

A comparative analysis of reflexivisation in English and Ibibio

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Abstract

This paper examines patterns of reflexivisation in English and Ibibio to establish their structures, similarities and dissimilarities and implications on Ibibio-English bilinguals' performance in this aspect of English grammar. The study is anchored on Binding Theory. Data for this research were drawn from a test conducted among selected Ibibio-English bilinguals. Findings indicate that the two languages have proforms which occur leftward and rightward; and that those proforms in leftward position, our area of interest, are anaphors and have antecedents. Findings also show that anaphors and their antecedents in the two languages agree in person and number but differ in gender as there is no gender distinction in Ibibio reflexives whereas English anaphors and their antecedents show gender distinction. It is also discovered that Ibibio-English bilinguals encounter difficulties in assigning appropriate grammatical interpretations to English anaphors and their antecedents as well as misunderstand reciprocals. Cross-linguistic influence, interlanguage problem and overgeneralisation of grammatical rules are some of the major causes of infelicities in the use of reflexives among Ibibio-English bilinguals. The paper recommends intensive instructions on this aspect of English grammar among these bilinguals.

Keywords: Reflexivisation, binding, co-referentiality, anaphor-antecedent, c-command

1. Introduction

Language operates a system of interrelatedness of linguistic elements in which grammatical units in a sentence depend on one another for the interpretation of meaning. One of these interdependencies is related to proforms in a language such that depending on the structure of the language, a proform may occur leftward or rightward. The position of its occurrence also determines the source of its meaning. When the direction of a proform is

leftward, it sets up an antecedent-anaphor relationship but when the direction is rightward it sets up the precedent-cataphor relationship (Silas 2018). This study is on the antecedent-anaphor relationship in English and Ibibio, two distinct languages which belong to two different language families but co-exist in the same environment. The study as well examines Ibibio-English bilinguals' performance in reflexivisation during communication.

2. Purpose of the study

Earlier studies on reflexivisation in this language family include those of Essien (1974) on “The Reflexive in Efik”, Silas (2018) on “Anaphors in Annang: A Binding Theory Approach” and Udosen and Okon (2020) “Reflexivity in Ibibio: A Government-Binding Approach”. These studies specifically analyse the syntactic process of reflexivisation in their languages of study. The present study differs from theirs in that it undertakes a comparative study of the structures of reflexives in two distinct languages – English and Ibibio because of their relevance to each other, and to find out possible cross-linguistic effect(s) on Ibibio users of English. Consequently, a comparative analysis of reflexivisation in English and Ibibio serves a useful purpose as it hopes to further boost the understanding of this syntactic process not just in English but in Ibibio as well because of the place of English in Nigeria's educational system as the language of education.

3. Conceptual framework

This study anchors on Binding Theory (BT), one of the sub-theories of Principles and Parameters Theory (P&P). Binding Theory is a grammatical framework that divides noun phrases (NPs) into various types and provides direction on how they should be viewed. Aside from distribution into types, BT also directs how NPs are to be interpreted by way of specifying binding conditions for each of them. Binding conditions are the rules for the interpretation of the interconnections between noun phrases and espouse how pronouns are classified in a clause. Binding Theory, therefore, sets parameters for the distribution of reflexives, whether reflexives or reciprocals, pronominals, overt NPs, and empty categories, the last bit added by Horrocks (1993). BT in sum portions NPs into three different types and indicates binding conditions for each of them.

Haegeman (1994) gives three different NP typologies: (i) full noun phrases (ii) pronouns and (iii) reflexive elements and states how they are viewed. The source explains that the first type like *Mary*, *table* are full nominal expressions with independent referents (referential expressions) and select their referents from the universe of discourse and occurs

anywhere; the second type are pronouns like *she, he, her, him* referred to as pronominal elements which may and may not select their referents from the universe of discourse while the third type of NPs has to do with reflexives such as *herself, himself, myself* which select their referents from the minimal clause for co-referentiality. The third type is our area of concern.

