Abstract
This study examines the syntax of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act, 2000 with forensic linguistic orientation. The work discusses the development of forensic linguistics to the present state with a special highlight of the efforts of Jan Svartvik, a Swedish Professor of Linguistics. The study also discusses syntax as a linguistic item and explains some of its major areas, notably the descriptive and theoretical aspects as well as its form and function. As a legal document, The Independent Corrupt Practices Act, 2000 is examined with a special focus on its status as a product of legislation which places it in the rank of ‘Ordinances’, ‘Decrees’, ‘Laws’ and ‘Edicts’. The study utilises the principles of systemic grammar as its theoretical basis since its interest is on social context. Thus, the offences and penalties on corrupt practices stated in the ICPC Act agree with the intention of the systemic model. The analysis of the four (4) sentences selected from the document from the syntactic point of view reveals that: (i) all the offences predicted to be committed are placed in the nominal group structure; (ii) the generic subject of each of the sentences in the Act, predicts that someone will commit the stated offences, and on conviction, will be penalised; and (iii) beta (β) clauses in the document are mostly rank-shifted adjectival clauses describing the generic subject as support to predicting the committing of the stated offences and the consequences following.

Introduction
Forensic Linguistics is gradually gaining ground in the world today because of the interest of linguistics to crime investigation, trial and judicial procedures. Also, cases of plagiarism, suicide notes, and so on, have made this field of linguistics to flourish. Olsson (4) says in ancient Greek, there were issues among playwrights concerning the styles or storylines plagiarism. They accused one another of plagiarizing the styles or storylines of one another. Even in the eighteenth century, issues were raised about the authorship of popular works like the plays of William Shakespeare and even the authorship of sacred texts, like many books of the Bible. Somehow, through examination of the stylistic features of the texts, those disputes were resolved. Olsson added that the seed of modern approach to Forensic Linguistics was sown in the 19th Century in Britain and America by Mathematicians and Statisticians who developed methods of authorship attribution. Among those mentioned by Olsson were Augustus de Morgan in 1851, T.C. Mendenhall (1887 and 1901) and Udney Yule (1983 and 1944) (4). But Forensic Linguistics, as we have it today, began with an effort way back in the 1940s, when Frederick A. Philbrick’s work entitled; Language and the Law: The semantics of Forensic English, was published by Macmillian in New York (13). Essentially, Philbrick’s work set linguists thinking about the relevance of linguistic investigation to legal practice. In any case, the application of linguistic knowledge to legal issues did not occur until 1968. It was that year that what could be considered
as a breakthrough occurred when the Swedish Professor, Jan Svartvik, a foremost linguist, carried out a forensic analysis of a statement by John Timothy Evans, a convicted murderer, to discover that the man who had been executed for the murder of his wife did not commit the crime (12).

Professor Jan Svartvik did a ground breaking analysis of a 1953 police officer’s statement that a judge wrongly relied upon to convict Timothy John Evans of murder. Evans was hanged at Pentonville prison. However, following a linguistic examination of the text, Professor Svartvik discovered that the statement was not authored by Evans, and upon further probing, it was discovered the Professor was correct. It was Professor Svartvik who labelled this approach to language and law, ‘Forensic Linguistics’. This study intends to use a legal document, the ICPC Act, 2000 for analysis.

**Forensic Linguistics: An Overview**

According to Abochol, ‘Forensic linguistics is the application of linguistic knowledge, methods and insights in dealing with legal issues such as crime investigation, trial and judicial procedures’ (133). For Osisanwo, ‘Just as there are experts who scientifically inspect the fingerprints of suspects, and medical experts who carry out their own side of the investigation through Forensic medicine, so also do we have linguists who study recorded conversations, statements, documents, and written interviews under forensic linguistics or forensic discourse’ (45).

Since Professor Svartrik’s exploit, the language of the law has come under scrutiny by linguists in many parts of the West. In the United Kingdom, United States and Canada, linguistic expertise is being used in legal matters. Roger Shuy in 1979 pioneered this work in America. In the 1980s, Malcom Coulthard, a renowned Forensic Discourse Analyst, built on the works of Svartvik. Also in the 1980s, Hannes Kniffka led in this same effort in Germany. As it were, the modern approach to Forensic Linguistics grew out of concern for resolution of civil and criminal conflicts, whose decisions relied largely on linguistic evidence.

