



A Comparison of Subject Complement Patterns in English and Anaang Languages at Distributional Equivalence: From Government and Binding View Point

Edenowo T. Enang *Ph.D*

Department Of English

Obio Akpa Campus

Akwa Ibom State University

edenowoenang@aksu.edu.ng, 08020933030

Abstract

This study is a Comparison of Subject Complement Patterns in English and Anaang Languages at Distributional Equivalence: from Government-Binding view point. The purpose of this study is to add to the ever-growing body of knowledge on the studies of natural languages by noting the distinctive features of the two languages and at the same time discovering the similarities and the dissimilarities in them at the subjective level. The study is anchored on Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) which compares the learners' native languages for similarities and differences; a theory encompassed within Universal Grammar (UG) where all phrases have the same structure of heads, specifiers and complements while Government-Binding grammar serves as the theory for the description and analysis in the study of natural languages. To achieve this purpose, 15 sentences in English and Anaang languages each, totaling 30 sentences were juxtaposed for comparative analysis. The study showed similarities that Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives Prepositions and Adverbs in both languages are governors in their functions. The study further revealed that differences exist between English and Anaang complementation systems. Conclusion was drawn that the differences shown would form the basis for devising grammars that would remedy areas of difficulties of the l_2 learners.

KEY WORDS: Comparison, Subject Complementation, English and Anaang languages, Distributional Equivalence, Government and Binding theories.

Introduction

Anaang is a name which marks a dual identification: it identifies a people – the Anaang and their language. Indigenous identity is often preserved through language, performance, music and dance as living expressions of communal heritage (Edem, 2022). As a people, the Anaang is the second largest ethnic group after the Ibibio in the present day Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. They number 1.4 million following the 1991 census result. They occupy the North-Western part



of Akwa Ibom State with a total of 2.73 sq. kilometres. They are bounded by Abia State in the North, Rivers State in the West, the Ibibio people in the South, East and North-East.

The Anaang people are semi-Bantu speakers who originated from the Central Benue valley in Nigeria. They are said to have moved through the Northern flank of the Cross River to the Enyong Creek and eventually through the present day Eastern Ibibio (Ikono) land to settle at the location of the present day Abak. Greenberg further claims that the Anaang people were the first wave of the Ibibio speaking people to settle in the present day Ibibio land. (Greenberg. 84)

Anaang language therefore, is a divergence from other related languages such as Efik and Ibibio about four thousand years ago. This linguistic distinctiveness reflects the wider cultural uniqueness through which communities preserve their history and worldview (Edem, 2024). Similar to other languages, Anaang is a tonal and agglutinative language. The language has many subvarieties with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. Although these varieties of dialects possess lexical, phonological and syntactic properties in common, there are differences in certain grammatical, lexical and phonological details. These differences, however, do not interfere with normal communication and or mutual intelligibility. Scholars have made appreciative efforts towards the promotion and development of the Anaang language through book publications, seminars and inaugural lectures as well as preoccupation of interests in a good number of scholarly projects, dissertations and thesis in levels like morphology, phonology, semantics and some aspects of syntax-related studies.

Enang (2017:6) collaborates with Udondata (2006:5) and notes that:

Anaang Verb is a component that always co-exists mutually with complements. According to the author, it is immediately found preceding the complement(s) in the VP. The author's concern with Anaang verbal paradigm is motivated by the fact that virtually all Anaang complements have some dependency relationship with the verbs, nouns, adjectives and prepositions both at the word, phrase and clausal levels. This study, as we shall see, illustrates the fact that while all objects are complements, that not all complements are objects. This factor further points to the fact that when a native speaker of a particular language is learning a second language (L_2) (like the case of an Anaang speakers learning English language as their second language), there are bound to be problems arising from the differences in the paradigms both spoken and written. For instance, the Anaang speaker of English has the tendency of applying the grammatical rules of Anaang language to his use of the English language. There are also many cases of transliteration. Examples can be noted in the following constructions:

1. What will you do, if I slap you?
2. I will follow you to Lagos
3. Do not put mouth in this matter
4. I used to know you before before
5. I am coming (when in actual fact the speaker is going).



One therefore discovers that the sentences above have problems as far as the native speakers of English are concerned.

Statement of the Problem

It is an established fact that no two languages have the same structure and whenever two languages are in contact, there are bound to be problems, thereby making it difficult for the L₂ learner to come to terms with the earmarked target language in all aspects of communication. Communication involves the patterning of individual lexical items of a language into larger meaningful stretches. To know and to obey the ordering restrictions on words are just as important to the language user as to acquire the lexical items. This therefore, establishes the need for a study of the complementation systems in English and Anaang with a focus on it at the subjective, objective, phrasal and clausal levels.

