standard dialect used for Ẹ̀ggón native Bible (New Testament Bible), is used in this work. Blench (2006) opines that Ẹ̀ggón is a tone language; three level tones are attested in the language. The tone marking adopted is acute accent [́] for the high

tone, grave accent [̀] for the low tone, while the mid-tone is left unmarked. The communicative role of language all over the world is achieved through the use of sounds referred to as phonemes which are unique in every language. Due to globalization and languages in contact, various issues arise particularly when learning another language (L2). In a country where the official language is non-native to the citizens, they are bound to face different difficulties based on the sound system of their first language.

This research tries to expose some difficulties faced by Éggòn learners of English and how to remedy them by teachers of English. The paper presents the features of Éggòn phonetics and phonology and also points out the similarities and differences with English. This paper seeks to acquaint the readership with the basics of Éggòn phonology. The language has 38 phonemes comprising 7 vowels and 31 consonants. Some of the unique sounds found in the language include labiovelars [kp] and [gb]; bilabials [Φ], [β]; labio-dentals [ts], and [dz]; palatals [Ɨ], [y], [ɲ], retroflexs [ɾ], [ɳ] and implosive [ɓ] which are unfamiliar sounds in English. While English phones not found in Ẹ̀ggón include /ʒ/, /ʤ/, /ʧ/, /ɭ/, /T/, /Σ/, /tΣ/, /ʃ/, /ɬ/. The present research shows that Ẹ̀ggón has five syllable structures such as V, CV, VC, CVC, and CCCV, which are also found in English but at different positions; in addition, the language is tonal where tone differentiates the meaning of words, sentences and perform grammatical functions while English uses stress and intonation to change the meaning of words.

Statement of the Problem

Language is an indispensable part of human beings without which communication cannot take place effectively. Every language is unique and needs to be adequately described, documented, and used by its speakers. This is true of many European and some African languages except a majority of small group languages such as Éggòn which suffer poor documentation, are less described, grossly endangered and at risk of extinction; due to many factors such as the effect of English as the official language, influence of the majority languages such as Hausa, to mention two. Poor implementation of the use of the language of the environment in teaching for the first three years as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (1977 revised 1981, 1999 and 2004) results in poor mastery of English as L2 by learners. This study tries to provide a solution to this problem.

Methodology

This study collects data from existing literature such as text books, journals, and projects, particularly, English phonetics and phonology (Roach 1999), Ẹ̀ggón dictionary draft (Blench 2006), English phonetics and phonology (Omachonu 2010), the sound pattern of language (https://scholar.havard.edu,files), and five literate informants who are Eggon native speakers. The researchers' intuitive knowledge as Ẹ̀ggón native speakers and English language users aid their observations in the analysis of English and Ẹ̀ggón sound system. The collated data is analyzed using the descriptive method and contrastive analysis method formulated by Lado (1957) because the study deals with the phonological relation between two languages and its effects on second language learners. The data were collated, written down/recorded and described to identify easily the similarities and differences between English and Ẹ̀ggón languages.

Literature Review

Egbe (1979) in a contrastive study of the sound system and syllabic structure of the English language (Received Pronunciation) and Nigerian English reveals that the sound system of the local language influences English pronunciation. The tonal features of Nigerian languages are often transferred into the prosodic feature of English resulting in stressing every syllable in some words. This review is relevant to the present study because the sound system of Éggòn learners of English L1 interferes with their learning of L2. In addition, most Éggòn speakers find it difficult to place stress in English words because there is no stress in Éggòn.

On the contrastive study of the consonant sounds of English and Okphela, Balogun (n.d) shows that English differs from Okphela in terms of the number of consonants comprising 24 against 33. 3 bilabials /m/, /p/, and /b/ exists in English while Okphela has 8 bilabials /m/, /p/, /b/, /kp/, /gb/, /kpʰ/, /gbʰ/ and /Ɔm/. In addition to English labio-dental /f/ and /v/, Okphela has /pf/. There are no dental and palato-alveolar in Okphela while /ts/ and /ŋ/ phonemes are found in the dialect but do not exist in English. These and more constitute L2 problems for speakers of this dialect who find it difficult to realize some words correctly e.g., thigh as [tai] though as [dou], yam as [ʃa], went as [ɳent], etc. This review is important to the present study as Éggòn also has more consonants than English but some of the sounds are not found in English and vice versa. This creates a lot of learning difficulties.

