

## Contrastive Analysis Of Tense Formation Processes In Hausa And English With Teaching And Learning Implications For Teachers Of English As A Second Language

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper investigates the linguistic devices carrying tenses in Hausa and English and provides Teaching and Learning Implications. The tense formation processes in the two languages were studied by a way of contrast. In the study, Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) was used as analytical model. The Gradman's Description, Detection and Explanation (DDE) model was used as a descriptive model for the contrast. Two texts were selected for the analysis: "Points of Disorder" and "Da na Sani Keya ce". Out of the population of ten sentences: four sentences from the Hausa text and another set of four sentences from the English text were used as sample. The sentences carrying different tenses in each language were analyzed to demonstrate both tense markers and linguistic items carrying tense and tense formation processes the languages. It was discovered that the two languages have some similarities in terms of directions occupied by linguistic items marking the presence of tense as well as tense formation processes. However, from the data collected and analyzed, differences become apparent in terms of linguistic items marking the occurrence of tense, those carrying tense and tense formation processes in Hausa and English. The study recommends the use of context-related activities such as making students to write to vividly report and describe adventures and experiences in the teaching of English tenses to Hausa-speaking students. Equally recommended are drilling students in story writing and comparisons of the English tenses identified in stories, speeches etc. with those of the Hausa language. It is expected that using the contrastive model of DDE will help Hausa-speaking students identify if there are cases of confusion in the use of English and Hausa tenses as well as cases of transfer in the use of tenses in either language. This includes problems of overgeneralization of tense formation rules and processes among Hausa-speaking students learning the delicate English language tenses.*

### Introduction

The tense system is often considered as a fundamental aspect of grammar in every language. Using English grammar and its tense system to communicate in speech and in writing is a great problem among Hausa-speaking students in second language settings such as Nigeria. This happens especially in due to certain factors that inhibit effective English language teaching and learning in countries, where English is used as both official and national language. In such contexts, learners transfer certain grammatical aspects of their native language into the target language. This includes the tense system of their language(s). Every teacher of a foreign language knows that the learner's native language tends to interfere with their target language in some predictable ways. Therefore, there will be the need for contrastive analysis of tense formation in second language contexts to aid both teaching and learning. This will serve as a contribution to contrastive linguistics involving English and African languages at especially grammatical level. Cases of interference occur at different learning stages. For example, with respect to similarities and differences of tense at the levels of tense markers and

formation processes, there have not been comprehensive and systematic research by way of contrast, that were carried out using a conventional descriptive model.

Experience has shown that despite the efforts in the development, supply and distribution of teacher and learner textbooks as well as employment and distribution of teachers of English to schools basic and post-basic education institutions in recent years, availability of the teaching materials in some quarters, training workshops, the Hausa-speaking students of English at senior secondary, college and university levels still find it difficult to use the tenses of English well in their written and spoken communication.. This ugly situation warrant wanton stigma, shame and disgrace among interlocutors in many ways. The problems in encountered in this area of English grammar could be approached from the point of view of contrastive linguistics to suggest solutions to the problems.

### **Concepts, Terms and Issues in Contrastive Linguistic Analysis (CLA)**

The term, ‘Contrastive Linguistic Analysis’ (CLA),’ has for many years attracted the attention of theoretical linguists, language teachers and world centers and institutions dealing with second language teaching with a view to investigating heterogeneity and homogeneity of diverse crosslinguistic aspects between and among languages. Some of these institutions, according to James (2013), include the University of Michigan in the United States, the Indiana University as well as the George Town University. These academic institutions have contributed in no small scale to the growth and development of the field of contrastive linguistics (James: 2012). They provided the parameters that are used for carrying out practical contrast. Their contributions to the field open up wider interest from other countries. Nigeria is one of those countries, where leaners of English as a second language face grave difficulties in using English to communicate. As a result, some Nigerian teachers of English such as Yaro (2008), Adeyanju (1972) and Olaofe (1982) become interested in using the theory to study English and some Nigerian languages at particular sub skills by way of contrast to determine areas of English language to which book writers need to pay serious attention and learners need to concentrate on.

Contrastive studies between 1960 and 1965 have shown that the Center of Applied Linguistics of the Washington D.C. was the first major institution that signed a contract with the United States’ Office of Education on the need to champion the course of pursuing a method that facilitates second language learning by way of contrast. The main objective of the contract was to produce a great deal of contrastive studies that involve the English language with any of the five commonly taught languages in the United States. These languages were French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish (Di Pietro 1989). There are five teams of contrastive linguists that were each inaugurated for each of the languages. Subsequently, other east European countries began to establish centers, where contrastive studies could be carried out to aid English language teaching and learning. These include Romania, Poland, Hungry and Czechoslovakia. In each case, English is one of the languages involved in contrast (Di Pietro: 1989). Olaofe (2010) identifies both the strong and the weak hypotheses usually involved in the contrat.

