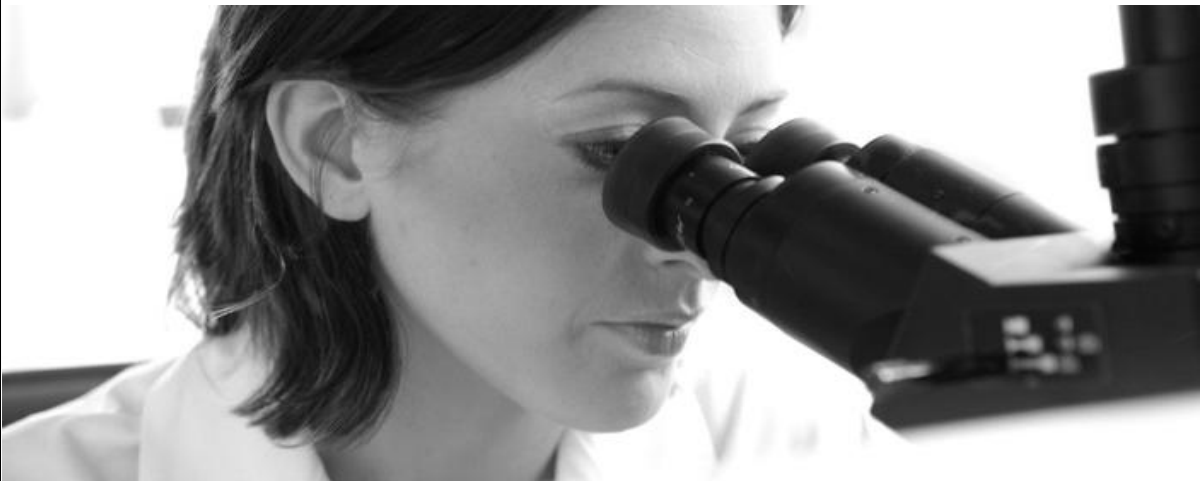


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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND NOBEIN THE SYNTACTICAL LEVEL

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to describe English and Nubian's syntactical systems in order to identify the similarities and differences between them. The process of comparing both systems involved analyzing and describing the elements of sentence in both languages relying on the method of contrastive analysis. The data for this study has been collected from two main sources: the informants and the published materials like books and papers. The study came out to find out some differences in the structure of the sentence in English and Nubian. It recommended some further studies on Nubian language in the field of contrastive analysis with different languages.

#### Key words:

Contrastive study, Nubian  
Language, Syntactical Level

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is the greatest gift given to people. It is their media in expressing their ideas, thoughts and cultures. Also, it is one of the most important resources in transforming the human cultures from one generation to another. Within it we can go deep in the past and know the present and future.

Diane (1984: 14) states that scholars came to recognize the need of language for two different types of study, called 'synchronic' and 'diachronic'. A synchronic study examines a language at a particular time, whereas a diachronic study traces its development throughout time. The scholar who was most influential in separating diachronic and synchronic studies was Ferdinand de Saussure. In insisting up on his separation and in delineating the appropriate objects and goals of linguistics, he was instrumental in laying the foundation for descriptive or structural linguistics.

Nubia is defined geographically by Trigger (1976:12) as the portion of the Nile Valley that lies between Aswan which was the southern border of Egypt in the Pharaonic time and Khartoum district. Located in one of the hottest and most arid region of the world, it begins from Aswan and Komombo in Southern Egypt including a series of cataracts down the Nile which divided into two parts, the lower and upper Nubia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many people think that Nubian is a dialect, not a language. According to Kabara (1997), Nubian is a language and it was written using special letters but nowadays there is no specific writing system. Nubian is a Nubian language spoken along the banks of the River Nile in Southern Egypt and Northern Sudan. It is classified as Northern Nuba. Many Nubian speaking Nubians were forced to relocate in 1963 \_ 1964 due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt( Adams, 1984). Nowadays, Nubian speakers live in the following areas: (1) near Komombo, in Egypt. (2) in New Halfa, in Kassala state of Sudan, and (3) in the Northern State of Sudan, northwards to the Egyptian border at Wadi Halfa.

