

# A Contrastive Analysis of English and *Afenmai* Morphology

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The study was a Contrastive Analysis of English and *Afenmai* Morphology. CA (Contrastive Analysis) is an area of linguistic studies, which has to do with a scientific study of two or more languages, so as to make critical, howbeit, pedagogical comments on their areas of divergence or convergence. The paper examined morphological processes in English and *Afenmai*, a language of the Esako people of Edo State of Nigeria, a multilingual speech community. We based our analyses on the Agenebode dialect of *Afenmai*. Morphology, which is essentially the study of the grammatical rules of word formation in any language, was discovered to operate in both English and *Afenmai* with significant areas of differences and similarities. It was discovered from the analyses that the morphological processes common to English and *Afenmai* are prefixing, compounding, derivation of one word-class from another and reduplication.

**Keywords:** Contrastive analysis, morphology, affixation, prefixing, suffixing, morpheme, root, stem.

## INTRODUCTION

Language can be studied in diverse dimensions. Ore [1] submits "that the study of the different aspects of language is the concern of linguistics". From a good traditional understanding of the term "linguistics", it can be said that it does not exclude the study of grammar, which essentially concerns "form" (syntax, morphology, phonology, phonetics) and "meaning" (semantics). This study is a Contrastive Analysis of the morphological rules in *Afenmai* and English. We have aligned with the idea that morphology is a well explored area of linguistic analysis. An aspect of Applied Linguistics, Contrastive Analysis is a "linguistic approach to the analysis of two or more languages. The paper has examined crucial issues in the literature of Contrastive Analysis; morphology, morphological processes in English and *Afenmai* (affixing, prefixing, derivational processes, etc.); the overview of such morphological processes has necessitated the discussion of certain parts of speech in English; nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. We have also proceeded to discuss the semantic functions of morphology, after which we have presented briefly, the findings of the study. This is followed by the concluding remarks, which essentially summarizes the research effort as well as the position of the paper on how the

morphological features of *Afenmai* compare to those of English.

The word "*Afenmai*" as used in this paper is "the name of one of the sub-groups which constitute the ethnic group called Edo. The area called *Afenmai* embraces the present Akoko-Edo, Etsako West, Owan East and Owan West Local Government Areas of Edo State of Nigeria (Oseni [2]). The people of *Afenmai* have a multiplicity of dialects that are clans-based. Most of these dialects are mutually intelligible. We have chosen the Agenebode dialect for convenience.

## The Research Problem

The Nigerian speech community is multilingual. However, there is still controversy as to the number of indigenous languages that the country has. For example, Adegbija [3] cites that "ignorance of the actual number of languages in Nigeria has been and still is an embarrassing enigma to all linguists, to the government, to policy makers in general and to anyone that has to do with language planning". He notes that all the while, the issue of the number of languages that abound in Nigeria has been subjected to guessing; some scholars say 200,

others say 300, and there are others still who say between 394 and 400. This multi-ethnic sociolinguistic trend features a situation whereby the three major languages in the country; Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo are more developed in terms of orthography, codification and literary potentials (Acheoah J, and Personal Communication). The present study has argued that there is need for more research, if at all any major research abound on the numerous minority languages in Nigeria, as this could facilitate the bid to develop their orthography and literary potentials. We have not known any research on a contrastive analysis of English and *Afenmai* morphological processes and this fact has spoken volume on the expediency of this study.

**Literature Review**

**Contrastive Analysis**

Linguists have viewed Contrastive Analysis from different but related perspectives. The literature of Contrastive Analysis does not indicate that the field of linguistic analysis has been extensively explored. Lamidi [4] has cited that despite the numerous works on fields of language study e.g. Banjo, Ojo, Igboanus, Abuti and Asowata, contrastive morphological studies have not been extensively treated in major Nigerian languages. We have observed that *Afenmai* is bereaved of research in her morphological processes. Roberto [5] *Linguistics across Cultures* represents the beginning of applied contrastive linguistics of the modern age. Tinuoye [6] has submitted “that Contrastive Analysis (CA) is a process by which two languages are compared so as to identify the areas of differences and similarities in their linguistic patterns”. In this regard, the areas of differences are of pedagogical relevance.

**Morphology**

William [7] have opined “that Linguists use the term “morphology” to refer to the part of the Grammar that is concerned with words and word formation. They have contended that nothing is more important to language than words. Unlike phonemes and syllables, which are simply elements of sounds words carry meaning in addition to their phonological form. Linguists have defined the “word” as the smallest free form found in language. The branch of linguistics which studies the word-formation rules of language is known as morphology. The most important element of word structure is known as the “morpheme”, which is the basic concept of morphology. The morpheme is “the minimal meaningful unit of grammatical analysis”.

**Types of Morpheme**

There are two major types of morphemes namely; free

morphemes and bound morphemes.

