A Contrastive Study of English Inflections and Ukwuani Inflections

INTRODUCTION

This paper will make a contrastive study of the inflections of the English language. By a contrastive study, we mean the analysis of the similarities and the differences at different levels of linguistic analysis. Contrastive analysis (C.A.) involves a comparison of a mother tongue (LI) and second language (L2). This paper will therefore, delve into identifying the similarities and the differences which exist in English and Ukwuani inflections.

Inflection is a morphological process. There are basically two types of morphology–lexical morphology and inflectional morphology. Lexical morphology is the study of word-formation, which involves derivation and compounding. It deals with the lexicon. Inflectional morphology is the study of inflections. This paper is however

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comparative or possessive form.

Inflectional morphemes appear at the end of the English word. This means that no other morpheme is added to a word after inflectional morpheme. This can be illustrated with the following words: agreed, jumped, boys and schools. The inflectional morphemes in the above words are 'd', 'ed','s' and 's' respectively.

Inflection preserves the word class. As Tomori (2004) explains in the grammatical function of inflectional morphemes, in the word 'agreed', when 'd' is added, it changes to 'agreed'; the two words belong to the same word class, verb. The inflection 'd' only changed the grammatical function, present tense to past tense. In a similar vain, when 's' is added to the morpheme 'boy', it changes to 'boys' without a change of word class. The words boy and boys are nouns but are in singular

concerned with inflectional morphology.

INFLECTIONS

Inflections are morphemes which perform grammatical functions without changing the grammatical unit of the word to which they are attached. Inflectional morphemes are not used to form new words. Rather, they are used to show if a word is singular or plural, and if a word is in the present or past form.

Yule in obodeh (2011) explains inflectional morphemes thus:

Inflectional morphemes are not used to produce new words in the English language. Inflectional morphemes are used to show if a word is plural or singular, if it is past tense or not, and if it is a

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and plural forms respectively.
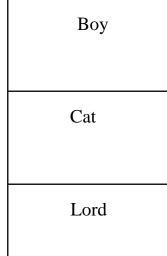
TYPES OF INFLECTIONS

Nominal Inflections and verbal inflections of English and Ukwuani will be compared.

Nominal Inflection in English

Nominal inflection in Ukwuani

Verbal Inflection in English

Verbal Inflection in Ukwuani

Nominal Inflection in English

English nominals have two inflectional forms. These are the possessive form and the plural form. Sometimes, in some words, the possessive form and the plural form have identical sounds. For example,

the possessive form 's' has the same sound **Table 1** with the plural form 's' as represented **Nominal inflection** below:

Nominals	Possessive form	Plural form
Girl	girl's /g**ɜ**:lz/	girls /g**ɜ**:lz/
Orange	orange's /ˀrind**ʒ**iz/	oranges /ˀrind**ʒ**iz/

Boy	boy's /bˀiz/	boys /bˀiz/
Cat	cat's /kæts/	cats /kæts/
Lord	lord's /Iˀ:dz/	lords /I ːdz/

In speech, the context usually prevents ambiguity. The phonetic representations of the morphemes of possessive forms are: /s/, /z/ and /iz/, and those of the regular plural nouns ending

general rule governing the distributi its variant or allomorph. This means we can precisely say or predict wher of its allomorphs can occur. For a phonologically conditioned morphe

have the same phonetic representation. The allomorphs of the possessive and plural forms are phonologically conditioned. A morpheme is said to be phonologically conditioned if there is a the phonological environment, (that is, the sounds which precede or follow the morpheme) can cause the sound segments of the morpheme to take a particular form so as to respond to the constraint imposed

by the environment (Ndimele, 1993: Some nominals in English have zero morpheme for the plural. Examples are eel and sheep. There are no morphemic differences in their singular plural forms.

