Pluralisation Strategies in Emai

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Abstract

This paper examined Emai's pluralization strategies. In addition to highlighting some of the features and differences that define the Emai plural system, it investigated the language's mechanisms for marking plurality on lexical items at the word level. Data for this study came from a number of sources, including five competent native speakers (three men and two women) who were recorded using a sound recorder, as well as published and unpublished resources on pluralization in other languages. This study is purely descriptive. The basic linguistic theory is used in the data analysis. The research found, among other things, that pluralization in Emai requires multiple strategies. The study revealed that Emai pluralizes nouns by using numerals; quantifiers like és, which mean "some," are also employed in this manner. Although the substitution varies, a noun's plural form is created by substituting its initial vowel in the singular form. Zero plural is also seen, when a word's singular form is preserved in the plural form, as well as reduplication, where a noun is duplicated in the plural form. Other procedures, including subtraction (reduction), in which a term or noun is diminished, are also used. It was also noted that pronouns in the language were pluralized through the process of suppletion, vowel substitution, and addition.

Keywords: pluralisation, Emai language, nouns, zero plural, suppletion,

1.0   Introduction

According to Jija (2012), plurals and pluralisation involve quite different processes in different languages. Whereas in some languages, there is variation between singular and plural forms of nouns, such a variation does not exist in other languages. According to Carnie (2007), plurals refer to "quantity of individuals or things". Crystal (2007) opines that plural refers to "…. a grammatical category used for the analysis of word classes displaying such contrasts as singular (Sg, SG, Sing), plural (pl, PL), dual (du) ('two'), trial ('three'), paucal ('few'), etc. …" Bradbury et al (1992) assert that "a plural is the term used for noun, pronoun, determiner or verb when it refers to two or more people, things or group.

This work examines pluralisation strategies in the Emai language, an Edoid language (according to Elugbe (1989)) spoken in Edo State. It is aimed at analyzing the strategies Emai employs in the formation of plurals. It highlights some of the peculiarities which characterize the Emai plural system. The study also attempts to capture the various procedures that are inherent in the Emai plural system, as well as their functions.

1.1   Emai People and Language

According to Egbokhare (1990), Emai is the name of a community of villages with claims of a common origin and cultural beliefs. Emai is also the name of the speech variety spoken in this community. The community is located in Owan East Local Government of Edo State. It is made up of the following villages: Afuze, Uanhumi, Eteye, Okpa, Ogute, Evbiame, Ojavun,

Okpokhumi and Ovbiowun. The dominant occupation of the people of Emai is farming and petty trading.

According to Emai oral tradition, as recorded in Egbokhare (1990), the name Emai is said to be derived from 'Ima' who is the ancestor of the Emai people. He was said to have fled from the ancient Benin Kingdom around the 16th century for an undisclosed reason.

Elugbe (1989) classifies Emai under the 'Ora-Emai-Iuleha' dialect cluster of the Proto North Central Edoid. Egbokhare (1990) states that Ora and Iuleha are mutually intelligible dialects spoken in communities bordering Emai to the southwest and west up to River Ose, while Elugbe (1989) notes that in spite of the fact that these dialects are easily recognized as dialects of the same language, political and inter-ethnic rivalries have prevented the adoption of one of them as the standard dialect.

1.2   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this work falls under Descriptive Linguistics namely 'Descriptive Theoretical Framework'. The gathering of primary data and an analysis of these facts make up the majority of the work in linguistics that is referred to as "descriptive," according to Himmelmann (1995:1). In other words, the goal of this framework is to analyze language by the collection of data and the basic description of the data's nature using terminology primarily from classical grammar, typology, and occasionally from explanatory theories like generative grammar. "The task of descriptive linguistics is to describe individual languages as perceptively and rigorously as possible, with maximum accountability to a naturalistic corpus of data, ideally collected within a broad program of language documentation [...] to ensure that full spectrum of language structure is represented," claim

Evans and Dench (2006:3). This framework does not employ formal signs and notation; it focuses on how languages are like and what tools we need to order to provide adequate descriptions of individual languages.