Olaofe (2010:5) says:

*Evidence from empirical studies shows possibility of transfer from source (native) language to the goal (target) language. Such studies are Ebrahim (1975) of Afghan students, peters (1074) of Hungarian students, Oller and Readings (1971) of international students in California, Doumergue’s and Lane (1976) of French adult students. In Nigeria, some contrastive analyses have been completed in support of strong predictive CLA. Adeyanju (1971) for example, finds CLA capable of predicting global and local errors of the Hausa students learning the sentence patterns of English. Banjo (1969), used CLA to predict some problems that Yoruba students may encounter in learning the lexical and syntactic rules of English and, Olaofe (1982), justifies the use of CLA for*

*predicting the verbal errors of Yoruba students learning the English verbal system (Olaofe 2010:5.)*

### **Contrastive Models and their Implications on Contrastive Analysis**

According to Olaofe (2009) and Yusuf (2014), there are some analytical models, which the researcher/constructivist needs to employ anytime there is need or interest for contrastive studies. The researcher adopts a particular model as a basis for establishing the ground and of course for the actual analysis in the contrast. Some of these models include traditional grammar, structural grammar, immediate constituent analysis, transformational generative grammar etc. For this study, transformational generative grammar was used as analytical model and Gradman's Model; Description, Detection and Explanation (DDE) model was as descriptive model.

### **Transformational Generative Grammar**

Chomsky (1957), first in his Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG), developed the Transformational-Generative Grammar. His book 'Syntactic Structures' was published in 1957.

The model was later transformed in his 'Aspects of the Theory of Syntax' (1965), which marks the metamorphosis of the theory from a Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) to a Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). The grammar identifies the deep structure, transformation structure and the surface structure. The basic tenet of the grammar is that speakers of any language are naturally endowed with Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to enable them acquire language naturally and communicate effectively. Jacobs and Rosenbaum (2002) give examples such as

"John gave Simeon the book" where the statement could be converted to "the book was given to Simeon by John". The surface structure of the two sentences refers to the physical arrangement of the elements of the sentences, which are arranged differently. The deep structure is the meaning expressed by the constructions. The two sentences above have the same deep structure, that is, their meaning is the same. The change in the position of "John", as the subject of the sentence from the beginning of sentence 1 to the end of sentence 2, is informed by passive transformations: changing active constructions to passive ones. For example, both sentences agree that John is the 'giver' and Simeon the 'receiver' of the object (the book). Osisanwo (2000), believes that the transformational generative grammar is a grammar that sets out to account for the native speaker's intuitive knowledge, that using finite rule to generate uncountable sentences. In view of the validity of TGG in contrastive grammar studies, Lapinska (1974:7) says:

*If CA is to serve not only as a basis for language teaching, but also, as a general theory of what human language is. If languages are viewed as surface realizations of one common universal language, whose properties are in strict correlation with the properties of the human mind, then the analysis has to be performed within the framework of transformational grammar (Lapinska1974:7).*

According to James (2012) there are models of description of contrastive studies that need to be employed by contrastive linguists. One of the popular models is the Description, Detection and Explanation (DEE) Model.

### **Gradman's Description Detection and Explanation (DDE) Model**

According to Guth (2014) and Guth (2013), the Gradman's Description, Detection and Explanation (DDE) model is suitable for contrastive studies dealing with the area of grammar in any two languages. Guth (2014) explains that Gradman (2010) invents the model in order to compare the French nominal phrases with those of English to determine the difficulties that French learners of English will encounter. The analyst has to start by describing fully the grammatical aspects of his/her interest in the two languages selected for the actual contrast; use the corpora of the two languages to detect grammatical aspects present as well as aspects absent in each of the two languages and finally, explain

clearly the similarities and differences. This includes the items present, aspects absent in each of the languages, which may be least difficult, more difficult or most difficult:

**The Tense: Concepts and Definitions**

Ogunsanwo, etals (2013), posit that tenses are those aspects of English language that only occur in verbs. Babalola (2012) and Otiede (2005), observe that each language has its unique tense system. Mathew (2012) and David (2014), Raymond (2015), Bidliya (2011) and Kolawole (2010) believe that leaners of any language must be trained to understand how the tense system of the second language works. Learners will need to identify other areas also, where their language differs from their target language(s). For Kolawole (2010), tense is the

“form of the verb showing the time in which an action is taking place”. For Latilo and Olooku (2009), tenses have often been mistaken to mean time. They posit that tense does not mean time. Tense is the form of the verb that shows the time of an action. Quirk and Sydney (2010) observe that tense and time have some correspondence. Tense, according to them is “the correspondence between the form of the verb and the human concept of time”. According to them, time is seen as a universal truth and of course a non-linguistic entity with three divisions: past, present and future.

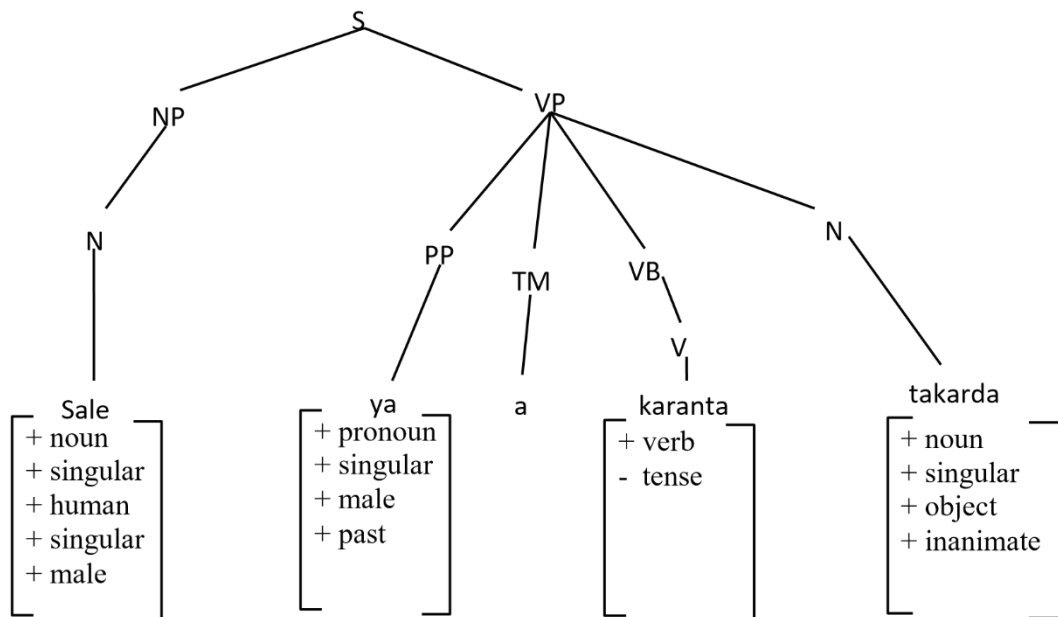
**Comparison of Carriers Tense and Tense Markers in Hausa and English**

