

European Journal of Linguistics

(EJL)

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and the Ukwuani Language



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An Investigation into the Derivations of the English Language and the Ukwuani Language

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Abstract

This paper looked into the derivations in English and Ukwuani. Since derivation is a morphological process, the paper started by explaining derivational morphemes. Types of derivations were also explained such as: derived nominals, derived verbals and adverbials. Derivation of one word-class to another word-class; and derivations from the same word-class were critically examined in the two languages. These include: derived nominal from verbals, derived nominal from nominals, derived adjectival from adverbial. Also, this paper went further to investigate the affixes use in derivation in both English and Ukwuani languages. The affixes used in English derivations include: prefixes and suffixes while the Ukwuani language used prefixes and inter-fixes to derive words. All the foregoing were carefully examined in this paper. The method of research for this paper is the interview technique. The researcher conducted an interview with the aid of a questionnaire administered to some students in junior secondary school through random sampling. This is done with L1 speaker of Ukwuani, for a proper analysis of the paper. Our study explained vividly that differences abound in the derivations of English and Ukwuani. For example suffixes in English are used for derivation while Ukwuani suffixes are used for inflection only and the nominal are derived by adding prefix to the verbally. Also there are no addition of suffixes in the derivation of Ukwuani plurals as in the case of English. There are no derivational suffixes for a change of word class in Ukwuani as in the English language.

Keywords: *Derivations, English and Ukwuani Word-class; Affixes*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper employed the contrastive linguistic analysis as its method for the study of the derivations of the English language and that of the Ụkwụani language. Looking at the derivations of English and Ukwuani languages, it is pertinent to examine the concepts of morphology and morpheme, since these terms are the basis of this study.

Morphology

Bloomfield, (1993) in Tomori, (2004) states that ‘the two parts of grammar are morphology and syntax’. Morphology is the study of the structures of words – the study of rules governing the formation of words in language (Tomori, 1999). Morphological analysis dates back to the ancient Indian linguists Panini, who formulated the 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology in the text *Astādhyāyī*, by using a constituency grammar. The term morphology was coined by August Schleicher in 1859 (wikipedia, the Free encyclopedia).

Morphology is the field within linguistics that studies the internal structure of words. Words are generally accepted as being the smallest unit of syntax. It is clear that in any language, words can be related to other words by rules. For example, in English, the words; dog, ‘dogs’ and ‘dog’ catcher’ are closely related. The speakers of English recognize these relations from their tacit knowledge of the rules of word-formation in English. They have the intuitive knowledge that ‘dog’ is to ‘dogs’ as ‘cow’ is for ‘cows’. In the same vein, ‘dog’ is to ‘dog-catcher’ as ‘dish’ is to ‘dishwasher’.

Morphological analysis dates back to the ancient Indian linguist, named Panini, who formulated the 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology in the text *Astadhyayi* by using a constituent grammar Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2004, Obodeh, 2011 Aronoff and Fudeman (2008) state that morphology is generally attributed to the German poet, novelist, playwright and philosophy, Johann Wolfgang Vien Goettie (1974-1832). He coined it early in the nineteenth century in a biological context, and its etymology is Greek: ‘morph’ which means shape or form. Morphology is the study of form or forms. According to Yule (1996), morphology literally means the study of forms. Morphology was originally used in Biology, but has been used to describe that type of investigation which analyses all those basic elements that are used in language. Robins (1965) defines morphology as the study of the grammatical structure of words. Napoli (1996) stipulates that morphology is the study of word formation processes. Brown and Miller (1980) morphology serves “a bridge between the syntax of a language and its phonology.

Consequently, the Ụkwụani speaker knows clearly well that ‘*awa*’ (dog) is closely related to *awa fianiefia* (many dogs) and ‘*efe*’ which means ‘dish’ is closely related to *ocha-efe* (dish washer). Ụkwụani has no inflection as in the case in English to indicate plurality. These rules in the languages reflect specific pattern in the way words are formed from smaller units, which extend to larger units. One wonders how the English learn that ‘ing’ or ‘in’ is an affix and the Ụkwụani speaker learns that ‘o’ or ‘i’ is an affix. This makes the study of morphology very interesting.

