



Efik Morphological Processes

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ABSTRACT

Morphological processes are operations by the forms of words which are derived from technical concepts used to describe new words. We are therefore inquiring into the operations of human communication trying to reveal the phenomenon of language universality and view the parametric variation found in the language of resource. This work is neither a contrastive nor a comparative one, but Efik copious examples are used as the major resource of the study, then drawing from the examples of English derivational and inflectional morphology. The morphemic analysis is the underpinning behind the semantic and grammatical proportionality which is the reference point that expresses what happens in Efik morphology. This discussion agrees with the various types of morphological processes which are affixation, borrowing, calquing, compounding and reduplication. We are coming up with the justification that there are peculiar morphological processes found in Efik that are not found in English or other languages and also there are those found in the two languages. This reveals the peculiarity of the different languages.

INTRODUCTION

The corpus base of this paper is drawn from the Efik language. Efik belongs to the Niger-Congo family and is sub-classified as the Lower-Cross language of the Delta-Cross sub-family that is spoken predominantly in southern Cross River State of Nigeria. It shares several language features with Ibibio, Anang, Oron, Eket amongst other languages spoken in this region.

Like in any language of the world, Efik has its morphological peculiarities which may be close to sister languages in the phyla. But we must mention that, since it is a language of its own the morphological processes are distinct. The English language which is seen to be a developed language serves as the source where morphological process examples are drawn.

Efik Morphological Processes

In the lexicon where all lexical items are stored, there are rules which govern word formation processes in a language which contains all existing words of that language. This is neither static nor exhaustive in content. It keeps enlarging and changing because language itself is organic. No language is known to possess complete lexical content or a definite number of words in its lexicon. Hence, lexically, we say that language is both creative and productive in its system. This is in the domain of morphology in language study, (Omachonu, 2001:55).

It might look as if morphological definition is belabored in discussions of this nature, but it is necessary to at least view experts concept, this is to enable us understand the subject matter better. Mathews (1984:3) says "Morphology ... is simply a term for that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the forms of words in different uses and constructions". Ndimele (2003:2) sees morphology as a branch of linguistics which is concerned with the study of how words are formed. He further put it that it has to do with rules that guide word formation. Todd (1987:14) says it refers to the meaningful combinations of sound to form words. It is the study of the smallest significant units of grammar known as morphemes. This definition, according to him, becomes clearer when we realize that in 'Cats or Cooked', there are morphemes each:

'cat' and 's' (plural marker), 'cook and 'ed' (past tense marker), likewise beauty + ful – beautiful and un + true - untrue. Omachonu (2001:55) quotes Yule (1996:75) who says morphology deals with investigating forms in languages. His explanation goes further: This term which literally means 'the study of forms'; was originally used in biology, but since the middle of the nineteenth century, has also been described as that type of investigation which analyzes all those basic 'elements' which are used in a language. What we have been describing as 'elements' in the form of a linguistic message are more technically known as morphemes. The recurring features in all of these definitions are the concept of 'words' and 'morphemes'. In morphology, morphemes are stronger features to use, because words 'in its own can serve as morphemes. Harmonizing all these views, one may describe morphology as the science of word formation; a branch of grammar which preoccupies itself with studying the rules that govern the principles and processes of word formation. Since our main focus is in the premise of morphological processes, then, we will carry out our investigations from the point of view of derivational and inflectional morphology.