The inadequacy of work in the language syntax of Anaang and English is also a great spur for this study. This is why documentation remains important because indigenous cultural forms can decline when they are not preserved, studied and transmitted deliberately (Akpan, Edem, & Iseyen, 2025). Hence, juxtaposing aspects of the syntax of two languages in contact will highlight in a way the syntactic features that are possible in inter-language studies. Therefore, this research intends to identify the subject complement categories in English and Anaang languages by undertaking a contrastive comparison of the two sets of complement categories in the areas of Phrasal and Clausal Complementation in English and Anaang in order to establish what constitutes the Similar and Different subject complementation Patterns in English and Anaang languages.

Theoretical Frameworks

The frame work of analysis of this research remains the GB theory of the Transformational Generative Grammar. In this model, morpheme, word, group and clause are regarded as exponents of the sentence. The sentence therefore ranks highest in the scale. A deliberate choice of words progresses into the higher structures for semantic purposes. The complementation of lexical items is best described in context rather than in its individual words. Examples are drawn and explained from our data.

In the same vein, the structures on complementation elicited from respondents are examined in English and Anaang based on the functions in a given structure. Therefore, subject and object complementations in Anaang and English are compared and contrasted to highlight the differences and similarities with a view to finding out likely areas that Anaang speakers of English may encounter problems. Halliday (1998) identifies a lexical category called unit to be made up of a sentence, clause, group word and morpheme with a sentence as the highest in the rank scale. Halliday further identifies nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives and prepositions etc, as grammatical elements that are operational in the structural compartment of a sentence. The diagramme below illustrates this:

Figure 1. A Rank Scale for Lexicogrammar of Halliday (1998:129)

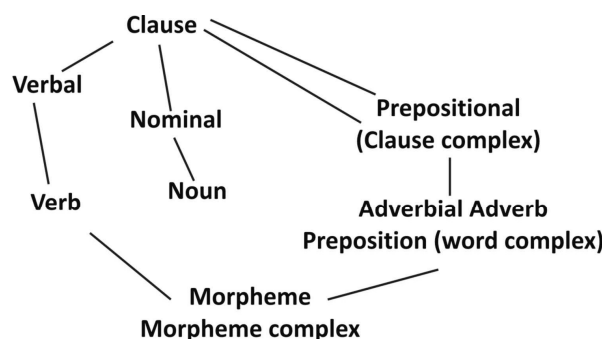


Diagramme - Rank scale for Lexicogrammar of Halliday (1998:129)

The above diagramme is a simple structure of a sentence of any natural language with grammatical components of a sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme in a descending order. The diagramme is relevant to the present study because the two languages (English and Anaang) under analysis poses structures that are both similar thereby meeting the Universal Grammar Principles and also containing different structures that are not in line with the UG, thereby making rooms for parameter setting so as to create a cross-linguistic environment for an application of a contrastive analysis hypothesis, which is one of the theoretical frame works employed in this study.

On the other hand, contrastive analytic studies show that there are differences in structure and functions of the lexical items. This research venture, though based on the two languages will be confined only to the contrastive analysis of subject complementation in English and Anaang. This will readily satisfy one of the major conditions for using contrastive analysis as prescribed by Headbloom (1972:27):

The basic practice of contrastive analysis is to first write a description of particular subset of each language to be compared (i.e. descriptions of phonology, morphology or syntax). One then compares these two subsets noting the differences and similarities. From this comparison, a prediction is made as to what the learner will find difficult or easy to learn.

Review of Related Literature

Generally, complementation may be thought of as a process whereby the meaning of a particular word or expression is made specific or clear (.Bresnan, 1970.. As a process of language, it has both syntactic and semantic considerations (Quirk et al, 1974). Syntactically, complements can be nouns, adjectives, prepositional phrases or clauses. These syntactic elements occur in a specified order in accordance with the syntactic rules of the language in question. Semantically, sentence constituents, which occur in particular sentences bear meaning relations to one another,



(Brown/Miller, 1980:253). Thus, sentence constituents bear structural and meaning relations to one another. Some constituents, for example nouns, adjectives and prepositional phrases typically realize semantic roles of complements (Brown/Miller, 1980; 1982, Radford, 1981:347).

While in agreement with the foregoing, Enang (2017:14) adds that the issue of subject complementation is not supposed to create any uncertainty since the Universal Grammar Principles are open ended and wide enough to accommodate every natural language, thus believing that the presence of the core features in every natural language are what qualify such languages for comparison. The further establishes that:

it is clearly seen that complements are elements that are necessary for the completion of the proposition after it has been initiated by the subject and the predicator. Complements supply information on the people and things involved in the process and as such, can be questioned with who or what while adjuncts (mostly adverbials) on the other hand, supply circumstantial detail and can usually be questioned with where, when, how or why. These definitions are relevant to this study which sets out to discover the patterns of complementation in the two languages- English and Anaang and to find out if there are areas where they are similar or dissimilar.

These explications are relevant to this study which sets out to discover the patterns of subject complementation in the two languages- English and Anaang and to find out if there are areas where they are similar or dissimilar. Linguists' views vary regarding the relations expressed in complementation. Brown/Miller (1982) identify four types of relation. They include mutual or bilateral dependency; unilateral dependency; co-ordinate dependency and mutual exclusion. This view is shared by Matthews (1981:146) cited in Ekah (2005:96). On this view of complementation as a bilateral relation, the term '*bilateral*' is used to describe a relation where verbs, nouns and prepositions co-pattern with other elements of structure and depend on them for their meaning to be specified.