According to Badr (1955: 5) the name Nubia was given to places between the First and Fourth cataracts, but in ancient periods it was designated to the countries from the First cataract to Ethiopia in the South. For Holt& Paly (1979: 1) the name, traditionally was applied to the whole regions from the First cataract to the Sabaluqa, north of Khartoum. It falls into two portions, which had separate histories from the early sixteenth century. Lower Nubia, called by the Ottomans, Berberistan 'the land of Barabra', extended from the First to the Third cataract, and included the territory both North and South of the modern Egyptian\_ Sudanese frontier.

Bianchi (2004: 2) refers the history of Nubians to the Old Stone Age, some 300,000 years ago Adams (1984:31) sees that the main physiographic subdivisions of Nubia are marked off in a

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general way by the main or numbered cataracts of the Nile. In upstream order, these subdivisions are Lower Nubia, the Batn el Hajar, the Abri \_ Delgo Reach, the Dongola Reach, the Abo Hamad Reach and the Shendi.

**Syntax**

Syntax is defined by many linguists; it is basically the structure of sentences. Sentences have to follow certain structural rules in order to make sense.

According to Edith (2006: 23) syntax complements the other components of grammar semantics, phonology, and the lexicon in two ways: on the one hand, it describes the selection and order of words for producing well formed sentences. On the other hand, it describes the correspondence between sentence structure and sentence meaning, and sentence structure and sentential sound form. She mentioned two syntactical rules:

**Syntactic structure rules**

Word selection: every concrete common noun in the singular must occur with an article. Word order: the article must precede the noun.

**Syntactic correspondence rules**

**Between syntactic structure and meaning:**

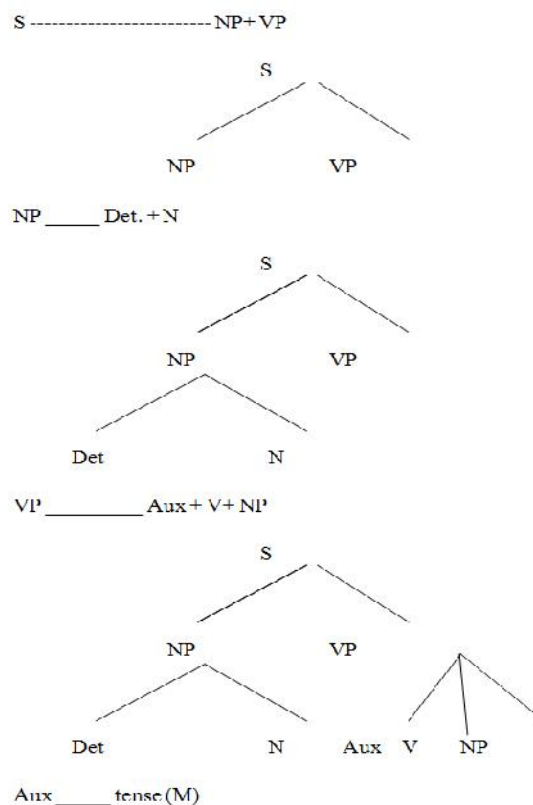
- In sentences where the predicate has a negative meaning, if they contain no auxiliary, a form of the verb do has to be included.
- In sentences whose meaning is a basic weather statement, there must be an it subject.