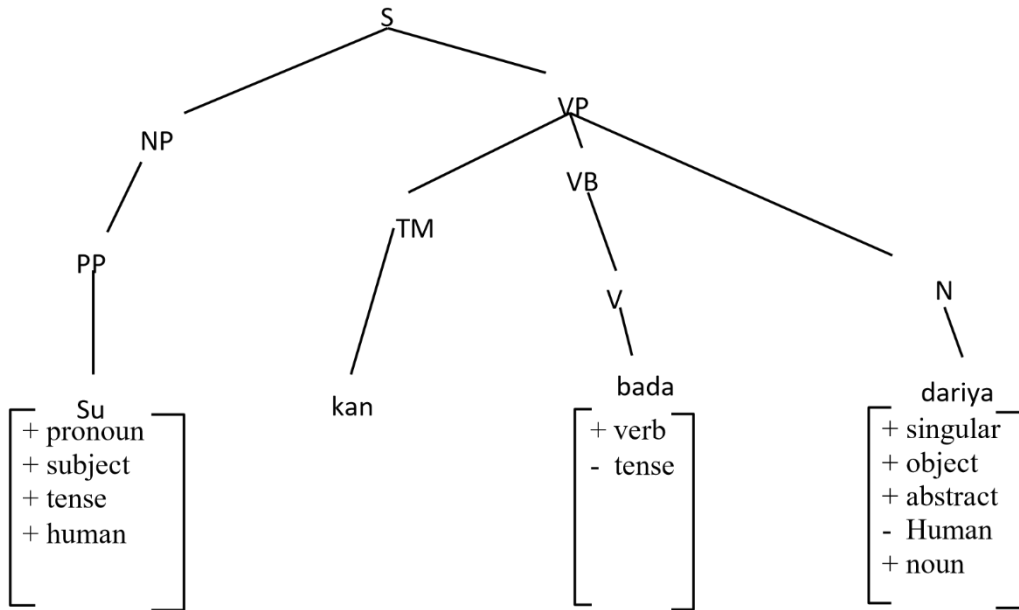
**a. General Past Tense**

Sentence (1): Sale ya a karanta takarda. The sentence is analyzed as follows:

**B. Simple Present Tense**

Sentence (2): Su kan ba da dariya. The sentence is analyzed as follows:

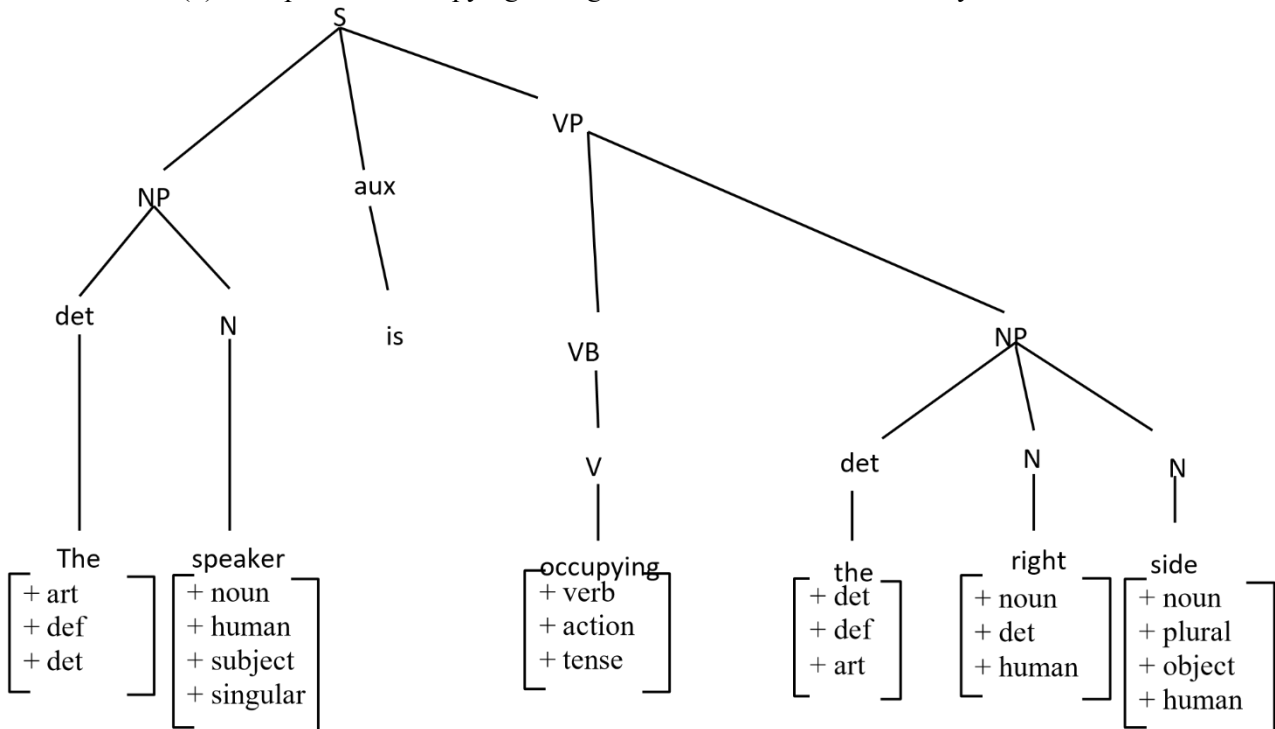




**Description of Carriers of Tense and Markers of Tense in the English Language**

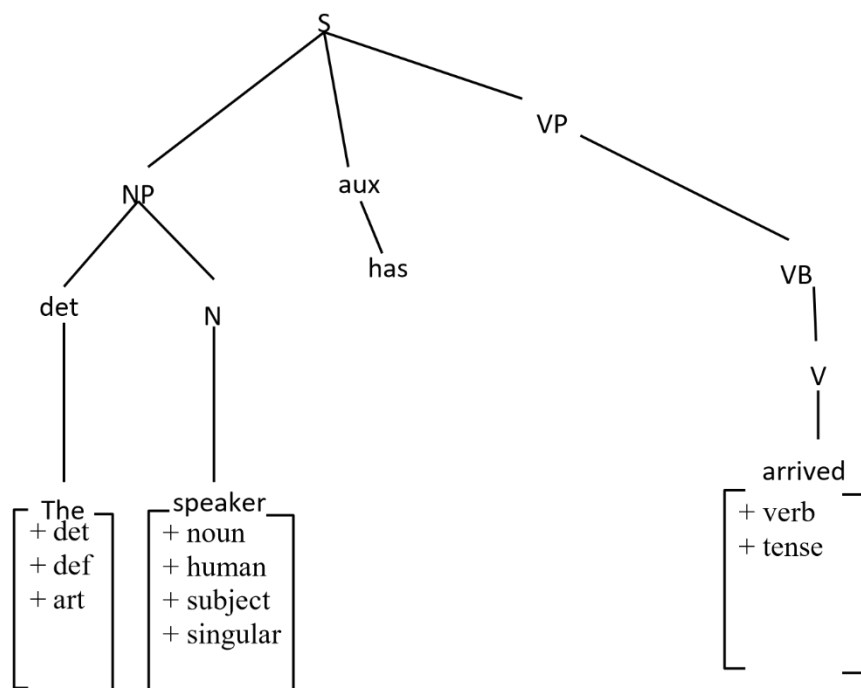
**a. Present Continuous Tense.**

Sentence (3): the speaker is occupying the right side. The sentence was analyzed as follows:



**B. Present Perfect Tense**

Sentence (4): The speaker has arrived. The sentence is analyzed as follows:



From the foregoing, it can be seen that in the above sentences, the carriers of tenses are the preverbal pronouns “Yaa” in the first sentence”. The verb “karanta” does not carry any tense. The sentence is in past tense. Even when it is changed to present continuous, the verb form “rubuta” does and will not change as a result of the transformation in the tense. For example in these sentences: “Rabiu ya na rubuta wasika” and “Ta na rubuta wasika”, the verb “rubuta” is in the present continuous tense. This confirms the assertions of scholars of grammar such as Galadanci (1978) that pre-verb pronouns are the linguistic elements carrying tenses in the Hausa language but not the verbs or, verbal phrases. The table below presents differences between the carriers of tenses in Hausa and English. In each tense, a pair of sentences from both Hausa and English languages is used to indicate examples of the carriers of tense as given in the analysis above. The English sentences are translated into their Hausa language counterparts for clarity below to display similarities and differences: **Differences in Carriers of Tense between Hausa and English**

Some English Tenses	Carriers of Tense in English (the verbs)	Some Hausa Tenses	Carriers of tense in Hausa (the pre-verbal pronouns)
John goes to school.	go	Ya kan je makaranta.	Ya
We have gone home.	Go	Mun tafi gida.	Mu
She is writing now.	Write	Ta na rubutu yanzu.	Ta
The people voted for him.	Vote	Mutanen sun zabe shi.	Sun
The student will send it	Send	Dalibin za ya aika da shi	Ya

In the table above, the carriers of tenses in English are the verbs. If the auxiliary verb is found in a sentence without a main verb, the auxiliary verb changes to indicate tense. If however, the auxiliary verb is used in along with a lexical verb otherwise known as the main verbs in English sentences, the main verb is affected. However, in the Hausa language, the pre-verbal pronouns are the carriers of tense. The verbs do not show the existence of any tense in Hausa language.

