

Grammatical Assessment of New English 'Native' Speaker in Ghana and Nigeria

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Abstract

New English 'Native' Speakers (NENS) are a growing group of English speakers who acquired English as their first and only language. Some researchers' opinions partly inform the study that English speakers should be classified based on competence, not geographical location, race, or nationality. While it could be easily assumed that these speakers will perform excellently in the use of English, English language teachers, educational policymakers, and researchers are very concerned about these speakers' competency, especially in the area of English grammar. Hence, this research, therefore, examined and compared the competence levels in tense between Nigerian and Ghanaian New English 'Native' Speakers (NENS) in selected private secondary schools.

The study adopted a simple survey method to assess 400 secondary school students' grammatical competence from selected private schools in Ghana and Nigeria (ten schools in each country) through the instruments of a 34-item objective Standard English General Test (SEGT), with each item designed to measure different aspects of English tense usage, and a validated researcher-designed questionnaire for demographic data collection. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the 400 samples for the study. Data gathered from the instruments were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using the SPSS tool.

The overall compared results revealed a mean score of 60.42% for Ghanaian students' use of tense, while their Nigerian counterparts had a mean score of 67.88%. This implies that Nigerian students performed better in the overall results. However, performance is still at the average level. In other words, the New English Native Speakers from the two countries are average speakers of the English language. These speakers are expected to be competent since they use only English as a communication medium, but the reverse is the case. The data presented in the study clearly illustrates the extent of the issue, with most participants performing below the expected standard.

This research has contributed to the existing efforts to develop and build English grammar to promote proficiency in English language learners, especially among the English New 'Native' speakers. The research reveals emerging English 'native' speakers are still refining their competence in tense usage.

Keywords: *New 'Native' Speakers, English Tense, Ghana, Nigeria, Grammatical Competence*

Introduction

The distinction between the Inner (native speaker) and Outer (non-native speaker) circles in the Kachruvian circles paradigm has frequently come under attack due to its biased classifications of the speakers of the English language in the world, especially in the outer and extending circles. The emergence of New English Native Speakers in the outer circle has further raised questions on the parameters in classifying the speakers of English. New English Native Speakers grew up in environments outside of the inner circle where English is the main language used at home and in the community. Since NENS are exposed to English from birth or at a very young age, language learning occurs in a natural and engaging setting. This shift in thinking has been accompanied by a growing acceptance of New English in academic and professional settings (Hackert, 2013).

More recently, a group of speakers has been identified as the New Native Speakers of English. These speakers are mostly monolingual and are assumed to have a good command of the English Language. They cannot speak or comprehend the local languages used around them. The new native speaker is a 21st-century phenomenon because these speakers did not exist in Nigeria before this time. (Babatunde, 2022). Jowith (1991) crafts the term 'New English Native Speakers' to represent the reality of classifying English speakers in the 21st Century. According to the tenet of New Native Speakers, they are speakers whose English language has a better command of fluency and idiomatically correct language forms. They are more knowledgeable about the cultural nuances of the language. Paikeday (2003) suggests using the term 'proficient user' of a language to refer to all speakers who can successfully use it. A few years later, Rampton (1990) similarly proposed the term 'expert speaker' to include all successful language

users. These speakers are mostly monolinguals with good English language command. They are with or without the ability to speak or comprehend the local languages used around them.

In NENS communities, English frequently predominates as the primary language of communication, minimizing exposure to other languages and minimizing barriers to language acquisition. Unhindered by conflicting forces, NENS can develop native-like ability in a language lacking in most outer circle circumstances. Generation after generation deepens English's usage, increasing its status as the native tongue. As a result of this generational transfer, English becomes more than just a personal ability; it becomes a common legacy ingrained in cultural norms and family customs. In recent times, linguists have been drawn to a new group of English speakers with English as their first language but not in the Inner Circle. They are traditionally described as speakers who acquired English as their first language (in the outer or extending circle) and as monolinguals who do not speak any other indigenous language in most cases. These speakers are in Nigeria and Ghana (Shondel, 2020).

Kperogi (2012), in his observation of the 'native' English speakers in Nigeria, comments: Where do urban-dwelling, monolingual, English-speaking Nigerian children fit into these categories? They are not considered native speakers of the English Language because they do not live in the traditional linguistic habitat of native speakers of the Language UK, U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc. However, they are not technically speaking English as a second language because English is chronologically their first and only language. Plus, it is the only language their parents speak to them. They are certainly not "English as an alternate language" speakers because they live in English as a second language linguistic climb.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 New English Native Speakers

The word 'native' is derived from the Latin 'natus', meaning 'to be born', so one's native language is the language one acquires from birth. An alternative term for this is mother tongue, which refers to the language of one's early childhood environment. People growing up in bilingual or multilingual environments might learn more than one language from birth, so they have more

than one mother tongue. A native speaker is, therefore, someone who has acquired a particular language from early childhood. That means being a native speaker of a language is a bio-developmental fact that cannot be changed afterwards through training or learning (Cook, 1999). Hackert (2013) asserts that the notion of native-speaker ownership of English has become problematic in the context of the worldwide spread of the language and its indigenisation in various post-colonial contexts and about English as a modern lingua franca.

To this end, Hackert (2013) identifies two groups of speakers who do not conform to the traditional classification of native English speakers as follows:

1. Native-like speakers who acquired English as a second language from birth or early childhood. These speakers may have some grammatical or pronunciation features that differ from native speakers of British or American English, but they are generally fluent and proficient in the language.
2. Nativized speakers who acquired English as a second language later in life but who now use English as their primary or dominant language. These speakers may have grammatical or pronunciation features influenced by their native language, but they are also fluent and proficient in English.

Bonfiglio (2010) states that the authority of any speaker, native or nonnative, must be based on that speaker's expertise in the written language in question. The fact that in literate societies, especially in the United States, first language speakers have to be taught how to write properly well into the level of higher education itself calls into question the authority of the inner circle over the circle of a speaker based on the fact that they were born into that society's matrix of language and culture. Scholars have used different terms to define the new native speakers contemporarily. Jowith (1991) proposes "New English Native Speakers" to differentiate the native speakers in the outer and inner circles. Stephanie (2018) uses "Post Speakerism" to describe these speakers. Bonfiglio (2010) wrote a book titled 'Mother Tongues and Nations: the Invention of the Native Speaker' to give a new structure to the definition of new native speakers. Thomas (2008) contributed to the notion of new native speakers, writing, 'The Native Speaker is dead.' All the coined terms these scholars use are inevitably useful, but 'New Native Speakers' will be adopted for this project.