Ayegba (2011) in a contrastive study of English and Igala phonology and morphology shows that Igala has only two fricatives /f/ and /h/. The sounds /t/ /s/ and /z/ do not occur in the language; the language does not distinguish short and long vowels; and does not allow consonant clusters. Ayegba predicts Igala learners of English would have pronunciation problems. The study of Igala and English is relevant to the present study but differs slightly. Igala has fewer consonants than English while Éggòn has more consonants than English. Éggòn, just like Igala, does not have long vowels and diphthongs, but the consonants /ts and z/ exist in Éggòn.

Oforji (2014) in a contrastive study of Igbo and Yoruba segmental phonemes and phonetics shows that the language has a different number of consonant phonemes (Igbo 28 Yoruba 18). The two languages also differ in the manner of articulation. All Yoruba fricatives /f/ /z/ /ʒ/ are voiceless and the only affricate is /dz/, while Igbo has voiced fricatives /v, z, Φ/ and voiceless affricate /tΣ/. Voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ labialized velar plosive /kw/ and /gw/, velar nasal /ŋ/ labialized velar nasal /Ɔw/ are not found in Yoruba. Similarly, vocalic phonemes also differ in the two languages 12 in Yoruba and 8 in Igbo. The /l and y/ in Igbo do-not exist in Yoruba. Nasalization occurs in both languages but Yoruba five nasalized phonemes do not undergo nasalization. For instance, /a/ is a back vowel in Yoruba but a front vowel in Igbo. Igbo and Yoruba phonotactics do not permit consonant clusters or consonants at the word final positions except syllabic nasals /m/ and /n/. There is vowel harmony in Igbo with the exception of /a/. Yoruba phonotactics: the syllable structure is V, CV, and N (syllabic nasal). The writer predicts problems of transfer from L1 to TL in both languages where a particular sound is absent in L1. Thus, a language teacher needs to emphasize such areas of difference.

Okanlawo (n.d) report on the analysis of the Yoruba language and English shows that Yoruba has some sounds such as /kp/ and /gb/ which are unfamiliar to English, uses tones (high, mid and low) to signify a difference in meaning, which is not found in English. Okanlawo adds that Yoruba has three syllable types CV, V and syllabic nasal N, all the syllables are open and consonant clusters

are not allowed unlike in English. Morphologically, Yoruba add a word before the noun to form a plural rather than inflection in English. Words are formed through pre-fixation (verb to noun) and compounding, the morphological typology is isolating or analytic. The syntax of Yoruba includes the word order SVO; a Yes-No question is formed by adding the Q particle (ndʒé) or (ʃé) to the beginning of the sentence while a wh-question is formed by moving the object NP to the beginning of a sentence.

In addition to the study of Yoruba compared to English, Ogundapo (2015) says Yoruba has 25 alphabets made up of 7 vowels and 18 consonants. The difference in alphabets, phonemes, phonological processes, consonant clusters, tone and intonation, etc., result in different problems for Yoruba learners of English. The writer suggests that teachers of the English language in Nigeria should carry out a comparative study of learners' L1 and English to facilitate learning, and the learners should strive to acquire proficiency in English.

Eme and Uba (n.d) on a contrastive study of the phonology of Igbo and Yoruba note that the two languages differ in consonants, vowels and tonal system. Igbo has twenty-eight consonants and eight vowels while Yoruba has eighteen consonants and twelve vowels (7 oral and 5 nasal vowels). Both languages have high and low tones but differ in down-step (Igbo) and mid (Yoruba) tones. The study shows that sounds that are similar in both languages facilitate learning while areas of difference constitute learning difficulties, citing the Igbo phonemes / p kw gw v z ŋ ŋw ɲʁ tʃ/ which are absent in Yoruba; similarly, Igbo lacks nasal vowels / ĩ ɛ̃ ã ɔ̃ ũ/ found in Yoruba while Yoruba lacks /i/ and /u/ found in Igbo. These learning difficulties can be solved by a proper emphasis on areas of difference in both languages when teaching.

The above review of the phonemes of Igbo and Yoruba is relevant to the present study in that it is a comparative study of two languages that have similarities and differences. Emphasizing areas of difficulty during teaching is also a possible solution for Éggòn learners of English difficulties.