Derivational And Inflectional Morphology

As a means of explaining Derivation and Inflectional morphology, we will look at Mathews (19994:38) submission of these areas of morphology. The field of morphology is divided into two major subfields: One concerned with processes of **Inflection** (for example, with the role of English verbal endings -s or -en) and the other with what are usually referred to as processes of **word - formation**. This later field is then divided in turn into two smaller subfields,

Offiong Ani Offiong

of which one is concerned with processes of **derivation** (for example, the derivation of 'generation' from 'generate' or adjectival 'trying' from verbal 'try' and the other with processes of **Composition** or **compounding**. Under this last heading one would talk, for example, of the formation of the compound 'ice - cream' from the simple 'ice' and 'cream'. The grounds for dividing composition from derivation is sufficiently clear: in the case of **ice – cream**, both **Ice and Cream** can represent words in their own right. Whereas in **generation**, the **-ion** is a purely formative element (a bound morpheme) which has no status as a 'word' in its own. The higher division between inflection and word - formation (the later covering, as we say, both derivation and composition) is defined precisely by the distinction between 'forms of the same paradigm' (**beget** versus **begotten**) and 'forms with separate paradigms' (**generation** versus **generate**)

Using Mathews examples to distinguish between derivational and inflectional morphology, we will now delve into the most fundamental unit or objects of study in morphology which is identified as the morpheme. As we examine these units, a clearer picture of the processes found in morphology will obviously be exposed - in this case, using Efik examples.

Morpheme

Morphemes are prominent features in the study of morphology. It does not necessarily entail having all the entrapments of word-formation, but it constitutes a major and fundamental part in understanding how words are formed, in any particular language. The level it is used when analyzing word-formation processes will surely explain its degree of importance, Omachonu (2001:57) describes the morphemes as the basic element which is the most fundamental unit and primary object of study in word formation or morphology. In the words of Oyebade (1992:64), The morpheme can be defined as "the minimal meaningful unit of grammatical analysis". In other words, it is " a minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function" (Yule, 1996:75). Mathews (1991:77) say "smaller units which are parts of words are generally referred to as morphemes. To him, "the morpheme is established as the single minimal or primitive unit of grammar". Understanding that morphemes are the thrust of morphology, our study will delve into the crux of it which are - free and bound morphemes. This will reveal the status and hierarchy of morphemes in the Efik language. Every word in a language is analyzable into units of one or more morphemes and each morpheme encodes a specific meaning or performs a grammatical function. In this concern, we will look into the two major types of morphemes which are free morphemes and bound morphemes and these form the subject matters of our discussion in the subsections below.

Free Morpheme

According to Ndimele (2003:10) morphemes which can occur in isolation

Efik Morphological Processes

without necessarily having to be attached to another grammatical unit are referred to as free morphemes. All free morphemes are words. Free morphemes fall into two categories depending on their semantic content. Free morphemes which have independent dictionary meaning of their own are referred to as Lexical morphemes. Words in Efik like the examples given below are examples of free morphemes

1. (a) Ka - 'go'
- (b) bọ - 'take'
- (c) nọ - 'give'
- (d) dia - 'eat'
- (e) kot - 'call'
- (f) wọñọde - 'turn'

The morphemes that do not have independent dictionary meaning of their own are referred to as functional or grammatical morphemes. Functional morphemes are used to mark grammatical relationship in the larger constructions in which they occur. Most free morphemes are regarded as the root or the base. There are usually referred to as the heart of the word, which carries the core meaning of the word. Usually it is not further divided into smaller meaning units. There exist free morphemes in Efik as there exist in English. However, the distinction is viewed from different perspective. This is because the division of lexical items into word classes or parts of speech in Efik may not follow exactly the same pattern for English. Using Omachonu (2001:58) examples in Igala language, one can draw a semblance from the distinction between nouns and adjectives. Let us examine three examples below:

2. (a) ndandat 'red'
- (b) obubut 'black'
- (c) awawa 'green'

The examples are interpreted as both nouns and adjectives. Equally, conjunctions in Efik language are fewer compared to English. Apart from ye 'and' and 'edi' 'but' which function inherently as conjunctions in the language, one hardly finds others. In Efik, to use other types of conjunction, borrowing is expedient or total description is required. This word class (conjunction) belongs to a 'closed system' (functional morphemes) which creates no room for expansion or addition of new words or 'morphemes. Therefore, to make up for these deficiencies the Efik language at times, resort to serial reconstruction.