Paikeday (2003) defines a contemporary native speaker as a competent speaker of a specified language and uses it idiomatically. By "native speaker", one means the person who has the language as their first language, and typically, such individuals have greater competence than those for whom it is a second language. The term "new speaker" and "new speakerness" constitute an explicit attempt to move away from the older labels; scholars, therefore, build on the now growing emphasis on multilingual research to understand the new communicative order of the modern era, which is characterised by new types of speakers, new forms of language and new modes of communication. The "new native speaker" phenomenon contradicts how both majorities and minorities have historically used language to legitimise claims of nationhood and cultural authenticity Paikeday, (2003)

Jenkins (2005) views the Native speakers of English as the people who belong not only to the "Inner Circle" but also to the "Outer Circle". Thus, NSEs refer "not only to those who speak English as their mother tongue but also to those who speak the language as an institutionalised language at work or school." According to this view, if you belong to the circle where English is used as a medium of instruction and communication as well as an official language, you are an NSE. This view implies that those who belong to the "Outer Circle" are the ones who develop their standards just like the ones in the "Inner Circle." Paikeday (2003) uses competence to classify native English speakers worldwide instead of the archaic geographical location. The "new speaker" concept has thus come to constitute a kind of umbrella term and a means of linking different multilingual strands across various research sub-disciplines. In doing so, it puts forward an alternative linguistic model to help understand the complex profiles of speakers emerging in the twenty-first-century multilingual society.

As O'Rourke, Bernadette and Pujolar (2013) said, 'Our use of the "new speaker" label also reflects growing critiques in multilingual research of the fundamental epistemologies on which our understanding of language has been based. It prompts us to query how linguistics as a discipline has participated in reproducing linguistic ideologies; essentially, through abstract notions of "nativeness", they argue that the nation has shown little or no empirical basis. Bloomfield (2010) uses the term 'native language' instead of 'native speaker', and by that, he means "language learned at one's mother knee" or "the first language one learns to speak. A native speaker can be regarded as a speaker of a given language as their mother tongue. However,

it was early in the 20th Century when Bloomfield used the term relating to one's mother tongue. As Davies (2003) stated, we are all native speakers of a language.

New English Native Speakers, therefore, refer to individuals who have acquired English as a first language and use it fluently in their daily lives. These individuals have a high proficiency in English, enabling them to communicate effectively with native speakers of the language. They have also been exposed to English from an early age, so they have developed a native-like command of the language. (Babatunde, & Adebileje 2023).

2.2 The Concept of English Grammar

The word grammar could mean different things to different people. Many people view grammar from different perspectives. It means a collection of archaic terminology: auxiliary, verb, relative clause, past participle and so on; A galaxy of arbitrary rules, e.g. gender, case e, .t. c; Every human language, English inclusive, can be described according to its sounds (phonetics and phonology), meaning/function (semantic), and grammar/structure (morphology and syntax). English grammar is, therefore, one basic element of the English Language. It describes the structure of the language. Lyon (1997) provides two different views of English grammar. One sense is the traditional notion of grammar having two structural levels: phonology and syntax.

Lyon (1998) further distinguishes traditional and modern grammar. While traditional grammar describes grammar as constituted by syntax and inflexion, modern grammar views grammar as composed of syntax and morphology. While these dichotomies are similar, the only difference between the traditional and modern descriptions of grammar is that inflectional rules specify which term of the forms of lexemes should occur in one construction rather than another (examples of inflexion are boy -boys, sing – singing, e.t.c), morphological rules embody both inflexion (sing – sings) and derivation (sing – singer). Morphology is far-fetching than inflexion as it covers more ground inflectional rules. According to Ham (2005), cited by (Madukwe 2011), grammar is the "science of language that is concerned with the constructions, forms and usages of words."

Yule (1996) views grammar as the principles determining the formation and interpretations of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Teaching English promotes good expression and

understanding so that many people who know little formal grammar can speak, write and read well. Every language has its grammar. Whether it is one's mother or second language that one is learning, the grammar of the language is important. This is because acceptability and intelligibility, both in speech and writing, depend on grammaticality's fundamental notions and norms. A knowledge of grammar is perhaps more important to an English as a Second Language learner than a native speaker. This is because, in acquiring the language, the native speaker intuitively internalises the grammar of the language. In contrast, the second language learner must consciously master these aspects of the language, which accounts for grammaticality. Therefore, it is necessary for speakers of English as a second language to learn English grammar.

2.3 Prescriptive Grammar

The traditional approach to grammar tells people how to use the English language, what forms they should utilise, and what functions they should serve. Prescriptive grammar is essential as it helps people use formal English speech and writing. Lowth (1762) and Fowler (1926) defined prescriptive grammar as the establishment and enforcement of standardized language rules for "correct" usage. This method provides guidelines for proper sentence structure, word choice, and grammar, frequently based on traditional norms or linguistic authorities. It emphasizes the importance of adhering to accepted conventions in language communication to ensure clarity and precision. Schools teach prescriptive grammar to provide people with a common standard of usage.

Examples:

In English, **less** goes with mass nouns (e.g. “less **money**”), and “**fewer**” goes with count nouns (e.g., “fewer **items**.”)

In English, speakers should not separate the infinitives (for example, “to boldly come;”) rather, he should say (“**to come boldly**.”)

In English, a speaker should not use passive voice in writing (e.g., “The snake was killed by the man); rather, he should say (“**The man killed the snake**.”)

In modern linguistics, “prescriptive grammar” refers to a grammar approach that emerged in the 18th Century and reached its peak during the 19th Century as “borne out by the large numbers of grammars that were produced” (Ostade, 2008). During the 17th and 18th Centuries, disturbed by the ever-increasing language variation, some people called for establishing an English academy to regulate the use of the English language. Nonetheless, proposals for such academies “died aborning” (failed) in both England and the United States (Mulroy, 2003). Something else, however, filled this gap. There was an increase in the publications of authoritative English grammar. These works became immensely popular, so much so that the 18th Century has been described as “a period when ideas of correctness became an obsession” (Hitchings, 2011). Three works were particularly influential: Bishop Robert Lowth’s ‘Short Introduction to Grammar’ (1762), Lindley Murray’s ‘English Grammar’ (1794), and Dr Samuel Johnson’s Magnum Opus, ‘A Dictionary of the English Language’ (1755) (Crystal, 2019). These works intended to demonstrate what the authors believed to be correct and proper usage. They were normative.

Nonetheless, the claim that these prescriptive works were mere opinions about language usage created by pundits who lived in ivory towers does not hold water. In their works, prescriptive grammarians did not accept everything common among people. Indeed, they were selective. This is evident in the way Johnson described some words as “low”, “improper”, and “barbarous” (Hitchings, 2011). Certain linguistic usages were deemed indicative of corrupted speech, as illustrated by the utilization of double negatives. Despite their widespread prevalence, such constructions have yet to find their way into Standard English today. As Johnson stated in his preface, "I have studiously endeavoured to collect examples and authorities from the writers before the restoration, whose works I regard as the wells of English undefiled, as the pure sources of genuine diction"(Cited in Crystal, 2006, p. 85). One of the distinguishing characteristics of prescriptive grammars is their authoritative nature. As Crystal (2017) puts it, prescriptive grammar “lays down rules to which all usage must conform” (p. 94). One of the primary wellsprings of "elevated language" resides in the linguistic contributions of esteemed writers (referred to as the untarnished reservoirs of English), rather than in the linguistic output of the general populace, regardless of its ubiquity. Moreover, prescriptive grammarians propagated that 'refined English' should be rid of impurities, a stance that has earned them the

appellation of language purists within contemporary linguistic discourse. The conception of an inherently "pure language" is not upheld in the modern linguistic landscape.