English and Éggòn Alphabet

Éggòn alphabet consists of twenty-seven letters which are made up of seven vowels and twenty-three consonants. This differs from the English alphabet which is twenty-six consisting of five vowels and twenty-one consonants. The Éggòn alphabet is as follows:

a b d e ẹ f g gb h i j k kp l m n o ọ p r s t u v w y z

English alphabet is: a b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

In addition to the difference in number, some letters in each language are not found in the other, although there can be equivalents. Letters like ẹ gb kp ọ are not found in English while letters like c q x are absent in Éggòn.

Phonemes in English and Éggòn

Phonemes can be defined simply as the sounds that differentiate meaning in a language, such as /p/ and /b/ in the words **pit** and **bit**. There are 44 phonemes in English comprising 20 vowels and 24 consonants. However, there are 38 phonemes in Éggòn comprising 31 consonants and 7 vowels. It is clear that there are differences in the number of phonemes which can result in different learning problems for Éggòn learners of English. Éggòn has more consonants than English but some English consonants are not found in Éggòn. Similarly, Éggòn has fewer vowels than English.

The Éggòn consonant and vowel chart are presented in the sub-sections that follow based on the Éggòn Dictionary Draft Blench (2006), and the writer's input.

Consonants

Consonants are sounds that are produced with some form of obstruction of the air as it passes from the lungs through the mouth. There are 24 consonants in English and 31 consonants in Éggòn. English consonants include bilabial /p b m w/, alveolar /t d s z l r/, velar /k g ŋ/, labiodentals /f v/, dental /T Σ/, post alveolar /ʃ ʒ ʧ ʤ/, glottal /h/, and palatal /j/ (cf. Omachonu 2010) for a detailed description. Éggòn consonant sounds are shown in the chart below.

Éggòn Consonant Chart

	Bila-bial -vc +vc	Labio-dental -vc +vc	Alveolar -vc +vc	Retroflex -vc +vc	Palatal -vc +vc	Velar -vc +vc	Labio-velar -vc +vc	Glottal -vc +vc
Plosive	p b		t d		ɟ	k g	kp gb	
Nasal	m		n	ɳ	ɲ	ŋ		
Implosive	ɓ							
Fricative	φ β	f v	s z	ʃ				h
Affricate		ʦ ʣ	J					
Approximant	w				y			
Tap			r	ɾ				
Lateral			l					

1. Examples of consonants

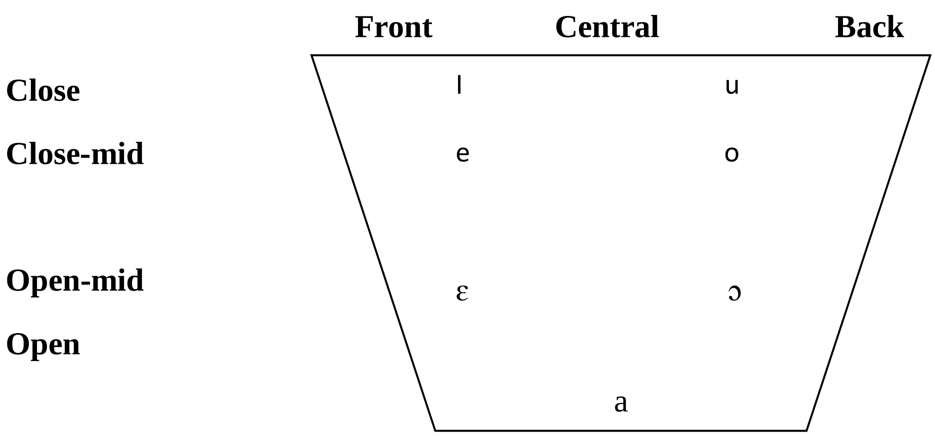
/p/	Pyèn 'fine'	/ b/	bá 'come'	/t/	taŋ 'chew'
/d/	dá 'let'	/ɟ/	edjimù 'stone'	/Φ/	ipù 'jealous'
/k/	kpi 'demolish'	/g/	gzọ̀ 'vomit'	/kp/	kpù 'die'
/gb/	gbìngbìn 'insistently'	/m/	mbo 'no'	/n/	nzénzé 'plenty'
/ɳ/	henè 'slowly'	/ɲ/	nye 'teach'	/ŋ/	abòŋ 'his, hers, ones'
/ɓ/	úbin 'ground'	/β/	ebeh 'beans'	/f/	fa 'fetch'
/v/	vu 'catch'	/s/	skó 'carry'	/z/	zagá 'cook'

