A CONTRASTIVE MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY OF ENGLISH AND IGBO AFFIXATIONS

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Abstract
Affixation is one of the morphological processes of word creation in many languages. This paper presented a contrastive morphological study of English and Igbo affixation with a brief analysis of some morphological processes of word creation. The theoretical framework used for analysis was the Immediate Constituents Analysis (ICA) propounded by Leonard Bloomfield in his book entitled *Language* (1933). The paper described the features of affixation in English and Igbo, identifying areas of differences and similarities. As a descriptive library research paper, it came up with the following findings: (a) That every language is unique (b) That the English Language affixation process is more inconsistent than that of Igbo language. (c) That Igbo affixes are mostly verb-based. (d) That Igbo does not have zero affix and radical affix features (e) That in place of suprafixation, what Igbo has is extensional suffix

Introduction
Morphology is an aspect of the grammatical knowledge of any language acquired unconsciously during contact with language. It is of course, the linguistic study of the internal structure of words and the rules of word formation. In English as well as many other languages, there are many processes by which words are created or formed. This means that, there are variety of ways in the morphological processes of word creation. Thus; affixation is one of such processes. In the study of the morphological processes of word formation, and also the internal structure of words, there are of course two basic units of analysis called word and morpheme. In Igbo, word means mkpụrụokwu or mkpụrụasụsụ while morpheme is called mọfịm. According to Ndimele (2002:3) a word may be defined as "a minimum independent linguistic unit having an identifiable meaning and grammatical function with a fairly consistent phonological shape. A word can, however, exhibits a certain amount of variation to reflect the environment in the sentence in which it is found". He further defines morpheme as "the smallest meaningful unit of an utterance which may not, however, exist in isolation". Unlike words, a morpheme often needs the presence of another grammatical unit onto which it attaches. The term word could refer to written or spoken utterances just like the Igbo version, which is okwu e kwuru n'ọnụ maọbụ nke edere ede.

Okafo and Ewelukwa (2012, p. 85) explains that words in Igbo are variety of utterances used to form sentences in any language (mkpụrụokwu bụ ọkpụrụkpụ okwu dị iche iche e ji mkpụrụasụsụ mebe). This is represented below in the following form for more clarification.

Mkpụrụụdaasụsụ	(Phoneme)
↓	↓
Mkpụrụasụsụ	(Morpheme)
↓	↓
Mkpụrụokwu	(Word)
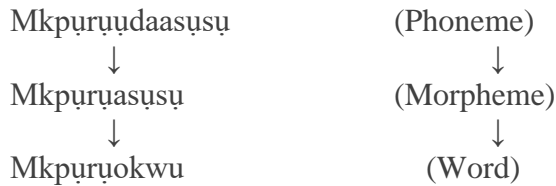
Incidentally, words in English are not symbols of things. They are rather symbols of our ideas. They are certainly, abstraction, generalizations, qualities, movements, functions, and conditions that all humans know. Example; *zebra, jumb, quick, slowly*. Many words correspond with nothing in the physical world, notwithstanding that we do infer the entity by its effects as in *anger, confidence, peace, joy, love*, etc. Some words symbolize a kind of mental gesture when we use them. Examples*, with, of, in, by, when, beneath*. Others are made from the first letters of other words and they are called acronyms. Example; SEMB takes its name from its longer title, Secondary Education Management Board. Blended words are similar to compound words, because in blend, two words are joined to create a new word. In this case, some letters from one or both of the words are dropped. Example; the word brunch is a blended word that is created from breakfast and lunch.

Some English words are borrowed from other languages. Example; *champagne* from French; *stadium* from Latin while some are made by shortening existing words in a process called clipping as in *photo, advert* clipped from *advertisement* clipped from *photograph*. Also, words could have both denotative and connotative meaning based on the context of usage. In English unlike in Igbo, a morpheme is not identical to a word because it may or may not stand alone. It is considered a root word when it is meaningful and stands alone as in *Chair*. But when it depends on another morpheme to express an idea, it becomes an affix because of its grammatical function. Example; the morpheme – *s* in *chairs* shows that it is plural, the morphem-*ing* in stealing shows continues action or continuous state of being.

Theoretical Framework:
The theoretical framework for this paper is anchored on the Immediate Constituents Analysis (ICA) Model by Leonard Bloomfield in his book, *Language*, (1933). Bloomfield proposed that every construction in any language exhibits both linear sequence of elements and layers of immediate constituents and that each lower-level constituent is an aspect of a higher-level constituent. According to Ndimele (2008, p. 132) "Linear sequence is a spatial relationship where items occur from left to right, one after the other following a particular order…" Bloomfield explains that the constituents of a construction exist in pairs and the different parts may or may not contain the same number of constituents. He also notes that this dual division on constituents can occur at the level of words and the sentences.