1.02 Morpheme

Morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in a language. To say that a unit is meaningful, is to say that there is a meaning which is associated with it. For example, the word ‘writer’ means one who writes. There are two morphemes in writer, ‘write’ and ‘-er’. We can associate the first morpheme, ‘write’ with the part of the meaning, and the other morpheme ‘-er’ with the part of the meaning. Moreover, morpheme is the minimal linguistic element that carries grammatical and/or semantic meaning. It is not further divisible into smaller grammatical components. For instance, ‘boy’ in English is one grammatical unit, ‘boys’ is two: it is made up of the semantic element in boy and the signal ‘of more-than-one’ (Tomori, 1999). Yule (1996) stipulates that a morpheme is ‘a minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function. To Kateumba (1993) a morpheme should be primarily regarded as a distributional unit.

1.1 Derivations

Most times derivational morphemes are morphemes that change the word class of words which they are added to. For instance, in English, the derivational morpheme ‘-ly’ changes the word ‘rich’ to ‘richly’. The two words are different word classes (Obodeh 2011, Napoli, 1996). According to Yule (1996) derivational morphemes are used to make new words in the language and are often used to make words of a different grammatical category from the stem”. Napoli (1996) also emphasize that derivational affixes can be prefix or suffixes. He further states that the English language allows multiple derivational morphemes in a word. This can be illustrated with the words below, which have more than one derivational morphemes attached to their roots or stem: independent; empowerment; international; hopeless; governmental; instrumentalist; nationalize. The morphemes underlined above are derivational morphemes.

Majority of the derivations in English are class –changing derivations. This means that new classes of words are formed in English derivation. Robins (1965) divides derivational morphemes into two classes; they are class-changing and class maintaining derivational morphemes. The class-changing and class-maintaining derivational morphemes affect the lexical meaning of the word to which they are attached. But, sometimes the new word formed in English derivation maintains the same word class. Therefore, English derivations are also class –maintaining. Examples of class-changing and class-maintaining derivations in English are shown below:

Table 1. Examples of English Derivations.

Word	Class-changing derivation	Class-maintaining derivation
run (vb)	runner (n)	
play (vb)	player (n)	

sing (vb)	singer (n)	
rich (adj)	richly (adv)	
man (n)		manhood (n)
boy (n)		boyhood (n)
sister (n)		sisterhood (n)
child (n)		childhood (n)

According to Omachonu (2001), the Igala language lends itself more to derivation than inflectional morphemes, except for the present participle, using prefix ‘e’ as in the following;

e + gwe = egwe ‘washing’

e + je = eje – ‘eating’

In Ụkwụani language, there is no derivational suffix that makes a change of word-class. Most words in Ụkwụani language are derived by reduplication, addition of prefix to a root morpheme and addition of interfix between two root morphemes. Some nominals can also be derived from verbals in Ụkwụani but there is no adverbial derived from adjectival in Ụkwụani language. Sometimes in Ụkwụani, some words are used as adjectival and adverbial.

1.2 Derived Nominals from Verbals

Nominal can be derived in Ụkwụani by adding a prefix to a verbal. That is, the addition of a bound morpheme to a verbal, a nominal can be derived in Ụkwụani. The bound morphemes used in Ụkwụani language are; ‘o’ and ‘o’’. These are shown in the table below:

Table 2. Examples of Derived Nominals from Verbals.

Prefix	Verbal Root	Gloss	Derived Nominal	Gloss
o	de	to write	ode	writer
o	lu	to work	olu	worker
o	shi	to cook	oshi	a cook
o	cha	to wash	ocha	washer

3. Derived Nominals from Nominal

Nominals can also be derived from other nominals in Ụkwụani language. This is done by placing an interfix between two existing root morphemes, and the new word is also a nominal. Examples are;

Table 3. Examples of Derived Nominals from Nominal

Root	Gloss	.	Root	Derived Nominal	Gloss
Ogbo	a type of masquerade	k	ogbo	ogbokogbo	huge person
Aza	a kind of greeting to someone sweeping	k	aza	azakaza	scattered, not arranged
Ojo	a type of canoe used for fishing	k	ojo	ojogojo	too tall, not attractive

The addition of the interfixes to the roots did not change the word-class, but has altered the meaning of the roots.

2.0 FORMATION OF NOMINALS FROM VERBALS

2.1 English

In the English language, nominals are formed from verbal by the addition of suffixes to the base form of the verbals. Nominals are also formed from verbals as a result of functional shift. Functional shift is the free interchange of functions whereby one part of speech is changed to another. This is a significant feature of the modern English (Webster Dictionary of the English language XVI). For example bottom as a nominal can become a verbal when used in different functions. According to Ndimele (1993:70) when a word changes its part of speech (e.g. from verb to noun) without necessarily undergoing any reduction or enlargement (by way of affixation), we say the word has undergone a morphological process known as conversion or functional shift.