Prescriptive grammar refers to a set of norms or rules governing how a language should or should not be used rather than describing how a language is used. A person who dictates how people should write or speak is called a prescriptivist or a prescriptive grammarian. According to linguists Ilse Depraetere and Chad Langford, "A prescriptive grammar gives hard and fast rules about what is right (or grammatical) and what is wrong (or ungrammatical), often with advice about what not to say but with little explanation" (Advanced English Grammar: A Linguistic Approach, 2012).

The prescriptive grammarians went out of their way to invent as many rules as possible which might distinguish polite from impolite speech. They did not find very many--just a few dozen, a tiny number compared with all the thousands of rules of grammar that operate in English. But these rules were propounded with maximum authority and severity and given plausibility by the claim that they would help people to be clear and precise. As a result, generations of school children would be taught and confused by them."(David Crystal, *the Fight for English*. Oxford University Press, 2006).

2.4 Educational Policy in Ghana and Nigeria

Suglo (2015) explains that Ghanaian and Nigerian Englishes are part of the West African English varieties, and both have similar colonial and postcolonial influences and experiences. For instance, the account given by Adika (2012) of the origin of English in the Gold Coast, as Ghana was formerly called, started in the 16th Century. It was introduced for trade. However, Morris (1998) believes that in addition to training Ghanaians for trade, it was to make them literate so that they could read the Bible, as the British missionaries came to Ghana to impart religion and morality to the "pagan" Africans. Hence, schools were established by Christian missionaries where English was taught and used as the medium of instruction to the detriment of the local languages (Adika, 2012).

English was then used to conduct public business and interpret the people's laws and rights. It soon became a status symbol, as English speakers held most of the power. Indeed, the colonial

and missionary language policy was behind the consolidation of English in Ghana (Adika, 2012; Morris, 1998). Although English became the official language in Ghana, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), owned by the government, ran programmes in Hausa, Nzema, Ewe, and Akan each week to encourage using indigenous languages. Also, an agency, the Bureau of Ghanaian Languages, was set up to promote literature in its local languages (Dzameshie, 1988). Nevertheless, Mahama (2012) believed that it seemed Ghanaian indigenous languages had been overtaken and overrun by English. He opined that a Ghanaian child could only have access to the scientific and cultural knowledge of the world through English (Mahama, 2012; Aziaku, 2015). The English spoken in both regions has many similarities but also many differences. For instance, the English Language plays two important functions in Nigeria and Ghana: It serves as the language of education based on the apparent assumption that there is a substantive connection between English and the quality of education Ibekwe (2006). Secondly, it acts as a unifying factor in the two countries. Adebileje (2002), Anyidoho & Kropp Dakubu (2008), cited in Quarcoo (2014), Odebunmi (2001), and Tom-Lawyer (2011). This first motivation inspired the need to use the countries and their New English Native speakers.

Also, the two countries' educational policies are similar, which is considered the backbone for developing and producing competent language speakers. Similar language policies have been adopted at different times since independence from British rule over the two countries.

Presentation of Educational Language Policies in Nigeria and Ghana

Year	Ghana	Year	Nigeria
1925-1957	The Ghanaian Language was used as a means of instruction in the first three years.	1970-1973	The Ghanaian Language is used in the first four years of primary school.
1957-1966	English-only policy.		
1967-1969	Ghanaian language was used only in primary school.	1974-2002 (Sept)	The Ghanaian Language is

used in the first three years of primary school.	1927	Indigenous languages should be used as the medium of instruction in lower primary schools.
	1977	The medium of instruction will be the mother tongue or Language of environment and later English.
	1981	The medium of instruction will initially be the mother tongue or language of the environment and, later, English.
	1998	The medium of instruction for lower primary would be the language of the environment.

2002-2006	English-only policy.	2004	The medium of instruction will be the language of the environment in the first three years.
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2008	The Ghanaian Language is used in the first three years of primary school.
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Sources: Musa (2010), cited in Ibrahiim & Gwandu (2016); Owu-Ewie (2006); Ibrahim and Gwandu (2016); National Policy on Education (1998).

3.1 Methodology

The study adopted a simple survey method to assess 400 secondary school students' grammatical competence from selected private schools in Ghana and Nigeria (ten schools in each country) through the instruments of a 34-item objective Standard English General Test (SEGT), with each item designed to measure different aspects of English concord and tense usage, and a validated researcher-designed questionnaire for demographic data collection. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the 400 samples for the study. The stratified sampling technique helped to ensure that the sample was representative of the different schools, curriculums, genders, and disciplines. The purposive sampling helped ensure that the sample included schools more likely to have students considered as "new English native speakers". Data gathered from the instruments were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using the SPSS tool.

A simple percentage is used to determine the performance of the participants. Score intervals are used to classify students' score ranges. Since the test focuses on testing students' competence in English concord, every student is expected to get all the questions on the Standard English test. However, where this is not feasible, a competence mean of 70 per cent and above is used to

determine the students' high performance. Therefore, competence is measured by having at least 70 per cent in the test of tense sets for NENES in Ghana and Nigeria.

4.0 Data Analysis

4.1 Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Table 1

Answer = have been studying		I am tired. I for seven hours!			Total
		have studied	have been	had been studying	
Country	Ghana	58	142	0	200
	Nigeria	50	147	1	198
Total		108	289	1	398

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The response to the statement above is "have been studying." The data reveals that 147 respondents from Nigeria correctly answered the tense statement, while 142 respondents from Ghana also provided the correct answer. This suggests that the respondents from Nigeria demonstrate a higher level of competence than those from Ghana regarding understanding and accurately responding to the tense statement.