The source further explains that two binding features [anaphoric] and [pronominal] determine the distribution of NPs. Anaphors are those elements that must have an antecedent as in “He loves himself” in which *himself* is the anaphor and its antecedent is *he*; pronominals are those elements that may have an antecedent as in “Richard said he would come” in which *Richard* and *he* may and may not be co-referential. To be co-referential is to refer to one and the same entity. The source adds that personal pronouns (he, she, we, him) have the features [-a, +p] as in “I saw him” which is featurally [-a] (minus anaphor) but [+p] (plus pronominal) while reflexive pronouns are featurally [+a, -p], that is, plus anaphor, minus pronominal as in “He loves himself.” The remaining overt NPs have the features [-a, -p] as in *chair, Mary* which are r-expressions (r- stands for referential). They are neither anaphors nor pronominals but overt full lexical NPs. We are interested in [+a, -p], that is, anaphoric expressions where reflexives belong. The way each NP is viewed is guided by three principles and each principle regulates the distribution and interpretation of a given type of NP:

1. Principle A: An anaphor must be bound in its governing category;
2. Principle B: A pronominal must be free in its governing category;
3. Principle C: A referential expression (R-expression) must be free everywhere
(Horrocks 1993, p.110, Haegeman 1994, p.233)

These conditions and principles are adopted in this study to investigate the use of reflexives among Ibibio-English bilinguals.

4. Antecedent-anaphor relationship

The term reflexive is a grammatical word in English related to pronouns from where the syntactic process of reflexivisation draws its existence. Reflexive pronouns refer to some animate or inanimate entities which are already mentioned at some place within the same clause, phrase, or sentence. A reflexive element refers to an antecedent in the same clause it is expressed and is technically referred to as an anaphor. An anaphor is an NP that must have an antecedent to be interpretable and shares the same reference with another NP within the same clause while an antecedent is that NP that is a replica of an anaphor and shares the same meaning with it. This information is exemplified diagrammatically as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1. Patricia | injured | herself. |
| NP ₁ | | NP ₂ |
| antecedent | | anaphor |

Patricia is the subject NP and *herself* the object NP. While *Patricia* (NP₁) is the antecedent, *herself* (NP₂) is the anaphor. *Patricia* and *herself* are co-referential because the two NPs refer to the same entity and are compatible. Consequently, the entity that is the subject of the verb and of the sentence is also the object of the verb (Ndimele, 1999). In such a situation, no matter how the sentence is cast, the subject, the object and the verb refer to one and the same entity. The entity who/which performs the act and the one acted upon are the same. This is the process of reflexivisation where the subject of the sentence acts on itself. It is on this basis that (Agbedo, 2015) notes that in reflexivisation, a noun or a proform is converted into a reflexive pronoun. In this syntactic process, the same NP replicates itself in a minimal clause as co-referents. Anaphor comprises reflexives and reciprocals.

A reflexive pronoun is an antecedent of a noun; an antecedent is the noun a reflexive pronoun refers to as a reflection of itself. Co-reference is the pivot on which reflexivisation situates. For reflexivisation to occur:

1. NP₁ and NP₂ must co-refer;
2. NP₁ and NP₂ must be sisters;
3. NP₁ and NP₂ must occur within the same clause.

From the discussion, reflexivisation requires “sameness of reference within the same simplex” (Chomsky 1965, p.145). Simplex is synonymous with a minimal clause. Sameness of reference semantically distinguishes one sentence with a pronominal from another. Consider the following sentences in English and the Ibibio equivalent:

2(a) Esther likes her.

(b) Esther ama anye.

Esther_{3s/g} love her

3(a) Esther likes herself.

(b) Esther ama idem ommo.

Esther_{3s/g} love herself

An interpretation where *Esther* and *her* in (2a) are co-referent is not possible in English. Similarly, equating *Esther* and *anye* in (2b) in Ibibio is not. *Her* does not refer to *Esther* but some other entity not mentioned in the clause and the same applies to *anye* in the Ibibio example. *Her* and *anye* are pronominals. However, in (3a) it is very obvious that *herself* is a co-referent of *Esther* in English and *idem omo* is co-referential with *Esther* in Ibibio. Therefore, *Esther* and *herself* as well as *Esther* and *idem omo* are clause-mates in English and Ibibio respectively. This is because *herself* and *idem omo* are reflexives. They are co-indexed as the following shows:

4(a) **Estheri* likes herselfi.

(b) **Estheri ama idem ommoi*.

We shall return to co-indexation in data analysis. The explication so far clearly establishes the existence of the syntactic process of reflexivisation in English and Ibibio.