In the United States, one of the areas of early application of Forensic Linguistics is related to trademark disputes, where a word or phrase was a subject of litigation between corporations. Often, both sides in the dispute offer linguistic explanation for the ownership of the trademark. Buttler added that trademark laws grant control over “the linguistic and semiotic entities (MARKS) by means of which providers of goods and services identify what they market to the public” (352). In many cases, disputes occur when a party feels that an organization was coming up with a mark that is similar to its own and such could encroach on its identity. Shuy says that to handle such issues, two experts are needed by the forensic stylistician: “(1) experience in applied linguistics such as one finds in lexicography and (2) the sort of interest in empirical data that dialectologists and sociolinguists deal with centrally in their professional enterprises” (352).

For this study, the Independent Corrupt Practices (ICPC) Act, 2000 is the legal document for analysis considering its suitability in terms of its content which addresses issues that are relevant to forensic analysis. Moreover, this study is interested in syntax as a linguistic tool for handling forensic analysis.

**Syntax: A Linguistic Discipline**
Syntax can be treated in two broad perspectives: descriptive and theoretical. For the descriptive approach to syntax, the discipline covers its definition; word classes, phrases, clauses and sentences, while the theoretical approach treats syntactic models such as Immediate Constituent Analysis (ICA), Systemic Grammar (SG), Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG), Case Grammar (CG) etc.

According to Thakur, ‘The word “syntax” consists of two word – elements. ‘Syn-’, the first of two word elements, is the Latinized form of the Greek preposition ‘sun’ which means “together”. The second word – element, ‘- tax’, is derived from a Greek root, which means “to put in order”. (1) Thus, the etymological meaning of syntax is “putting things together in an orderly manner”. In accordance with this etymological meaning, syntax was, in traditional grammar, considered to be a study of the ways in which words could be strung together to form acceptable sentences. The standard way recommended for the study of syntax was a study of the parts of speech and the typical exercise in the study of the parts of speech used to be the exercise known as ‘parsing’, that is, resolving sentences into their component parts of speech, and then describing the grammatical features of each part of speech in every sentence. Ben Jonson in Thakur, for example, defined syntax as “the second part of grammar that teach the constitution of words” (2), he meant not the formation but the concord or the congruence of words with other words in a sentence. This meaning of the word “construction” during those early days is evident from the remark that Greenwood, an 18th Century grammarian, made about a century later regarding the syntax of nouns. “The syntax or construction of the noun”, he said, “is chiefly performed by the help of certain words called prepositions” (2).

One good thing about the early approach to the study of syntax was that it made a clear distinction between syntax and the other branches of language study popular at that time. In his famous dictionary, Dr. Johnson, for example, made a distinction between syntax and certain other branches of language study and said the following: “A grammar, which is the art of using words properly, comprises four parts: orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody” (2).

In studies of syntax, attention has to be focused on two cardinal points: form and function. Form, in this context, is intended to mean the internal structure of a unit of grammatical analysis, the internal structure of phrase or a clause, for example. Function is essentially a relational concept. When we talk about form in the context of syntax, we think in terms of categorical labels like noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase and adverbial phrase. But when we talk about function, we think in terms of functional labels like subject, object, subject –complement and object –complement. According to Thakur, “Function leads us upwards, i.e, it places an item in relation to another item of a higher grammatical status” (3). When we talk about subject, for example, or about object, we think of the subject or the object of a clause. Similarly, when we think of a headword, we think of the headword of a phrase. Thakur adds that the concept of structure makes us to look downwards. When we think of the structure of a noun phrase, for example, we think of the items of a lower grammatical status which constitutes that phrase. Any worthwhile study of syntax must, therefore, include a study of both form and function. Similarly, any worthwhile study of syntax must emphasize the fact that the sentence is not just a putting together of words (3).