The results imply that there may be differences in language proficiency, educational background, or exposure to similar linguistic concepts between the two groups of respondents. The more correct responses from the Nigerian participants indicate that they have a stronger grasp of tense rules or may have encountered tense-related concepts more frequently in their language-learning experiences.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Present Perfect Continuous Tense

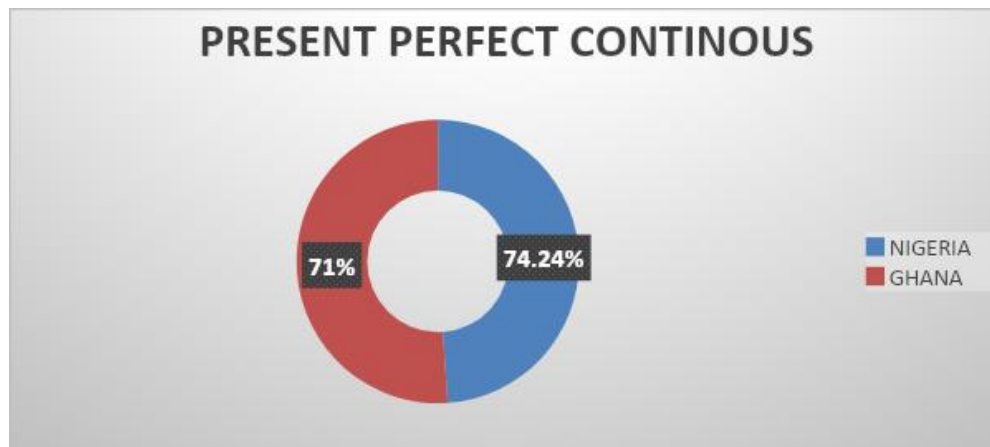


Figure 1

In Table 4.2, we have data from a field survey conducted in 2023; the table shows the number of respondents from Ghana and Nigeria who answered correctly for the given tense statement and the total number of respondents from each country. For Ghana, out of 200 respondents, 142 answered correctly, which gives us a percentage of 71% ($142/200 * 100$). This means that 71% of the respondents from Ghana got the tense statement "have been studying" right.

In Nigeria, out of 198 respondents, 147 answered correctly, resulting in a percentage of approximately 74.24% ($147/198 * 100$). This indicates that around 74.24% of the respondents from Nigeria correctly identified the tense statement "have been studying."

Based on these percentages, we can conclude that respondents from Nigeria performed slightly better than Ghana in identifying the correct tense statement "have been studying."

4.2 Simple Past Tense

Table 2

		My family in Canada for a year when I was a child.			Total
		was living	Lives	lived	
Country	Ghana	23	16	161	200
	Nigeria	18	43	137	198
Total		41	59	298	398

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

Linguistically, the response to the statement above is "lived." According to the data, 161 respondents from Ghana answered the tense statement correctly, whereas 137 respondents from Nigeria also answered correctly. This linguistic evidence suggests that the respondents from Ghana exhibit a higher level of competence than those from Nigeria in understanding and accurately responding to the tense statement.

The results imply that the two respondents might have linguistic variations or differences in language proficiency. The more correct responses from the Ghanaian participants may indicate that they have a more solid grasp of tense rules or have encountered tense-related concepts more frequently in their linguistic experiences.

5.9.2. Overall percentage of the two countries in Simple Past Tense

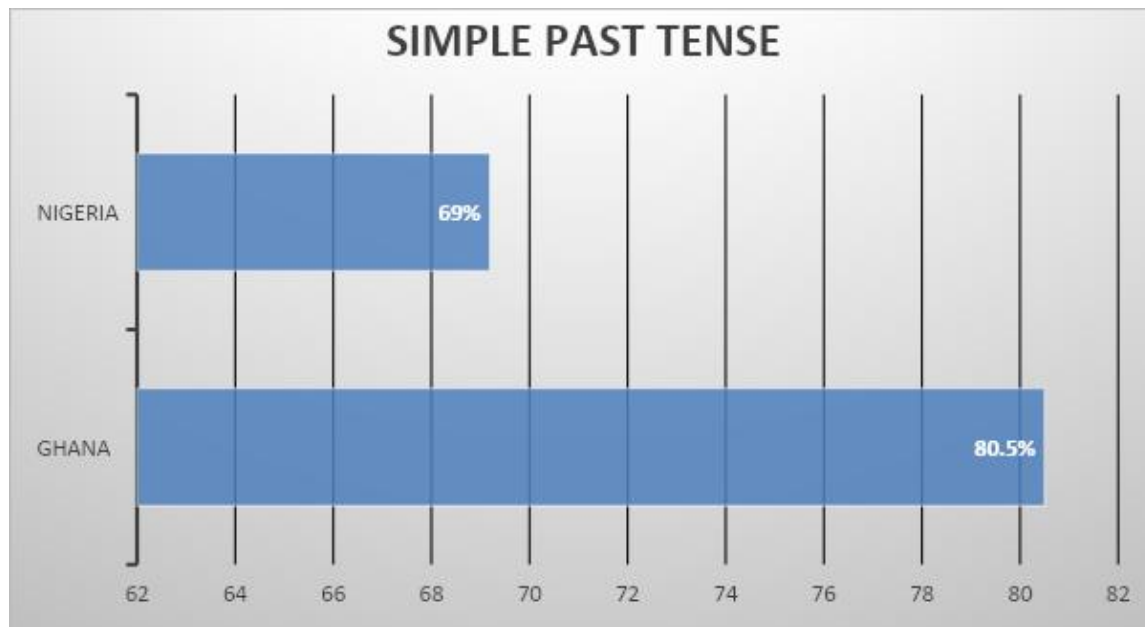


Figure 2

The table shows the number of respondents from each country who answered correctly for the given tense statement and the total number of respondents from each country. For Ghana, out of 200 respondents, 161 answered correctly, which gives us a percentage of 80.5% ($161/200 * 100$). This means that 80.5% of the respondents from Ghana got the tense statement "lived" right. Nigeria, out of 198 respondents, 137 answered correctly, resulting in a percentage of approximately 69.19% ($137/198 * 100$). This indicates that around 69.19% of the respondents from Nigeria correctly identified the tense statement "lived." We can, therefore, conclude that based on the correct percentages, respondents from Ghana performed better than those from Nigeria in identifying the correct tense statement "lived." The percentage of correct responses for "lived" is higher in Ghana (80.5%) than in Nigeria (69.19%).

4.3 Future Perfect Tense

Table 3

Answer = have drown		Most major states significantly over the last 30 years.			Total
		grew	have drown	will grow	
Country	Ghana	63	131	6	200
	Nigeria	77	104	17	198
Total		140	235	23	398

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (have drown). The result shows that 131 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly, and 104 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Ghana are more competent than respondents from Nigeria on this statement.

Table 4

Answer = future perfect		"We will have finished by 6 pm". What is the name given to the quoted expression?			Total
		future perfect	future continuous	future simple	
Country	Ghana	143	24	32	199
	Nigeria	116	46	34	196
Total		259	70	66	395

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (future perfect). The result shows that 143 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly, and 116 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly. Therefore, the respondents from Ghana are more competent than

respondents from Nigeria in this statement.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Future Perfect Tense