5. Input for reflexivization

The word “idem” in Ibibio and its equivalent “-self” in English are the materials for reflexivisation in both languages. “-Self” is hyphenated and “idem” is not for obvious reasons as we shall see later. The basic requirement for reflexivisation is an agreeable clause-mate antecedent. English reflexive pronouns are derived by attaching the bound morpheme affix -self to the personal and possessive pronouns it/him/her/our/your/them/my etc. to derive the reflexives herself, yourself, himself, itself, themselves, myself. Personal pronouns have the features [-a, +p] with two distinct referents and are free in their governing category while anaphors have the features [+a, -p] and are bound in their governing category. Some reflexive anaphors in English are gender sensitive as in he/himself, she/herself and it/itself denoting male, female and neuter gender forms respectively while some others like *ourselves* and *themselves* are gender neutral. In addition, most reflexives in English apart from indicating gender distinction indicate number as in I/myself, it/itself, she/herself and he/himself for singular and you/yourself when used in the singular sense and your/yourselves, we/ourselves and they/themselves when used in plural. The following information is represented in sentences as follows:

5.(a) *He* hurts *himself*.

(b) *It* killed *itself*.

(c) *She* did it *herself*.

(d) *I* know *myself*.

- (e) *You have yourself to blame.*
- (f) *You should bear the burden yourselves.*
- (g) *They forwarded it by themselves.*

I, it, she, he, you and *myself, itself, herself, himself, yourself, yourselves* and *themselves* are the object NPs and the anaphors. Each NP is co-referential with the other since each is a mirror of itself and in agreement (antecedent and its anaphor). A phrase marker representation of antecedent-anaphor relationship for better understanding is as follows:

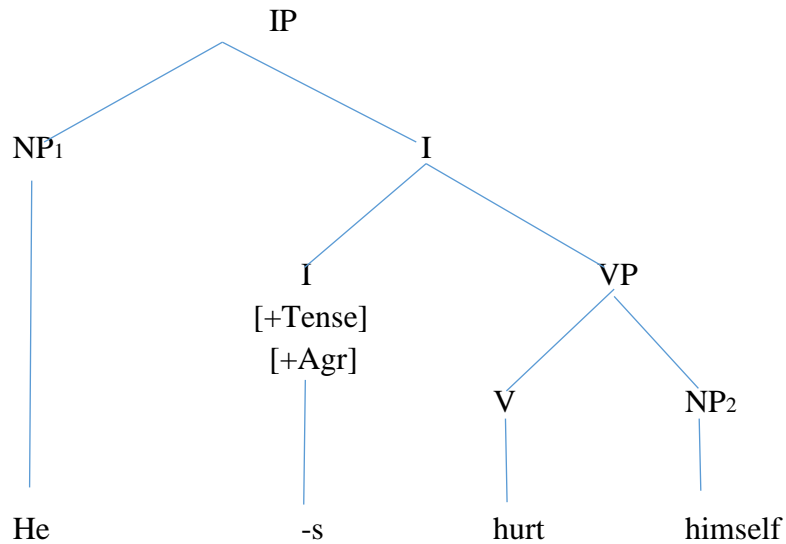


Fig.1: Tree diagram representation of antecedent-anaphor relationship in English

In the tree, the subject NP *he* (NP₁) and the reflexive *himself* (NP₂) agree in person, number and gender. The IP node dominating NP₁ also dominates NP₂.

Ibibio reflexive pronoun is a composite of the lexical element or free morpheme "idem" (-self in English) followed by a possessive determiner (PD). Possessive determiners in Ibibio include *mmi, mfo, nnyin, ndufo, ommo*. In Ibibio, the personal pronouns *afo, anye, ami, nnyin, ndufo, ommo* may function as pronominals (subject or object) based on their position in the structure of the sentence. Just as *she, her, he, him, it, they, them, you* are pronominals in English, *afo, ami, anye, omo, nnyin, ndufo, ommo* are pronominals in Ibibio. Some English pronominals are marked for gender but no pronominal in Ibibio marks gender.

