Morphological Productivity in English and Hausa Languages

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Abstract ;

This paper examines morphological productivity in English and Hausa languages with the aim of investigating the areas of parity and disparity between the two languages and the strength of the productivity in some processes. The basic linguistic unit, which both languages possess, that develops into a larger unit and produces meaningful utterances in communication is word. These words are universally present in all languages but with uniqueness and peculiarities in their use, structure and formation. English and Hausa languages are two different languages according to language family, yet share some linguistic properties, among which morphological productivity. While English is Indo-European, Hausa is a Chadic language, from Afro-Asiatic Family. The study therefore attempts to pay attention on the most important morphological processes in both languages, citing examples from previous literatures. The results show that the languages have some processes in common with recorded differences in some.

1. Introduction

Languages shrink and expand depending on their ability to create and accommodate new words. The need usually to produce some expressions gives rise to the invention and coinage of words in a language. Elements of different languages can be studied. Alhassan (1998:11) views that "comparative linguistics approaches languages through the different hierarchies of linguistic analysis, ie phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Among these levels of analysis, morphology has been accorded rather secondary status in comparative linguistics." The branch of linguistics that deals with formation of words is morphology. The term morphology was coined by Johann Wolgang von Goathe in the nineteenth century in the context or field of biology, (Gbeyonron, 2019). Morphology, in linguistics, has received a plethora of definitions by the experts in the field. Yule for instance (1996:75) opines that morphology "…since the middle of the nineteenth century, has been used to describe the type of investigation which analyses all those basic 'elements' which are used in a language." This apprises us with the view that before nineteenth century, morphology was used to mean study of forms and structures of organisms in biological context. The term has been broadened and used to mean analysis of the basic grammatical units of a language. These units are grammatically called words (and morphemes in some cases). Hulse (2010:12) sees morphological productivity as "the ability of a language to coin new complex words from existing components of the language, typically conforming to the morphological rule of the language. In this way, productivity is the lifeblood of language, allowing it to remain fertile and dynamic." For a word to fully and meaningfully accommodate a morphological affix, the affix must be in concord to the word and the environment it occupies in the word. The morphotactics of the language should be strictly followed. It is not proper to add the suffix 'ed' to the base 'go' because existence of the acceptable form 'went' blocks goed* from being morphologically well derived. Plag (2003:44), reports that "the property of an affix to be used to coin new complex words is referred to as the productivity of that affix. Even among affixes that can in principle be used to coin new words, there seem to be some that are more productive than others." This states the productive versatility of a morphological process, an affix or a morpheme. In English plural formation for example, 's' is stronger than 'ies'. An affix can be productive, non-productive, (unproductive), or semi-productive (Crystal, 2008). Bauer (2001:207) posits that "productivity deals with the number of new words that can be coined using a particular morphological process……". This projects that morphological products, affixal or non-affixal, are the building blocks in producing words in languages. The ability of a process to be used to create many lexemes is its productivity. Productivity, therefore, can be seen as a property of language by which existing components of word formation are employed to generate more words. Yule (1996:74) underscores that "…in many languages, what appear to be single forms actually turn out to contain a large number of word-like elements.'' A clear example of calque as expressed by the above assertion is the Hausa word 'farar karya', directly translated from English word 'white lie'.

2. Literature Review

Sama'ila, Kadin and Ekwueme (2020) conducted a comparative study of English and Hausa affixation, applying construction morphology and contrastive analysis theories, with the aim of identifying areas of differences and similarities in the affixation of the two distinct languages. The study provided that both linguistic similarities and differences exist in the languages. The research further highlighted that Hausa speakers of English could use the areas of resemblances as learning facilitative aid that might be achieved via positive transfer. Another work conducted by Sama'ila (2015) compared some English and Hausa