Examples of words used in different functions are ‘play’, ‘carpet’, ‘butter’, ‘comb’, ‘nail’, ‘man’, ‘thread’, ‘fish’, ‘plant’ etc. These words can undergo shift from verbal to nominal. Also, examples of nominals formed from verbal by addition of suffix are:

Table 4. Formation of Nominals From Verbals in English

Verbal	Suffix	Nominal
Affix	-ation	Affixation
Bounce	-er	Bouncer
Blame	-less	Blameless
Use	-ful	Useful

Forgive	-ness	Forgiveness
Assign	-ment	Assignment
Wash	-er	Washer
Leak	-age	Leakage

2.2 Ukwuani

The Ukwuani language form nominals from verbals. This is done by adding a prefix to the base of the verbals. Examples are shown below.

Table 5. Examples of Nominals formed from Verbals in Ukwuani

Base (Verbal)	Form	Gloss	Prefix	Nominal	Gloss
-de		to work	O	ode	writer
-lu		to work	o	olu	worker
-cha		to wash	o	ocha	washer
-je		to go	O	oje	traveler
-kwa		to sew	o	okwa	tailor

From the analysis of the formation of nominal from verbal in the two languages, we discover that suffixes are added to verbal in English to form nominal, while in Ukwuani language, prefixes are added to the base of the verbal to form nominals. Also there are functional shifts in English where verbals can function as nominals in different contexts, which is not applicable in Ukwuani.

2.3 Derived Adjectival from Adverbial

In English language, suffixes are added to adjectival to get adverbial which is another word-class. Examples are shown in the table below:

Table 6. Examples of Derived Adjectival from Adverbial

Adjectival	Suffix	Adverbial
legal	- ly	legally
Possible	- ly	possibly

Discreet	- ly	discreetly
Bitter	- ly	bitterly

In Ụkwụani language, some adjectivals are changed to adverbials by reduplication. Examples are illustrated below:

Table 7. Adverbial formed from Adjectivals by reduplication.

Adjectival	Gloss	Adverbial	Gloss
nkọ	quick	nkọnkọ	quickly
ọchia	white/neat	ọchaọcha	neatly

Examples are illustrated below, to show words that are used as adjectival and adverbial in Ụkwụani language;

Table 8. Examples of words used as Adjectivals and Adverbials.

Adjectival	Gloss	Adverbial	Gloss
nkọnkọ	fast	nkọnkọ	quickly
ẹfiaẹfa	many	ẹfiaẹfia	plenty
sekẹsekẹ	gentle	sekẹsekẹ	gently

It is in the context of use that differentiates the adjectival from the adverbial

3.0 AFFIXES USED IN DERIVATION

As earlier discussed in section 2.7 affixes are morphemes that are attached or affixed to the base or root of a word. Affixation is one of the morphological processes we have in English and Ụkwụani. There are basically two types of affixes in English and three in Ụkwụani language. These are prefixes, suffixes and interfixes. Interfix is very prominent in Ụkwụani language.

3.1 English Prefix Used in Derivation

English prefixes are usually seen in derived words. This means that prefixes in English are used for derivations. Therefore, English prefixes are derivational morphemes and are also bound morphemes. Examples of English prefixes are illustrated in the table below:

Table 9: English Prefixes

Prefix-	Root	DerivedWord
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em-	power (noun) bitter (adj,n).	empower (vb) embitter (vb)
en-	slave (n)	enslave (vb)
mis-	conduct (vb, n)	misconduct (n)
un-	tie (vb)	untie (vb)
pre-	view (vb,n)	preview (vb,n)
sur-	charge (n)	surcharge (n,vb)
de-	merit (n)	demerit (n)
dis-	connect (vb), loyal (n)	disconnect (vb), disloyal (adj)
il-	legal (adj)	illegal (adj,n)
in-	discreet (adj)	indiscreet (adj)
im-	possible (adj,n)	impossible (adj)

The foregoing table shows English prefixes. The roots which they are attached and their derivations.

3.2 Ụkwụani Prefix Used in Derivation

Ụkwụani prefixes are attached to root morphemes to form new words. Therefore, Ụkwụani prefixes are also used for derivations. The prefixes in Ụkwụani language are ‘o’ and ‘o’’. The table below shows their use and derived words.