**Free Morpheme**

The free morpheme is a morphological unit which can exist without an affix. Examples in English “are”, “eat”, “come” and “run”. *Afenmai* examples include “obo” (hand) “élami” (meat) and “okogua” (bush).

**Bound Morpheme**

These are morphemes that are inflected to other morphemes. They cannot exist in isolation. They include English suffixes such as “-ness”, “-ful” and “-ment” (as in “madness”, “beautiful” and “management” respectively) as well as prefixes such as “mis-” “un-” and “dis-” (as in “mismanage”, “unhappy” and “disadvantage” respectively).

For more insights on the structural functions of morphemes (root, stem, bound morpheme) and the structural positions of morphemes (affix, prefix, suffix), see Matthews [8].

**Purpose of the Study**

Our aim is to explore the morphological properties of English and *Afenmai*, so as to show that two different languages may have same word-formation processes, yet differ in certain areas which reveal their morphological identity. We have observed that the study could provide useful insights into the morphological rules of *Afenmai*.

**Examples of *Afenmai* Orthography<sup>1</sup>**

Indeed, there is relationship between phonology and morphology. For example the *Afenmai* “i” (the concept of “phoneme” in phonology), which makes an adjective a nominal, functions as a prefix (the concept of “morpheme” in morphology). See Oseni [2] and Ofuya [9] for *Afenmai* and English consonant and vowel charts respectively.

A	B	CH	D	E	E	F	FH	G	GB
GBH	GH	GW	H	I	J	K	KH	KP	KPH
KW	L	M	MH	N	NW	NY	O	O	P
R	RH	S	SH	T	TH	TS	U	V	VB
VH	W	Y	YW	Z	ZH				

1. a /a/ Iyoma o yi aki. (Mother has gone to the market.)
2. b /a/ Ethama o ye ime. (Our father has gone to the farm.)
3. ch /tʃ/ Ē mi ma yi Auchi (We are going to Auchi)
4. d /d/ Ade ke o nwu na anyō (Foolishness can be more intoxicating than wine.)
5. e /e/ Imē mha o lemhi (Our farm is large.)