### Markers of Tense in English and Hausa Languages and their Positions with Verbs

Some English Language	Markers of Tense in English	Some Hausa Language	Markers of Tense in Hausa
He prepares early for work.	S	ya kan fita aiki da wuri.	Kan
They are reading a novel.	aux+ing	su na karanta nobel.	Na
We have done our best.	aux+en	mun yi bakin kokarin mu.	N
She presented a good speech.	verb+ed	ta a gabatar da kyak-kyawan jawabi.	A
He will attend the party.	aux+verb	za ya hararci wurin bikin.	Za

According to scholars such as Babajo (2006) and Galadanci (1979), some of the linguistic items marking the existence of the tenses in the Hausa language include “a”, “kan”, “na”, “ke”, “za” etc. while in the English language tenses, there are front and end tense markers. For example, some tense markers such as “are,” “have,” “will” etc. which are placed before the carriers of tense (the verbs). Other tense markers in the English language such as “ing”, “ed”, “en” etc. are placed at the end of the carriers of tense. The table above indicates both front and end markers as posited by Raymond (2015). In the Hausa language, however, the markers of tense are placed at the end of the carriers of tense, with the exception of the first future tense. In the Hausa first future tense, “za” is the marker of tense.

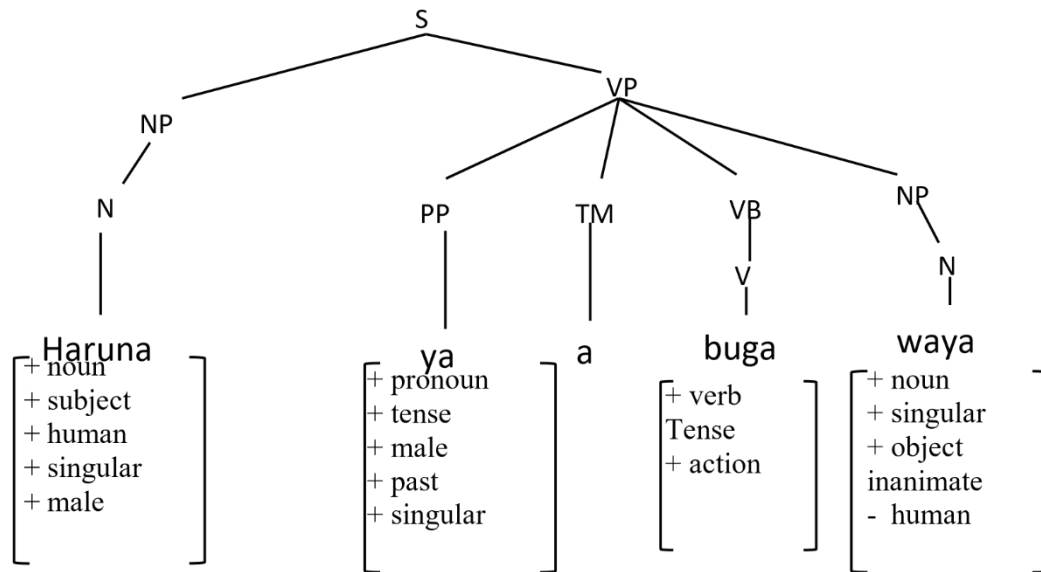
#### Differences between the Markers of Tense in Hausa and English

SOME ENGLISH TENSES	MARKERS OF TENSE IN English	SOME HAUSA TENSES	MARKERS OF TENSE IN HAUSA
He takes care of the children.	S	ya kan kula da yaran.	kan
They are debating now.	aux+ing	su na tattaunawa yan zu.	na
We have decided to go.	aux+ed	mu n yanke shawarar tafiya.	n
She complained on the matter.	Ed	ta a ko ka akan lamarin.	a
You will address them.	Aux	za ka gabatar musu da bayani.	za

#### Description of Tense Formation Processes in Hausa and English Languages

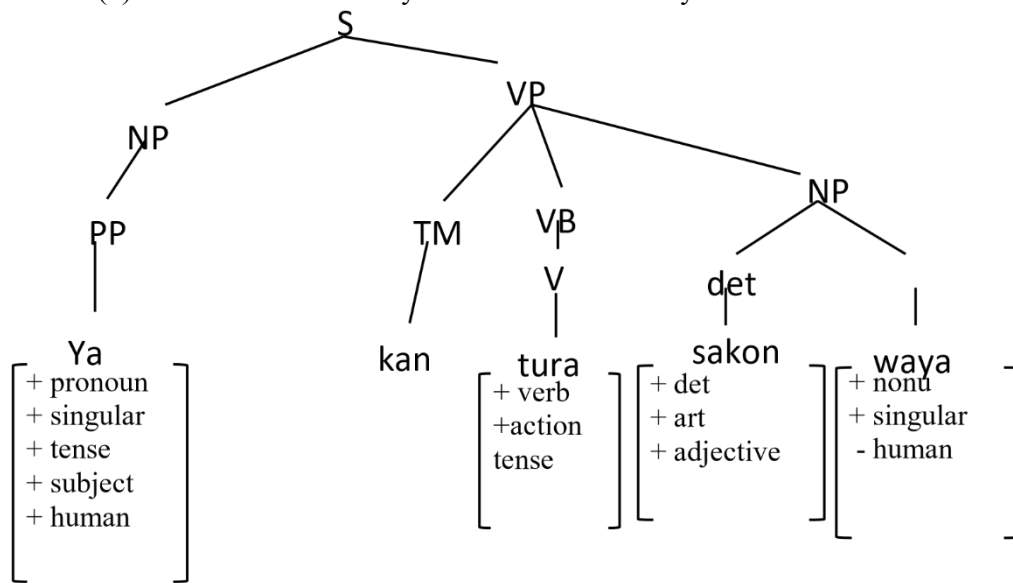
##### a. General Past Tense

Sentence (1): Haruna yaa buga waya. The sentence is analyzed as follows:



### B. Simple Present Tense

Sentence (2): Ya kan tura sakon waya. The sentence is analyzed as follows:



N

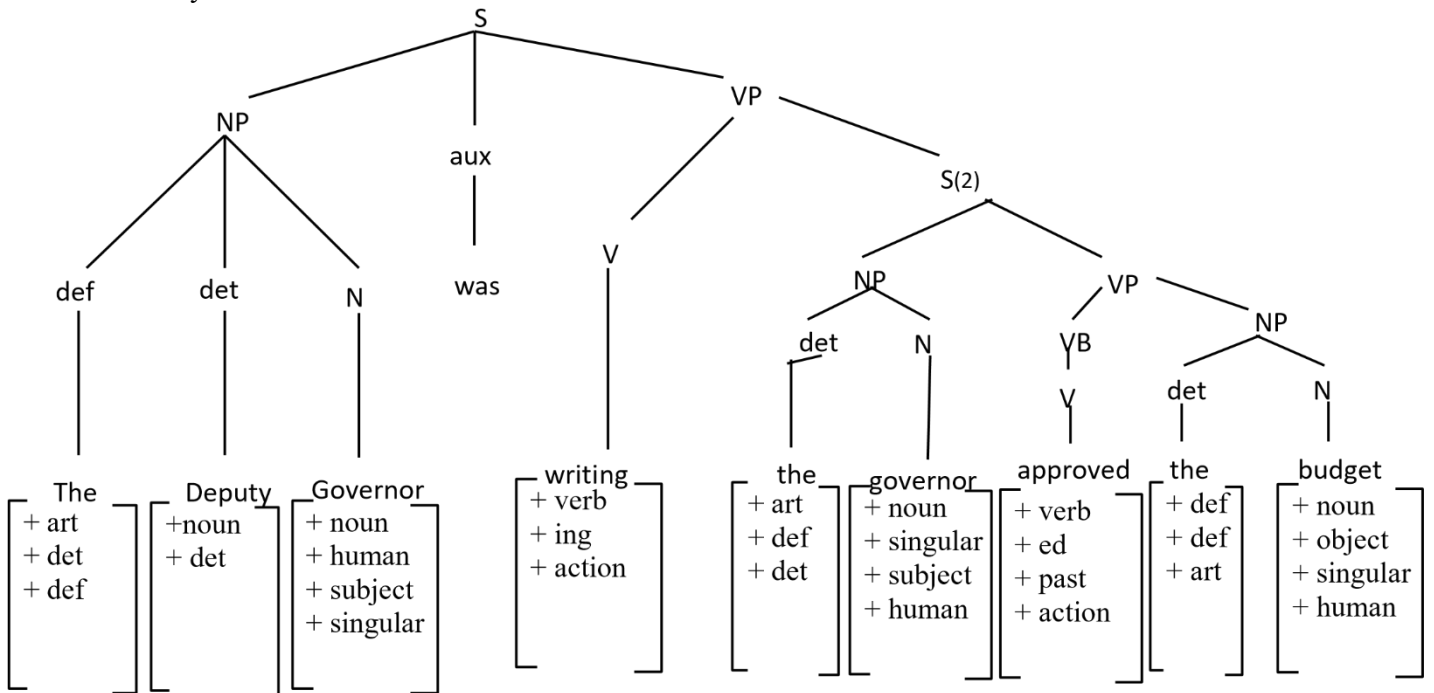
In the sentence, "Haruna ya a buga waya", it could be deduced that the sentence is in the general past, that is what is commonly referred to as simple past tense in the English language. The use of "Haruna" determines the pre-verbal pronoun that follows. For example, one cannot say "Aisha yaa buga waya" but Aisha taa buga waya. The present continuous tense is "Haruna ya na buga waya". The simple present is "Haruna ya kan buga waya." The simple future tense of the same sentence is "Haruna zai buga waya". In all the sentences, the verb "buga" does not change due to transformations involving the use of the tense. Hence, "Haruna ta buga waya" is wrong since "Haruna" is a name given to a masculine gender (Male human) not a female.