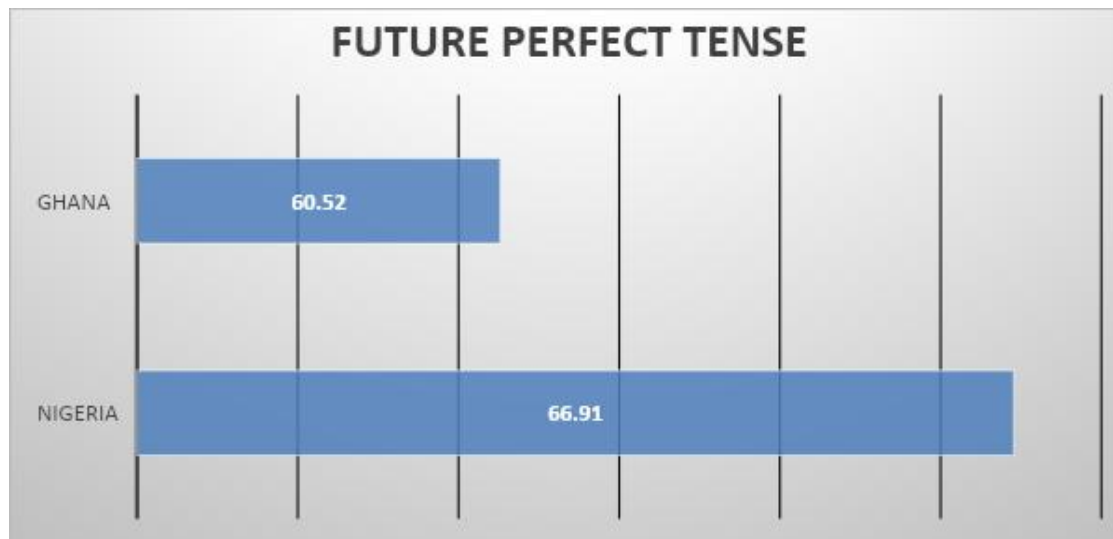


Figure 3

In the analysis that considers data from Table 5.1: 21 and Table 5.1: 24, respondents from Ghana and Nigeria were asked to identify the correct tense statements and expressions. The overall percentages were calculated by adding the correct percentages from both tables and dividing by the total number of tables (2). For Ghana, the overall percentage was calculated as follows: Overall percentage for Ghana = $(65.5\% + 71.86\%) / 2 = 68.68\%$ (approximately). This means that, on average, Ghanaian respondents had a combined overall percentage of approximately 68.68% in correctly identifying the given tense statements and expressions. In Nigeria, the overall percentage was calculated as follows: Overall percentage for Nigeria = $(52.53\% + 59.18\%) / 2 = 55.86\%$ (approximately). This indicates that, on average, Nigerian respondents had a combined overall percentage of approximately 55.86% in correctly identifying the given tense statements and expressions.

Based on the combined data from both tables, respondents from Ghana performed better than those from Nigeria. The overall percentage of correct responses was higher for Ghana (68.68%) than Nigeria (55.86%), suggesting a higher level of competence among the Ghanaian respondents in identifying the specified tense statements and expressions.

4.4 Present Simple Tense

Table 5

Answer = comes		Soon as She home, She sits on the chair and asks her children how they spend their day				Total
		came	comes	has come	none	
Country	Ghana	62	121	12	1	196
	Nigeria	61	117	19	0	197
Total		123	238	31	1	393

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (comes). The result shows that 121 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly, and 117 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Ghana are more competent than respondents from Nigeria on this statement.

Table 6

Answer = does not know		Man how to create life despite the daily advanced technology.				Total
		hasn't knew	do not know	didn't knew	does not know	
Country	Ghana	2	40	21	136	199
	Nigeria	19	55	17	105	196
Total		21	95	38	241	395

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (do not know). The result shows that 136 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly, and 105 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Ghana are more competent than respondents from Nigeria on this statement.

Table 7

Answer = always speaks	 very little when you are with people you are meeting for the first time.				Total
		had always spoken	was always speaking	always speaks	always speaking	
Country	Ghana	69	53	52	20	195
	Nigeria	62	48	56	31	197
Total		131	101	108	51	392

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The response to the statement above is "always speaks." The data indicates that 56 respondents from Nigeria correctly answered the tense statement, while 52 respondents from Ghana also provided the correct response. This suggests that the respondents from Nigeria display a higher level of competence than those from Ghana regarding understanding and accurately responding to tense statements.

These findings suggest that the respondents from Nigeria exhibit a higher level of competence in understanding and accurately responding to the tense statement than those from Ghana. The more correct responses from the Nigerian participants indicate that they possess a more solid grasp of tense rules or may have encountered tense-related concepts more frequently during their linguistic experiences.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Present Simple Tense

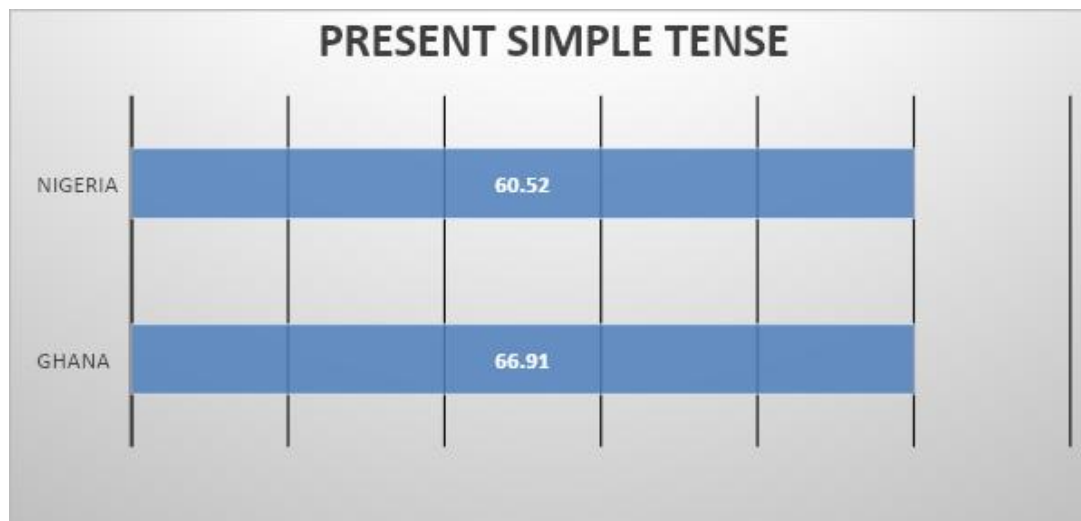


Figure 4

This comprehensive analysis considers data collected from three tables: Table 5.1: 25, Table 5.1: 26, and Table 5.1: 27. In each table, respondents from both Ghana and Nigeria were presented with different sentences and expressions, and they were required to identify the correct tense statements or terms. To calculate the overall percentage for each country, we added the correct percentages from all three tables and then divided the sum by the total number of tables (3). In Ghana, the overall percentage was determined as follows: Overall percentage for Ghana = $(121/196 + 136/199 + 52/195) / 3 \approx 66.91\%$

This indicates that, on average, Ghanaian respondents achieved a combined overall percentage of approximately 66.91% in correctly identifying the given tense statements and expressions across all three tables. The overall percentage was calculated in Nigeria as follows: Overall percentage for Nigeria = $(117/197 + 105/196 + 56/197) / 3 \approx 60.52\%$. This suggests that, on average, Nigerian respondents attained a combined overall percentage of approximately 60.52% in correctly recognizing the specified tense forms and expressions across all three tables.