According to Dryer (2006:3), the dominant theory assumed in descriptive grammars has "developed as a single descriptive theoretical framework.". This theoretical foundation is referred to as "basic linguistic theory" by Dixon (1997). The most striking way that basic linguistic theory differs from other modern theoretical frameworks is in what might be called its conservatism: in contrast to many theoretical frameworks that only loosely and freely assume many novel concepts, basic linguistic theory fully incorporates new traditions. Thus, it can be broadly compared to traditional grammar, eliminating its flaws (such as a propensity to characterize all languages in terms of concepts inspired by European languages), while adding essential concepts that traditional grammar lacks.

Pre-generative structuralist traditions have had a significant impact on basic linguistic theory, according to Dryer (2006), particularly in emphasizing the need to describe each language in its own terms as opposed to imposing on individual languages concepts that are primarily motivated by other languages, in contrast to traditional grammar and many recent theoretical frameworks. In particular, in the fields of phonology and morphology, it has borrowed analytical methods from structuralist traditions. However, it also differs from more purely structuralist work in that it uses terminology that has been used for comparable occurrences in other languages, includes semantic consideration in its analysis, and aims to describe languages in a more user-friendly manner.

Since it covers non-historical and non-prescriptive work, which is of course what the current study aims to do, this theoretical framework is helpful in characterizing the multiple devices in the

Emai language. This theory was chosen because it is a flexible framework that enables the researchers to stay focused on the facts at hand and adhere as closely as possible to standard grammar principles for describing linguistic data, which is why it is relevant to the current study. Since the framework has proven to be extremely helpful and effective when working on obscure languages, Emai can likewise be categorized as such.

1.3   Methodology

The data for this work are drawn from discourses in which Emai is used. The study used two methods in the collection of data. They are the primary and secondary methods. The primary data is the direct oral interview from five (three male and two female) competent native speakers with the aid of a sound recorder. Out of the five competent native speakers, two are above 50 years; one is 38 years, while the remaining two are between the ages of 20 to 25 years. The data were collected using over two hundred (200) lexical items (nouns, pronouns, etc. extracted from the Ibadan four hundred (400) word list. The secondary method comprises published and unpublished materials on pluralisation. The analysis of the data collected was done by careful observation of lexical items containing plurals that are extracted from the recorded data. Verification of the data was done with the help of some native speakers of the language, who helped to verify the appropriateness or otherwise of the data. The observations made and results derived guide our conclusions.

2.0   Literature Review

Plural formation is a crucial phenomenon in human languages and all human languages inherently observe the phenomenon of counting. Since all natural languages count items, the implication is

that numbers are used. Numbers are used to indicate plural referents; they are not doubt universal options. The basic evidence of the category of number is observed in the distinction between singular and plural in relation to nouns, (see Lyons 1968 and Robins 1971). Number, on which plurality is based, is according to Crystal (2003) a grammatical category used for the analysis of word classes displaying such contrasts as singular, plural, dual, trial or apical (few) etc. as in English 'boy' vs 'boys'; 'he walks' vs 'they walk'.

The word 'pluralisation' can be defined as the inflection of a singular noun to make it acquire a status of two or more persons, places or things, ideas concepts and entities. Pluralisation works to indicate the status of a number of items. This is affirmed by Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:80) in the following words; "The English number system comprises SINGULAR, which denotes 'one' and PLURAL, which denotes 'more than one'". The singular category includes common non-count nouns and proper nouns. Count nouns are VARIABLE, occurring with either singular or plural number 'boy' vs 'boys', or have INVARIABLE plural 'cattle'. 'Plural' as Bradbury (1992:881) emphasizes, implies "consisting of more than one person or thing or different kinds of people or things". In the same vein, Alobo (2008:35) concurs with Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:80) as follows:

> The pluralisation of nouns cannot be discussed in isolation of number. This
> is because the inflection of nouns to indicate their plurality is essentially a
> business of number. The English number system comprises the singular which
> denotes 'one' and the plural, which denotes 'more than one'.