morphological processes. Areas compared in the study included: affixation, compounding, clipping, modification, reduplication, coinage, alternation, circumfixation, backformation, blending, etc. While coinage, circumfixation and backformation exist in English according to the study, alternation, partial modification and compounding are morphological properties shared by the two languages. Infixation, back clipping and front clipping exist only in Hausa language. Abraham and Yusuf (2011) revealed from their study on selected derivational morphological processes in English, Hausa, Igala and some other languages that derivational morphology, the chief concern of which is forming new lexemes with different syntactic categories from the base, is productive and universal. Their work handled morphological properties such as: prefix, suffix, infix, interfix, circumfix, transfix and suprafix or superfix in the aforementioned languages. Language users from different speech communities can learn one another's languages without serious or tedious difficulty. This adds credence to the idea of universality in language properties among world languages. Shehu (2015) examined clipping and blending in Hausa language. With this study, oblivion regarding the presence of clipping and blending among even some native Hausa speakers was reduced. The study also propelled the existence of these morphological similitudes between English and Hausa. Buhari (2011) makes a break-through comparative exploration and analysis of word formation processes in English and Hausa languages. The processes examined in the two languages included: acronyms, affixation, alternation, blending, borrowing, clipping, coinage, compounding and reduplication. Findings from the research work indicated that some of the processes mentioned above were found in the two languages, while possess some with glaring differences. This current study however attempts to explicate the productivity of some processes in English and Hausa, with a view to comparing the strength or otherwise of the relative productivity of the processes studied. It would be pedagogically and didactically of immense significance as it can serve as a useful aid and guide to teachers of English as a second language by employing the areas of similarities in the languages in eliminating some incorrect uses and interferences.

3. Methodology

In order to arrive at the accurately and reliably desired result, the paper adopted contrastive analysis theory which states that elements to be analysed must be juxtaposed and carefully examined so as to bring to light a remarkable outcome worthy of consideration and newness in the study (Sama'ila, Kadin & Ekwuema, 2020). The research acknowledged qualitative approach which is usually connected to inductive approach in order to facilitate in theory generation (Creswel, 2012). Qualitative researches give room for suitable and reliable interpretation in order to yield good comprehension. This must not be far away from the conventions people attach to the objects of the research. This confirms its nascence from interpretivist perspective (Creswel, 2012). The sources of data used included books, journals, etc, written in either English or Hausa where many productive morphological processes in the two languages were identified and compared. In addition, being born and raised in a speech community where Hausa is the lingua franca, the researcher applied introspective method where meticulous observation helped in generating data of the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

All languages have peculiar ways of word formation and the rule governing such formation processes. This is irrespective to the morphological type of the language, isolating, agglutinative, polysynthetic or inflectional it is. Buhari (2011: ix) posits that "comparative studies have shown that languages may share resemblances without being genetically related." After a careful perusal and comparison of the morphological processes in English and Hausa,

the level or strength of productivity of the processes studied were examined. The analysis in this paper has revealed an interesting fact about the two languages. Adding a morpheme whether bound or free to a base results to changes in shape, meaning and sometimes even the syntactic status of the base. For examples:

4.1 Productivity in Shape

Shape of words is very important in productivity. Any affix, (suffix or prefix) attached to a word or a morpheme, affects the shape of the root or base. For instance, the suffix 'ness' affects the structure of the words 'kind' and 'happy' in the derived constructions 'kindness' and 'happiness'. The structure or shape of a word does not guarantee the type of morpheme it accepts. Words with similar or the same orthographic feature may receive different morphemes. For instance, in order to make the word 'boot' into plural, we normally inflect the plural marker 's' to the base and get 'boots'. As for the word 'foot', we only modify the middle vowel and get 'feet'. This implies that the plural marker 's' is not productive in changing the word 'foot' into plural. In Hausa for instance, bature means an English person. To find the same word for English woman, the Hausa language acknowledges the suffix 'iya' and by removing the last vowel in bature, that is 'e', to form baturiya. This is not universal, however, while 'makaho' means a blind man, makahiya doesn't mean 'a blind woman' but the accepted word for it is 'makahuwa'. It is decipherable here that the Hausa suffix 'iya' which indicates female gender is not productive in changing the gender of the word 'makaho' blind man in English to the female gender. That is to say 'makahiya' is not accepted in Hausa. In this case, modification of 'o' to 'u' and affixing the suffix 'wa' to the root have morphologically taken place (Sani, 2002).