For Adejare and Adejare, syntax and grammar are synonymous. However, they define the two thus: “Syntax generally refers to a description of word order in which grammatical units and
MORPHOLOGY are treated together as in transformational model. Grammar, on the other hand, is used to refer to the instance where word order is treated separately from LEXIS or MORPHOLOGY” (8). Adejare and Adejare further discuss some emphases of grammar where they state that: “Another goal of a descriptive grammar may be to predict how the users of a language apply the knowledge of their language… for communicative purposes. This form of descriptive grammar is equally concerned with discovering the forms of the language and their functions. (9)

This study, therefore, is interested in the predictive communicative purpose that descriptive grammar focuses on. For the theoretical approach to syntax, a few grammatical models will be discussed so as to dwell on the model that will serve as the theoretical framework for this study. According to Osisanwo, Transformational Generative Grammar is a product of the work of Noam Chomsky. This grammar model sets out to achieve the following:

- To account for the native speaker’s ability to produce, identify and interpret correct sentences in his language.
- It considers the syntactic component of grammar as central, while semantic and phonological components are interpretive.
- It makes a clear distinction between a surface and a deep structure. The semantic component interprets the deep structure while the phonological component interprets the surface structure.
- Transformational generative grammar recognizes the sentence as a theoretical category, while other units like the clause are used merely as ad hoc descriptive labels.
- In analysis, the grammar derives all exponents from the initial sentence by a set of rules of two kinds. The first set of rules produces structures and basic or kernel items, while the second set uses transformation to produce the remainder of the formal items. (9 – 10)

For Abochol, Immediate Constituent Analysis (ICA), focuses on the notion of constituency. It shows how small constituent components in sentences go together to form larger constituents. For example, in the sentence, “Ade locked the door”, we can identify four constituents or components as follows: Ade/locked/the/door (72). Abochol adds that a sentence under ICA can be broken up paradigmatically into the various word classes or lexical items that can occupy subject or predicate positions (73).

Tagmemic grammar, according to Osinsawo, is associated with Pike (1954, 1958) and his associates, Elson and Picket (1964). The term “tagmeme” refers to a meaningful stretch of speech which is not a bound morpheme. Tagmemic grammar is also sometimes called slot and filler grammar because of its reference to slots in structure capable of being filled by particular fillers (12).

On Systemic Grammar, Abochol opines that: “This is a form of functional grammar associated with the Prague School of Linguistics. It is distinct from generative grammar. MAK Halliday, a prominent Neo–Firthian linguist is the chief proponent. Other notable systemic grammarians include Margaret Berry, F.R. Palmer and W.E. Enhrst (80).

Systemic grammar is a model of grammar which sets its goal on relating language to its social context. It is concerned with the dynamic interplay between the forms of the language and their functions. What is foregrounded in systemic linguistics is the notion that language as a system
comprises a network of options or choices from which a language user selects. Systemic grammar accounts for the occurrence of one, rather than another, from among a number of like items, e.g. among fat, plump or obese, or infant, child or kid, etc. In other words, whenever at a particular point in the language structure, we face a choice among a set of possibilities, we have a system. Some of the systems include finiteness, mood, transitivity and tense. In the mood system, for instance, the potential choices are between the indicative and imperative moods. Within the indicative mood, the language user has an option to choose between the declarative and interrogative.

According to Berry, the implications of the choices are that: “The speaker of a clause who has chosen the declarative has selected for himself the sole of an informant and for his hearer, the role of the informed. The speaker of a clause, who has chosen interrogative, has selected for himself the role of the informed and for his hearer, the role of the informant”.

The transitivity system of the clause has three inter–related aspects: the participants, the process and the circumstance. The participants are usually indicated by the nominal group, the process by the verbal group, and the circumstance by the adjunct element of the clause. There are three main types of processes in the verbal group. These are Physical or material process, mental process and the relational process. The material process can be subdivided into action process and event process which can be further subdivided into intention process and supervening process. In the case of the mental process, there are two divisions: internalized process and externalized process.

Systemic grammar, adds Abochol, divides language into scales and categories of grammar for the purpose of orderly and systematic description. The scales are Rank, Exponence, Delicacy and Depth. The grammatical categories include:

- **Unit**: The name given to the observed regularities over certain stretches of linguistic activity. E.g. morpheme unit, word unit, group unit.
- **Structure**: The order in which the constituent element of a unit must occur to generate a meaningful unit in the language. E.g. Word structure, group or phrase structure, clause structure and sentence structure.
- **Class**: A collection of linguistic units which can perform the same operation within the structure of the next higher unit. E.g. the word class, noun.
- **System**: e.g. the number system (81 – 82).

Systemic grammar also recognizes three levels of language: substance, form and situation. Substance has to do with the raw materials or tangible aspect in language – the phonic substance or graphic substance. Form is organization of the substance into meaningful units, while situation represents experience. This study intends to use the systemic grammar for the purpose of analysis of the legal document, the ICPC Act, 2000.