There are different typologies of plurality in language. Dryer (2011) insists that there are basically two ways in which languages indicate plurality. The first (and most common) involves changing the morphological form of the noun as in English 'dog'/ 'dogs'. The second involves indicating plurality by means of a morpheme that occurs somewhere else in a noun phrase illustrated by a plural word as in example (1a) from the Hawaiian language where the word 'mau' has the same function as the plural suffix in English but there is a separate word modifying the noun.

1   a)   élua a u mau ia
                  two my P1 fish
                  'my two fishes'

Other forms include indicating plurality morphologically on the noun. The first of these is plural prefixes as illustrated in (2a) to (2d) from Degema, a language of the Niger-Congo Phylum spoken in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria, where two prefixes are listed for a given modern in the plural, the first attaches to the modem when it qualifies nouns denoting non-human entities (Kari, 2003:240)

2	a)	oßí	"ancestor"	pl.	eßí
	b)	ɔ́mɔ́mɔ́si	"brother"		ímɔ́mɔ́si
	c)	ɔ́mɔ́	"child"		imɔ́
	d)	odim	"corpse"		idim

3	a)	áikí	"cooking pot"	íikí
	b)	ukpúró	"feather"	òkpúiró

Degema nominal are therefore formed through a change in the prefix or initial vowel syllable of the word from /ɔ/ to /i/, /u/ to /a/, /u/ to /o/. There is plurality marked in both human and non-human specific

nominal. According to Wiltschko (2008), in languages, such as English, French, German, etc. where number marking is inflectional, the choice between the expression of singularity and plurality is a forced one. For example:

4   a) book - books   English
       b) Livre – s   French

Whereas. in languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, amongst others, where plural marking is non-inflectional, the choice between the expression of singularity and plurality is not a forced one. In this case, it is optionally possible to unambiguously distinguish plurality by means of a variety of expressions. For example:

5   a)   àwọn ìwé   Yorùbá
               PL.   book
               'books'
       b)   umu nwoke   Ìgbò
               PL.   man
               'men'

Inflectional plurality is a process whereby plurality is marked on a noun by affixation which, in most cases, is a suffix. On the other hand, non-inflectional plural making is reflected by a morpheme or word that is not solely dedicated for pluralisation (Schane 1973, Wiltschko 2008).

3.0   Pluralisation Strategies of Nouns in Emai

This section answers the questions of how nouns and nominal elements are given their plural interpretation in Emai. A noun can be defined as a word used to name a person, place or thing. By a thing here, it means that it comprises something which can be

perceived by human senses, or that which cannot be perceived but can be thought of. Quirk et al (1963) defines nouns as "a word used to name a person, place or thing. They may be real objects or an idea, etc.". It is important to note that most Emai nouns begin with a vowel.

3.1   Pluralisation by Vowel Substitution

One of the ways of devising plural of nouns in Emai is to substitute or change the initial vowel of the singular form. Omoruyi (1986:67) defines vowel substitution as "a phonological process of substituting an initial vowel of nouns with another vowel – whether it is a prefix or not." In other words, since most nouns in Emai usually start with a vowel, this vowel will be changed or substituted with another vowel to show pluralisation as shown in the table below:

Table 1.0

The Singular Initial Vowel	Plural Initial Vowel
u	*i*
o	a
o	e
ọ	*i*
ọ	E
a	E
a	*I*
ẹ	E
ẹ	*I*

In Emai, the substitution of vowel at word initial position does not apply only to nouns with semantic feature (+human) but also applies to the sematic feature [-human]. Thus, examples can be seen below:

6)   **Vowel /u/ changes to /i/ for plurality**

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
ùkpẹ́ò	'eye'	ìkpẹ́ò	'eyes'
ùkpákọ̀n	'tooth'	ìkpákọ̀n	'teeth'
ùkpékhìẹ́n	'nail'	ìkpékhìẹ́n	'nails'
ùguáwẹ̀	'knee'	ìguáwẹ̀	'knees'
ùguàkpókà	'bone'	ìguàkpókà	'bones'
ùkpà	'seed'	ìkpà	'seeds'
ùkpóràn	'stick'	ìkpóràn	'sticks'

In the data above, /u/ a back high rounded vowel, which is singular, changes to /i/ a front high unrounded vowel which functions as the plural marker. This change takes place for the purpose of plurality.