The morphological construction must be constituents that have certain relationship with each other especially at the word level. This happens with morphological constructions that have more than one morpheme. This makes the constituents to be immediately adjacent to each other in a

dependent or an independent relationship. Examples, the word *deport* has two constituents. The immediate constituents are *de* and *port* because they are adjacent to each other and they form an acceptable morphological construction. Also, the word un/success/fully.

Here, the two main immediate constituents are *un* and *successfully*. Then within *successfully*, the immediate constituents are *successful* and *ly*. *Successful* consists of two immediate constituents *success* and *ful*. The process of division into two parts continues to the irreducible constituents compulsory in Immediate Constituent analysis (ICA). Agbedo (2003, p. 99) stresses that "An irreducible constituent is the ultimate or terminal string that is not subject to further segmentation". He further stresses that, "Between these ultimate constituents, there exist dependent and independent relationship". *De* is dependently related to *port* while *port* is independently related to *de. Success* is the only constituent that is independent while *un, ful, ly* are dependently related to success while un is adjacent to successful, successfully but not to *ful* and *ly*. The other level which is the syntactic level has its own foregoing analysis. But this paper would not touch the syntactic level. Our level of interest is at the word level which is what this paper requires for morphological analysis. Thus; we promise to make judicious use of it.

The English Affix
In English, bound morphemes are mostly affixes. They are words that are created by combining constituents as explained above. In fact, when we know the meaning of the word parts, we can often discover the meaning of the whole word. These kinds of word part are called affixes. Agbedo (2003, p. 89) defines affixation as "a word-building or word-formation process that involves the addition of a phoneme or group of phonemes to a root or stem to modify, extend, or change the meaning and/or function of the word". The following are the morphological processes of affixation in English; prefixation, suffixation, circumfixation or confixation, infixation or interfixation, superfixation/suprafixation. Prefixes are morphemes added at the beginning of other morphemes. Anyanjo (2017, p. 46) defines prefix as "a unit of meaning which is added before the root of a word. It is called prefix because, it is added to the initial position of the word. *Pre* means before". Examples; *un* as in *unbelief, ir* as in *irregular*, *pre* as in *prejudge*. Suffixes are morphemes that are added at the end of the root or stem. They sometimes change the meaning and the word category of the original word. Examples; economy (n) – economize (v), educate (v) education (n).

Infixes are morphemes that are inserted inside the root. They can appear twice in a root word. They do change the meaning of the original word Examples: Spoonfuls, passers-by, mother-in-law, cupsful. Also in English there are words that have zero affix. They do not change the word category but the meaning of the original word. This usually happens in the plurals of some nouns and the tense of some verbs. Examples; verb as in *burst, beat, cast, cost*, etc. Noun as in *fish, cattle, deer, sheep*, etc. Radical affixes takes a complete different form from the original word but usually do not change the original word category as in *good-better-best, bad-worse-worst.*

Inflectional affixes has to do with changing to plural as in boy-boys, changing tense form as in pray-prays-prayed-prayed or taked takes, took-taking-taken. Comparative and superlative as in *taller-tallest*, possessive as in *Amaka's, John's*. Circumfixes are morphemes that are attached to any root morpheme at the beginning and at the end. Fromkin et al (2011, p. 45) stress that, they are sometimes called discontinuous morphemes. Examples; <u>un</u>want<u>ed</u> <u>be</u>lov<u>ed</u>.

Suprafixation is a kind of affix that involves segmented patterns like tone, stress, etc. they superimpose one or more syllable(s) morphosyntactic operation as in produce(n) and produce(v), insult (n) and insult (v).

The Igbo Affixes
Mbah (1999, p 138-138) explains that "most Igbo verbs … they generally co-occur with affixes or other nominals as part of their complex e.g.

gwá	–	tell
gwáá	-	mix
ri	-	eat
riri	-	ate
bá	-	enter
bátà	-	enter into

Most of the time, the affixes which the verbroot takes are bound morphemes. Notably, affixation in Igbo is called mgbakwunye. They usually occur as;

Prefix (ngaaniihu in Igbo)
Interfix (nnọnaetiti)
Suffix (nsonaazụ)

According to Agbedo (2003, p. 91), "in Igbo language prefixation is verb-based, no other word class undergoes this kind of morphological process". Prefixes in Igbo are infinitive and participle markers that are attached to verb roots. They normally appear as bound morphemes to the verb root in the following manner

Participles (omekangwaa)
Mfinitivu (infinitives)
Jerondu (gerund)
Ahaome (noun agent)
Ahamme (noun instrument)

Examples:

Prefix (nganiihu)	Verb root (Isingwaa)	New word (Mkpụrụokwu ọhụrụ	Meaning
A	Da	ada	first daughter
a	Tọ	atọ	three

Prefix (nganiihu)	Verb root (Isingwaa)	Mfinitive	Meaning
I	Si	isi	to cook
i	ri	iri	to eat
ị	kụ	ịkụ	to plant/tap