3. wot unam men di item ita
"Kill animal carry come cook eat"
'Kill the animal lets cook it and eat'

Offiong Ani Offiong

The morphemes in example (2) and (3) are referred to as functional or grammatical morphemes, while examples of (1) are lexical morphemes.

Bound Morphemes

Bound morphemes are prominent features of the word formation process. They are integral parts of the morphemes, that is the part of words which cannot be further broken down into smaller meaningful units. They are absolute minimal semantic units. They vary from free morphemes in the sense that they cannot occur in isolation and therefore must be attached to other grammatical units. They are not full-fledge words. Omachonu (2001: 58) states that these are morphemes which though meaning bearing units, cannot occur in isolation and still retain their meanings but can only be recognized when joined to other morphemes especially root morphemes or stems. In other words, bound morphemes cannot occur alone in sentences except: when attached to the base or stem morphemes. The analysis of morphological structure according to Okolo and Ezikeojiaku (1999) is "based on the distinction between a free morpheme, which can constitute a word by itself and a bound morpheme, which must be attached to another element".

Yule (1996:76) classified bound morphemes into two types following the functions that such affixes perform in word formation; derivational morphemes. and inflectional morphemes. Derivational morphemes are used to form new word in the language. They are quite often used to derive words of a different grammatical category from the stem. An English example is seen in good (adjective) to goodness (noun). Inflectional morphemes are equally used to form new words, especially in English, but only to show aspect of the grammatical function of a word. Inflectional morphemes are limited in number and their presence does not suggest a change of word class. Yule 1996:77) identifies, the following English language inflectional morphemes as summarized below:

Noun	+ - s, - 's (plural and possessive)
Verb	+ - s (3rd person present singular)
	- ing (present participle)
	- ed - en (past tense and past participle)
Adjective	+ - est, -er (superlative and comparative)

It is observed from the above examples that all the inflectional morphemes of English listed above are suffixes.

Examples of Efik derivational morphemes are what we describe as verbal extension affixes. Offiong (2005:13) states that this extension alters or modifies the meaning of the words they are attached to without changing the

Efik Morphological Processes

parts of the speech of those words. Instances are as follows:

4.	Host	Suffix \meaning	Example\meaning
	(a) Idiøk	-ke 'bad' 'wicked'	idiøkke 'it is not bad'
	(b) Ka	-ha 'go'	ikaha 'he did not go'
	(c) lfiøk	-ke 'knowledge'	ifiøkke 'he does not know'
	(d) Kõñ	-ode 'hang'	kõñode 'unhang'

Nominal forming derivational affixes are found in Efik, these are seen as abstract morphemes, which are added to the verb root. Examples are:

5. Verb root	Abstract nouns
(a) ma 'love'	i-ma 'love'
(b) sua 'hatred'	u-sua 'hate'
(c) siak 'split'	a-siak 'one who splits'
(d) top 'fire', 'shoot'	ata u-top 'hunter'

Examples of inflectional morphemes in Efik reflect grammatical categories such as pluralisation, tense, aspect, dictation amongst others. In English, there are suffixes, but in Efik, they are mostly prefixes. There are normally derived nouns, verbs and adjectives as seen in the following example:

6.	Inflectional Affix	Functional/Meaning	Orig. Word	Examples
	(a) m - plural	abia 'native doctor'		mbia 'native doctors'
	(b) ye- future tense	di 'come'		iyidi 'we will come'
	(c) mme- present tense	bre 'dark'	mmbebre	'I am dark'
	(d) mma - past tense	nka 'go'	mmanka	'I went'
	(e) si - habitual aspect	wet 'write'	mmansiwet	'I use to write'
	(f) ku - negation	dia 'eat'	kudia	'do not eat'

The examples in (6) clearly indicate that the following prefixes are used to mark plurality, future, present and past tenses, habitual aspect and negation respectively. English, which serves as a language with good examples of derivational and inflectional morphemes, have suffixes instead of prefixes

Offiong Ani Offiong

representing the morphemes. This is obvious when compared to those found in Efik.