7.   **Vowel /o/ changes to /a/ for plurality**

	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
a.	óbọ̀	'hand'	ábọ̀	'hands'
b.	òwẹ̀	'leg'	àwẹ̀	'legs'

There is a vowel substitution from the singular form of the noun to its plural form. From the data above, the back mid-high rounded vowel /o/ changes to the front mid-high unrounded vowel /e/.

8.   **Vowel /o/ changes to /e/ for plurality**

	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
a.	óràn	'tree'	éràn	'trees'
b.	ófè	'rat'	éfè	'rats'

Looking at the data above, we observe that the back mid-high rounded vowel /o/ is substituted or replaced by the front mid-high unrounded vowel /e/ to pluralise the noun.

9.   **Vowel /ɔ/ changes to /i/ or plurality**

	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
a.	òpià	'matchet'	ìpià	'matchets'
b.	òkpòsò	'woman'	ìkpòsò	'women'
c.	ọ́ègiè	'chief'	íégiè	'chiefs'

Here, the back mid-low rounded vowel /ɔ/ changes to the front high unrounded vowel /i/ to pluralise the noun.

10.   **Vowel /ɔ/ changes to /e/ for plurality**

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural**	**Gloss**
a.	ɔ́khɔ́khɔ̀	'chicken'	ékhɔ́khɔ̀	'chickens'
b.	ɔ́hà	'wife'	éhà	'wives'
c.	ɔ́diɔ̀n	'elder'	édiɔ̀n	'elders'
d.	ɔ̀bɔ̀	'doctor'	èbɔ̀	'doctòrs'
e.	ɔ́ìà	'person'	éìà	'persons'

From the above data, /ɔ/ a back mid-low rounded vowel changes to /e/ a front mid-high unrounded vowel.

11.   **Vowel /a/ changes to /e/ for plurality**

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural**	**Gloss**
a.	ákhè	'cooking pot'	ékhè	'cooking pots'

The central low vowel /a/ is seen to change to the front mid-high vowel /e/ when the noun is pluralized. This is an exceptional case of plurality in the language as not much words were found where /a/ changes to /e/ to mark plural.

12.   **Vowel /a/ changes to /i/ for plurality**

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural**	**Gloss**
a.	áwá	'dog'	íwá	'dogs'
b.	áfiánmì	'bird'	ífiánmì	'birds'

From the data above, the central low vowel /a/ changes to the front high vowel /*i*/

13.   **Vowel /ɛ/ changes to /e/ for plurality**

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural**	**Gloss**
a.	ɛ́wè	'goat'	éwè	'goats'

The front mid-low vowel /ɛ/ changes to the front mid-high vowel /e/ to pluralise the noun. This is also another exceptional case of plurality in the language as not much words were found where /ɛ/ changes to /e/ to mark plural.

14. **Vowel /ɛ/ changes to /i/ for plurality**

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
a. ẹ́mẹ̀nlá	'cow'	ímẹ̀nlá	'cows'

Here, the front mid-low vowel /ɛ/ changes to the front high /i/ to pluralise the noun. This is a third exceptional case of plurality in the language as not much words were found where /e/ changes to /i/ to mark plural.

In Emai, nouns, whether human or non-human, can be pluralised through the process of vowel substitution in word-initial position.