4.2 Productivity in Meaning

A word, complex or compound, may be irregular in meaning associated with the process of its productivity. For instance, 'fire department' does not mean a department that starts fire, neither does 'pain pill' mean a pill that gives pain. Some words formed with some suffixes or prefixes are not entirely predictable. For instance, inflammable does not mean 'not flammable' but highly flammable. The word 'invaluable' refers to something extremely valuable. This is a slight deviation or exception in the meanings conventionally attached to the prefix 'in' in English. Therefore, productivity of some affixes makes meanings clearly inconsistent or unpredictable. In Hausa for example, Dan Kasuwa means a businessman. The gloss for this is son of market. Because 'kasuwa' means market, while Da means son. The inflection of 'n' to the base 'da' indicates ownership in Hausa. Therefore, 'dan' means son of. The word Dan kasuwa is achieved through compounding of two free morphemes and a bound morpheme. Azumi in Hausa language refers to fasting. So 'Dan Azumi' does not connote someone whose occupation is fasting or someone who does fasting. It projects the meaning of a person born in the month of Ramadan. Therefore, semantically there is a shift or change of meaning between 'dan' in the word 'Dan kasuwa' and the one in 'Dan azumi'. As a result, it can be concluded that the productivity of the morpheme 'dan' attached to different Hausa words is morphologically versatile.

4.3 Productivity in Syntax

Some productive affixes like –ly usually and plainly indicate class of the derivative. Many –ly ending words generated from adjectives (eg beautifully) are adverbs. This implies that the class of the root may be changed to adverb when the affix is attached to an adjective. However, words like costly and sprightly are not adverbs but adjectives. In Hausa for instance, the suffix 'ci' indicates a male person doing what the root of the word to which the suffix is

attached suggests. Therefore, marubuci, means a writer, mashirmaci, a person doing foolish things, but does not abinci mean a person doing something, but it means food; matafiyi, though ends with a suffix different from 'ci', means a male person on travel or a way farer (Yakasai, 2014). It is pertinent to note that the words just cited as examples are products of more than two morphological constituents. The root of marubuci (a male writer) is rubutu (writing), the root of mashirmaci (a male foolish person) is shirme (foolishness) and the root of matafiyi (a male traveller or way farer) is tafiya (travelling or walking). All the words have the Hausa prefix 'ma' which means 'a person of' and the suffixes attached 'ci' (both in marubuci and mashirmaci) and 'yi' (in matafiyi) connote male person doer. Therefore, matafiyi is a male person doing travelling (traveller). The structure of the three words can each be dissected as prefix + root + suffix.

The findings of this research provide that the most productive morphological process in Hausa is affixation. Even infixation which seems to be rare in English is highly productive in Hausa language. Fagge (2004:7) underscores that "when a morpheme comes in between elements of the root, it is called an infix." Below are examples:

Operand	Infixes	Derived Word	Gloss
Gurgu	-a-	Guragu	Lame
Murhu	-a-	Murahu	Local stoves
Kurma	-a-	Kurame	Deaf
Doki	-wa-	Dawaki	Horses

Abdulhamid (2000).