**Between syntactic structure and sound form:**

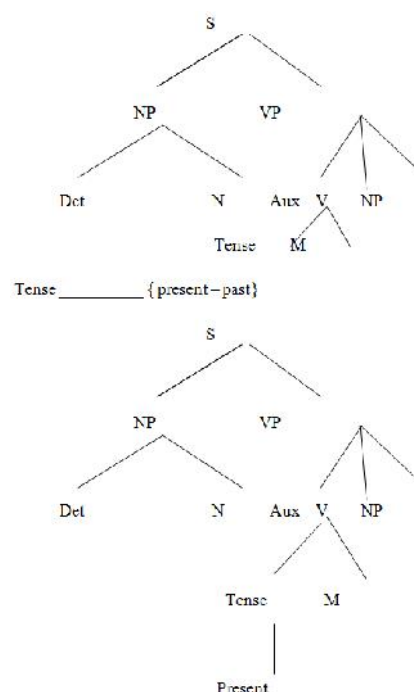
- Yes/ no questions carry rising intonation.
- The two syntactic constituents is and not can make a single phonological word isn't.

The traditional grammar school developed a system of sentence analysis, which involved examining complete sentence and identifying major sentence elements, such as subjects, verbs, and objects. Diagrams were used to indicate sentence structure. In Syntactic Structure ( 1957 ) Chomsky mentions that when we try to set up for English the simplest grammar containing a phrase structure and transformational part, we find that the kernel of the language consists of simple, declarative, active sentences, and that all others can be described more simply as transforms.

In a transformational grammar, phrase structure rules are illustrated by means of tree diagrams, called "phrase markers" which show the hierarchical structure of the sentence. it is begun with S, the highest level, and work down to lower levels until the maximally specific or terminal level, where no additional symbols can be rewritten. This process is called a derivation of a sentence. The following rules and diagrams illustrate the step- by – step derivation of a sentence:

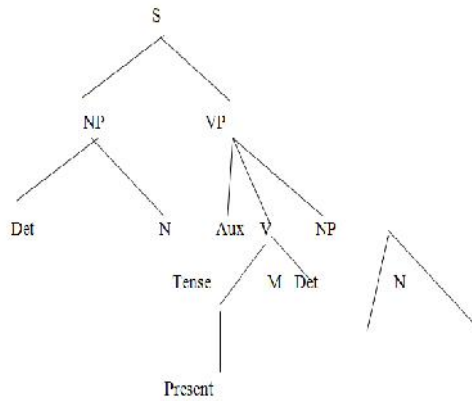


The optional modal(N) is chosen in the following rewriting of auxiliary(Aux)"



The noun phrase rule is applied for rewriting of the object noun phrase:

NP → Det + N



Sentence pattern: Det + N + PRES + M + V+ DET + N

Sample sentence: the man will buy a car.

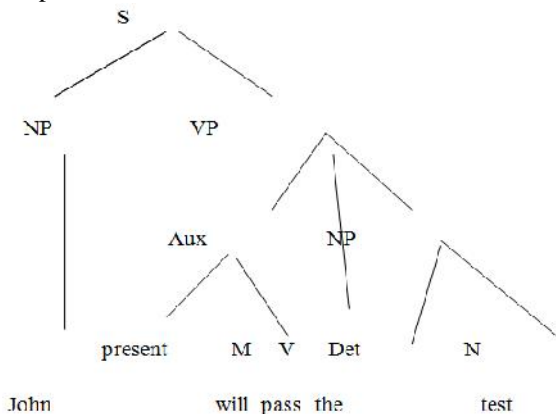
The tree diagram provides a precise means of defining syntactic relation. An NP immediately dominated by an S is the subject of that sentence. An NP immediately dominated by a VP is the object or complement of the sentence containing the verb phrase. The tree diagram also shows which words are constituents of a sentence.

The rule "S \_\_\_\_\_ NP+ VP" accounts only for simple declarative sentences, such as the following:

*John will pass the test*

In early models of transformational grammar, questions and negatives were considered optional transformations of simple declarative sentences, which were called "kernel sentences".

Since the deep structure was supposed to represent the meaning of the sentence, abstract markers were placed in the deep structure in later models of the grammar to give positive, negative, and interrogative sentences different representations:  
John will pass the test.



