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A Study of Tiv and English Inflectional Morphemes

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Abstract
This paper exploredthe inflectional morphology of Tiv the and English languages. The inflectional affix is an item that performs grammatical function without changing the part of speech of the word to which it is attached. The study is an exercise in Applied Linguistics which adopts contrastive analysis as a tool in the description of the languages. The paper observes that there are some similarities and differences in morphemic distributions of the two languages. It therefore justifies the fact that differences are likely to influence teaching and learning of a language. Unlike English, the inflectional morphemes in the Tivlanguage can also occur by alternation in tone. In other words, there are some rules on the plural formations or pronunciations. There is no set of Tiv morphemes referring to its particular gender as observed in English. Whether plural or past tense, the affixes in Tiv are only affixed at the levels of suffixation, infixation and tone. The study concludes that difficulties in teaching or learning of English language as L2 are often experienced in areas of differences, however, learning difficulties can also be in the areas of similarities. The study, therefore, advocates that language teachers/syllabus planners should make adequate use of the findings of contrastive or error studies as a research tool in designing syllabus for the teaching/learning of a second languages.

Keywords: Inflection, morpheme, Tiv/English languages, contrastive analysis

1. Background

Current linguistic and pedagogic theories have come up with two different approaches to errors. The earlier approach is contrastive analysis, which is based on the premise that languages are different and that because of these differences, the language learner will encounter difficulties. The basic practice of contrastive analysis is to first write a description of language to be compared (description of phonology, morphology or syntax subtests, noting the differences and similarities). One then compares the languages and the comparison, a prediction is made as to what the learner will find difficult or easy to learn. (Wikipedia 2011).

While error analysis is the second of these approaches, it is sometimes referred to as "a posteriori contrastive analysis". Our concern is based on contrastive study. It is commonly observed that the influence of Tiv morphology has much to do with errors often committed by learners of English. The argument is as a result of the possible morphological differences. In most cases, the over generalization of rules is often applied by second language learners. This paper attempts to make a contrastive analysis of inflectional morphemes in Tiv with particular reference to the formation of plural/possessive and past tense morphemes, thereby contrasting it with those of the English language.

1.1. Conceptual Review

The concept "contrastive studies draw many of the theoretical bases from the field of psychology; Alan (1952) opines that psychology is the study of behaviour which deals only with observable evidence. In this light, language is seen as a verbal behaviour which is empirically testable and definable and which cannot be dealt with in more abstract terms. Osgood (1957) notes that the transfer has aneffect on the proceeding activity upon the learning/teaching second language. In relation to L^2 as rightly observed in Alan (1952), transfer has to do with the influence of the learners' previous language (s) on his present learning. This concept states that if the languages have similarities in rules or concepts' there will be a positive transfer of learning/teaching, if they are differences then it will be a negative transfer of learning. Alan (1952) further suggests that since speech production is often considered more of a motor than a linguistic function, it is proper to deal with interference in the language in a more global sense. Many other linguists evolved on the markedly different theoretical models for the description of morphology. Bloomfield (1933) introduced the term "bond" (Radical elements and free stems) forms for the study of exotic languages.

Accordingly, Hocketh and Haris (1995) develop the basic ideas of structural linguistics to the degree of sophistication that is well beyond the one that attained in the structural analysis of English. He therefore posits three models of grammatical analysis in general perspective; "frames of reference" (within which an analyst might approach the grammatical description of word and paradigm) "item and arrangement and item and process" (an approach based on the morphological structure of language) these models can constitute the morph syntactic categories of the language. Mathew

(1973) further explains that morpho-syntactic analysis is obvious in categories of word in which its manifest both in the rules of syntax and morphology.

2. Literature Review

Language is systemic and dynamic means of human communication, it is widely considered to be diverse in nature. It is evident in that traditional linguistic study had developed comparative methods, chiefly to demonstrate family relations between cognate languages or illustrate the historical developments of one or more languages. The Modern contrastive linguistics intend to show in what ways, how languages differ, in order words, help in the teaching of second language. Since the inception of contrastive linguistics by Robert Lado in the 1950's it has often been linked to the aspect of Applied Linguistics. DiPietro (1962) notes that errors in foreign language learning can be evaluated at every level of linguistic structure; speech sounds, written symbols (graphology), word formation (morphology), word-meaning (Lexicology), collocation (phraseology), sentence structure (syntax) and complete discourse (textology). According to Lado (1957), contrastive analysis is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities. The theoretical foundation for what became known as the contrastive analysis, hypothesis were formulated in Lado's linguistics across culture), he claimed that "those elements which are similar to the learner's native language will be simple for the learner and "those elements that are different will be difficult (Lado 1957:21l). He further suggests that a systematic set of technical procedures for the contrastive study of languages is relevant. This involved describing the languages, comparing them and predicting learning difficulties.