The English plural morpheme 's' three variants. The three variants are the allomorphs of the plural morpheme 's', and is realized as /s/, /z/ and /iz/. This is illustrated in the following table:

Table 2. Examples of Nominal Inflections in English

Base Form	Plural
book /buk/	books /buks/
cup /kʌp/	cups /kʌps/
bucket /bʌkit/	buckets /bʌkits/
cat /kæt/	cats /kæts/
pant /pænt/	pants /pænts/
ball /bɔ:l/	balls/bɔ:z/
room /ru:m/	rooms /ru:mz/
bell /bel/	bells /belz/
face /feis/	faces /feisz/
church /tʃɜ:tʃ/	churches /tʃɜ:tʃiz/

Nominal Inflection in Ukwuani

Ukwuani has no inflection as it is in English. Nominals are not inflected in Ukwuani language. Ukwuani form plurals by:

Reduplication

Reduplication involves a total or partial copying of a root word. Omachonu (2001:61) posits that reduplication 'is a process whereby either a part or a whole stem is copied and attached to the stem either at the beginning or at the end. Reduplication as seen in most Nigerian languages is either partial or full.

Aronoff and Fudeman (2008:77) state that in reduplication, a continuous

substring from either the beginning or the

end of a word is copied, and languages

may use reduplication for inflection or **Examples of Reduplication in Ilokano** derivation. They give

examples of reduplicated words in a language of the

Philippines as follows;

Table 3.

	Ilokano Language	**English**	**Reduplication**	**English**
1	Kalldin	'goat'	ka –kaldin	'goats'
2	Pusa	'cat'	Pus-pusa	'cats'
3	klase	'class'	Klas– klase	'classes'

Aronoff and Fudeman,2008

Oyebade (2001) distinguishes between the two forms of reduplication, thus:

Singular Form	**Gloss**	**Plural Form**	**Gloss**
Igwe	Iron	igweigwe	Irons
Madu.	Person	Madumadu.	People
ekwa.	Egg	ekwaekwa.	Eggs
ekpa.	Bag	ekpaekpa.	Bags
Ewu	goat	ewuewu	Goats
e.ku.kwo.	Book	ekukwoekukwo	.Books

Quantifiers

Quantifiers are added to singular nominals to make the norminals plural. Examples are shown below:

Table 5. Plural Formation by Quatifiers

Reduplication are forms which are either partially or fully copied from the root and added before or after the root. Partial reduplication may

involves total copying of the root word (61).

In Ukwuani language, reduplication mostly appears in full. Examples are

involve copying only the   shown in the table below: consonant or the vowel and putting this in

prefixal position… or   **Table 4.**

adding it to the root in suffixal **Plural formation by reduplication** position … Full reduplication

Addition of number to the singular nominal: Numbers are added to singular nominals to form plural nominals. Examples are illustrated in the table below:

Table 6. Examples of plurals formed by numbers

Singular Form	Gloss	Plural Form	Gloss
okute.	Stone	okutenebe. . .	two stones
Ewu	Goat	ewunebe. .	two goats
okuku. . .	Fowl	okukueto.	three fowls
efele. . .	Dish	efelenebe. . . .	two dishes
Okuku	Cup	okukunebe. .	two cup

Suppletion : Replacive morphemes in Ukwuani language are mostly seen in the nominals in form of suppletion. Suppletion in Ukwuani language is a process of plural formation when singular nominal changes to plural nominal. The sound of the singular nominal not only changes, but the plural nominal formed is a new word entirely. Examples are seen in the table below:

Table 7 Plural Formation by Suppletion

Singular	Gloss	Suppletion	Gloss
Nwa	Child	umu	Children
Onyenye	Female	Ndiom	Women

Singular form	Gloss	Plural form	Gloss
Okuku	Fowl	okukufianiefia	many fowls
Nnu	Salt	nnufianiefia	much salt
Uko	wrapper	ukobunibu	Plenty of wrappers
Uno	House	nnoshininne	many houses
Onyeke	Male	Ndikom	Men

These words are used in sentences below:

1.   Ochade // muni // nwa

        S   P   C

                                form inflection are:

1.   (Ochade had a child) s/ cats, cheats, percepts, chats, heats, 2.   Joy // muni // umueno

                                counts, peacocks, gives, books, plates,

        S   P   C   helps, keeps, etc.

                                z/ girls, chairs, comes, disapproves, dogs,

        (Joy had four children) explains, examines, drugs, brings,

3.   Ofuonyenye // biani // ebeni

                                herbs, hens, pears. Dimples, etc.

        S   P   A   iz/ judges, languages, diseases,

                                dispensaries, dresses, boxes, dances etc. (One

woman came here).

4.   Ndiom // eto // biani.

S   C   P

(Three women came).