Table 10: ỤkwụaniPrefix

Prefix	Roots (verbals)	Derived nominals
O	de (to write)	ode (writer)
O	te (to dance), to cook soup	ote (dancer), one that cooks soup.
o	zaa (to sweep)	oza (cleaner)
o	su (to pound)	osu (pounder)

In the table 10 above, the class of words derived are nominals. This is a very striking difference between English prefix and Ụkwuani prefix, a word (root) which has prefix attached to it in the Ụkwuani language has a suffix as its bound morpheme in English. For instance, when the prefix ‘o’ is added to the root ‘de’ (write), the word derived is ‘ode’. The prefixes ‘o’ and ‘o’ in Ụkwuani are used for derivation.

3.3 Suffixes in English Used in Derivation

English suffixes are bound morphemes that are used for derivations. Napoli (1996:19), states that “English Language allows multiple derivational morphemes in a word”. These multiple morphemes are usually suffixes. For instance, the words ‘instrumentalist’ and ‘nationalize’ have two suffixes each as bound morphemes: -al, -ist and -al, -ize respectively.

Words are derived in English with the addition of suffixes and some English suffixes are class changing or class maintaining derivations. Examples of suffixes in English are presented below.

Table 11: suffixes in English Used in Derivation

Suffix	Root	Derived word
-ment	Amend	Amendment
-age	Link	Linkage
-ed	Talk	Talked
-en	Beat	Beaten
-ing	Sing	Singing
-ist	Social	Socialist
-able	Forgive	Forgivable
-er	Teach	Teacher
-ful	Care	Careful
-ry	Rival	Rivalry
-ness	Great	Greatness
-ation	Import	Importation
-s	Eat	Eats

-y	Oil	Oily
-or	Sail	Sailor
-ship	Fellow	Fellowship

3.4 Ukwuani Interfix Used to Derive Words

Ukwuani uses infixes to derive words in the language. It is placed in between two roots and the roots can exist independently without the interfix to give different meanings. Ukwuani language has multifarious use of interfix, examples are illustrated below:

Table 12. Interfix Used to Derive words in Ukwuani.

Interffix	Root	Gloss	Derived word (Noun)	Gloss
-m-	eli (noun)	act of not eating	elimeli	feast, banquet
-g-	osọ (noun)	a kidnapper	osogoso	a word used to describe the behaviour or appearance of a drunker
-ka-	nya (verb)	act of carrying load	Nyakanya	heavy load
-k-	anwa (adjective)	clever or fast person	Anwakanwa	fast and clever person
-t-	opo (noun)	young palm tree	Opotopo	very fresh, plump and fresh
-k-	oyọ (noun)	something that has to do with softness or rottenness	oyokoyọ	a soft and fragile person
-g-	ojo (noun)	a wooden canoe used for fishing	Ojogojo	Someone too is and tall looking haggard, something of extreme length
-t-	apa (noun)	a scar on the skin	Apatapa	watery, not solid, not strong

The derived word may be of the same word class with the root or may have different word class from the root as indicated in the foregoing table.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Our study on the derivations of the English language and the Ụkwụani language has made a contrastive analysis of the two languages. The investigations in the two languages have tried to fill a gap in knowledge by drawing attention to the fact that the acute problems a competent Ukwuani speaker will face while learning English grammar in general, and morphology in particular as a second language can be minimized.

By an investigation of the derivations of the languages, this research focused on a linguistic description of morphological structures of English and Ụkwụani language, with a view to identifying, most especially the differences between derivations of the two languages. A close look at the derivations of the English language and the Ụkwụani language shows that there are remarkable differences between the morphological structures of the languages. For instance Ụkwụani nominals have no inflections as in the case in English nominals. Consequently, the formation of additive morphemes in Ụkwụani is different from English additive morphemes. The affixation processes in the two languages also differ. Where there is prefixes in English, there are suffixes in Ụkwụani. Some English nominals are derived by the addition of suffix to verbals. Suffixes in English are used for derivation while Ụkwụani suffixes are used for inflection. Ụkwụani nominals are formed by adding prefixes to verbals. There is no functional shift in Ụkwụani nominal formation. Ụkwụani plural formation is different from English in some aspects. For instance, there is no addition of morphemes (suffixes) in the derivation of plural in Ụkwụani. Ụkwụani plurals are formed by reduplication or by addition of numbers to the existing nominals and by suppletion.

Furthermore, there are no derivational suffixes that make changes of word class in Ụkwụani as it is in the English language. Most words in Ụkwụani language are either derived from reduplication or by prefixing. Moreover, there are no adverbials derived from adjectivals or adjectivals derived from adverbials in Ụkwụani, except a (root) morpheme is reduplicated in adjectival to get adverbial. However, English prefixes and Ụkwụani prefixes are used for derivation

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