/ʃ/	shḱa ‘the act of’ sha ‘exclamation’			/h/	hi ‘this’
/dz/	ádzi ‘good’ dza ‘wash’	/w/	wuku ‘cry’	/j/	begyekù ‘cat’, áyî ‘who’
/y/	áyýa ‘leaf’, ayan ‘sigh’	/r/	ŕa ‘remain’	/ɍ/	grò ‘to escape’, ágrò ‘fool’
/l/	óĺo/ĺoĺo ‘sickness’	/ts/	tsotse ‘together’, tsipi ‘to understand’		

As seen in the examples above, the consonants /y/, /dz/, /kp/, /gb/, /ts/ /ɳ/, /ɲ/, /ɓ/, /β/, /ɟ/, /Φ/, and /ɍ/ are not found in English; similarly, the sounds /ʒ/, /ʤ/, /ʧ/, /ɹ/, /Ѳ/,/T/, /Σ/, /tΣ/, /ɾ/, /ɬ/, are not found in Éggòn.

Vowels

Vowels are those sounds that are produced without any form of obstruction of air as it passes from the lungs through the mouth. There are 20 vowels in English: /i: i e æ a: ɔ ɔ: u u: Λ ε: ə ei ai ɔi əu ea au iə εə uə/ (Omachonu 2010) but 7 in Éggòn i e u a o ɔ ε . This results in a lot of pronunciation challenges for Éggòn learners of English. The absence of some vowels like the schwa /ə/, /Λ/, /iə/, /eə/, /ai/, /ei/, /æ, results in the replacement of the vowels with similar vowels in Éggòn such as /a/, /u/, /i/, /e/, and /a/. Below are the vowels in Éggòn and their examples:



6. Examples of each vowel:

/ε/	d́ẹ ‘tear’, t́ẹ ‘shift’	/i/	nglî ‘wait’
/e/	enú ‘chicken’, dé ‘give’	/a/	ḱa ‘see’, tsá ‘show’
/ɔ/	esọ̄ ‘heart’, óvọ ‘fire’	/o/	osh́e ‘strength’, ogbǵa ‘air’
/u/	hĺu ‘blow’, enu ‘chicken’		

English Consonant and Vowel Chart

CONSONANT CHART (ENGLISH)

		PLACE OF ARTICULATION							
MANNER	**VOICING**	**Bilabial**	**Labiodental**	**Dental**	**Alveolar**	**Post-Alveolar**	**Palatal**	**Velar**	**Glottal**
Stop	*Voiceless* *Voiced*	p (*s*pat) b (*b*at)			t (*st*ack) d (*d*ig)			k (scat) g (*g*et)	[/ (uh-oh)]
Fricative	*Voiceless* *Voiced*		f (*f*at) v (*v*at)	T (*th*in) Δ (*th*en)	s (*s*at) z (*z*ap)	Σ (*sh*oe) Z (mea*s*ure)			h (*h*at)
Affricate	*Voiceless* *Voiced*					tΣ (*ch*urch) dZ (*j*udge)			
Tap/Flap					[ɾ (pi*tt*y)]				
Nasal		m (*m*at)			n (*n*ot)			N (si*ng*)	
Approximant					ɹ (*r*ope)				
Lateral Approx.					l (*l*ate)				
Glide		w (*w*in)					j (*y*et)	w (*w*in)	

VOWEL CHART (ENGLISH)

TENSE VOWELS ARE IN BOLD

	Front	Central	Back
High	i (m*ee*t)		u (wh*o*'d)
Mid-High	ɪ (m*i*tt)		ʊ (h*oo*d)
Mid-Low	eɪ (m*a*te) ɛ (m*e*t)	ə (*a*bove) ʌ (*a*bove)	ɔɪ (b*oy*) oʊ (h*oe*d) ɔ (p*aw*)
Low	æ (m*a*t)	aɪ (b*y*e) aʊ (b*ou*gh)	ɑ (f*a*ther)

Source: arizona.edu

Phonological Processes

The phonological process occurs as a result of continuous reading which is typical of words being used together. Put differently, there is sometimes a combination of the last sound of the first word with the first sound of the words that follow when reading. This might result in sound change. In addition, the pace of the speech (fast, normal or slow), as well as, the medium of communication may affect pronunciation leading to one form of phonological process or another. There are different types of phonological processes: assimilation, dissimilation, nasalization, deletion, insertion, vowel reduction, metathesis, and flapping. These are found in English but only a few are found in Eggon.