*\*will John pass the test*

*\*John will not pass the test*

The question and negative markers serve as triggers for transformations; that is, they indicate that certain transformations must be performed. Similar markers are used for imperative and emphatic sentences. The following phrase

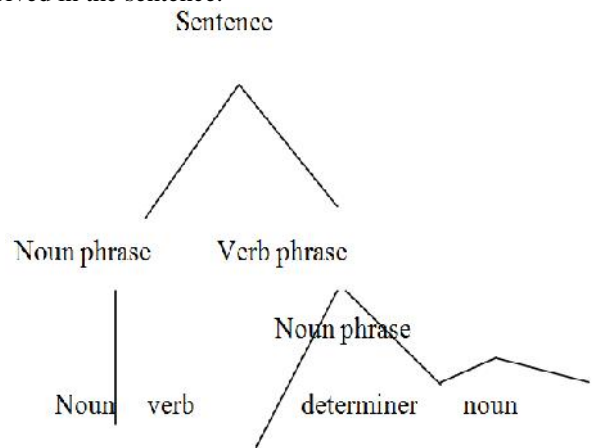
structure rule indicates the possibilities of selecting these markers so as to generate different types of sentences:

S----- (Emph- Imp- Q) (Neg) NP+ VP

Sentences are made up of smaller phrases. There are several difference types of phrase that can be used in a sentence, but the two phrases which must be used in a sentence for it to make sense are a noun phrase and a verb phrase.

A noun phrase is usually the person or thing that is performing the verb in the sentence. It may also be the person or thing that the verb is being done to in a sentence. The person doing the verb in a sentence is known as the subject. For example, in the sentence 'Tom pushed the car', 'Tom' is the subject of the sentence as he is pushing the car. 'The car' is the object in the sentence as the car is the object that the verb is being done to. Both of these are noun phrases.

A noun phrase has to be made up of a noun, such as a name or a tangible object. Sometimes, a determiner is needed in a noun phrase, for example 'a cat', 'the dog'. 'A' and 'The' are called determiners because they tell us which person or thing is involved in the sentence.



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study carried out using two approaches. The prescriptive and descriptive approaches. The prescriptive views grammar as a set of rules for the proper use of a language, while the descriptive approach describes the regular structures of a language as it is used, which is the basis of most modern attempts to characterize the structure: structural analysis, which investigates the distribution of forms in a language, and the immediate constituent analysis, which shows how small constituents in sentences go together to form larger constituents. However, the researcher has chosen the first type of descriptive approach (i.e. the structural analysis) in order to carry out this study. We can conclude that this study has benefited from this model of analysis, which seems suitable to deal with such issues.

### Tools Of The Study

Primary and secondary sources of the data collection are utilized here include information collected during interviews with the native speakers of Nubian, who live in New Halfa and

Khartoum with which text analysis elicitation were used to collect data. The instrument is recording actual Nubian speech; the researcher used a notebook and a pen in order to write down the information immediately so that it can be referred to it at any time. The secondary sources include references and published articles related to the subject. The descriptive method is used along with structure functional approach to analyze the data which tries to describe the structure of both English and Nubian.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher used the descriptive method is used along with structure functional approach to analyze the data which tries to describe the structure of both English and Nubian. The information below support what has been discussed and illustrated above.

### *Declarative Sentence*

Similarities in the following terms are noticed in both English and Nobein:

- Declarative sentences are divided into nominal sentences and verbal sentences. In nominal sentence the subject in both languages is either a noun or pronoun.
- Verbs are transitive and intransitive.
- Objects are direct and indirect.
- Complements can be realized by noun phrases or adjective phrases.

The following differences hold between sentence elements between English and Nubian:

**First:** In English simple declarative sentences, the subject is an obligatory realized element, whereas in Nubian, may be overt or covert:

**English:** He entered the house. Nubian: tar noug il toro

**English:** he entered the house. Nubian: noug il toro.

**Second:** in English the syntactic functions of sentence elements are determined by word order, but in Nobein, these functions are marked by case endings that are retained by the elements regardless of their position in the sentence.