Idem performs dual functions in Ibibio. The first function is that of a full lexical NP and the second that of a reflexive element. *Idem* as a full lexical noun phrase refers to the trunk of the body and the body parts like face, leg, hand, head etc. in a generic sense. It also refers to an entity. Consider the following sentences:

(6) *Idem mfo?* 'How are you?'
 Body your
 'How your body is'

(7) *Idem mmi isonno.* 'I am not well/feeling fine.'
 Body my sick
 'My body sick is'

In another sense, it can be an anaphor:

(8) *Mbo idem mmi.* 'I refer to myself'
 I 1s/g refer body/self my
 'I refer to self my'

In (6) and (7) *idem* makes reference to body, an overt lexical NP which is free everywhere and in (8) *idem* co-occurs with the pronoun *mmi* to function as an anaphor, bound to its antecedent M- (I). In Ibibio personal pronouns may be indicated through affixation, specifically as a prefix and mark number as in *mbo* (I refer/say), *ibo* (we say), *abo* (he/she says). *M-*, *I-*, and *a-* mark person and number.

In Ibibio, *ídém* as a reflexive marker does not attach to personal pronouns/possessive determiners or what Ekah (1998) real possessives in the language as it is in English rather it co-occurs with the personal pronouns/possessive determiners *ami* 'I', *nnyin* 'we', *afo* 'you' (singular), *ndufo* 'you' (plural), *òmmò* (singular) 'he, she, it' and *òmmò* (plural) 'them' to derive *ídem mmi* (myself), *ídem mfo* (yourself), *ídem ndufo* (yourselves), *ídem nnyin* (ourselves), *ídemòmmò* (himself, herself, itself) and *ídem òmmò* (themselves). Whereas the affixial morpheme -self occurs in post-position in English where it attaches to personal pronouns, in Ibibio *ídem* occurs in pre-position not as an attachment to the pronominal but in close connection and proximity with a personal pronoun or possessive determiner with which it forms a reflexive and interprets as a co-referent. The final output may and may not be hyphenated. All reflexives in Ibibio are gender-neutral but number sensitive. An agreement relationship exists between PD and the subject NP in Ibibio. Reflexives in Ibibio are represented sententially as follows:

- 9.(a) *Ami mma idem mmi.* ‘I love myself.’
 I 1sg love self my
 ‘I love myself.’
- (b) *Afo ama idem mfo.* ‘You love yourself.’
 You 2sg love self your
 ‘You love yourself.’
- (c) *Anye ama idem omo.* ‘He/she/it loves himself/herself/itself.’
 He/she 3sg love self himself/herself/itself
 “He/she loves himself/herself.”
- (d) *Nnyin ima idem nnyin.* ‘We love ourselves.’
 We 1pl love self ourselves
 “We love ourselves.”
- (e) *Ndufo ema idem ndufo.* ‘You love yourselves’
 You 2pl love self yourselves
 “You love yourselves.”
- (f) *Ommo ema idem ommo.* ‘They love themselves’
 They 3pl love self themselves
 “They love themselves.”
- (g) *Ime mme Edo ema idem ommo.* ‘Ime and Edo love each other.’
 Ime and Edo 3pl love self themselves
 ‘Ime and Edo love each other’
- (h) *Ime, Edo mme Okon ema idem ommo.* ‘Ime, Edo and Okon love one another’
 Ime, Edo and Okon 3pl love self themselves
 ‘Ime, Edo and Okon 3pl love one another’
- (i) *Atim mme ebe edu makka* ‘Atim and the husband love each other.’
 Atim and husband 3pl each other love
 ‘Atim and husband love each other’

- (j) Inem, Eno mme Etim edu makka. ‘Inem, Eno and Etim love one another.’
 Inem, Eno and Etim 3pl one another love
 ‘Inem, Eno and Etim love one another.’

In (9a), the antecedent *ami* is co-referential with *idem mmi* as its anaphor, in (9b) *afo* is co-referential with *idem mfo*, in (9c) *anye* is co-referential with *idem omo*, in (9d) *nnyin* is co-referential with *idem nnyin*, in (9e), *ndufo* is co-referential with *idem ndufo* while in (9f) *ommo* is co-referential with *idem ommo*. In (9d – f), both the anaphors and the antecedents are morphologically similar but their referents are syntactically and semantically encoded by the positions they occupy in the structure of the sentence. Meaning is derived from context based on the gender of the referent. A P-marker representation of the information using example (9a) is as follows:

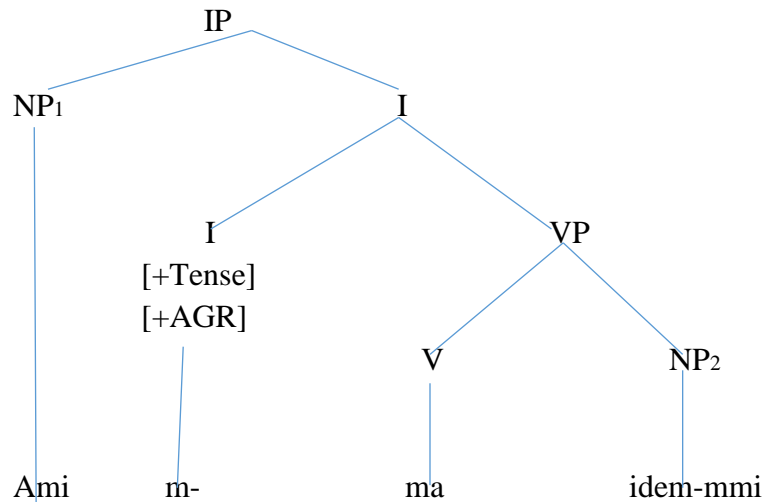


Fig2: Tree diagram representation of antecedent-anaphor relationship in Ibibio.

The illustrations show that reflexive anaphors in Ibibio do not mark gender distinction as it is in English where reflexive anaphors in 3rd person singular are morphologically marked for person, number, and gender. *Idem omo* can refer to masculine, feminine and neuter gender quite unlike English where *she* is female, *he* is male and *it* animate/inanimate. From the analyses, anaphors are not autonomous in the two languages therefore incapable of expressing independent meaning except they relate with their antecedents where their meaning is attached. There is, therefore, an agreement constraint on the sisterhood

relationship between reflexives and their antecedents in English and Ibibio. We conclude that in reflexivisation an anaphoric element only attaches itself to an antecedent which is a copy of itself. In addition, *ami* and *idem mmi* c-commands each other since one does not dominate the other and the first branching node dominating the antecedent also dominates the anaphor. This corroborates (Haegeman 1994, p.222) position that:

1. A node A c-commands a node B if and only if
2. A does not dominate B;
3. B does not dominate A;

The first branching node dominating A also dominates B. Anaphors hence comprise reflexives and reciprocals.

6. Data presentation, analysis, and discussion

The analyses of reflexives in English and Ibibio languages bring to fore their structures. The structures also suggest that Ibibio-English bilinguals are not likely to encounter much difficulties in the use of reflexives in English – the target language except with third person singular pronouns because of the absence of gender distinction in the mother tongue whereas English distinguishes gender. However, choices such as the following incorrect sentences from the data drawn from Ibibio-English bilinguals make interesting revelations:

10. (a) *We know ourself.
- (b) *Don't mind them. They know theirself.
- (c) *They did it by theirselves.
- (d) *The children played rough game and hurt themself.
- (e) *I doubt if that boy knows hisself.
- (f) *Show us. We want to do it by ourself.
- (g) *They were congratulating themselves.
- (h) *We decided to forgive ourselves.
- (i) *Ene and Edet greeted themselves after the contest.

These outputs are clear violations of conditions for co-referentiality which anchors on antecedent–anaphor relationship. Every anaphor (the bindee) must be bound by an antecedent (the binder). This is why in reflexivisation, anaphors are interpreted in relation to the NP subject (complement NP) for co-referentiality in person, number and gender. Any violation

of this rule results in ungrammaticality as evidenced in (10). In (10a-f), the anaphors are unbound.

One condition for binding is that no anaphor lacks antecedent since reflexives lack independent reference. 10(a) – (f) satisfy locality constraint on reflexivisation since the antecedents and the anaphors are found within the same binding domain as sisters and the distance between them is close by. To some extent, the anaphors are locally bound since there must be two co-referential expressions as clause-mates for binding. However, grammatical infelicities in the respondents' outputs reveal that binding requires more than fulfilling clause-mates condition. The outputs violate the binding condition that a reflexive element in English is co-referential with its antecedent if the two agree in number, person and gender. The outputs in (10a-f) agree in person and gender but breach number agreement. It is obvious from respondents' outputs that Ibibio-English bilinguals have challenges with subject-verb agreement in pronouns. In all the outputs, there is no number agreement between NP₁ and NP₂ (anaphor and its antecedent) as the following show: *we ... ourself, they ... theirself, they ... theirselves, boy ... hisself, we ... ourself. They do not understand that in English, -self only attaches to pronouns and possessives like him, them, our, your, my, her and not to possessives like their, his, etc. There is total confusion about the appropriate anaphor for each antecedent; a problem which arises from incomplete acquisition of reflexivisation rules in English as well as mother tongue interference.