Linguists like Dorovolsky/O'Graddy (1969) describe complementation as a process which operates in all languages, but differing from language to language on in sentential realization. This study by Dorovolsky/O'Graddy is very relevant to this work because it is concerned with the complementation systems of two languages: English and Anaang which are from two different language families.

While English Language is from Indo-European group of languages, Anaang is classed within the Niger-Congo language families. That is why this study sets out to explore the areas of possible differences and their similarities, especially, the rules governing words order in their sentence constructions.



This view is in accord with that held by other linguists who embrace the principles and parameter convention. They stress that the principles of language are universal and invariable across languages; whereas only the values of the parameters differ (Haegman, 1994). (Parameter, here, refers to the syntactic rules that are operational in that language, which must always be in line with the native speaker's norms).

Our position here is that, since all the major lexical categories in all languages; such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions always or serve as complements, the verb type normally required here is always the auxiliary verb. Based on this understanding, these categories can be said to have their individual complementation systems.

Research Methodology

The research instrument used in this study was a written production task on grammaticality for data collection purpose. The respondents were expected to write an essay in English on the topic: "How Governor Akpabio's Uncommon Transformation Agenda in Akwa Ibom State has Affected the People at the Grass root." The reason for the selection of this type of topic is for the respondents to produce varied structurally determined sentences that would range from simple to complex and or multiple types of sentences.

Again, the topic was so selected so that respondents were allowed to write on every area that was of interest to them such as circular religion, politics, economic or social issues etc. The essence of this topic was for the respondents to generate more complex sentences so as to determine respondents' handling of subject complement structures in a continuous writing atmosphere with the aim of finding out the differences and similarities between the subject complement structures in the two languages. There is also a data analysis in addition to the discussions based on the findings from the data collected. The descriptions here are mainly in continuation of data elicited from the 100 respondents who constituted the population of the study and accordingly presented and carefully analysed.

Data Obtained (Results) and Analysis of Subject Complementation on English and Anaang

The main complementation in Anaang and English languages contains the copula which is defined by Nwachukwu (1983:27) as a type of relator or relational verb providing a link between the subject of a sentence and its complement. In English, French, Latin and Anaang, the verb, 'to be': Ajem ide ikọ arunam is a typical copula.

Data indicating respondents' ability in the production of Subject Complements are provided on Table 1 below

Table : Table Showing the Test Results of Respondents' Ability to Apply Subject



Complementation in Anaang and English Languages

Lexical Complementation	No. of Respondents out of 100 Able to Produce the Subject Complementation	Percentage	No. of Respondents out of 100 Not Able to Produce the Subject Complementation	Percentage
Noun Subject Complementation	81	81%	19	19%
Adjective Subject Complementation	74	74%	26	26%
Adverb Subject Complementation	39	39%	61	61%
Phrasal Subject Complementation	32	32%	68	68%
Subject Clausal Complementation	77	77%	23	23%

From this study, the results of the essay test on the production of subject complementation are summed up under the table above. Table 5 has Noun Subject Complementation with the score of 81%, Adjectival Subject Complementation scoring 74%, Adverbial Subject Complementation with 39% while Phrasal and Clausal Subject Complementations score 32% and 77% respectively as were obtained by the respondents who were able to produce those structures.

In what follows, samples are presented and a detailed analysis of each of the samples in line with the issue/s appraised according to the sub-headings in Section.

3. Noun-Head Subject Complementation in English and Anaang:

The investigation shows that nouns in Anaang subcategorize complements. Moreover, the findings indicate that different noun types at the N-bar which exist in the language select different kinds of complement. In what follows, we present subject complements of noun heads in Anaang and discuss them.

Sample 1 (Respondent No. 40)

Anaang: Buhari ade ada iwuod ilung Nigeria

English: Buhari is the head of states in Nigeria

An S-bar structural analysis of sample 1 shows that the N-head “Buhari” is the subject of the sentence while the copula ade, meaning ‘is’ functions as the V-Head which subcategorizes ada iwuod ilung Nigeria, which means ‘head of states in Nigeria’ as complement of the subject. This



selection order conforms to the traditional grammar structure of subject – verb – object (S – V – O) or the subject – verb – subject complement (S – V – Sc) which this sample represents. As it is shown here, ‘Buhari’ is the subject of the sentence which co-occurs with the copula ‘is’. Instead of ‘the head of states in Nigeriat’ serving as the object of the verb ‘is’, it serves as the complement of the subject which is ‘Buhari’. It is of interest to observe that “the head of states” refers to “Buhari”, thereby completing the idea initiated by the subject of the sentence.