4.0 MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Morphological rules sometimes are used to specify or change the value of existing segment in a language. Therefore, it is possible to alter the morphological status of a word or form new words from the hitherto existing words of a language. We are using the model which states that the form of morphological process is built up from the root of the word. Mathew (1984:116) outlines types of morphological processes which he says are universal. That is, it could be viewed from the perspective that a particular process may be found in language (a) and not found in language (b). These processes are: affixation, prefixation, Suffixation, infixation; reduplication, modification; vowel change; directionality of processes; suppletion; discontinuous morphs, 'suprafixes', 'sub phonemic affixes'; subtraction.

Morphological processes in language serve as the productive resource of creating more words and new lexical items in the affected language(s). Therefore, words of a language are limitless in number. At present, certain morphological processes are quite evident in Efik language (Omachonu: 2001: 60). Let's view and analyse the processes that are found in Efik and the word-class they apply to:

Affixation

Different linguists have defined affixation from their various points of view. Affixation is a morphological term derived from the word affixes. Offiong (2005: 11) says "the term affixation is the process of attaching parts of the words to already existing words of a language. Prefixes, suffixes, inflectional affixes, derivational affixes and extensional affixes are all examples of affixes". Givon (1993:48) maintains that affixation aims at deriving grammatical and derivational morphemes as bound morphemes or affixes which in turn, are attached to lexical words as either prefixes or suffixes..." He likens "affixes to bound morphemes". Essien (1990: 71) from a similar perspective posits that free morphemes may be referred to as root morphemes in the context of additional morphemes attached or affixed to them. Affixation takes the following forms in Efik language: Prefixation, suffixation, infixation and suprafixation.

Prefixation

Prefixation involves an affix which occurs before the root or base of a word. This is referred to as positional classification of affixes. They are illustrated as in example (7) below:

Efik Morphological Processes

Personal Pronouns

Prefix	→	Meaning	→	Host	→	Examples
(a) (Ami) m-		(first person, singular)		bọ	'take'	mbọ, 'I take'
(b) (afo) ọ-		you(2 nd person singular)		bọ	'take'	ọbọ 'you take'
(c) Enye) ọ-	he/she (3 rd person singular)			bọ	'take'	ọbọ, 'he take'
(d) (Nnyin) i-	we (1 st person plural)			bọ	'take'	ibọ, 'we take'
(e) mbufo) e-	you(2 nd person plural)			bọ	'take'	ebọ, 'you take'
(f) (mmọ) e-	They(3 rd person plural)			bọ	'take'	ebọ, 'they take'

The peculiarity of these prefix occurrence in Efik is indicative of the harmony that occurs in the vowels. That is; they must be a corresponding harmony with the vowels of the host words in the second and third person singular. However, there are no corresponding harmonic tendencies or consistencies in the first, second and third person plurals.

There are several other occurrences of prefixations in Efik, but since this paper is not specifically describing affixation, we have to limit our scope. Again, it is necessary to mention that personal markers take the form of a vowel for all persons except the first person singular which takes the form of a nasal. Such a nasal, which is syllabic and homorganic with the following consonants, always carry a high tone. Efik also does have prefixes like u- and m- which are attached to intransitive verbs like buana meaning 'to share' becoming ubuana - the act of sharing which is a noun and mbuana 'I share'. Also, the verb buk meaning 'tell' which is a host takes a prefix mbuk, meaning 'a story' (Offiong :2005:16).

Suffixation

Suffixation is one of the productive morphological processes in Efik language. It involves the placement of an affix after the base or root of a work has mostly causative suffixes which are seen as reversal markers.

Host	Meaning	Suffix	Meaning
(a) bere lean	against	berede	remove from leaning position
(b) bire	lay a mat	birede	remove a mat
(c) mbọ	I take	mbọho	I will not take
(d) fuk	cover	fuhode	uncover

According to Offiong (2005: 17), "Efik has words that are reduplicated and are expressed or analysed as suffixes" as the following examples show.