The bilinguals arrive at this error by analogy by inferring that since *you* and *yourself* is possible in English, then *we and ourself, *they and theirself/theirselves, themselves also exist. Another major factor is the ignorance of the grammatical rule that the pronoun *you* is not only syntactically marked for number distinction in English but its use is also semantically encoded since *you* may be used in singular and plural sense such that when the antecedent (*you*) is singular the corresponding anaphor is singular and when plural the anaphor is also plural. *Yourself* as such is for one referent and *yourselves* for more than one referent. In addition, the bilinguals overgeneralise the rule by assumption that since *you* and *yourself* occurs, then *we and ourself, *they and theirself, *they and theirselves, *they and themself as well as *he and hisself are correct.

Reflexivisation requires two co-referring NPs on the relation of c-command (constituency command) also called constraint command by Chomsky (1986) whereby one constituent c-commands another constituent. In Figures 1 and 2, the IP node dominates NP₁ and NP₂. NP₁ c-commands NP₂ as the daughter of I (I-bar). *He/ami* c-commands *himself/idem mmi*. So, *he* and *himself* and *ami* and *idem mmi* are co-indexed in the languages. In co-indexation, the antecedent and the anaphor share the same notational index to the two NPs that have the same interpretation. Respondents' outputs lack clear number distinctions

between antecedents and their anaphors. The infelicities clearly show that they do not know that the structural relationship between antecedents and anaphors is that of c-command for grammaticality. They are unaware that c-command and binding are two intrinsic conditions on anaphoric relations (Black 1998 cited in Silas 2018, p.58). What this means is that:

A node A c-commands a node B if and only if A's sister either:

1. is β , or
2. contains β

(Adger, 2003, pp. 116-117).

This symbol (β) is pronounced as beta. In addition, in c-command and binding “A” binds “B” iff (if and only if) –

1. “A” c-commands “B”
2. “A” and “B” are co-indexed.

(Horrocks 1993 p.116)

Since the relationship between a reflexive and an anaphor is meaning-bearing, “an anaphor must be co-indexed with a lexical NP that bears a θ -role by virtue of its position within a sentence as the subject ... that c-commands it” (Horrocks 1993, p.111). This symbol θ -role is pronounced as theta-role. In 10, the antecedents or co-arguments are bound in their governing category in line with Principle 1 on reflexivisation but violates a section of the principle that a reflexive must be bound by a clause-mate antecedent which c-commands it within the same local domain in such a way that A (antecedent) c-commands B (anaphor) and A and B are co-indexed in relation to person, number and gender. According to Radford (1997, p. 75), “a bound constituent must be c-commanded by an appropriate antecedent.” Examples 10 are correct to the extent that A c-commands B in sisterhood relationship but with wrong co-indexation because they do not bear the same theta-feature. Each breaches agreement in person and number rule. Consider (10a) which is re-presented as (11) as follows:

(11) *Wei know ourselfi.

This is inappropriate co-indexation since the co-arguments (anaphors-antecedents) do not agree in person and number whereas in English an anaphor must agree with its antecedent in person, gender and number. A reflexive has to be co-referential with a preceding expression which it shares theta-feature with. All the anaphors and the antecedents in (10a-f) do not

share the same notational index in our respondents' outputs. In BT the same notational index is assigned to two compatible NPs with same interpretation. In (10a re-analysed as 11), *we* can only c-command a plural anaphor like *ourselves* with which it shares the same feature index and not **ourself* which is a misrepresentation. **Ourself* is not synonymous with *ourselves* apart from the fact that such a word does not exist in English language.

In addition, an anaphor must co-index with a subject NP which bears a theta (θ -) role with it and as a clause-mate which c-commands it because they are bound in their governing category. Adger (2003, p.118) explains that "for two expressions to be co-referential they must bear the same θ -feature" (theta-feature). For grammaticality, plural anaphors co-refer with plural antecedents and singular anaphors co-refer with singular antecedents. *We* in (11) can only c-command a plural anaphor. There is a seeming confusion in the grammar of the bilinguals about English reflexives whether it is *ourself* or *ourselves*, *hissself* or *himself*, *themself*, *theirsself*, *theirselves* or *themselves*. This misrepresentation suggests learning gap.