An interesting feature of sample 1 is that semantically, the two sentences (English and Anaang) in this sample are the same, but there are some differences noted in the N-bar final. In the English sentence of this Sample, there is the use of a definite article ‘the’ to specify the ‘the head of states in Nigeria’ in question but its Anaang counterpart of the same sample does not have any article to specify ‘Buhari’ as the ‘the head of states’ of a particular country. This is probably so, because in Anaang language the definite article occurs post nominally preceding the verbal group in most cases. This accounts for the outright omission of article or difficulty in complement selection in English sentences constructed by Anaang speakers of English.

Again, it is of interest to observe that in the sample, the word ‘president’ in English morphology is one word and also a noun, but in Anaang, it is made up of a verb ada, ‘stand’ and a noun, iwuod, ‘head’, meaning ada iwuod, (Stands as the head) making it two words in Anaang and four: Buhari ade ada iwuod as a translational equivalence into English. This again, accounts for the differences in word/complement order which constitute the major features of non-standard complementation in Anaang speakers’ output of English sentences. Other instances of the structure just discussed as shown in our study include the ones in the examples (6-7) below:

(6) a. Donald Trump ade ada iwuod ke America
Donald Trump is the President in America

(7) b. Ete ami ade ada iwuod kufok ajid
My father is the head in our house

There is a similarity in the syntactic and semantic requirements of this sample 20 despite the little difference in the morphological processes. This, to a large extent is accounted for by the agglutinative posture of the Anaang language. Notwithstanding this difference, the Anaang bilinguals won’t have difficulties in their use of the English language in a second language situation.

2. Sample 2 (Respondent No. 25)
Anaang: Nnusóhó mbon abóló bóló esók efehe ekana
English: Some politicians are running around

In sample 2, the N-head, mbon abóló bóló, meaning ‘politicians’ has its modifier before it. Unlike in many cases in Anaang where modifiers come after the N-heads, mbon abóló bóló,



‘politicians’ agrees to co-occur with a quantifier pre-modifying it. It is also significant to state here, that even though the syntactic structure of English is quite different from that of Anaang it is because Anaang operates a centrifugal syntax in most cases. The combinatorial possibilities in Anaang allow the modifiers to come after the head words (N-heads). Of particular significance to our study is the fact that quantifiers in Anaang have one to one equivalence with their English counterparts whereas other determiners do not. Quantify, such as ‘every’ ‘any’ ‘much’ ‘few’ ‘a few’ and ‘several’ occupy a pre-modifying position to their N-heads in Anaang just like their English equivalence.

The complement structures or constituents in this sample 2, efenghe ekana, meaning, ‘running around’ is the noun complement of the subject, mbon abóló bóló, ‘politicians’. These complement structures are made up of verb: ‘running’ and adverb, ‘around’. The adverb ‘around’ post-modifies the verb- ‘running’ in English, whereas in Anaang, ekana, ‘around’ which is an adverb also functions like its English counterpart to post-modify the verb, efenghe, ‘running’. Again, the use of the copula esók, which was highlighted earlier on in this section means ‘are’ and has a plural status because the prefix, /e/ vowel and a phoneme is a plural marker to all verbs while the prefix /a/ vowel and a morpheme is a singular marker to all verbs also in Anaang. In English too, the use of ‘are’ or ‘is’ copulas simply indicates the subject and the verb as plural or singular respectively.

Another significant feature of sample 2 is that the N-head ‘politicians’ in English is just one word for plural but in Anaang language, mbon abóló bóló has a modifier mbon and a noun abóló bóló derived by a morphological process of reduplication and are usually realized or written together as one word. Instances abound in our data which further support the occurrence of the features in this sample 2. These include the ones in the example (8-9) below:

(8) a. Mbon Ikpa ke mkpo agwọ esók esin ntime
Some thugs are causing problems

(9) b. Nnusóhó ntọk ajen esók efenghe akana
Some children are running around

The complement selection and the semantic import in the two languages have a similar value. This equivalence will enhance communication and the use of English sentences by an Anaang speakers of the English language as a result of proper complement selection order where he finds himself in a second language situation.



2 Adjective as Subject Complementation in English and Anaang

The adjective as subject complementation is made up of adjectives and the lexical items, which help the adjectives to realize fully their meanings. In English, the adjectives are many and inexhaustible. Udondata (2006:66) asserts that adjectives in Anaang are pre-modifiers and post-modifiers unlike English where they predominantly operate as pre-modifiers. Their use is illustrated in the example (10-) below:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|
| (10) | Anye ade eti Agwọ | - | He is a good man |
| (11) | Ami mmenyene afia affong | - | I have a white cloth |
| (12) | Anye ade agwọ ibak | - | He is a wicked man |
| (13) | Ajen ammọ ade etọk-etọk | - | His child is small |
| (14) | Ade ekamba | - | It is big |
| (15) | Ade anwenwen | - | It is black |

It is therefore, pertinent to note that adjective can serve as complements, for example – joy is “good”. They can also be complemented by other lexical words or structures as seen in the sentence: “Peter is too bad to be a Christian”. Based on the identifiable structures of adjective complementation in the data, it is explicable to state here that samples 3 – 4 take care of adjective complementation (i.e. where adjectives are complemented by other lexical words or structures).