In contrast to Lado's view which claimed that all errors made in learning the L2 could be attributed to interference by the L1. This claim could not be sustained by empirical evidence, as a challenge in 1970s. Wikipedia (2011) explains that, many errors predicted by contrastive analysis were inexplicably not observed in the learner's language. Certain errors were made by learners irrespective of their L1. This made it clear that contrastive analysis could not predict all learning difficulties.

Language like human beings is made up of parts, these parts are called structures. Language starts from sounds, these sounds are combined at the level of form to send out meaning. Therefore the basic levels are phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Thus, each has its important role which it plays in language. However, our approach in this paper is affixation processes with focus on inflectional morphemes and possessive pronouns. According to Mathews (1984), morphology is a term for the branch of linguistics which concern itself with formation of words in different uses. This means that morphological processes include affixation (prefixation, infixation and suffixation) reduplication, modification, vowel change or replacives, directionality of process, suppletions, discontinuous morphs, suprafixes, subphonemic affix subtractions. Morphology is central to language, According to Sapir (1954) cited in Charlton (1953:23) opines that writing is a derivative form composed of symbols, once received from the original speech sounds, it explains the fact that, morphology builds language with physical components which represents the sounds we produce.

The way units are combined to form meaningful words in language is quite arbitrary and conventional. For instance, if you say o+n =on, the 'o' has no meaning likewise 'n' but when put together, it becomes 'on' (preposition). The 'on' is a morph and is meaning carrying. A morpheme is the least meaningful unit of a word which any attempt to temper with it will render it meaningless. (Agbedo 2001).

Mathew (1973) sees it as the functioning parts of words. Going with these, we would understand that inflectional morphemes are attached to words to serve a grammatical purpose as well as semantic function in the words in which they are attached. Covertly, morphemes are not the same across languages. There are two groups of morphemes; free and bound morphemes. Free morphemes are those morphemes that can stand alone as single words with meaning e.g. eat (verb) book (noun) e.t.c. While bound morphemes are reverse of "free morphemes". They cannot stand on their own to make meaning. Naturally, bound morphemes are affixes, which are generally considered as dependent morphemes".

Affixes are then divided into two main groups; inflectional and derivational morphemes (affixes). Derivational morphemes are the forms that are added to a word to create new words or change the class of one word to another. On the other hand, inflectional affixes serve to establish a relationship within re-structural elements and a sentence, this relationship is evident in gender, tense and case. This paper therefore focuses on the inflectional affixes.
In English, all prefixes are derivational though other languages use prefix for inflectional purposes. Fromklin& Rodman (1978:335) assert that "a morpheme undergoes a change in form when its grammatical function in the sentence is changed" Recent studies in English have shown somewhat of fusional quality in which some adjectives exhibits. Tiv also has this kind of fusional quality. Wombo (1997), in the research on "Noun formation in Tiv" examined these phenomena:

Tiv	English
kwàsé/kásév	woman/women
ìshímà/ásémà	heart/hearts

Unlike English, Tiv nouns inflect it by prefixation of some additive element of the stem as in:

mfé (Singular)	mbámfé (Plural)	wisdom

The study concludes that inflectional rules are always related to two different levels of representations (morphology/ syntax).

3. Contrastive Analysis of English and TivInflectional Morphemes

The morphemic systems in languages across the world are not always the same. In a contrastive evaluation of the inflectional process in Tiv and English, we contrasts the data obtained in Tiv with English examples from the point of view of the morphemic structures and morphosyntactic relationship that is the structure of individual words and its place in the

context of sentences.

3.1. The Plural Markers
The English plural morphemes are phonological and morphological conditioned. The English phonological condition has three (3) shapes:

/s/,/z/,/iz/ = allophone

cats /kæts/, /dogs/ /dɔgz/

boxes /bɔksiz/

The morphemes in English take the plural form with the addition of - s – es – ies, - ves, - en (change of vowel or zero morpheme) e.t.c.

mango ------------ mangoes
photo ------------- photos
fly ----------------- flies
wife --------------- wives
man -------------- men
stimulus --------- stimuli
furniture --------furniture
ox ----------------- oxen

The {-s} marker occurs mostly on nouns ending in /o/ sound as in Photo +s = photos. Those that end in 'y' change its form to {-ves} as in: wife +ves + wives. Those that replace some sound with others as in man +s = men. Also, certain words exist in singular and plural within a suffix form as in News +s = News.