According to Omoruyi (1986:64) '… semantic extensions make it possible for some non-human nouns to be pluralized by initial vowel substitution". He states further that the semantic extension is even more noticeable in the use of the genitival prefix 'òvbí' which translates as 'child' of…' which in its literal sense possesses the semantic feature [+ human], so when it is pluralized it becomes ìvbí - 'children of …' The same however, cannot be said of Emai. In Emai, it is 'òvbí – 'child of …' and ìvbí – 'children of…' strictly for singular and plural markers respectively. As observed by Omoruyi (1986:65), for Edo, òvbí – and ìvbí - in Emai are employed as strategy by which only human nouns can be pluralised… Let us consider the examples below:

15.

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
a. òvbiọ́bà	'child of the king	ìvbiọ́bà 'children of the king'
b. òvbiúàn	'child of a person	ìvbiúàn 'children of a person'

Looking at the data above, we observe that the prefix *òvbí* – 'child of' is changed to ìvbí - 'children of' in the plural form. There is a

vowel substitution of /o/, a back vowel to /i/, a front vowel from singular to plural form respectively. However, it must be understood that in Emai, the initial vowel substitution of the genitival prefix 'òvbí-' to 'ìvbí -' is strictly applicable to only human nouns and not used as a plural formation strategy for some non-human nouns through semantic extension as in some related languages such as Edo.

From the examples discussed above, the phonological rules below can be adduced:

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{syll.} \\ +\text{back} \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syll.} \\ -\text{back} \end{bmatrix} \Big/ \quad \#\# \ \underline{\quad\quad}$$

Prose statement: A back vowel is realized as a front vowel when it occurs at word-initial position.

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{syll.} \\ +\text{front} \\ -\text{high} \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syll.} \\ +\text{front} \\ +\text{high} \end{bmatrix} \Big/ \#\# \ \underline{\quad\quad} \qquad \Big|$$

Prose statement: A high vowel is realized as a low vowel when it occurs at word-initial position.

However, there is no phonological basis to account for the reason why back vowels change to front vowels and low front vowels change to high front vowels to form the plurals of the nouns. This agrees with Omoruyi (1988:66) where he stated that "Edo singular and plural nouns do not reveal any phonological conditioning in the vowel substitution pattern". The level of phonology in this work will be concerned with any alternant that are phonologically conditioned. As such, we argue that they are grammatically conditioned.

3.2   Zero Pluralisation Strategy

This strategy is a word formation process in which there is no change to the form that undergoes it (Crystal 2006). By zero plural, we mean that there is no change between the singular and the plural

form. In Emai, zero plural is evident whereby the singular and plural forms of a noun are the same. Consider the following examples:

Table 1.1

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural**	**Gloss**
15a	Íhuè	'nose'	íhuè	'nose'
b	úẹ̀mì	'tongue'	úẹ̀mì	'tongue'
c	Égbè	'body'	égbè	'body'
d	Ùdù	'heart'	ùdù	'heart'
e	Únù	'mouth'	únù	'mouth'
f	Úhùnmì	'head'	úhùnmì	'head'
g	Étò	'hair'	étò	'hair'

The data in example 15 above shows that the words are the same whether used as singular or as plural. In the language, the plural marker is zero in nature as the plural form of a word takes the same form as its singular. Another way to pluralize these words is with the use of quantifiers as will be discussed in the next section of the work.

3.2 The Use of Quantifiers

A quantifier is a word that expresses quantity. The concern in this section is to demonstrate how this quantifying element readily makes available the plural interpretation of nouns that they modify in Emai. Quantifiers like ésò 'some'; lò bùn 'many/plenty' can combine with a singular noun in Emai. Consider the examples below:

Table 1.2 The use of *ésò* 'some'

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural form**	

16a	ébè	'book'	ébè ésò	'some books'
b	àgà	'chair'	àgà ésò	'some chairs'
c	ókò̩	'mortar'	oko ésò	'some mortars'
d	ò̩kpòsò	'woman'	ìkpòsò ésò	'some women'

Table 1.3 The use of *lò̩ bùn* 'many/plenty'

17a	ò̩gè̩dè̩	'plantain'	ò̩gè̩dè̩ lò̩ bùn 'many plantains'
b	ákhè	'pot'	ékhè lò̩ bùn 'many pots'
c	émà	'yam'	émà lò̩ bùn 'many yams'
d	émàè	'food'	émàè lò̩ bùn 'many food'
e	áwá	'dog'	íwà lò̩ bùn 'many dogs'

From the data above, the quantifiers ésò 'some' and lò̩ bùn 'many', in Emai can be said to be post modifiers occurring after the nouns in their plural forms.