3. Sample 3 (Respondent No. 47)
- | | | |
|----------|-----|--|
| Anaang: | (a) | Udom Emanuel achoñ <u>agwó Inook</u> |
| Anaang: | (b) | Okon ase abóp utóón <u>usóhóini</u> |
| English: | (a) | Udom Emanuel is difficult <u>to bend</u> |
| English: | (b) | Okon behaves stupid <u>at times</u> |

The above sentences in Sample 3 (a-b) have infinitive clauses (underlined) as the subjects. The English sentence at the surface plane looks intransitive but “to bend” at the deep plane shows the infinitive verb as transitively used. In order to bring out the full transitivity of the infinitive verb, sentence (a) can be recast to read thus:

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|---|---------|
| (16) | It is difficult to bend Udom | – | English |
| | Ade nchón nchón agwó inook Udom | – | Anaang |

The major difference between samples 3 (a) and (b) is in the syntactic structure of the Anaang and English. In sample 3 (a), for instance, “Udom Emanuel” is the subject of the sentence, while “hard to bend” is complementary in English, but in Anaang, the case is different. ade nchón nchón, “hard or difficult” in Anaang becomes the subject. There is also the writing together of ‘to’ and ‘bend’ in Anaang which results in the realization of the words achonagwo-inook as one word. Writing them separately would therefore be ungrammatical in Anaang. Again, the word agwo in Anaang could refer to a male or a female. Anaang language does not have any word to specify the



sex of a human being like its English counterpart. So, whether it is a male, female or inanimate serving in the predicative position as a complement, it retains the same form of agwó.

Again, the word, “achón agwó” in Anaang is purely transitively used which literally means “to bend him is difficult”, while in the sample where “to bend” appears in English construction, it is intransitively used only when it is in deep structure. Both sentences, apart from the few syntactic differences have the same and equal grammatical and semantic values because they all show the constructions as being in the non-past. For sample 3(b), we have the sentence: Okon ase abóp utóón Usóhóini, meaning, “Okon behaves stupid at times”. The sentences in Anaang and English have the same syntactic structure but the grammatical values are not the same. In Anaang, the word, abóp, which literally means “behaves”, could also mean “he is acting”. Aspectual differences are not easily identified in Anaang unlike in English, for example:

He comes (non past) He is coming (present past)

Even in the use of the words, abóp utóón in Anaang, there is no single word to describe it, hence the use of modifier, ase to translate the word, which literally means (somebody who does not act properly or well). It therefore means that the words, anangha mkpo serve as a direct equivalent translation of the word “behaves” in Anaang as shown in the data here. Again, the word “abóputóón” realized as one word (not acting properly or well) is transitively used. Finally, the use of “he” is translated in Anaang as anye, (he/she/it) because it does not have a specific sex equivalence in English.

4. Sample 4 (Respondent No. 46)
Anaang: Ammo ekebabaak Babangida
English: They were afraid of Babangida (Ci)

Sample 4 in Anaang sentence shows the expression, Ammo ekebabaak Babangida as the literal translation of “they feared Babangida” but in English, it is put as “afraid of”. In Anaang, it is therefore transitively used while in English “afraid of” is intransitively used. The Anaang sentence, apart from the translation given to it, can also be translated thus: Ekese ebabaak Babangida. But in English, having ‘afraid’ before the other words as seen in Anaang would make the construction ungrammatical. In English, the complementation of the adjective is in the predicative position but in Anaang the complementation of the adjective occupies a subjective position which results in the syntactic variation while the semantic imports and values of the two sentences in Anaang and English are the same.

Another interesting feature in sample 4 is the fact that in English, the expression “were afraid of” is a combination of three different lexical items: copula ‘were’, adjective ‘afraid’ and the particle (preposition) ‘of’ which normally co-occurs with the adjective ‘afraid’. In Anaang eke ba-baak is a combination of three lexical items; the last two, the main verb + adjective which are contracted into one word to make it two lexical items: the copula eke, (past marker) ‘were’ plus the ba ‘fear’ the verb and baak the adjective. Again, in Anaang, the verb and the adjective are



compounded to form *ba + baak* resulting in *babaak*, ‘afraid’, is so, probably due to the agglutinative nature of Anaang language even though it does not affect grammaticality. Therefore, *eba-baak Babangida*, and “afraid of Babangida” have the same semantic value in spite of their syntactic variation while still functioning as the adjective complement of the subject, *Ammo*, ‘they’ in the two languages under study.

3. Adverb as Subject Complementation in English and Anaang

Adverb complementation according to Ibokwe (2006:97) is made up of the adverb and the lexical items that complement it. In the test conducted, samples 17 and 18 were selected for our discussion.