**Description of Tense Formation Processes in English**

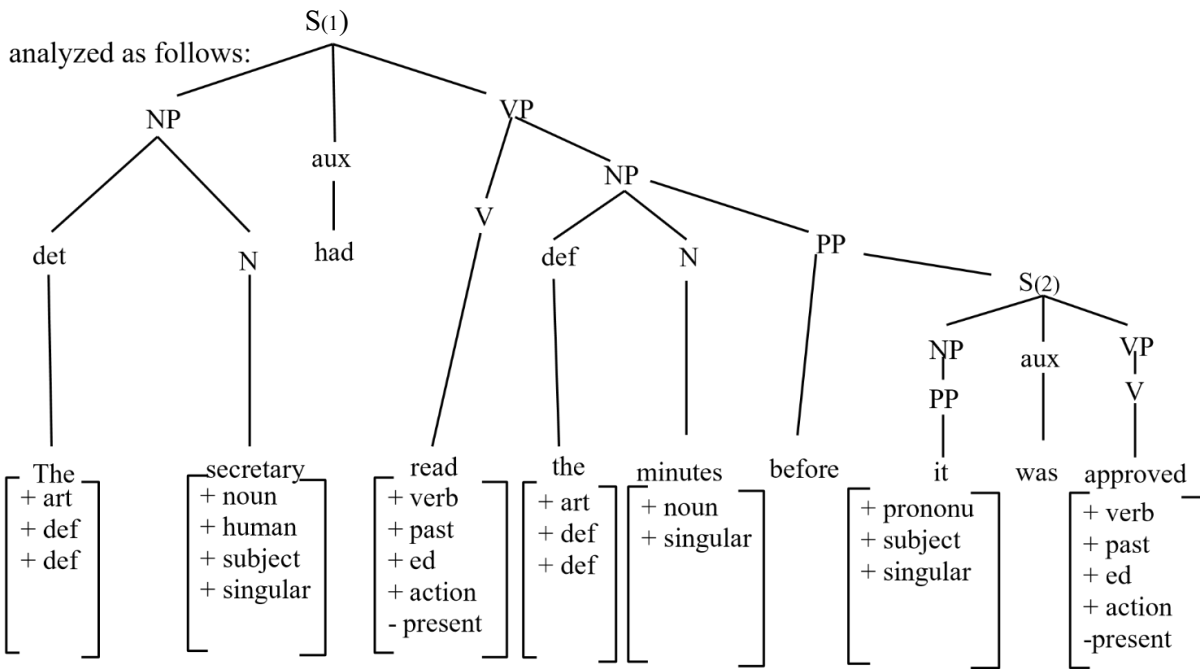
**a. The Past Continuous Tense**

Sentence (6): The deputy governor was writing when the governor approved the budget. The sentence is analyzed as follows:



**b. The Past Perfect Tense**

Sentence (7): The secretary had read the minute before it was approved. The sentence is



In the foregoing, the processes of tense formation in English and Hausa appear to be both similar and different, considering the nature of carriers of tense and tense markers in both Hausa and English languages. Whether the subject is male or female is not differentiated in English. However, in the Hausa language, the pre-verbal pronouns determine the process of tense formation. If a noun is used in the beginning of the sentence, the noun determines the preverbal pronoun that will precede it. In the

English language, however, if the subject is singular, the form of the verb must be singular to conform to the number of person in the sentence.

Moreover, from the sentences used above, it could be deduced that in the Hausa language, the pre-verbal pronoun takes the tense. The forms of the tense markers are similar irrespective of whether the subject is singular or plural. For example, “Yaran su na karatu” (the children are reading) and “Musa ya na karatu” (Musa is reading) have similar tense marker “na”. Nevertheless, in the English counterparts, the subject of the sentence affects the markers of tense.

The form of the verb “reading”, is similar, but the markers are different. While “is” was used with singular subject, “are” was used with the plural subject in the English language. In English, the processes of tense formation determine when an ‘s’, ing, aux+ed, aux+been+ing, ed, en, past+aux +ed, etc. will be used as markers of tenses. This is illustrated in the analysis of the English sentences using sentences from Point of Disorder. It was shown in appendixes A for clarity.

### Findings of the Study

In view of the contrastive analysis of English and Hausa tenses, the following findings were made:

- a) It was found out that the tense markers in the Hausa language are separated from carriers of tense. The markers of tense come after the carriers of tense. Some of them include ‘a’, ‘n’, ‘ka’, ‘kan’, ‘na’, ‘ke’, etc. as shown in appendix A. They are separated from preverbal pronouns which function as carrier of tense in the language:
- b) It was also discovered the English language has two types of tense markers: front markers and end markers. The end markers of tense are sometimes attached to the carriers of tense, that is, the verb of the sentence. Examples of these include “ing,” “s,” “ed,” “en” etc. In some cases, certain tense markers such as “is”, “were”, “are”, “will”, “shall”, “can”, etc.

are used before the carriers of tense that is, the verbs. They are the front markers of tense:

- c) Both languages maintain a degree of similarity in their process of tense formation. For example, in each of the two languages, tenses are formed through the subject-verb order. For example, in “He read it here yesterday”, “he” is the subject, while “read” is both the verb and carrier of tense in English. This is similar to the Hausa version of the same sentence: “Ya a karanta shi a nan jiya”. Here, “yaa” is both the subject and carrier of tense, while “karanta” is the verb. This shows the existence of the subject-verb order in both Hausa and English tenses.

### Teaching and learning implications

Mathew (2014) posits that “ *the teacher, who has made a comparison of a foreign language with a native language of students will know better the characteristic features under contrast, identify what the real problems are and then provide for teaching them in the classroom.*” The major concerns of this study are the similarities and differences in tense formation in Hausa and English languages. It is an attempt to see how Hausa-speaking students of English could be made to communicate effectively using both English and Hausa tenses in speech and in writing. Based on the submissions of Mathew (2014), comparison of English tenses with those of the learners’ language can adequately respond to pedagogical problems. The contrastive strategy can be used to solve problems of methodology in the teaching of English tenses and similar aspects. Use of report writing, narrative writing, extemporaneous speech delivery, expository writing and other forms of activities in the classroom could assist in training Hausa-speaking learners in using

English tenses. The teacher is expected to have mastery of tenses of learners’ native language and English to be able to undertake an effective contrastive study. This could facilitate the teaching of the aspects through both writing and speaking.

The SSS students among Hausa speaking populations in Nigeria and similar contexts need to be able to identify the similarities and differences between the tenses of their language and those of the English

language so that they can largely avoid problems of transfer, confusion or overgeneralization of the rules of grammar in their native language and English. In each component of writing that involves writing an essay, a report, or even a speech in the classroom, the teacher needs to make learners use correct English tenses. Learners' attention could be drawn to tenses in their language that correspond with those English to avoid confusion and cross linguistic transfer. The tenses of the English language used in a narrative text could be compared with their Hausa counterparts to expose the similarities and differences to the learners. The contrast should include detection of tense aspects present or absent in any of the two languages. More importantly, this will help make the students write well in public and other allied examinations.