Host	Meaning	Suffix	Meaning
(a) tie	sit		tietie
	sit down		

Offiong Ani Offiong

(b) eka	mother	ekaeka	grand-mother
(c) ete	father	etete	
	grand-father		
(d) ekpiri	small	ekpiriekpiri	
	smallish		

Examples (8) and (9) are examples common in Efik which clearly shows the occurrence suffixation. There are several other examples which we could use, but the above examples are explicit enough to explain aspects of morphological processes which is one of the main concerns of this paper.

Infix

Offiong (2005: 17) asserts that infix is an affix which is inserted in the middle of a word. An infix however, interrupts the sequence of a root. We hardly find this phenomenon in English and many other languages. Efik is one language that has infix even though some scholars of linguistics argue against this phenomenon. We disagree with this notion because the examples below are a clear indication of the existence in the language. Let's examine the following examples;

Base form	Meaning	Infix	Derived form
	Meaning		
(a) wɔŋɔde	turn	ke	n-wɔŋɔ <u>ke</u> de
	I will not turn		
(b) forode	Peel off	ke	n-forokede
	I will not peel off		
(c) fiañade	twist	ke	n- fiañ <u>ke</u> de
	I will not twist		
(d) berede	open	ke	m-bere <u>ke</u> de
	I will not open		
(e) dorode	remove from top	ke	ndorokede
	I will not remove from top		

Example (10) states these phenomenon of infix found in Efik which depict negation. The *ke* affix which is underlined in the derived form interrupts the sequence of the root as seen in the example.

Borrowing

Borrowing is one of the commonest way of creating new words in human language. Ndimele (2003 :65) indicates that" Borrowing simply means the process of taking words from one or more languages to fit into the vocabulary of another". Every language of the world borrows when once there is contact. Borrowing is expressed from the following forms - Loan-word, loan-blend and calque or loan translation. The three forms of borrowing are noticeable in the Efik language.

Efik Morphological Processes

As morphological processes involve creation of new words, we are looking at the technical concepts used especially as it concerns Efik language.

Efik has borrowed many words from other languages especially from the English language. This has increased the vocabulary of the language and has aided 'Meta' language development. It is usually easier for Efik speakers to borrow words through coinage and meaning extension from the English language. This is because they are exposed to English. Let's examine how Efik borrows its lexical items from English through different methods, usually called the mixture methods:

English Term	Efik Term	Method
a) Heart beat onomatopoeia	tip	
b) Fry	(a) frañ (b) frai	borrowing
c) Addict coinage	umehe	
d) Candle borrowing	tiandle	
e) Teacher borrowing	titia	
f) Silky material	sighisighi (bembem)	comage

It is noted that languages usually borrow lexical materials (words) rather than sentences; instead, there are prevalent occurrences of code switching. This occurs when an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages during his /her speech with another bilingual person. Efik bilinguals apply a number of strategies using English words that are borrowed. For instance, they employ phonological transfer in the pronunciation. They use words through paraphrasing technique to pronounce words alien to Efik culture e.g. Ikpa ukot – 'shoe' which is paraphrased as leather for the leg. We have examples of borrowed words from English to Efik as seen below:

Lexical	Englis Gloss	Efik Equivalent
(a) Siot	Shirt	ofon idem
(b) Siñidi	Singlet	ofon ke idak siot
(c) tian tin		tian
(d) akraši	glass	iko uwof
mmof		
(e) babru .	paper	nweed uwed
nkyo		
(t) satide	Saturday	usen itio kiet ke urua
(g) moto	motor	ubom isoñ
(h) titia	teacher	ekpep nwed
(i) tosin	thousand	tosin
(j) doкта	doctor	Abia ibok mbakara