Phonological Processes in English and Ẹ̀ggón

Phonological processes in English include assimilation, dissimilation, nasalization, deletion, insertion, vowel reduction, metathesis, and flapping; while that of Ẹ̀ggón include deletion, insertion, and nasalization.

Deletion

This is the loss of certain sounds in a word or word boundary in order to ease pronunciation in speech. Deletion in Ẹ̀ggón is found in both a word and word boundary. Some examples of deletion of sounds are included.

7. Adega _ adga ‘leg’

   Abugo _ abgo ‘hand’

   Embaga _ embga ‘witchcraft’

   Ikulu _ iklu ‘sheep’

   Abumo _ abmo ‘breast’

   Aku ugumu akugumu ‘hospital’

   eyi eyi eyiyi ‘face’

In the examples above, /e, u, and a, are deleted in the words adga, abgo, iklu, abmo, akugumu and eyiyi respectively.

Deletion in English removes a sound segment from a word. It involves a letter being written at the surface structure but silent in the deep structure e.g.

8. memory /mɛmri/ (o is deleted)

   sign /sain/ (g is deleted)

   lamb /lam/ /b/ is deleted.

While in Éggòn the deleted sound is not written at the surface structure. Éggòn learners of English often pronounce such silent letters due to the transfer of what is obtainable in their language.

Insertion

Insertion involves adding a sound segment into the pronunciation of a word for ease. In English, it can be found in words like,

9. Please /p?liz/

   Film /fil?m

   Ankle /??k?l/

In example 9, there is an insertion represented by a question mark in each word at the deep surface.

In Eggon, insertion can be found in some words usually indicated by a possession sign as in the words

10. ék'pó 'ten'

    ènd'gàkyèn 'one hundred'

In example 10, there is the insertion in both words represented by a possession sign.

Nasalization

Nasalization is a transfer of nasality to a nearby vowel in a word. It is common in English and Éggòn. However, the nasal in English comes before the nasalized segment while in Eggon the nasal can come before or after the nasalized segment. Nasalization in English occurs when a sound is influenced by the following nasal within the same syllable structure. In Éggòn it is sometimes phonemic, represented by a tilde over the vowel (post nasalization) and other times both phonemic and represented by a nasal (pre nasalization). Nasalization occurs as a result of a following nasal either before or after a vowel e.g. post nasalization.

11a. Éggòn ozhẽ 'road', esõ 'heart', vẽ 'beg'

     English bean [bĩn], lame [lẽm] lace /les/

In the examples of post nasalization above, the nasal /n/ at the end of the above words ozhen, eson and ven is not written but the nasalized vowels have a tilde to show they have been nasalized.

Pre-nazalized segments

Pre nasalized segments refer to the process whereby the nasal precedes the segment it is nasalizing. This is not found in English but is common in Éggòn as exemplified below

11.b mbo 'no', nzénzé 'plenty', mbré 'to mix', mbrè 'to give birth', ndzà 'wash', mvyé 'all'

As shown above, the nasals /n/, /m/, /mb/ come before the nasalized vowels /o/, /e/, and /a/.

Tone

Most African languages like Éggòn are tonal but English uses intonation for emphasis and difference in meaning. This constitutes a learning problem for Éggòn learners of English as most

of them find it difficult to place the primary stress in words. There are two commonly marked tones in Éggòn: The high (´) tone and the low (`) tone. The mid-tone is not usually marked. There are also falling (∧) and rising (∨) tones (Blench 2006). However, these are not common. Thus, the present study limits itself to the level of tones. The tone in Éggòn performs both lexical and grammatical functions. The lexical tone is marked on open class (noun, verb, etc.) words which differentiate meaning, as shown below:

12.a Examples of lexical tone.

i. àzhén (LH) 'stranger',
ii. àzhèn (LL) 'door',
iii. mbré (H) 'to mix'
iv. mbrè (L) 'to give birth'

As seen above, the tone performs the function of changing the lexical meanings.