Table 1.4 The use of *évbá* 'particle'

	Word	Gloss	Plural form	
18a	íhùnmì	'grass'	évbá íhùnmì	'grasses'
b	é̩kpà	'bag'	évbá é̩kpà	'bags'
c	é̩vèè	'kolanut'	évbá é̩vèè	'kolanuts'
d	éhè̩n	'fish'	évbá éhè̩n	'fishes'
e	íwè̩	'house'	évbá íwè̩	'houses'

The particle 'evba' differs from the two quantifiers previously examined; it occurs before the noun in their plural form and as such, it is a pre-modifier.

3.3 The Use of Numerals

All languages count things. Corbett (2000:135) defines 'plural words' as special 'number words' that languages use to indicate number. Nouns are classified into numbers (i.e. singular and plural).

Numerals are figures that denote number. When these numerals are added to lexical items, they indicate plural. Let's now take a look at how this works in Emai.

Table 1.5

	Word	Gloss	Number	Plural form	
19a	éwà	'mat'	ìgbé 'ten'	éwà ìgbé	'ten mats'
b	éìn	'tortoise'	èvá 'two'	éìn èvá	'two tortoise'
c	àgá	'chair'	éẹ̀n 'eight'	àgá éẹ̀n	'eight chairs'
d	ọ̀kpà	'cock'	èéà 'three'	ọ̀kpà èéà	'three cocks'
e	ògiè	'king'	ọ́gbàn 'thirty'	ògiè ọ́gbàn	'thirty king'

Looking at the data above, it could be seen that numbers are added to the singular forms to pluralise them. Also, the numbers come after the nouns in Emai, unlike in English language where the numbers come before the nouns. As such, number is a post-modifier in Emai. Thus, we have the rule below:

Noun + number $\longrightarrow$ Noun, number

3.4   Noun Pluralisation by Reduplication

Reduplication is a process by which a category or constituent of a sentence can be doubled (Essien, 1990b). Crystal (2003) describes reduplication as a process of repetition whereby the form of a prefix/suffix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root. Kim (1997) states that reduplication refers to the affixation of a morpheme whose phonological form depends in all or in part on the phonological form of the host stem to which it attaches to the effect

of expressing certain semantic features. Reduplication is a common morphological process in which part or a whole lexical item is repeated usually to express some notions such as plurality, emphasis or intensity. Reduplication can be full or partial. It is full when the whole stem is repeated and partial when part of the stem is repeated. In Emai, complete or full reduplication is evident and it indicates plurality. Consider the following examples:

Table 1.6

	Word	**Gloss**	**Plural form**
19a	údò	'stone'	údò + údò = údòúdò 'stones'
b	íwè	'house'	íwè + íwè = íwèíwè 'houses'
c	́ebè	'book'	ébè + ébè = ébèébè 'books'
d	íshè	'nail'	íshè + íshè = íshèíshè 'nails'
e	àgà	'chair'	àgà + àgà = àgààgà 'chairs'
f	sàghà	'rag'	sàghà + sàghà = sàghàsàgha'rags'

3.5 Pluralisation by Subtraction

Golston and Wiese (1995) term it 'Subtractive Morphology'. They define subtractive morphology by stating that "a morphological category is signaled by deletion of underlying material". Subtraction expresses a grammatical meaning by deleting part of the base, prototypically the final segment. It is a morphological process of modification that removes one or more segments from a root or stem. Subtraction is used in Emai to form the plural of a singular noun whereby the noun or word is reduced by removing one or more of its segments. Consider the examples below:

	Singular	**Gloss**	**Plural form**	
20a.	ùkpéhòn	'ear'	éhòn	'ears'
b.	ùkpákòn	'tooth'	ákòn	'teeth'

   c.   ùkpékhìẹ́n   'finger nail'   ékhìẹ́n   'finger nails'

The segments 'ukp' are removed from the words to form their plurals.