Third, unlike Nubian, English allows definite or indefinite nouns to occur initially in a copulative sentence.

**English:** a man in the house. Nubian: nou gil id dafi. house man in

### *Interrogative Sentence*

In both English and Nubian interrogative sentences are divided into yes/no questions, wh-type questions and tag questions. Alternative questions in English and Nubian are expressed by using one word (i.e, in English uses 'or' which equals the word 'walla' in Nubian). The following differences hold between English and Nobein. First, English question formation involves Do- support when no auxiliary is present in the statement,

whereas in Nubian certain suffixes are used at the end of the sentence. Second, only English question formation involves auxiliary- subject inversion. Thirdly, unlike Nubian, English questions allow preposition stranding. Fourthly, Tag questions in English and Nubian are formed by adding an interrogative suffix at the end of declarative sentence. In English, if the sentence is in positive the tag will be negative and vice versa.

English has a variety of tags, whereas Nobein has only one fixed structure that expresses the tag. Fifthly, English tag may have either rising intonation (expecting agreement) or falling intonation (demanding agreement).

**Table 1** Question types in both languages

Question type	English	Nubian
Wh- question	Who	'nay , naysi'
	What	'mina'
	where	'siddo, hiddo'
	how	'sikir'
	when	'hisun , insun'
Alternative questions	how much	'min kela'
	which	'sika , hika'
	Or	Walla
	Yes/ no	Suffixes: na, ri, ru,
Tag	Auxiliary and modal verbs Auxiliary and modal verbs (positive and negative )	ingira emi

The Nobein tag in contrast, always has rising intonation. Sixthly, English uses 'how many ' and 'how much' to ask about count and no count nouns, respectively, while Nobein does not make this distinction. The following table explains the question types in both languages:

### *Imperative Sentence*

Imperative sentences in both English and Nubian show request, command and permission. The structure of the sentence in English and Nubian in imperative differs. In English the imperative begins with a verb followed by an object or a complement while in Nobein it begins with a noun and the object marker precedes the verb. Both have the form of the imperative in the case of one verb.

The following table explains the structure of imperative in both languages:

**Table 2** Imperatives of English and Nubian

English	Nubian
V O	O V
Come here	Indo kir
V	V
Sit	Tiig

### *Exclamatory Sentence*

In both English and Nobein exclamatory sentences are formed by adding interrogative pronouns. English possesses more words for exclamation than Nobein as shown in the following table:

**Table 3** Exclamation words in English and Nobein

English	Nubian
What	Brilliant!
How	Magnificent!
Unbelievable	Sikir
Awesome!	Amazing

Examples:

\*English: What a beautiful day!

\*Nobein: sikir buru ashra ya !( what a beautiful girl)

**Sentence Patterns**

English and Nobein sentence patterns differ in structure and word order. In the following tables all patterns of both languages are shown:

**Table 4 Contrast of Pattern (1)**

English			Nubian			
S	V	O	S	O	V / O	S V
I	saw	Omer	Ay Omer	ka	nass//	Omer ka ay nass
			Tar	wilid	ta	nalu(she saw the boy)

In English the sentence is consisted of a subject followed by a verb and an object. In Nobein the subject is followed by an object which is marked by some suffixes such as 'ka', 'ta'. Unlike English.

**Table 5 Contrast of Pattern (2)**

English		Nubian	
S	V	S	V
The	man came	id	kiro

The structure of this pattern is similar in both languages. The sentence begins with the subject followed by a verb. We notice that in Nubian there is no definite article like in English.

**Table 6 Contrast of Pattern (3)**

English				Nubian			
ADJ	N	V	ADV	N	ADJ	ADV	V
small	dogs	run	fast	Mugri	kudud	tu	shiddan warawin

Unlike English, in Nobein the adjective does not precede the noun, it follows it and the verb follows the adverb.