Based on the combined data from all three tables, respondents from Ghana displayed a higher level of proficiency (approximately 66.91%) in accurately identifying the given tense statements and expressions compared to respondents from Nigeria (approximately 60.52%). This implies

that, on average, Ghanaian respondents performed better in comprehending and selecting the appropriate tense forms and expressions presented in the survey.

4.5 Past Continuous Tense

Table 8

Answer = was taking		Last month, while I a walk in the garden, I met Prof. Udah.				Total
		have taken	Took	was taken	was taking	
Country	Ghana	15	38	33	114	200
	Nigeria	14	36	25	122	197
Total		29	74	58	236	397

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (was taking). The result shows that 122 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly, and 114 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Nigeria are more competent than respondents from Ghana on this statement.

Table 9

Answer = past continuous		“Were you working at 9 o'clock”? “The quoted expression is an example of			Total
		past simple	past continuous	past perfect	
Country	Ghana	57	106	35	198
	Nigeria	44	109	43	196
Total		101	215	78	394

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (past continuous). The result shows that 109 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly, and 106 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Nigeria are more competent than respondents from Ghana on this statement.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Past Continuous Tense

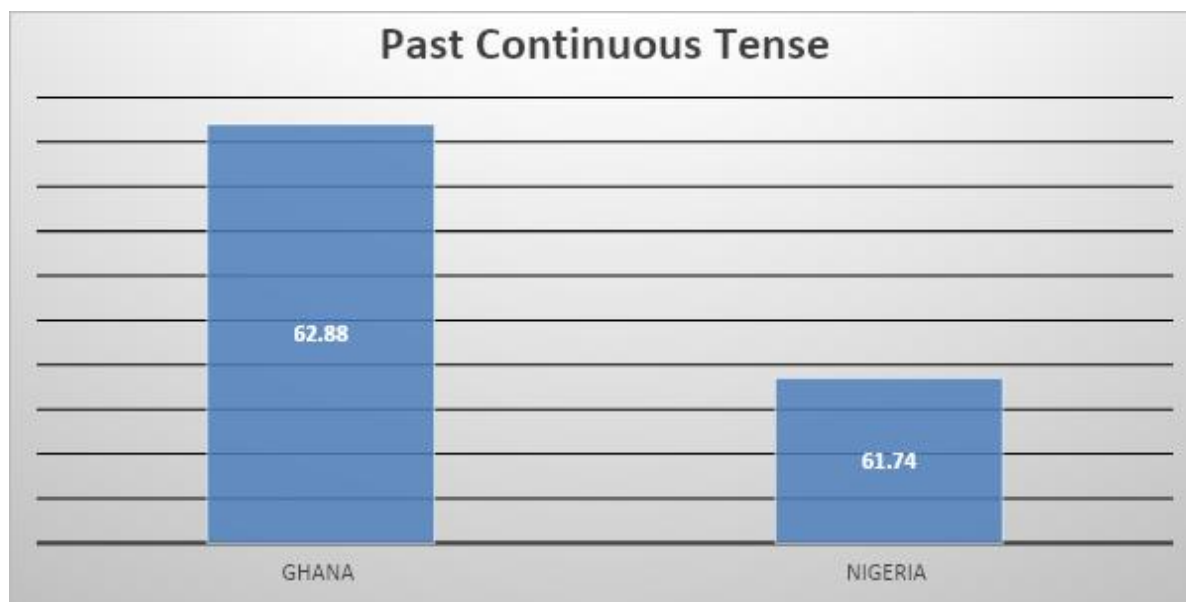


Figure 5

This analysis entails adding data collected from three distinct tables: Table 5.1: 28 and Table 5.1: 29. Each table presented different sentences and expressions to respondents from Ghana and Nigeria. Their primary objective was to identify the correct tense statements or terms within each presented context. To compute the overall percentage for each country, we aggregated the correct percentages from all three tables. Subsequently, we divided the sum by the total number of tables (3). Ghana's overall percentage was derived through the following calculation: Overall percentage for Ghana = $(114/200 + 106/198) / 2 \approx 62.88\%$. The result indicates that, on average, the Ghanaian respondents achieved a combined overall percentage of approximately 62.88%. This signifies their proficiency in accurately identifying the given tense statements and expressions across all three tables.

Similarly, the overall percentage for Nigeria was determined using the following calculation: Overall percentage for Nigeria = $(122/197 + 109/196)/ 2 \approx 61.74\%$. The computed value indicates that, on average, the Nigerian respondents obtained a combined overall percentage of approximately 61.74%. This reflects their competence in recognizing the specified tense forms and expressions across all three tables. Upon evaluating the combined data from all three tables, it becomes evident that respondents from Ghana demonstrated a slightly higher level of proficiency (approximately 62.88%) in accurately identifying the given tense statements and expressions compared to respondents from Nigeria (approximately 61.74%). However, it is noteworthy that the difference in percentages between the two countries remains relatively small, suggesting a comparable level of competence in recognizing the specified tense forms and expressions.

4.7 Future Continuous Tense

Table 10

		"I will be walking tomorrow." The quoted expression is an example of.....Past				Total
		perfect	present simple	future continuous	none	
Country	Ghana	17	61	119	3	200
	Nigeria	22	33	142	0	197
Total		39	94	261	3	397

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (future continuous). The result shows that 142 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly, and 119 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Nigeria are more competent than respondents from Ghana on this statement.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Future Continuous Tense

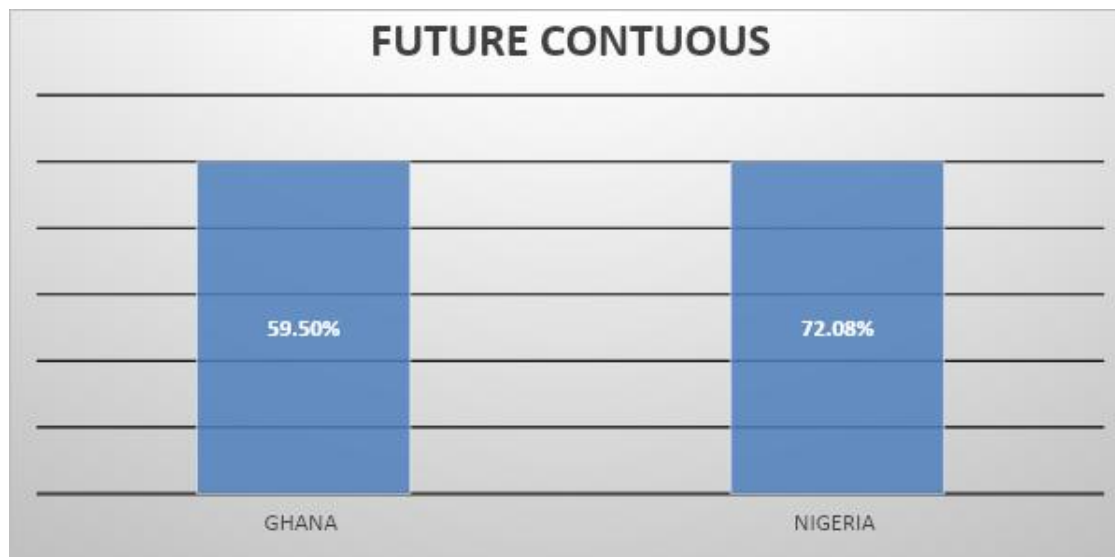


Figure 6

To calculate the overall proficiency for each country, we aggregate the correct responses and then divide by the total number of participants in each region. Let's analyze the overall percentages for Ghana and Nigeria:

For Ghana:

Overall proficiency for Ghana = $(119 / 200) * 100 \approx 59.5\%$

For Nigeria:

Overall proficiency for Nigeria = $(142 / 197) * 100 \approx 72.08\%$

The findings indicate that participants from Nigeria exhibit a higher overall proficiency (approximately 72.08%) in correctly identifying the specific tense category "future continuous" compared to participants from Ghana (59.5%). This suggests that individuals from Nigeria display a more advanced level of competence in comprehending and associating the quoted

expression with the appropriate tense form. On the other hand, respondents from Ghana manifest a slightly lower level of accuracy in recognizing the same tense category.

4.8 Future Perfect Continuous

Table 11

Answer = will have been living		This time next year, I in London for seven years.				Total
		will have been living	will have lived	will be living	None	
Country	Ghana	44	55	98	2	199
	Nigeria	33	41	122	2	198
Total		77	96	220	4	397

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (will have been living). The result shows that 44 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly, and 33 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Ghana are more competent than respondents from Nigeria on this statement.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Future Perfect Continuous

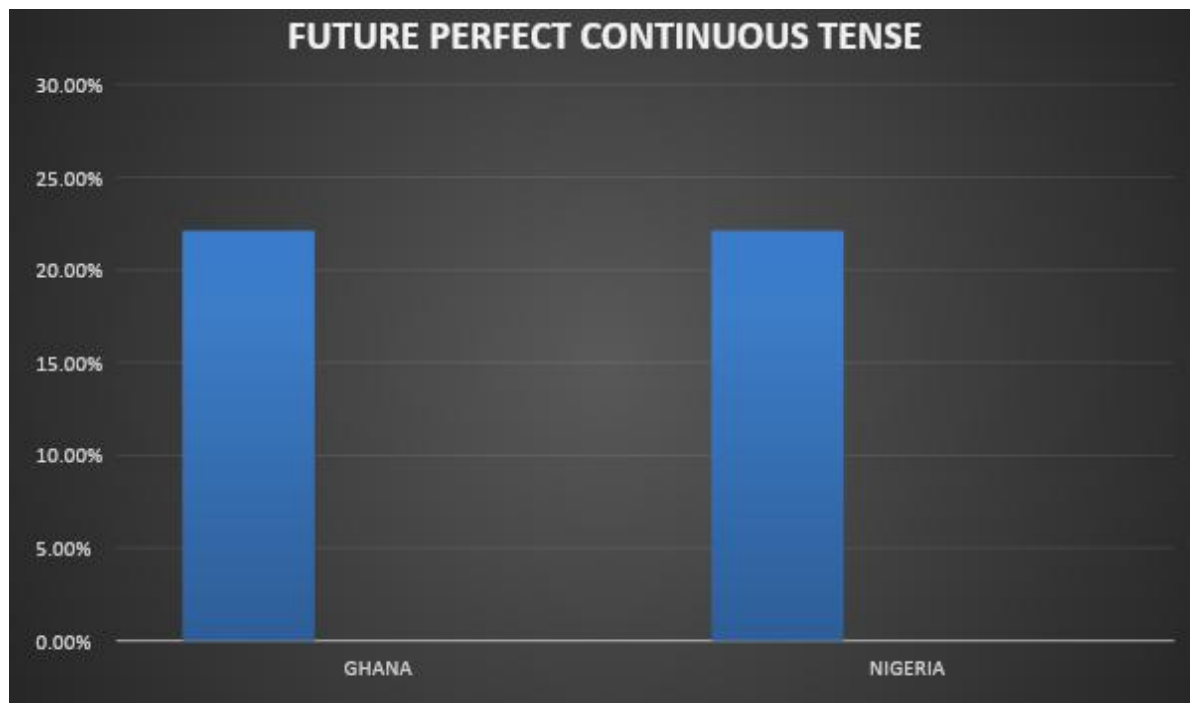


Figure 7

To determine the overall proficiency for each country, we calculated the percentage of correct responses for each tense category. Then, we divided by the total number of participants in each region. Ghana's overall percentage was found as follows:

Overall percentage for Ghana = $(44 / 199) * 100 \approx 22.11\%$. This indicates that approximately 22.11% of Ghanaian respondents correctly identified the specified tense form "will have been living" when presented with the given expression.

For Nigeria, the overall percentage was calculated as follows: Overall percentage for

Nigeria = $(33 / 198) * 100 \approx 16.67\%$. This implies that around 16.67% of Nigerian respondents accurately recognized the same tense statement. Based on the data from Table 5.1: 32, respondents from Ghana demonstrated a higher overall proficiency (approximately 22.11%) in correctly identifying the given tense statement "will have been living" compared to respondents from Nigeria (approximately 16.67%). This suggests that the participants from Ghana displayed a

greater level of competence in understanding and associating the specific tense form "will have been living" within the context of the provided sentence.

4.9 Conditional Perfect Continuous

Table 12

Answer = present simple		‘Would you have left for school very late? The quoted expression is an example of what?’				Total
		past perfect	present simple	future perfect continuous	none	
Country	Ghana	117	41	39	2	199
	Nigeria	116	38	40	1	195
Total		233	79	79	3	394

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The answer to the above statement is (present simple). The result shows that 41 respondents from Ghana got the above tense statement correctly, and 38 respondents from Nigeria got the above tense statement correctly. This implies that the respondents from Ghana are more competent than respondents from Nigeria on this statement.

Table 13

Answer = would have been		If you had arrived late, I angry.			Total
		had been	would have been	will have been	
Country	Ghana	45	123	31	199
	Nigeria	39	133	26	198
Total		84	256	57	397

N=400 (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

Linguistically interpreting the statement, the response to the above tense statement is "would have been." The data analysis indicates that 133 respondents from Nigeria correctly answered the tense statement, while 123 respondents from Ghana also answered correctly. This linguistic evidence suggests that the respondents from Nigeria demonstrate a higher level of competence than those from Ghana in understanding and accurately responding to the tense statement.