5. Sample 5 (Respondent No. 36)
Anaang: *Usóhóini, anye achak*
English: Sometimes, he laughs

Sample 5 shows that the sentences *Usóhóini, anye achak*, meaning “sometimes, he laughs” are the same syntactically and semantically. In both English and Anaang, the complement of the adverb *Usóhóini*, ‘sometimes’ is the clause, *anye achak*, “he laughs” which is made up of the N-head *anye*, ‘he’ and the V-bar *achak*, ‘laughs’ which is used intransitively here. It would be observed that in both English and Anaang, the third person singular marker *anye*, ‘he’ subcategorises compulsorily the non-past *achak* ‘laughs’ to make the sentence grammatical and concordant. This equivalence is made possible because in Anaang language, the third person singular marker *anye* represents human and: ‘she/he/they’ and non-human, ‘it’ at the subjective level, gender notwithstanding.

Again, it is interesting to observe that the V-bar in English ‘laughs’ is one word containing a singular verb marker [-s] whereas Anaang language does not allow or portray the use of inflectional marker for verbal number identification, just like there is no provision in the distinction between the sex of the person at both subjective and objective cases unlike its English counterpart.

In Anaang also, there can only be an addition of prefix to the root of the V-head to show the difference in the time and tense inflectional markers as in the example (19-22) below:

- (19) a. Anye *a*achak - He laughs (Non-past)
(20) b. Anye *asu*kachak - He is laughing (Present in present)
(21) c. Anye *ama*chak- He has laughed (Past in present)
(22) d. Anye *Ake*achak - He laughed (Past)

6. Sample 6 (Respondent No 41)
Anaang: *Idahaam, Idem achion mbon ldeen*
English: Now, the men are well



In sample 6, there is the clausal complement of the adverb, Idahaam, ‘now’. In Anaang, Idahaam is a combination of two lexical items from the adverbial group: Idaha + ami, meaning ‘now-now’ when written separately, which will be ungrammatical in English whereas “right now” is the correct translation into English.

There is also the pluralization of the N-bar ideen, ‘man’ Mbon-ideen, ‘men’ which refers to the male species of an adult age in English. As it is shown in this sample 25, ‘men’ is one word and plural in English, but in Anaang, it is made of two words – an adjective Mbon and a noun, ideen written in a compounded form as one word, Mbon –ideen, ‘men’. However, there is a distinction also in Anaang in the selection of adult male and the word ‘children’ – male species of a young age. This is done by adding an adjective etok (for singular) and ntok (for plural) to the noun, ideen to come by etokideen, ‘young man’ and ntokideen, ‘young men’.

Secondly, the choice of the plural copula, ‘are’ as the V-head agrees with the N-bar, Mbon –ideen, ‘the men’ thus showing that the sentence has a plural inflectional marker. Therefore, as far as concord and agreement is concerned, the two sentences in both Anaang and English have the same value syntactically and semantically.

It is worth mentioning here that the words idem achioñ if given a direct translation into English will be “body strong” at the deep level and will be ungrammatical. At the surface level, it means “well” which is used here as an adjective functioning as the subject Adverbial complement of the adverb ‘now’. There are other versions of this sample 6 found in our data. They include those in the example (23-25) below:

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| (23) | a. Anye ade eti | He/She/It is good |
| | ↖ | ↖ |
| (24) | b. Ammo echioñ idem | They are well |
| | ↖ | ↖ |
| (25) | c. Abolobolo asine akpoho | Politics brings money |
| | ↖ | ↖ |

The syntactic variation which exists in the complement selection and word order in this sample is capable of posing a problem to an Anaang bilingual in his attempt to come to terms with the metropolitan norms. The difficulty is a result of the devices of his L₁ (Anaang) which are different from those of the target language (English).

4. Phrasal Subject Complementation in English and Anaang



According to Quirk et al (2003:353), the copulas which allow the widest range as subject complement in the English language are ‘be’ for current attribute and ‘become’ for resulting attribute which subcategorized for noun phrases, infinitive phrases and prepositional phrases. The data relating to Phrases as complements are obtained from the respondents with numbers 43, 45 and 49 and subsequently tagged Samples 7 and 8.

7. Sample 7 (Respondent No.43)

Anaang: Ukaan ntọ ufok ngwed iba ema esine kufok ade

English: Two old students were in the house

An analysis of the constituent structure of the sentence in sample 26 shows that it contains the N-bar-Ukaan ntọ ufok ngwed iba, “Two old students” which functions as the subject of the sentence. The prepositional phrase, emaesine kufok ade, “in the house” is the subject complement of the sentence as made possible by the copula, ema, “were” which, in both English and Anaang sentences functions as a plural marker for the number of ‘old students’ who were in the house. Another feature of sample 26 is that it contains a numeral determiner, iba: “two” which post-modifies the nominal head, ukaan nto ufok ngwed, “Old students”, closely followed by the copula, ema, ‘were’ linking the prepositional phrase, emaesine kufok ade, “in the house” which is the subject complement of the sentence.