Offiong Ani Offiong

(k) midion million midion

Compounding

Compounding is a morphological process of joining two or more formerly independent roots to form a single word. This is a very productive process in most languages of the world including Efik. In addition to stringing together words from parts of speech, words from different parts of speech can also be combined to form compounds. Some examples in Efik are indicated below:

(a) Noun	+	Noun	Transliteration	Meaning
ufok		ibok		'house' 'medicine'
hospital				
ufok		nwed		'house
'book' School				
ubom		enyon		'boat'sky'
aeroplane				
usen		ubok		'day 'hand'
morning				
(b) Verb	+	Verb	Transliteration	Meaning
Ka		di	go come	safe journey
Tie		tie	sit sit	sit
down				
Sik		ka	move go	shift

The examples in (13) show that in compounding; the overall meanings are not always equal to the meaning of the individual words with which they are composed. In Efik, vowel elision is noticeable in some compound formations like the following examples in (14) show.

14.	ka	ufok	→	kufok	'In the house'
	Ke	ima	→	kima	'In the midst of love'
	Ke	ini	→	kini	'In time'
	Ke	edem	→	kedem	'from behind'

We have noticed that the first morpheme or word loses its final vowel and it transfers its tone to the initial vowel of the following morpheme.

Reduplication

This is a process whereby either a part or a whole stem is copied and attached to the stem either at the beginning or the end. Reduplication is a very productive morphological process in Efik. Reduplication as defined by Essien (1990:104) " is the process by which a category or constituent of a sentence can be doubled". In the case of verb reduplication, it leads to the

Efik Morphological Processes

modification of the root phonologically in one way or another. Sometimes, processes of repetition are generally referred to as reduplication. Reduplication processes could be partial or complete. In Efik, the process is usual complete or what Essien refers as to as full reduplication. Examples of reduplication in Efik are bound in verbal situation. Let's examine a few:

Verbal Reduction

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) nek 'dance' | nenek 'the act of dancing' |
| (b) sak 'laugh' | sasak 'the act of laughing' |
| (c) tua 'cry' | tutua 'the act of crying' |
| (e) be 'pass' | bebe 'the act of passing' |
| (e) fe 'fly' | fefe 'the act of flying' |
| (f) bom 'break it' | boobom 'the act of breaking' |

As seen in Efik, there are so many reasons for reduplication, certain times, it could be for emphasis. It could also be for progressiveness. These are more repeated in sentence forms than in single word situation. Let us now consider the following examples:

- (a) Affiong akakaka udua: 'Affiong was going to the market (rather than returning)
- (b) Ekanem edifefeghe: 'Ekanem will be running (instead of walking)'
- (c) Mmayen etetem udia: 'Mmayen is cooking food (rather than frying)'

The examples in (16) reinforce our analysis in non- imperative sentences. From our analysis in 4.1 to 4.3, we have been able to deduce firstly, that there exist peculiar morphological processes in Efik. Examples (7) to (14) have further buttressed these facts.

CONCLUSION

In projecting morphological process operation in Efik language, and acceding that the operations of human communication reveals the phenomenon of language universality, we accent to the fact that there are some regular and natural processes involved in word formation across languages. Some schools of thought and many scholars of morphology argue that the actual principles and processes determining the derivation and existence of basic linguistic forms vary with languages. This can be proven from what we have seen of the English and Efik morphology. This study discovers that Efik have some peculiar morphological processes which are not common in other languages' morphological processes. One of such is infixation which has been explained. We used both nominal and verbal categories to analysis 'the processes of existence in Efik. We have given attention to processes that are most productive in the language. Affixation, borrowing, compounding and

Offiong Ani Offiong

reduplication are the processes examined and the universal constraints noticeable were merely superficial mentioned.

There are several other morphological processes that we have not mentioned in this study because of the approach we used. In effect, an exhaustive treatment of this subject matter has not been totally carried out. However, a more analytical work is in the offing which will deal with this matter intensively. At this stage, this work is dependable enough to reinforce the various types of morphological processes in Efik language.

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