**The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000**

According to the Pamphlet on the mandate of ICPC Act, 2000,

Nigeria has been stigmatized by the international community as the second corrupt country in the world... The rating came up as a consequence of several failed attempts in the past to wipe out corruption or reduce it to a tolerable level in the polity.
This background made the government under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to present a bill to the National Assembly seeking to prohibit and prescribe punishment for corrupt practices and other related offences. The bill was passed and so established an Act called “The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000”. The Act in turn established a commission with a chairman and members. The intensity of corruption in the country made the same government to establish a sister agency to fight the monster (corruption), the sister agency is called “Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)”. However, the focus of this study is the ICPC Act, 2000, thus, forensic linguistics as a research tool is applied with a view to describing its syntactic component.

Sanni explains that an Act like the ICPC Act 2000 is one of the statutes of the Nigerian Legislation. According to him (Sanni), laws made by the legislation are called ‘statutes’. He, therefore, defines legislation as a source of law, that means, “the law made by the organ of government whose primary duty is to make law for the state”. He further explains that Nigerian statutes are variously known as ‘Ordinances’, ‘Acts’, ‘Decrees’, ‘Laws’ are ‘Edicts’ depending on when they are enacted (126). This work is interested in the syntax of the ICPC Act, 2000.

**Theoretical Framework**

As earlier mentioned, the grammatical model for this study is systemic grammar. Osisanwo states that: “systemic grammarians… have carried out four language tools which can be used in describing the grammar of any human language. These tools are the four theoretical categories set up for the description of the grammatical pattern of any language termed: UNIT, STRUCTURE, CLASS and SYSTEM” (14).

In the grammar of English, there are five units: morpheme, word, group, clause and sentence. The morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit pertinent to grammatical description, while the sentence is the largest unit. Arranged on a rank scale of ascending magnitude, we have the five units in this order:

- Morpheme
- Word
- Group
- Clause
- Sentence

It is also possible and acceptable to arrange them on a descending magnitude thus:

- Sentence
- Clause
- Group
- Word
- Morpheme

If we move from the highest unit to the lowest, we find that each unit consists of one or more than one of the next lowest unit. A sentence, for example, consists of one or more than one clause, a clause consists of one or more than one group, a group consists of one or more than one word, and a word consists of one or more than one morpheme.

In systemic grammar, the following symbols are used to mark unit boundaries in utterances, according to Halliday (1967):

- **Sentence /// ///** - Three bars at the beginning and the end of the sentence.
- **Clause /// ///** - Two bars at the beginning and the end of the clause.
### Methodology

Four (4) sentences were selected from the ICPC Act, 2000 for presentation and analysis. The selection of only four sentences is because of the longwinding style of sentence patterns in the Act. The heading for each of the sentences will be written out as they (the headings) are placed under sections as offences and penalties. These will serve as the data for the study.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

The data for this study are selected syntactic structures from the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) Act, 2000. They are presented below:

**(A) OFFENCE AND PENALTY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFENCE AND PENALTY</th>
<th>SECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fraudulent receipt of property/</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

///Any person who receives anything which has been obtained by means of act constituting a felony or misdemeanour, or by means of any act done at a place outside Nigeria, which, if it had been done in Nigeria, would have constituted a felony or misdemeanour and which is an offence under the laws in force in the place where it was done, knowing the same to have been so obtained, is guilty of a felony.///

**OFFENCE AND PENALTY**

| /Deliberate frustration of investigation by the commission/ | 15 |

///Any person who, with intent to defraud or conceal crime or frustrate the commission in its investigation of any suspected crime of corruption under this Act or under any other law:

- destroys, alters, mutilates or falsifies any book, documents, valuable security, account, computer system, diskette, computer printout or other electronic device which belongs to or is in the possession of his employer, or has been received by him on account of his employment, or any entry in any such book, document, accounts or electronic device, or is privy to any such act; or

- makes, or is privy to making any false entry in any such book, document, account or electronic records; or
omits, or is privy to omitting, any materials particular from any such book, document, account or electronic records; is guilty of a felony, and shall on conviction be liable to seven (7) years imprisonment.///