One feature which is significant in sample 26 is the indication that in Anaang, the possibility of N-head-numeral determiner associative construction exists whereas in its English counterpart, a variation exists because determiners generally precede the N-head of the N-bar in English. Again, it is interesting to observe that while the numeral determiner, iba, ‘two’ post-modifies the N-bar in Anaang sentence; it pre-modifies the N-bar of the English sentence. Therefore, despite the difference in the syntactic structure of the two sentences in Anaang and English, the grammatical and semantic values are the same. As a result of this, there is communication and a very high level of intelligibility in the complement selection.

8 Sample 8 (Respondent No. 49)

Anaang: Akpohọ arunam ade ade ake ami

English: The money for that project is mine.

Sample 8 shows that the subject of the sentence, Akpohọ arunam ade, “the money for that project” is a prepositional phrase which serves as head-initial with which the copula, ade, ‘is’ occurs to the right to bring into contact, ake ami, “mine” which is the subject complement of the verb ‘is’ in the sentence.

One feature in sample 8 which is significant in this investigation is the absence of the agent who owns the money for the project mentioned in this construction. Scholars like Udoka (2008:34)



Sample 9 shows that the N-bar, Se ami nkekud ke ngwed ade, “What I saw in the book” has equal grammatical structure and semantic values. The selection of the copula, ‘are’ as the V-head quickly signals that the sentence has a plural marker in the subject complement so as to agree with the 1st rule of concord and agreement. This is confirmed as the copula ‘are’ subcategorises for an adjective, agwak, ‘many’ to match.

An interesting feature in sample 9 is that the complement of the verb in English sentence “many” can also function as a determiner and as a pronoun whereas in Anaang, agwak only functions as an adjective. In spite of the difference in the work load of “many” in English as compared to that of its Anaang equivalence, agwak, communication is not in jeopardy because syntactic and semantic imports in the two sentences are of equal strength and value.

10. Sample 10 (Respondent No. 56)
- | | | |
|----------|-----|---|
| Anaang: | (a) | Agwó ibó daad ke Etim ade abón amkpa nyien idem |
| Anaang: | (b) | Daad ke Etim ade Abón amen nyien idem |
| English | (b) | The fact that Etim is a king baffles me |
| English: | (b) | The fact that Etim is a king weakens me |

Samples 10 (a) and (b) in both languages contain a complementizer, daad, ‘that’ clause in each as the subjects (N-bar) of the two sentences. There is also the presence of the phrases at the verbal level in each with ammem nyien and amkpa nyien, ‘weakens’ and ‘baffles’ respectively. The subject complement in each of the two sentences is idem, ‘me’.

A very interesting feature in samples 10 (a) and (b) is that the two verbs: ‘baffles’ and ‘weakens’ are transitively used. Another striking and interesting feature in both samples 10(a) and 10(b) is the presence of an indefinite article ‘a’ in English sentence construction. This article serves in a position where it pre-modifies the N-head final of the N-bar, Abón: “a king” in each sentence. In Anaang, there is no indefinite article in its sentence construction, whereas there is such provision for specific article “the” in Anaang language sentence constructions.

There are constructions in the corpus which are instances of the structure just discussed as shown in our study which includes the ones in the example (27-29) below:

- (27) a. Ibó daad ke anye akpóó kuumek agwó inem jire echid
The fact that he failed the election impresses us.
- (28) b. Daad ke anye akpa ade mkpó asuene
That he is dead is a thing of disgrace



- (29) c. Daad ke ufan ade ade ifót adóró agwó inua
The fact that friend is a witch surprises every body.

11. Sample 11 (Respondent No. 51)

Anaang: (a) Ikód abòlis ade uma se ikeme inam

Anaang: (b) Agwó isin anye eke esòp akede mkpe miere akemi

English: (a) To invite the police is the only option

English: (b) To sue him to court was my decision

- (28) b. Daad ke anye akpa ade mkpó asuene
That he is dead is a thing of disgrace

- (29) c. Daad ke ufan ade ade ifót adóró agwó inua
The fact that friend is a witch surprises every body.

11. Sample 11 (Respondent No. 51)

Anaang: (a) Ikód abòlis ade uma se ikeme inam

Anaang: (b) Agwó isin anye eke esòp akede mkpe miere akemi

English: (a) To invite the police is the only option

English: (b) To sue him to court was my decision

An analysis of the two samples: 11 (a) and 11(b) of both languages show that they contain infinitive clause complements, “To invite the police” and “To sue him to court” respectively, which serve as the subject or N-bar in each case as being possible in the two languages under study. The V-heads in each case ‘is’ for sample 30 (a); and ‘was’ for sample 11 (b) respectively, are present and past time markers in the two sentences. There is the pre- modification of the verb, isin, ‘sue’ by agwo, “one to sue” in Anaang which also involves the use of multiple words to describe the words, agwo isin, ‘for one to sue’ which vary syntactically but semantically carry a similar import. The syntactic difference as observed in the two samples; 11 (a) and 11 (b) again, shows that Anaang; is a developing language because its orthography has just been produced, presented and given approval by the NINLAN and NERDC, as such, Anaang as a language is as varied in its vocabulary as its English counterpart.