#### 5.4 Conclusions

Based on the findings gathered in this study, it is concluded that some similarities exist between English and Hausa tense formation processes. Some differences also exist between English and Hausa languages in terms of their individual tenses. For example, tense markers in the Hausa language are separated from the carriers of tense, while in the English language, some of the tense markers such as 'ing', 'ed', 'en' are attached to the carriers of tense i.e. the verbs. The absence of the correspondence in the realization of present perfect tense and other aspects of tense such as past perfect continuous tense, future perfect tense etc. in the Hausa language can become problems to Hausa-speaking students learning English tense system. These two tenses are therefore, areas that need to enjoy the considerable attention from the part of the teacher of English dealing with learners of English as a second language.

#### 5.5 Recommendations

- a- Asking learners to make frequent use of the some tenses of English (that do not correspond with those in Hausa) in context based activities such as report and story writing in the classroom. This may include reporting events, narrating past happenings, describing processes and explaining certain phenomena:
- b- Giving the learners well-written passages containing relevant tenses of English and asking them to identify the tenses by their names. The learners may be asked to translate the sentences into Hausa to demonstrate similarities and differences:
- c- Guiding the learners to use the tenses in game activities, storytelling, report writing. This may include other activities that may require different types of tenses:
- d- Guiding learners to identify English tenses from written and spoken texts and asking of them to find the equivalent in the Hausa language. This will help in clarifying the nature of tenses of both Hausa and English languages to the learners.

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**APPENDIX A**

Some of the Hausa tenses according to Babajo (2006) and their practical examples in sentences:

**(1) SHUDADDEN LOKACI NA DAYA1(GENERAL PAST TENSE)**

S.L.1	SHUDADDEN LOKACI NA 1	MISALI	LAMIRIN SUNA	LL (TENSE MARKERS)	AIKATAU
1	mutum na i nm	na a karanta	Na	A	Karanta
2	mutum na ii nm	ka a karanta	Ka	A	Karanta
3	mutum na ii tm	kin karanta	Ki	N	Karanta
4	mutum na iii tm	ta a karanta	Ta	A	Karanta
5	mutum na iii nm	ya a karanta	Ya	A	Karanta
6	mutum na i jm	mun karanta	Mu	N	Karanta
7	mutum na ii jm	kun karanta	Ku	N	Karanta
8	mutum na iii jm	sun karanta	Sun	N	Karanta
9	boyayyen mutum	an karanta	An	N	Karanta

**(2) SHUDADDEN LOKACI NA BIYU 2 (RELATIVE PAST TENSE)**

S.L.II	SHUDADDEN LOKACI NA BIYU	MISALI	LAMIRIN SUNA	LL	AIKATAU
1	mutum na i nm	na karanta	Na	-	Karanta
2	mutum na ii nm	ka karanta	Ka	-	Karanta
3	mutum na ii tm	kika karanta	Ki	Ka	Karanta
4	mutum na iii tm	ta karanta	Ta	-	Karanta
5	mutum na iii nm	ya karanta	Ya	-	Karanta
6	mutum na i jm	mu ka karanta	Mu	Ka	Karanta
7	mutum na ii jm	ku ka karanta	Ku	Ka	Karanta
8	mutum na iii jm	su ka karanta	Su	Ka	Karanta
9	boyayyen mutum	aka karanta	A	Ka	Karanta

**(3) LOKACI SABABBE (SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE)**

L.S.	LOKACI SABABBE	MISALI	LAMIRIN SUNA	LL	AIKATAU
1	mutum na i nm	nakan karanta	Na	Kan	Karanta
2	mutum na ii nm	kakan karanta	Ka	Kan	Karanta
3	mutum na ii tm	kikan karanta	Ki	Kan	Karanta
4	mutum na iii tm	takan karanta	Ta	Kan	Karanta
5	mutum na iii nm	yakan karanta	Ya	Kan	Karanta
6	mutum na i jm	mukan karanta	Mu	Kan	Karanta
7	mutum na ii jm	kukan karanta	Ku	Kan	Karanta
8	mutum na iii jm	sukan karanta	Su	Kan	Karanta
9	boyayyen mutum	akan karanta	A	Kan	Karanta

**(4) LOKACI NA GABA NA II (SECOND FUTURE TENSE)**

L.G.II	LOKACI NA GABA NA II	MISALI	LAMIRIN SUNA	LL	AIKATAU
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1	mutum na i nm	na a-karanta	Na	-a	Karanta
2	mutum na ii nm	ka a-karanta	Ka	-a	Karanta
3	mutum na ii tm	ki a-karanta	Ki	-a	Karanta
4	mutum na iii tm	ta a-karanta	Ta	-a	Karanta
5	mutum na iii nm	ya a-karanta	Ya	-a	Karanta
6	mutum na i jm	mu a-karanta	Mu	-a	Karanta
7	mutum na ii jm	ku a-karanta	Ku	-a	Karanta
8	mutum na iii jm	su a-karanta	Su	-a	Karanta
9	boyayyen mutum	a a-karanta	A	-a	Karanta

**APPENDIX B The Gradman’s Description, Detection and Explanation (DDE) Model**