5.   Ofuonyeke // tuluni // n'ebenu

S   P   A

(One man stood there

6.   Weli ye // nde // ndikom

P   C   C

of ed (Give to the men).

Verbal Inflections in English

English verbals have four inflections. These are: the - s form, the - ing form, the ed¹ form and the - ed² form. The 's' form is the singular form; it has three allomorphs and they are phonologically conditioned. The allomorphs are /s/, /z/ and /iz/. Examples of words that have the allomorphs of 's'

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The-ing form has only one allomorph, which is /i /. Examples of words that are inflected with ing form (which has one allomorph - /i /) are jumping, cooking, kicking, crying, treating, eating, counting, dressing, dancing etc. The ed¹ and ed² forms of regular verbs have three allomorphs and are phonologically conditioned. They are:

/t/, /d/ and /id/. These inflectional morphemes form verb classes in English. Examples of words with allomorphs of ed inflection are:

/t/ cooked, danced, washed, dressed, flourished, fussed, walked, excessed, jumped etc.

/d/ explained, examined, cried, maintained, screwed, dimpled, exchanged, flowered, judged etc.

/id/ counted, pointed, expected, exhibited, deleted, depended, depreciated, discarded, etc.

Table 8. Examples of Verbal Inflection Base form	Past form
talk /tɔ:k/	talked /tɔ:kt/
jump/dʌmpt/	jump /dʌ mp/
comb /kəum/	combed /kəumd/
bag /bæg/	bagged /Bægd/
plead /pli:d/	pleaded /pli:did/
crowd /kraud/	crowded /kraudid/

Verbal Inflection in Ukwuani.

Ukwuani past tense is formed from their verbal roots by inflections. There is no inflection in the present tense in Ukwuani verbals. In most of the words, pronominals are added to the stem or root by suffixation. Ukwuani verbals take the inflection '-ni' to form simple past and past participle tenses. The '-ni' past tense morpheme has just one realization /ni/. Ukwuani verbals are formed by : i suffixation ii additive morpheme.

Suffixation in Ukwuani

. Past tense are formed in Ukwuani by the suffixing of two elements namely 'ni' and 'fu'(ʊ) used to form past tense and past participle form. Example of past tense and past participle form by suffixing of 'ni' and 'fu' are shown below:

Table 9:Formation of past t	Roots	Inflected words
-ni (i.)	lu . (to work)	luni .(worked)
	je (to go)	jeni .(went)
	se (to draw)	Seni . . (drew)
	wese . (bring)	weseni .(brought)

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-fu (u.)	li (to eat)	lifu (eaten)
	la (to drink)	lafu . (drank)
	je (to go)	jefu (gone)

Additive Morpheme

Additive morpheme in Ukwuani is used to change present to past tense. An example of additive morpheme in Ukwuani is 'ni'. In Ukwuani language, an additive morpheme does not make a change of word-class as is the case in English language. In Ukwuani language, a morpheme is added to a root morpheme to form a new word, but both words still belong to the same class of word. For instance 'je' (go) is a verbal and 'jeni' (went) a new word formed by additive is also a verbal. Examples of words formed by additive in Ukwuani are:

Table 10: Examples of Additive Morphemes

Additive Morpheme	Root	Gloss	Inflected word	Gloss
Ni	lu.	to work	lu+ni .(luni.)	Worked
Ni	Je	to go	je+ni (jeni)	Went
Ni	Se	to draw	se+ni (seni)	Drew
Ni	La	to drink	la+ni (lani)	Drank

From the illustrations above, the additive morphemes are only present in Ukwuani verbals. Additive morpheme in Ukwuani is used for past tense formation. This is very different in English additive morpheme, where verbals are changed to nominals. Therefore, the use of this morpheme by an Ukwuani English learner will constitute a problem in the course of learning the English language.

Conclusion

This study has shown some similarities and remarkable differences in the inflections of the English language and the Ukwuani language. For instance, Ukwuani nominal have no inflections as in English nominal. Ukwuani nominal are formed by reduplication, quantifier and by suppletion. English nominal inflections are formed by possessive and plural form.

Also, verbal inflections are only seen in the past tense and past participle in Ukwuani verbals by additive and suffixation. English verbal inflections are seen in singular form-'s', the continuous form 'ing', and the past forms-'ed¹' and 'ed²'.

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