/Offence of using office of or position for gratification/  19
///Any public officer who uses his office to gratify or confer any corrupt or unfair advantage upon himself or any relation or associate of the public officer or any other public officer shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for five (5) years without option of fine.///

/Bribery in relation to auction/     21
///Any person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, offers any advantage to any other person as an inducement to or reward for or otherwise on account of that other person’s refraining or having retrained from bidding at any auction conducted by or on behalf of any public body, shall be guilty of an offence.///

Data Analysis
The analysis of the data presented above is carried out in line with the principles and orientations of forensic linguistics below:

/Fraudulent receipt of property/
(a) A nominal group predicting a criminal offence.
(b) /Any person…/ Generic subject (nominal group) of the sentence predicting the commitment of /Fraudulent receipt of property/
(c) [[who receives anything…]]
   Rankshifted adjectival clause referring to the generic subject.
(d) [[which has been obtained by means of act constituting a felony or misdemeanour…]]
   Rankshifted adjectival clause referring to ‘anything’ in the first adjectival clause.
(e) [[which ((if it had been done in Nigeria…)) would have constituted a felony or misdemeanour…]]
   • Rankshifted adjectival clause and conditional included clause referring to the offence.
(f) [[which is an offence under the laws in force in the place ((where it was done))…]]
   • Rank shift ed adjectival clause and included place adverbial clause both referring to the offence.

Note that all the syntactic structures: the nominal groups, the rank shifted adjectival clauses and the included conditional and place adverbial clauses are all predicting the committing of the offence of /Fraudulent receipt of property/.

/Deliberate frustration of investigation by the commission/     15
(a) A nominal group predicting the offence of deliberate frustration of investigation by the commission.
(b) /Any person…/ Generic subject (nominal group) of the sentence predicting the offence of ‘Deliberate frustration of investigation by the commission’. 
(c) [who, with intent to defraud or conceal crime or frustrate the commission in its investigation of any suspected crime of corruption under this Act or under any other law… is guilty of a felony]
   • Adjectival clause describing /Any person…/ and //shall on conviction be liable to seven (7) years imprisonment/
   • The entire sentence predicts the crime of ‘Deliberate frustration of investigation by the commission’.

h q
/Offence of using office or position for gratification/ 19
(a) A nominal group predicting the ‘Offence of using office or position for gratification’.
(b) /Any public officer…/ A generic subject (Any public officer) predicting the offence of using office or position for gratification.
(c) [[who uses his office to gratify...]]
Adjectival clause describing ‘Any public officer’
(d) The entire sentence predicts the offence and the possible penalty that will be associated with the offence.

h q
/Bribery in relation to auction/ 21
(a) A nominal group predicting the crime of ‘Bribery in relation to auction’.
(b) /Any person…/ A generic subject predicting the offence of Bribery in relation to auction.
(c) [[who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse…]]
   • Adjectival clause describing ‘Any person…’
(d) The entire sentence predicts the offence of ‘Bribery in relation to auction’.

Findings
The study adopted the forensic linguistics orientation using the ICPC Act, 2000 for analysis. It was discovered that Forensic Linguistics is gradually gaining ground in the world today as a result of the interest linguists have placed on the investigation of crime, trial and judicial procedures. Also, cases of distinguishing between authors of works using forensic fingerprints have flourished over the years. The analysis from the four (4) sentences selected reveals the following:
   • All the offences are placed in the nominal group structure, and each of them (nominal groups) predicts the offence that will be committed.
   • The generic subject of each of the sentences in the Act (i.e., /Any person…/or/Any public officer…) predicts that someone will commit the offences as stated in the Act, and on conviction, will be penalised.
   • The beta (β) clause or dependent clause such as … [[who receives anything…]], etc. is mostly rank shifted adjectival clause describing the generic subject as support to predicting the committing of the stated offences and the consequences following.

Conclusion
The study is modelled after the effort of Jan Svartvik which led to the present efforts of linguists concerning the language of law i.e., forensic linguistics. The study highlighted syntax as a linguistic discipline which can be generally discussed in two modes; descriptive and theoretical. It also noted that ‘form’ and ‘function’ cannot be alienated in syntactic studies. The systemic grammar model is adopted as the theoretical framework of the study given its interest and relevance to social context. Consequently, the choice of the ICPC Act, 2000, where offences and penalties on corrupt practices are stated, reflects the social context of this study.

Works Cited