The overall percentage of the two countries in Future Perfect Continuous

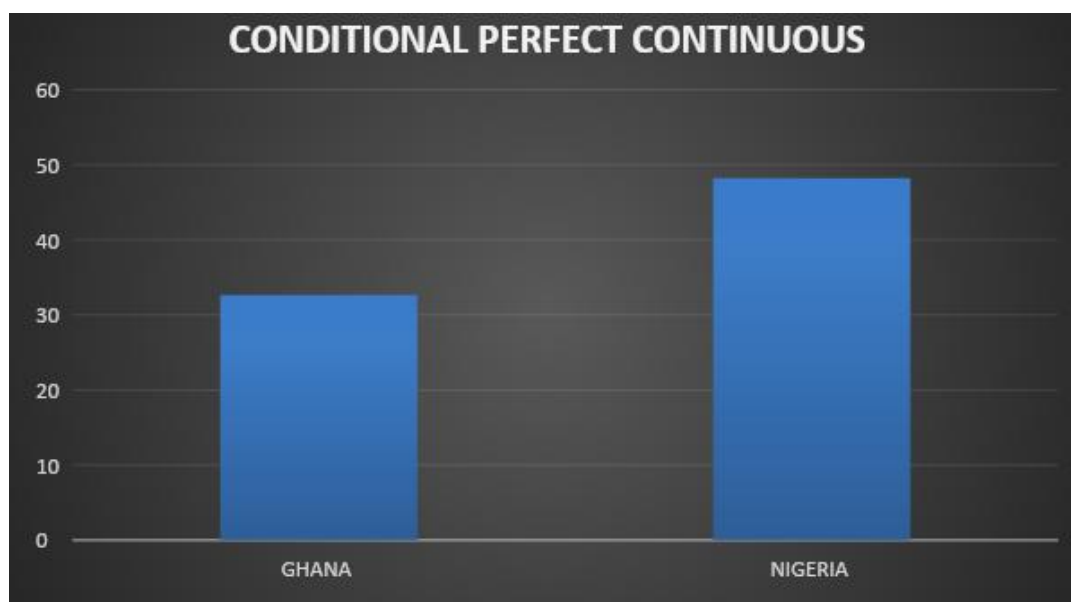


Figure 8

Table 5.1: 33 and Table 5.1: 34, where the study of tense expressions in Ghana and

Nigeria is the focus. Participants from both regions were presented with sentences and were required to discern the appropriate tense categories that best matched the given expressions. The correct percentages from both tables were aggregated to ascertain the overall percentage for each country. Subsequently, they were divided by the total number of participants in each region. The overall percentage for Ghana was calculated as $((41 / 199) + (123 / 199)) / 2$, resulting in an approximate value of 32.66%. This indicates that roughly 32.66% of the respondents from Ghana

accurately identified the tense expressions "present simple" and "would have been" within the provided sentences.

The overall percentage for Nigeria was derived as $((38 / 195) + (133 / 195)) / 2$, yielding an approximate value of 48.21%. This suggests that approximately 48.21% of the respondents from Nigeria exhibited precision in recognizing the same tense expressions. Based on the combined data from both tables, respondents from Nigeria demonstrated a higher overall percentage (approximately 48.21%) of correct responses in identifying the specified tense statements compared to respondents from Ghana (approximately 32.66%). Thus, participants from Nigeria exhibited greater competence in comprehending and ascribing the tense forms "present simple" and "would have been" in the given sentences.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

In getting the overall tense competence view of NENS in Ghana, the researchers did a comprehensive calculation by adding the percentages obtained in each group for Ghana. There are eight types of tense identified in total. Then, the cumulative percentage is added to the total number of groups (8 in this case).

Step-by-step calculation:

1. Add the percentages for Ghana in each group: $71 + 80.5 + 68.68 + 66.91 + 62.88 + 59.5 + 22.11 + 32.66 = 483.34$.
2. Divide the cumulative percentage by 8 to obtain the average: $483.34 / 8 \approx 60.42$.

Express the average in percentage form: 60.42%.

Thus, after adding all the percentages from all the groups and dividing by the total number of groups, the overall percentage for Ghana is approximately 60.42%. This figure indicates the average proficiency level of Ghanaian respondents in successfully identifying the specified criteria across the various groups analysed.

Likewise, in getting the overall percentage for NENS in Nigeria, the researchers added all the percentages obtained in each group for Nigeria, considering the existence of the eight types of

tense in total. Subsequently, this cumulative percentage was divided by the total number of groups (8). **The step-by-step calculation was as follows:**

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Add the percentages for Nigeria in each group: } 0.7524 + 0.7999 + 0.6454 + 0.6743 + \\ &0.6456 + 0.7158 + 0.388 + 0.8087 = 5.4301. \end{aligned}$$

1. Divide the cumulative percentage by 8 to obtain the average: $5.4301 / 8 \approx 0.6788$.
2. Multiply the average by 100 to express it in percentage form: $0.6788 * 100 \approx 67.88\%$.

Thus, after adding all the percentages from all the groups and dividing by the total number of groups, the overall percentage for Nigeria is approximately 67.88%. This figure indicates the average proficiency level of Nigerian respondents in successfully identifying the specified criteria across the various groups analysed.

Regarding tense usage, Ghana exhibited an overall percentage of approximately 60.42%, whereas Nigeria demonstrated a higher percentage of around 67.88%.

Overall Percentage for Tense Usage:

For Ghana: Tense Percentage: 60.42%

For Nigeria: Tense Percentage: 67.88%

This evaluation provides valuable insights into the linguistic competence of Ghanaian and Nigerian respondents in recognising and applying appropriate verb tenses.

The comparison of competence levels between Ghana and Nigeria provides valuable insights into the proficiency of respondents in identifying different types of tenses. Nigeria demonstrates higher overall competency level at approximately 67.88%, while Ghana's competency level stands at 60.42%. This suggests that respondents in Nigeria have a slightly higher proficiency in tense identification than their counterparts in Ghana. The study's findings have implications for the future of English in Ghana and Nigeria.

The implication of this finding for pedagogy is that there is a need to re-examine the current language teaching methods and approaches used in Ghana and Nigeria. The study results indicate

linguistic incompetence among New English 'Native' Speakers in Ghana and Nigeria. These speakers are expected to be competent since they use only English as a communication medium, but the reverse is the case. The data presented in the study clearly illustrates the extent of the issue, with most participants performing below the expected standard on various language tests.

Findings on the linguistic competence of NENS in Ghana and Nigeria have significant implications for pedagogy in the two countries. There is a need for more communicative and task-based approaches to language teaching and increased exposure to standard English language use. The analysis revealed low English concord and tense usage among the participants, indicating the need for more effective teaching and learning methods. Also, English language teachers in Ghana, Nigeria and other similar contexts must address their teaching methods, especially English tense.

This research has contributed to the existing efforts to develop and build English grammar to promote proficiency in English language learners, especially among the English New 'Native' speakers. The research revealed that students' estimated knowledge of grammar, especially in the rules tense, needs to be versed. This suggests emerging English 'native' speakers are still refining their competence in tense usage. Since the study only revealed the results of the Ghanaian and Nigerian New English 'Native' Speakers, further studies could delve into comparing the results of these students to native speakers of English from other parts of the world, especially the traditional inner circle speakers. In conclusion, English language teachers are encouraged to enhance their grammar teaching, especially in tense and concord, to improve students' competence.

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