We have so far examined reflexives. Examples (10g - i) express reciprocal pronouns. English has two reciprocal pronouns *each other* and *one another*. Whereas the former selects actions or states which involve two entities, the latter selects three entities and above. In reciprocals, a plural subject undertakes an act on other members of the same plural subject. The infelicities in (10g - i) point to the confusion in the grammar of these bilinguals in the use of reciprocals and reflexives. It is not possible for one to congratulate, forgive or greet oneself. It is rather to congratulate, forgive and greet *each other* if the referents are two or *one another* if the entities talked about are above two. The respondents are yet to master the grammar of reflexives and reciprocals in English.

There is also the problem of mother tongue interference. Some of the infelicities in the respondents' outputs may be traced to replication between subject NPs and their anaphors in *Ibibio* language as (9d-f) show where the antecedent and the reflexive elements are morphologically the same but only semantically different due to structural position in the clause and the meaning expressed in the position they occupy. In *Ommo ema idem-ommo*, *Ndufo ema idem-ndufo* and *Nnyin ima idem-nnyin*, the same words which function as NP subjects (antecedents) are the same words which function as object NPs (anaphors). It is only *mmi*, *mfo*, *omo* which are inflections of *ami*, *afo* and *anye* respectively which differ while the rest only copy themselves for reflexivisation as in *nnyin*, *ndufo* and *ommo*. Even though not all *Ibibio* reflexives inflect for number and person yet agreement is encoded in the grammar. (9a-f) are reflexives while (g) to (j) are reciprocals. Reciprocals in the language are also expressed by the suffixes "-ka" and "-ra" (Udosen & Okon, 2020, p. 279) as in *edumakka* (like/love each other/one another) and *edusuara* (hate each other/one another). They generally refer to two entities and above. 9 (i - j) may and may not attract the reflexive marker

as in *edumakka* (*idem ommo*) and *edusuara* (*idem ommo*). Hence, *idem ommo*, *ndufo* and *nnyin* may be specifically reflexives or function as both reflexives and reciprocals. A reflexive anaphor and a reciprocal anaphor can occur together for co-referentiality in the language whereas this is not so in English.

Comparatively, anaphors in the two languages are similar by pointing leftwards. The reflexive marker occurs rightward in a word in English but leftward in a word in Ibibio. However, in English, an anaphor uses the reflexive marker *-self* which attaches to a pronominal and selected possessive determiner for reflexivisation but in Ibibio, the reflexive marker *idem* does not attach but co-occurs with a pronoun for reflexivisation. Structurally, the reflexive marker *-self* occurs in post-position in English as a suffix but its equivalent *idem* occurs as a free morpheme in pre-position in Ibibio but in close proximity with the possessive determiner with which it forms a reflexive.

Carnie (2011, p. 9) argues that “an anaphor must agree in person, gender and number with its antecedent”. This is true of English where grammatical gender reflects sex (3rd person personal pronouns) but this is not of Ibibio. Gender is not clearly marked in Ibibio because 3rd person singular lacks gender distinction in the language. In English, all reflexives have features of number, except 2nd person, which restricts the entities referred to or spoken about whereas in Ibibio all reflexives have features of number without any exemption. Anaphors in the two languages do not have independent meaning but draw meaning from another expression in the same clause. In essence, anaphors in the two languages have dependency interpretation and meaning. They operate under strict grammatical rules even though rules application differs to some extent. Anaphors occur rightward and antecedents leftward in English and Ibibio. In addition, the two languages use *-self* and its equivalent form *idem* with the same meaning interpretation as materials for reflexivisation. Whereas a reflexive and a reciprocal may co-occur in Ibibio, it is not so in English.

7. Summary and conclusion

Based on the findings, in reflexivisation two NPs within the same minimal clause are in congruence if they are compatible in all the features. When any features of congruency is breached as the infelicities in 10 expose, the anaphors and the antecedents cannot be compatible the reason the outputs in 10 are ungrammatical and rejected by the grammar of English. Ibibio-English bilinguals require intensive instruction on reflexivisation in English and its rules in order to check such infelicities highlighted which are in part cross-linguistic influence and in part interlanguage while some of the errors are traced to overgeneralization

of rules. This will improve Ibibio-English language users underlying competence in English and enhance proficiency in performance.

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