4.   Pluralisation of Pronouns

Pronouns are words that can function as nouns on their own and refer either to the participants in the discourse or someone or something addressed elsewhere in the discourse. Traditionally, a pronoun is a word that modifies or replaces a noun. The emphasis here is on how their plural forms are derived, which is divided into two categories: personal pronouns and possessive pronouns. This section explains how pronouns in Emai are given their plural interpretation.

4.1 Pluralisation of Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are pronouns that are used instead of names of people. A personal pronoun may be in the nominative case or in the objective/accusative case. The participant refers to the person which could be 1st, 2nd or 3rd. The table below shows the personal pronouns in Emai.

Table 2.0

Person	Singular (subject) Nominative case	Plural (subject)	Singular (object) Accusative case	Plural (object)
1st	ì 'I'	màì, màmàìn 'we'	mẹ̀ 'me'	màì 'us'

2nd	ù 'you'	vbà 'you'	wẹ̀wẹ̀ 'you'	wàwà 'you'
3rd	ọ̀ 'He/she/it	yàn 'They'	nàì 'him/her/it'	yàìn 'them'

Looking at the personal pronouns above, one will observe that the plural forms are not derived from the singular form. There is no such process as reduplication, subtraction and so on, as seen in the previous section. What this implies is that there is suppletion in plural formation process in Emai personal pronouns. Matthews (1974) defines suppletion as "a morphological process or alternation in which one form wholly replaces another". The singular 1st person subject pronoun '*i*' changes to the form 'màì', 'màmàìn' when pluralised. No distinction is made between masculine and feminine as 'ọ' stands for male or female. Also noticed was vowel substitution as the vowels in the singular form of the 1st and 2nd person object pronouns were substituted with 'àì' and 'à' respectively to form their plurals.

4.2   Pluralisation of Possessive Pronouns
Pluralisation in Emai also extends to the genitive case. 'The genitive case typically expresses possessive relationship,' Crystal (2007:200). The examples below will suffice.

Table 2.1

Person	Singular Genitive/Possessive	Plural Genitive/possessive
1st	ísẹ̀mẹ̀n 'mine'	ísàmà 'ours'
2nd	ísẹ̀ 'your'	ísẹ̀àìn 'yours'
3rd	ísọ̀ì 'his/hers/its	ísẹ̀àìn 'theirs'

In the table above, two pluralisation strategies were noticed. They are addition and vowel substitution. Addition in this case, a direct opposite of subtraction, involves the addition of one or more segments to a root or stem. It was observed that addition was employed to form the plural of some of the Emai possessive pronouns. The 2ⁿᵈ person singular ísẹ̀'your' becomes ísẹ̀àìn 'yours' when pluralized while the vowel 'ẹ̀' was substituted for the vowel 'à' to form the plural of the 1ˢᵗ person possessive pronoun.

5.0   Pluralisation of Demonstrative Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe a noun or pronoun. Demonstrative adjectives point out specific persons, places or things that are close or far off in relation to the speaker. According to Quirk et al (1963), quantifiers, determinants and demonstratives could be used to bring about plurality. They have singular and plural forms. 'this and 'that' are singular, while "these' and 'those' are plural. This and these are used for countable nouns that are near to the speaker. That and those are used for countable nouns that are far off from the speaker. For example, in English we have:

This boy   -   These boys
That house   -   Those houses

In Emai, the demonstrative adjectives are:

Singular	**Plural**
ọ̀lì … nà 'this'	èlì … nà 'these'
ọ̀lì … àìn 'that'	èlì … àìn 'those'

There is the use of demonstratives like *ọ̀lì … nà* 'this' and *èlì … nà* 'these'. There are also *ọ̀lì … àìn* 'that and *èlì … àìn* 'those'. However, the plural demonstratives 'these' and 'those' are used to

mark plural nouns. Consider these examples in Emai where these demonstrative adjectives are used.