Grammatical tone, on the other hand, marks inflectional categories (noun, verb), derivational processes (noun from verb), and performs other grammatical functions. For instance,

12. b i endgà (L) 'hundred'

ii endgá (H) 'hundreds'

iii ŋò bà (LL) 'you should come here'

iv ŋ́o bá (HH) 'will you come'?

As seen above, the tone performs the grammatical function of plurality and changes sentence type.

English and Éggòn Syllable Structure

A syllable is usually made up of a consonant and a vowel or a single vowel. It consists of an onset (C), a nucleus (V) and a coda (C) i.e. CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant). This is found in both English and Éggòn and is somehow complex. Both languages have both open (go, bar; ba 'come', ka 'see') and closed (bad, pen; tan 'eat', àzhèn 'door) syllable structures. There are five syllable structures in Éggòn V, CV, VC, CVC, CCCV, as in the following words:

13a. V/CV u/bu 'dog', o/ri 'first', a/hé 'new'

VC/CCV am/bla 'later' gzo, 'vomit', kso, 'leave'

CVC taŋ 'eat'

CCCV ndba 'straighten', mbga 'test'

13b. English

V/CV I, go

VC	am, an,
CVC	pan, man
CCV	spit
CCCV	spray

Consonant Cluster

A consonant cluster is the presence of two or more consonants at the beginning, middle or end of a word. This is also found in both English and Éggòn, but the number of consonants in a cluster varies in the two languages. It ranges from two to five in Éggòn while English allows two to three consonant clusters at word-initial and medial positions but allows up to four consonants at the word-final position. Similarly, the consonant cluster is found at word initial, medial and final positions in English while there is no consonant cluster in final positions in Éggòn. A word can have a cluster at the beginning and medial positions; similarly, there can be double clusters at the medial position while English can also have a double cluster at the beginning and middle/end of words. Below are some examples:

14a. Éggòn

Initial	**Medial**	
bleble ‘slowly’	ambla	‘later’,
gno ‘listen’	ebiekpnmre	‘butter beans’
shla ‘save’	embgbeshka	‘fox’
tspi ‘stand’	amgblami	‘ship’
mbrè ‘to give birth’	otsotse	‘together’
ndba ‘straighten’	agbŋmre	‘fat’

14.b English

Initial	**Medial**	**Final**
Splints	grammar	stick
Physics	settle	stomp
Spray	improves	twelfths
Play	English	midst

As shown in the above examples, English and Éggòn consonant clusters are similar in a way. Both languages allow two to three clusters at the beginning and two to four consonant clusters at the end and middle. However, the fourth consonant sound in an English consonant cluster is due to inflection while it is not so in Éggòn which does not have a consonant cluster at the word-final position.

Discussions

Three sets of sounds make up Ẹ̀ggón words, which can be used to form infinite linguistic patterns. These are consonants, vowels and tone. There are thirty-one consonants, seven vowels, and three-level tones which distinguish individual words or perform grammatical functions. Whereas English words are made up of twenty-four consonants, twenty vowels and suprasegmental.

The study further shows that there are some similar phonemes found in both English and Eggon. Some consonants are produced with a brief complete stoppage of air. The production of nasals in Ẹ̀ggón is similar to that of English. The air from the lungs passes out through the nose instead of the mouth. In addition, the plosive / p b t d k g/, and fricatives /f v s z/ are also produced alike in both languages. The oral vowels that are produced when air passes out through the mouth only, include / a e ɛ i o ɔ u/. These are vowels found in Ẹ̀ggón which roughly correspond to English /i/ in 'pit', /e/ in 'pen', /ɛ/ in 'bet', /a/ in 'mark', /ɔ/ in 'thought' /o/ in 'boat' and /u/ in 'boot'. Three of these vowels /i e o/ can be nasalized before or after a nasal sound in Eggon. Nasal sounds in Eggon are sometimes marked with a tilde / ˜/ and at other times left unmarked. Both languages have close and open syllable type.