Interestingly too, is the fact that the subject complements in the two sentences, se ikeme inam, “the only option” and mkpe miere akemi, “my decision” also differ structurally. In sample 11 (b), we observe that akemi, ‘my’ pre modifies the subject complement mkpe miere, ‘decision’ while the specific article ‘the’ is used to specify the complement, “only option” in English language sentence construction as in sample 11 (a).



In Anaang, ade, ‘the’ is the only article that features in sentences to pre- modify the N-head or bar after it. Generally, it is a norm in Anaang that those constructions which do not have ade, ‘the’ in pre or post modifying positions compel the indefinite or non-defining article, ‘a’ to be subsumed into either of the pre or post-modifying positions in such constructions depending on the nature of the sentences. However, this article’s position of occurrence notwithstanding, the concern here is that it operates and functions equally both at the semantic and syntactic rank scales of the two languages.

There are other versions of this sample 6 found in our data. They include those in the example (30) below:

(30) Anaang: (a) Ikpóng mire abolo abolo idahaam aneke aliok

English: (a) To quit politics now is too bad

Summary and Conclusion

The present study addressed issues on Subject Complementation Systems in English and Anaang Languages. Specifically, it aimed at identifying the subject complement categories operating in English and Anaang, highlighting not only the similar/dissimilar complement phenomena in the two languages but also determining the head parameter variations between English and Anaang; and in the light of these factors determine the performance of Anaang learner/speakers of English in their use of English complement categories.

Lexical, phrasal and clausal complements exist in English and Anaang languages. Lexical heads of the same word class differ in the complements that they select. Significant similarities were observed to exist between the complement patterns in English and those in Anaang. Such similarities are those that are generally considered to be universal features of language. But, existing side by side these similarities are a number of subtle underlying dissimilar patterns, which can be obscured by the surface similarities. The complement patterns exhibited in the performance of the Anaang speakers of English does not fail to bring in the transfer implications from the L₁ to the L₂ and this requires close attention to enable curriculum planners to prepare remedial syllabus for the Anaang bilingual in a second language situation. A lot more research work needs to be done in Anaang interlanguage syntax.

References

- Bresnan, J. W. (1970) “On Complementizers: towards a syntactic theory of complement types” foundations of language. 6, 297-321 Retrieved Oct. 11, 2015 from ([http://signum-verlag.de/B tiles](http://signum-verlag.de/B%20files)).
- Brown, E. K. and Miller, J. E. (1980) A Linguistic introduction to sentence structure: London: Hutchinson. 394pp



- Brown, E. K. and Miller, J. E. (1982) *Syntax: Generative grammar*, London: Hutchinson, 240pp
- Burton, R. N. (1986) *Analysing sentences: An Introduction to English syntax*, London: Longman, 265pp..
- Edem, E. B. (2022). The promotion of Nigerian arts and culture through festivals. *GASPRO International Journal of Eminent Scholars*.
- Edem, E. B. (2024). African theatre and the performance space: Iboku Uruan cultural festival of Akwa Ibom State in view. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies*, 7(2), 91–102.
- Edem, E. B., & Akpan, N. A. (2025). Dance across generations from elders to children: The uniqueness of Akwaobio Theatre Troupe in Akwa Ibom State. *AKSU Diakonia: Journal of Religion and Culture*, 5(1), 95–116.
- Enang, E. (2017) “A Contrastive Study of the Complementation Systems in English and Anaang Languages”. A Ph.D Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka
- Greenberg, J. (1963). *The languages of Africa*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Haageman, L. (1994). *Introduction to government and binding theory*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. 700pp.
- Halliday, M. A K. (1998) *Functional grammar: An Introduction* (2nd Edition), London: O U P, 346pp.
- Headbloom, sA. G. (1972):*Error Analysis and Theoretical Considerations on L2 Learning*. In Uwakwe (Ed) *The Teaching on English Studies*.
- Matthews, P. H. (1981). *Syntax*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nwachukwu, P. A. (1983) “Readings on the Igbo verbs, Onitsha: Agriculture FEP. Ltd, 100-110.
- O’Grandy, W. M. Dobrovolsky and M. Aronoff (1989). *Contemporary linguistics: An Introduction*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 490pp.
- Okoh, F. (2010). *A Compact grammar of English*, Onitsha: D sell Graphical Press Service.
- Quirk, R and Greenbaum, S (1974) *A Grammar of contemporary English*, Longman: 1120pp
- Radford, A. (1981).*Transformational grammar. A First course*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 625pp.
- Udo Udom, J. C. (2006) “English and Ibibio complement systems: A contrastive study” , University of Uyo: (A thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy, Ph.D.). 73-76.
- Udoka, S. T. (1998). “Phonotactics in Anaang and English”, University of Uyo: (A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts).



- Udom, E. M. (1999) “Anaang and English morphological systems: A Comparative study”, University of Uyo: (A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts), 97pp.
- Udondata, J. P. (2006). *A Grammar of Anaang language*. Ikof Ekpene: Joe Graph Publications, 150pp.