The Tiv plural markers have two (2) principal formations, like the English. However, where the English phonological conditioned are said to be regular, the Tiv phonological conditioned are realised by variation of tone in pronunciation of the nouns. Probably the rising tone is use to mark the Tiv plurals while the singular form is usually in down step tone as illustrated below:

(2)   ishù   íshú   fish
       ivó   ívó   goat/goats
       igó   ígó   pig/pigs

The morphological conditioned is often formed by such morphs as in ' u-, i, m-, a-, mba-',.The principal variant is [mba] and the other four variants may seem to be regular formation because of their ability to occur at the prefix in most of the plural morphemes in Tiv. For examples

(3)   [mba-] ànyám mbáányám   tiger/tigers
       n-   jóndúgh mzòndúm   calabash/Calabashes
       l-   or   lór   people
       u-   tér   ùtér   father/fathers
       a.   ìchàn   átsán   suffering/sufferings

There are often forms of morphological condition in which the markers usually take a different shape in the description of certain morphemes. For examples;

(4) the change of shapes: wan   ónóv   child/offspring
morpheme with only plural form: íshwáíshwaBeniseed
additional of 'v' at suffix and the deletion of 'w' Kwase - kasev   women
The attachment of Plural only at the suffix: ankùhé - ankúhèm   little bone/ (s)

There are terms of genitive case which are often an entire length of morphemic fusion. The morphological condition, indicate [mba] as the first group with its variant;
m-,i-,a- and u – as allomorphs of the same plural morpheme. They normally occur as the prefix to make the word plural.

The second category of morphological condition is the other irregular forms as shown in example (4) i.e. another type usually adds some elements both at the prefix and suffix to become plural as;

wanyé + plural = mbáyév a child/children

Some categories omit/change segments of the morphemes to form plurals as in

tóugh (ear) + plural = átó (ears)

The morphemic analysis in Tiv may include the expression of genitive case. In oder words, the use of the possessive pronouns 'wam' 'yam' 'wagh'. For example

(5).a
i   motówámdòò   (car my good) my car is good
ii   ívóyàmkèhé   (goats my fats) my goats are fat
iii   wéghwághkuèngèm   (hand my is clean) my hand is clean

The genitive case often has an entire length of morphemic fusion .The variants of the genitive include possessive morphemes. There are six possessive morphemes in Tiv which takes the following allomorphs; –a, -u-en, na, ve, ase .as in

-a- = 'my'
-ou- =your
-en- = your
-na =   his/her

ve =   their
ase =   our
Noun possessive
-a- as in ìkúngúgh   yàgh   my dove
           námégh àgh   my thigh
                    hááv   àv   my roof
                    ìwá   yám   my dog
                    mato   wàm   my car
                    myóm   àm   my irons/logs
                    iyóu   yáv   my yam
-ou- as in   ìtyóúgh   yóúgh   your head
                    námégh   òúgh   your thigh
                    búà   wòúgh   your cow
The allomorph of the possessive morpheme – en – meaning 'your' (plural):
                    íyòúgh   yénègh   your iron
                    tòúgh   ènégh   your ear
                    háav   énév   your root
                    ikèsé   yén   your belly
                    búa   wén   your cow
                    mtóm (Pl)   èném   your posts
                    íkyáv   yènév   your containers
The allomorph "nagh, nam, na" all belongs to the possessive morpheme 'na' – his/her.
                    ìtyóugh   nágh   his/her post
                    myóm (Pl)   nàm   his/her irons
                    háav   náv   his/her root
                    ívó   ná   his/her goat
The possessive morpheme 've' – meaning 'their', has the allomorphs "vegh, vem, vev, ve" meaning 'their'
                    ìyóùgh   végh   their   yam
                    mtóm   vèm   their heads
                    haav   vev   their   root
                    ìvò (sing)   vé   their goat
Possessive – 'ase' – 'our' has allomorph yasegh, asegh, asev, yase and ase'
                    áhía   àsé   our peanut
                    ìméngér   yásé   our lamp
                    tough   asegh   our ear
                    ikonugh   yasegh   our chair

It is observed that morphological rule at this level in Tiv is confusing and only the intuitive knowledge of the native speaker that can guide in determining the selection of appropriate variants. All genitive case in Tiv post modifies the nouns to which they have attached.