The above infixes changed the number of root words from singular to plural. It is clear that the infix 'a' is very productive in Hausa language in terms of plural formation. This can be likened to the productivity of English plural marker 's, which is the most known to learners of English as a second language, and which leads them to a mistaken view of generalization regarding plural making of some nouns. The examples below entail suffix insertion:

Operand	Suffixes	Derived Word	Gloss
Mutum	-nci-	Mutunci	Kindness
Dangi	-ntaka-	Dangantaka	Relationship
Bako	-nta-	Bakonta	Being guest
Gona	-kai-	Gonakai	Farms

The first three suffixes affected the root words in terms of changing them from person to process. The last two changed the base words from singular to plural. From this, it is deducible that plural formation has several productive processes in Hausa. Generally, there are four prefixes in Hausa: mai—owner of, maras—a person who lacks, ba—a man of, and ma—doer of (Buhari, 2011). The illustration below may be of help:

Operand	Prefixes	Derived Word	Gloss
Kano	-ba-	Bakano	A person from Kano (male)
Noma	-ma-	Manoma	Persons who farm (male plural)
Kudi	-mai-	Maikudi	Owner of money i.e rich
Kunya	-maras-	Maras kunya	A person who lacks shyness

Among the aforementioned prefixes, mai and maras are antonyms to each other; and both are singular. The plural form of mai is masu: masu kudi (the rich people). The plural form of maras is marasa: marasa kunya (shyless or arrogant people). In addition, marasa has the idea of

those who do not have. Its singular form is maras with the idea of one who does not have. Masu has the idea of those who have. Its singular form is mai with the idea of one who has.

Apart from number, gender is also an aspect that gets metamorphosed by the morphological processes, especially affixation and modification. For example:

Operand	Suffixes	Derived Word
Yaro (boy)	-inya-	Yarinya (girl)
Mahaukaci (mad man)	-ya-	Mahaukaciya (mad woman)
Zaki (lion)	-anya-	Zakanya (lioness)
Boka (sorcerer)	-nya-	Bokanya (sorceress)

A glance at the suffixes above as attached to the bases will reveal the strong productivity they possess in Hausa language when it comes to gender change. In some instances, modification of the base takes place. For instance, malami (a male teacher) becomes malama (a female teacher), almajiri (a male beggar) becomes almajira (a female beggar), etc. Although they are genetically not related, English and Hausa share some similarities concerning productivity of some morphological processes. Differences also abound but these can be handled as linguistic elements that enrich languages.

5. Conclusion

Productivity follows morphological rules of a language. In both English and Hausa, there is a constraint that blocks the existence of some words, but does not imply the entire blockage of the productivity of the process or the affix. For instance, the inflectional morpheme ed is used to make a past form in verbs like pass, achieve, etc. but in verbs like go, eat, no ed is added. Instead, went is used not goed. This means 'went' blocks 'goed' as 'ate' blocks 'eated'. The building blocks of productivity in the two languages studied are consist of, and not limited to, inflectional and derivational morphemes. They bring about lexical changes in word structure, meaning, and some grammatical functions like change in number, tense, case, etc. In Hausa language, the productivity especially in number indication comes in many forms. Masallaci means a mosque, masallatai is the plural; which means replacement of 'ci' with 'tai' has taken place. Despite the fact that productivity of some morphological processes varies in the two languages, congruence exists in some areas of the two languages. It is therefore worthy to note that speakers of the two languages can make use their first language intuition, apply it positively and learn each other's language.

6. Recommendations

The following are recommendations given in respect of the findings of this research:

Learners of English as a second language with Hausa background should not be oblivious of the areas where English and Hausa are similar so that these similarities can serve as a helpful aid in facilitating learning of the English language.

Teachers of English should be applying different methods like immersion, translation method or say, eclectic method where examples from the learners' second language (Hausa in this case) can be cited and compared.

In order to reduce the paucity of books on comparative morphology, especially on Hausa and English, there should be a body of linguists or experts to write and educate people in this area so that Hausa speakers learning English can benefit from.

Learners of English as a second language should increase the level of the attention they give to morphology as most of them learn grammar rules and phonology without much concern to learn how words are formed in English.

Further studies with vacuous and reliable contents should be done by other students or linguists on similar or related topics in order to capture what the previous works done lacked.

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