Table 3.0

	Singular		**Plural**	
21a.	ọ̀lì ébè nà	'This book'	èlì ébè nà	'These books'
b.	ọ̀lì àgà nà	'This chair'	èlì àgà nà	'These chairs'
c.	ọ̀lì émà nà	'This yam'	èlì émà nà	'These yams'
d.	ọ̀lì íwè nà	'This house'	èlì íwè nà	'These houses'
e.	ọ̀lì éhẹ̀n nà	'This fish'	èlì éhẹ̀n nà	'These fishes'

Table 3.1

	Singular		**Plural**	
22a.	ọ̀lì àgà àìn	'That chair'	èlì àgà àìn	'Those chairs'
b.	ọ̀lì ògẹ̀dẹ̀ àìn	'That plantain'	èlì ògẹ̀dẹ̀ àìn	'Those plantains'
c.	ọ̀lì íwè àìn	'That house'	èlì íwè àìn	'Those house'
d.	ọ̀lì ọ́kà àìn	'That maize'	èlì ọ́kà àìn	'Those maize'
e.	ọ̀lì éhẹ̀ nàìn	'That fish'	èlì éhẹ̀n àìn	'Those fishes'

The nouns are inserted or placed in between the determiner ọ̀lì or èlì and the deictic markers nà or àin in their singular and plural forms respectively. Thus we have:

Det. + Noun + Deictic marker ⟶   Det., Noun, deictic marker (pl).

The deictic marker 'nà' shows that the noun referred to is actually close to the person. Hence, it is used as 'this' and 'these' for the singular and plural forms respectively, while 'àin' is used to show that the noun is not close to the person, it is used as 'that' and 'those'.

5.1 Pluralisation with the Use of the Determiner 'The'

According to King (2000), determiners are words that add information when they precede nouns and noun phrases. They mean little or nothing in isolation. They (determiners) are used before nouns to identify them (nouns).

They may be divided into definite article ('the') and indefinite articles ('a' and 'an'). In Emai, the determiner 'the' is used to pluralize nouns and used before nouns to identify them. When the noun is singular, the determiner is *ọ̀lì*. It becomes *èlì* when the noun is in its plural form. Consider the examples below:

Table 3.2

	Singular	Plural
23a.	.ọ̀lì ébè 'The book'	èlì ébè'The books'
b.	ọ̀lì óràn 'The tree'	èlì éràn 'The trees'
c.	ọ̀lì ínì 'The elephant'	èlì ínì 'The elephants
d.	ọ̀lì áwà 'The dog'	èlì íwà 'The dogs'
e.	ọ̀lì ẹ́wè 'The goat'	èlì éwè 'The goats'

In Emai, determiners are used before nouns to identify them both in their singular and plural forms. When the noun is singular, the

determiner is 'ọ̀lì' and it becomes 'èlì' when the noun is in its plural form.

6.0   Conclusion

This study presents a descriptive analysis of pluralisation strategies in Emai. The study describes the various strategies employed in the formation of plurals in Emai and how they function. Furthermore, it examines vowel substitution as a plural strategy in Emai, where vowels at the word-initial position are changed or replaced with another vowel. It describes the use of zero plural, where the nouns remain largely unchanged in the singular and plural forms. It examines the use of quantifiers and numerals for pluralization of nouns by combining the nouns and the quantifiers or numerals. Other strategies like subtraction (reduction of word form) reduplication (repetition of word form), and suppletion of pronouns are described as they are used to form plurals. The study also highlights and describes the pluralisation of demonstrative adjectives, as well as the use of the determiner "the" for the formation of plurals. This study concludes that pluralisation in the Emai language involves more than one strategy.

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