3.2. Past Tense Markers
The past tense morphemes in English are also phonological and morphological conditioned in nature. Phonologically, the principal variant of the past tense represented as {-ed} in English has three different phonological realizations:

{-ed} is realized as /d/ when it is attached to words ending in voiced
[+] as pass+ed /pazd/
{-ed} is realized as /t/ in word ending in voiceless sound as pick +ed
= picked /pikt/
{-ed} is also pronounced /id/ in words ending in /t/ and /d/ as in
Wedded /wedid/

The morphological condition is not of regular formation as noticed in phonological conditions. The {-ed} variants are regular and irregular in certain word formation. For instance, the regular verbs like kill + ed = killed. However, the irregular verbs formation takes five forms:

● Those that change the words form completely to form their past tense –go + went
● Those that are considered to be infix by changing a vowel sound with a word; get + ed = got
● Those that replace the final sound segment with others as; see + ed = saw
● Those that retain the same form; shut + ed = shut

The past tense morpheme in Tiv is not quite far from the English, differences could only be positions and morphological formations. The past tense is either phonological or morphological conditioned.

The phonological condition is realised by the manipulation of voice height. Since Tiv is a tonal language, tone plays a major role in the formation of past tense. For example:

down step tone (present)   rising tone (past)
(6).a

yam	yám	bought
tee	téé	sold
tem	tém	break
tuur	túúr	pushed

The morphological condition can be divided into three groups:

- Those that omit the final sound segment, the replacives, change final, as in menamènámén swallowed
- Those that replaced segment
- Korkér   caught
- Those that change the final segments of words
  - gba   gbé   fall
  - ya   yé   ate

In the above illustrations, four types of past tense markers exist in Tivlanguage, these are further divided into two main groups; Phonological and morphological conditions. The past tense is formed at suffix or infix. The phonological conditioned verbs are written and can be made past by the application of tone. Where the down step tone is implied on verb in present tense, then the same verb becomes a past tense when pronounced in rising tone. It should be noted that, there are no particular words with certain characteristics that make them realized their past tense as such. It all depends on the verb and context in it realization in Tiv language.

The morphological condition also has an irregular formation. No group of words has a uniform way of forming the past tense as seen in English past tense.

4. Tiv and English Plural and Past Tense Markers

Similarities	TivDifferences	English
Both have inflectional Morphemes	traditionally formed at the suffix	traditionally formed at prefix
Both are phonological and morphological conditioned	Plural reflects on only a word in the combined formation	
Both have irregular pattern	Tiv has eight ways of plural morphemes	twelve ways of plural formations
Both have adjectives	Plural formations are realized at suffix tone, and replacive	Prefix, infix suffix and replacive
Both have zero morphemes		
Both have suffix and replacive segments		

Table 1: Plural

Similarities	Tiv Differences	English
Both are inflectional morphemes	Phonological conditioned is not regular	Phonological condition is of regular formation
Phonological/ morphological conditioned	Phonological condition is by variation in tone	Phonological condition is affected by final segment
Both have suffix, infix and segments	do not have form that change	Some forms change completely for making their past
Both have irregular patterns	Four ways of making its past tense	Seven ways of forming tense
Both have had forms that are the same in present and past		

Table 2: Past Tense

5. Summary of Findings

The study viewed the inflectional morphemes of the Tiv and English languages with emphasis on the plural/possessive and past-tense markers. We therefore contrasted with the aim to establish their differences and similarities. Using the phonological and morphological conditions, the paper observes that English is represented by suffix in an environment of word ending in voiceless segments, voiced and sibilant/affricate/vocalic respectively, while morphological conditioned shows an irregular pattern. In Tiv, the phonological conditions are realised by variation of tone and are not of a regular pattern. The paper has shown that down step tone depicts the present form while the rising tone signifies the past form in Tiv. The morphological aspect of the plural markers in Tiv is traditionally realized at the prefix levels: (mba-), (u-), (m-), (i-) (a-) to show plurality in word form. In the same direction, English past tense is naturally marked by (-ed), it is also phonological and morphological conditioned. The phonological aspect in English has three different phonological realizations' /t/, /d/, /id/ depending on the word. In words ending in a voiceless is realized as /t/, while words ending in voiced are pronounced as /d/ and a word ending in –ded is realized as /id/. The morphological condition is of irregular pattern. All past tense morphemes in English are inflectional with the use of suffixes. The

phonological condition of the past tense in Tiv is realised by the variation of tone. It is not of regular and nor have any class of words for its formation. The morphological condition is also irregular, however, it has three ways of its formation. There are some that omit, replace other units as well as changes the final sound segments. It is therefore noted that some past tense markers in Tiv whether phonologically or morphologically conditioned are realised in a rising tone.

6. Conclusion

The study demonstrated the inflectional morphology of the Tiv and English languages, with emphasis on how it fashions the speech and particularly the structure/form of words or morphemes. The contrastive analysis of English and Tiv inflectional processes, showed a selective effect of it upon the pattern of grammar which bears some impact on the semantics. The aim of the study was borne out to ascertain the differences and similarities that can help language teachers/learners. This paper will guide in predicting possible errors in second language learning and teaching.

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