**Table 7 Contrast of Pattern (4)**

English				Nubian			
D.article	adj	N	modal V	N	ADJ	ADV	modal V
	ADV			Id	mas	walu	fa ki
The	kind	man	will arrive	Man	kind	tomorrow	will come
		tomorrow					

In this pattern the difference appears in that there is no definite article in Nubian as in English and the adjective and adverbs are adjacent followed by the verb in future.

**Pattern (5) Table 8 Contrast of**

English			Nobein				
In.d.art	adj	n	'Be'	main.	n	adj	in d.art
	v	-ing				v	ing
A	new	day	was	dawning	Wilid	kudud	wey a:g
						bataru	

Indefinite article and the -ing form are parts of this pattern. In English the indefinite article proceeds the adjective while in Nobein it follows the adjective. The -ing is attached to the verb in English whereas in Nobein it precedes the verb.

**Pattern (6) Table 9 Contrast of**

English					Nubian				
S	V	O	PREP	O	S	O	O	PREP	V
She	left	the	dog	at	home	tar	mug	ka	noug
									il
									mugu

In English this pattern is formed by a subject, a verb, an object followed by a preposition and a noun while in Nobein it is

formed by a subject, an object, an object, a preposition followed by a verb.

**Table 10 Contrast of Pattern (7)**

English			Nubian		
N phrase	V	prep	N phrase	N phrase	prep V
The	small	boy	fell	over	the chair
			Wilid	kudud	kursin kojel nado

In this pattern the difference lies on the structure of both languages sentence. In English there are two noun phrases which are separated by a verb and a preposition. In Nobein on the other hand the noun phrases are adjacent and followed by a preposition and a verb which comes at the end.

**Pattern 8 Table 11 Contrast of**

English					Nobein				
ADJ	N	V	PREP	N	S	ADJ	N	prep	v
The	old	man	fell	over	the chair	Id	daww	kursin	kojel
									nadu
						Tar	kursin	kojel	nadu

The prepositional phrase is formed by a preposition and a noun as a complement. In English the preposition comes after the verb while in Nobein it precedes the verb.

**Pattern 9 Table 12 Contrast of**

Language	Gerund form
English	ing-
Nobein	-i:d _ a:d _ andi _ innan

In English the gerund has only one form which is the -ing, while in Nobein gerund is formed by using many suffixes at the root verb.

**Pattern (10) Table 13 Contrast of**

English			Nubian		
S	predicate (linking verb + adj)		S	predicate (adj + be marker)	
Tom	is	lazy	Fatima	ashri	ya

In English the verb to be is used as a linking verb that precedes the complement, while in Nubian it doesn't have this function. It is expressed by adding some markers to the predicates.

**Table 14 Contrast of Pattern (11)**

English				Nubian			
S	V	IO	DO	S	IO+g	DO	V
He	gave	Ali	dates	Tar	Ali	g	fintig tiro

This pattern shows two object complements. In English they follow the verb while in Nobein they precede the verb.

**REPORT DISCUSSION**

As a result of analyzing the structure of English and Nubian sentence, the research came out to find out that the two languages share some aspects of syntax and differ in some. Here are some explanations of these similarities and differences:

- In both English and Nubian the declarative sentences are divided into nominal sentences and verbal sentences. Their structures also show differences.
- Interrogative, wh questions, are formed by using certain question words in both languages. Concerning yes/ no questions, English differs from Nubian in that it uses more auxiliary verbs while in Nubian only one form is used for all answers. In Nubian, tag questions use

affixed form whether the preceding statement is negative or affirmative.

- In both languages imperative can be realized by using one single verb. on the other hand, they differ in the structure if the imperative consists of a verb and a complement. In English the verb precedes the object while in Nubian it follows it.
- Concerning the exclamation, we find that both languages use certain words and expressions but English uses more exclamation words than Nubian.

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