Prefix (nganiihu	Verb root (Isingwaa)	Verb root (Isingwaa)	Jerondu	Meaning
O	Di	de	odide	writing
ọ	ṅụ	ṅụ	ọṅụṅụ	drinking

Prefix (nganiihu)	Isingwaa	Ọhaomee
Ọ	ga	ọgaa
o	ri	nri
o	che	nchee

Igbo interfixes are morphemes that are inserted in the middle of a word. They are called nnọnaetiti. Examples:

eri	-	m	-	eri	→ erimeri
ede	-	m	-	ede	→ edemede
ekwu	-	r	-	ekwu	→ ekwurekwu
apị	-	r	-	apị	→ apịrapị
aka	-	t	-	aka	→ akataka
efe	-	r	-	efe	→ eferefe
amị	-	r	-	amị	→ amịramị
akụ	-	ta	-	akụ	→ akụtaakụ

Igbo suffixes are called nsonazụ. Most of them are inflectional, while those that act as meaning modifiers are derivational. The inflectional suffixes in Igbo show the different forms of verbs that express tone and aspect in speech as in:

otu mgbochiume (one consonant)
otu ụdaume (one vowel)
otu myiriụdaume (one semivowel)
otu nkejiokwu maọbụ karịa (one syllable or more)

Examples:

ọjọ	→	ọjọọ
je	→	jee
ri	→	rie
nje	→	njem
me + re	→	mere
chọ + rọ	→	chọrọ

Mbah (1999, p. 135) posits that suffixes do not have inherent tone patterns. Their tone patterns depend on the tones they acquire from their grammatical positions. The negative inflectional suffixes are grouped into negative, positive and imperative in Igbo. Examples; ejela (don't go), ojeghi (He did not go), anyị abịala (we have come).

Emenanjo (1983, p. 97) notes that, "extensional refers to elements like affixes which function principally as meaning modifiers. He further notes that extensional one do not change grammatical classes of the elements to which they are affixed. Extensional suffixes are called nsonazụ mgbatị. They are meaning modifiers. Examples:

    kpo
    kpoko
    kpokotazi
    kpokotaziri

    gwu
    gwula
    gwusala
    gwuchawala
    gwuchaala
    gwukpochaala

Others are:

ri	+	gbado	→	rigbado
me	+	gide	→	megide
ga	+	ghari	→	gaghari
bi	+	keta	→	biketa

Igbo circumfix (nganiihu na nsonazu) could be realized in examples like:

<u>o</u>	+	je	+	<u>re</u>	→	<u>o</u>jer<u>e</u>		
<u>n</u>	+	je	+	<u>m</u>	→	<u>n</u>je<u>m</u>		
o	+	bia	+	ra	→	obiara		
o	+	ji	+	i	→	ojii		
o	+	bu	+	te	+	re	→	obutere

English versus Igbo Affixes

In English, prefixes in verbs are usually not syntactically determined but rather derivational which finally results to semantic changes. They don't change the word category. On the other hand, Green and Igwe (1963, p. 64) claim that the "verb is distinguished from all other parts of speech by the fact that it is only one in which an inflectional affix is found. These are the harmonizing vowel prefix (a-/e-) and (i-/I-)". Agbedo (2003, p. 91) adds that this shows that the prefix is the property of the Igbo verb, quite unlike English where the prefix is attached to both verb and other categories. Examples:

Igbo			**English**
ị-kwa	→	ịkwa	to sew
i-be	→	ibe	to peel
i-si	→	isi	to cook
a-sụ	→	asụ	pounding
e-go	→	ego	buying
a-gụ	→	agụ	reading

In English, suffix performs two functions with verb category either derivational or inflectional. Under inflectional, suffix occurs as simple present tense morpheme marker, simple past tense, morpheme marker, continuous tense morpheme marker, participle morpheme marker, and gerund morpheme marker, whereas Igbo suffixes are usually verb-based as in me-_vo_, reg_odu_, we_ta_. Many are inflectional while a few are derived. The inflectional suffixes in both languages show variant forms of verb.

English and Igbo have infix (interfix). They are morphemes that are inserted or fixed in the root word. Examples:

Igbo			**English**
e-je-m-e-je	→	ejemeje (journey)	spoon_s_full
a-gụ-m-a-gụ	→	agumagu (reading)	passer_s_-by
e-ri-m-e-ri	→	erimeri (eating)	mother_s_-_in_-law
a-ṅụ-m-a-ṅụ	→	aṅumaṅụ (drinking)	cup_s_full

Conclusion

The morphological processes of word creation with bound morphemes for languages that have it are different depending on the language. Indeed, the above analysis is an example of inconsistency which makes the two languages unique and even peculiar. Igbo affixes do not have zero morphemes, and even radical morphemes like the English affixation which add to the inconsistent pattern of the English structure. There is extensional suffix in Igbo language while English rather has supra/super fixation.

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