Some differences found between the two languages' consonants include labiovelars /kp/ and /gb/ in Eggon, produced with both lips and the back of the tongue which is the place of articulation. Another example of double articulation in Ẹ̀ggón is /dz/ involving a simultaneous articulation of /d/ and /z/. Other sounds not found in English include palatal [ɻ], [y], [ɲ], retroflex [ɾ], [ɳ] and implosive [ɓ]. Similarly, sounds not found in Ẹ̀ggón include /ʒ/, /ʤ/, /ʧ/, /ɭ/, /Θ/, /T/, /Σ/, /tΣ/, /ʃ/, /ɬ/. In addition, diphthongs and vowel lengthening are not also found in Eggon. These differences result in some pronunciation issues resulting in wrong articulation such as /it/ for /i:t/ 'eat', /ar/ for /a:r/ 'are', /teh/ for /tɛə/ 'tear', /tink/ for /Tiŋk/ 'think', /dere/ for //tΣə/ 'there', etc.

The only supra-segmental feature found in Ẹ̀ggón is a tone which performs lexical and grammatical functions while English has length, stress, intonation and phonation which bring about changes in the meaning of words and utterances. Supra-segmental as found in English not significant in Éggòn is why the whole sounds in a word can be stressed. In addition, Ẹ̀ggón has a complex syllable type CCCV at the word initial position which is also found in English, but the sounds in such clusters are different which creates pronunciation difficulty. Furthermore, there are fewer phonological processes in Ẹ̀ggón which are deletion, insertion, and nasalization which are also found in English under different conditions. Deletion in English for instance involves a letter being written at the surface structure but silent in the deep structure e.g. memory [mɛmri] (o is deleted), sign [sain] (g is deleted), etc. while in Éggòn the deleted sound is not written at the surface structure. Éggòn learners of English often pronounce such silent letters. Moreover, nasalization in English occurs before a nasal within the same syllable structure e.g. bean [bĩn], lame [lẽm], while in Éggòn it occurs before and after a nasal e.g. mbo [mbõ] 'no', eson [ɛsõ] 'heart'.

Some English phonemes such as possessive, 's, third person singular -s, regular noun plural marker -s, past tense marker -ed, have allomorphs as in [z] in woman's, [s] in ship's, [əz] in judge's; [z] in needs, [s] in eats, [əz] in rushes, etc. while these inflections do not exist in Éggòn talk more of the allomorphs. This poses difficulty for Éggòn learners who pronounce the above allomorphs as [s].

Conclusion

The analysis of the sound system of English and Ẹ̀ggón shows some features which can be found in Ẹ̀ggón which are unfamiliar to English. Some of the sounds are labio-dentals /ts dz/, labio-velars /kp gb/, bilabial [Φ], [β]; palatal [ɻ], [ɣ], [ɲ], retroflex [ɾ], [ɳ] and implosive [ɓ] which are unfamiliar sounds in English. While the missing phones in Ẹ̀ggón include /ʒ/, /ʤ/, /ʧ/, /ɭ/, /Θ/, /T/, /Σ/, /tΣ/, /ʃ/, /ɬ/. Ẹ̀ggón has five syllable structure which are V, CV, VC, CVC, and CCCV, while English also has a complex consonant cluster such as CCCVC (street), CCCVCC (streets), CVCC (belt), CVCCC (belts), CVCCCC (sixths) but most of the three or more consonant cluster at the end of words is due to inflection. In addition, some phonemes are not found in a cluster such as b after s like *sboil but spoil.

Furthermore, Éggòn language is tonal where tone differentiates the meaning of words, and sentences and performs grammatical functions such as ba 'come' bà 'belong to', nò bà 'you should come' nó bá 'will you come?'; while English has stress, intonation and length as supra-segmental features e.g. exPORT (noun) EXport (verb). Ẹ̀ggón has some phonological processes such as deletion, insertion and nasalization some of which are also found in English but under different circumstances.

The study concludes that Ẹ̀ggón teachers and learners of English should note the difference in the consonant, vowels, tonal system and syllabic structure. Learners should be shown the difference and taught how to master them, by repeated practice, instead of allowing interference and negative transfer, as suggested by some reviewed work. In addition, in line with the current call for a national language, Nigerian English can be used instead of Standard British English in education. This is because most Éggòn learners' errors are due to interference and unfamiliar sounds than grammatical.

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