- |     |                      |   |     |         |  |
|-----|----------------------|---|-----|---------|--|
| 6.  | e /ɛ/                | Oni ena ô kokomhi (The cow is fat.)   | 33. | s /s/   | Isuē <u>o</u> mh <u>o</u> uvuamhi (The nose has no lid)  |
| 7.  | f /f/                | Kha gē inyo fiā ēlamhi (Don't cut meat like that.)  | 34. | sh /ʃ/  | Oshoke <u>o</u> miē ukpatata ēmō khui (Oshoke saw a star in the sky.)  |
| 8.  | fh /pf/              | Fhi on'obe la yo otoo (Put that book down.)   | 35. | t /t/   | Kha tamhe ak <u>o</u> (Do not bite me.)  |
| 9.  | g /g/                | Eke agōgō o ya? (What is it by the time?)   | 36. | th /θ/  | Oshō the no oya ( It is God who provides for people. This phoneme is an affricate. It is used mainly (if not solely) by Weppa-Wano clan in Etsako in place of rh or r which most other clans in <i>Afenmai</i> use.) |
| 10. | gh /gb/              | Agio <u>d</u> e <u>o</u> gbē ini (A hunter killed an elephant.)   | 37. | ts /tʃ/ | Thu utsatsō ghi m <u>h</u> e (Get me a broom).   |
| 11. | gbh /gbh/            | Osi the gbhem <u>h</u> e (God be with me.)  | 38. | u /u/   | Unoogbua <u>o</u> thua athu vue (Unoogbua is wearing a cap.)   |
| 12. | gh /ɣ/               | Ovhi mha ē tōtō gbē (Our children are very strong.)   | 39. | v /v/   | Ukpuvi tsōtsō kh <u>o</u> na (What a nice palm Kernel.)  |
| 13. | gw /gw/              | Oni ugwe o she gbe (The pot is too small.)  | 40. | vb / /  | Ovba kh'oivba le (Home is home). This phoneme is occasionally written as bh as in <i>okpebho</i> , among the Esan  |
| 14. | h /h/                | The common phoneme /h/ represented by this letter is not used in Auchi, Uzairue and some of the dialects of Afenami except in exclamations e.g. "heo!" It exists, however, in many dialects especially those in Owan area. In Ora dialect, for example, we have a sentence like Ohi o ma re (God is the Creator.) | 41. | vh /vh/ | Musa o vho ikpo lo (Musa washed his clothes). This phoneme is mainly used in Aviele (Ayuele) clan in place of /f/ as used in most other clans of <i>Afenmai</i> .  |
| 15. | i /j/                | Aki Uzairue <u>o</u> k <u>o</u> komhi sōmi sōmi (Uzairue market is very large.)   | 42. | w /w/   | Awa <u>o</u> da la (A partridge flew away.)  |
| 16. | j /dʒ/               | Esivue lo <u>j</u> o Omoaka (Esivue is older than Omoaka.)  | 43. | y /j/   | ly <u>o</u> <u>o</u> s ōmhi gbē (Mother is very good.)   |
| 17. | k /k/                | Ogwimē <u>o</u> kō e <u>k</u> a (A farmer sowed some maize.)  | 44. | yw /y/  | O ywa ogbama enemode (She was delivered of a baby boy yesterday). Aviele clan in Etsako uses this phoneme often. In Auchi dialect, <i>yw</i> is often replaced with <i>vh</i>  |
| 18. | kh /ɣ /x/            | Kha the e <u>kh</u> o nwu m <u>h</u> e (Do not disgrace me.)  | 45. | z /z/   | Kha gan <u>o</u> nabi ozi (Do not crawl like a crab.)  |
| 19. | kp /kp/              | Okpa <u>o</u> vi <u>e</u> (A cock crows.)   | 46. | zh /zʰ/ | Uzhi o nwu lo (The law has caught up with him). This phoneme is used mainly by Aviele people instead of /s/ in most other dialects of <i>Afenmai</i>   |
| 20. | kph /kph/            | Emosi, a kphu ukhia ghi m <u>h</u> e (Emosi, go and pluck me some okro.)  |     |         |  |
| 21. | kw /kw/              | Etha nu gban <u>o</u> e kwaghie (The wood you tied had loosened.)   |     |         |  |
| 22. | L /l/                | Ogwime no toto lo <u>o</u> khona (This is a strong farmer.)   |     |         |  |
| 23. | m /m/                | Gie am <u>e</u> ya m <u>h</u> e (Get me some water.)  |     |         |  |
| 24. | mh /mh/              | Chi m <u>h</u> e egbē rē (Leave me alone.)  |     |         |  |
| 25. | n /n/                | <u>O</u> kha lē ēmhi nē, o nan <u>o</u> ikpiabo (When he finished eating yam, he licked his fingers.)   |     |         |  |
| 26. | nw /ŋ <sup>w</sup> / | Khu ēnw <u>e</u> yo ōt <u>o</u> (Pour ashes on the ground.)   |     |         |  |
| 27. | ny /n/               | Gboni enye i (Kill that snake.)   |     |         |  |
| 28. | o /o/                | Otha okpa ô mhē ôgwa (A tree cannot make a forest.)   |     |         |  |
| 29. | o / /                | O mo shaa nabi oko oko (He is as foolish as a millipede.)   |     |         |  |
| 30. | p /p/                | Tha ap <u>e</u> pe ghi m <u>h</u> e the fōfō ēgē (Give a fan to fan my body.)   |     |         |  |
| 31. | r /r/                | Fhi dono eda oo re (Go back, for the river has overflowed.)   |     |         |  |
| 32. | rh /r/               | Em'e ze kh'ovbie o lu na rho (Why is your child so dirty?)  |     |         |  |

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the aim of this paper, we have relied on morphological theories (basic theoretical concepts in morphology) as touching a variety of morphological concepts such as affixation, prefixing, suffixing, inflection, derivation, root, stem, bound morpheme, calquing, reduplication, etc.; the study investigates morphological processes in English and *Afenmai*, using insights from these morphological concepts. We have also examined linguistic units and stretches in English and *Afenmai* by pairing those of English and those of *Afenmai* in terms of how they capture the above morphological conceptual

tools. We have noted that free morphemes have word classes; thus, we have examined them in both languages across varied parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.

### Morphological Processes in English and *Afenmai* Affixation

“An affixation process in *Afenmai* is exemplified in the expression ‘Ō mh<sub>o</sub> ekpabo’ (one who has no strength) which consists of the root morpheme ‘ekpabo’ (strength) to which the two morphemes ‘mh<sub>o</sub>’ (not have) and ‘O’ (agentive prefix) are affixed” (Ogunmame, S. Port Harcourt, Nigeria). While English lends itself to both prefixing and suffixing, *Afenmai* dominantly lends itself to morphemic prefixing. But there are suffixing processes e.g.:

- i. egbenwhume (happiness)
- ii. egbe/ nenwu (one is happy).

### Inflectional Suffix

Tomori [10] has opined “that an inflectional morpheme is a morpheme that performs a grammatical function in a word without changing the word-class of the particular word”. Examples are “want” (verb) “wanted” (verb); “teacher” (noun), “teachers” (noun). The English inflectional suffixes are placed at the end of a word, and they close the form. For example, in the word “promotions”, the derivational suffix is (-ation) and the inflectional suffix is /-z/. The English words are inflected to show case, number, tense and degree. Nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and certain adverbs are given inflection.

The three allomorphs of both the plural and the possessive morphemes (represented by -s in English) are /s/, /-z/ and /-Iz/. The zero allomorph obtains in the following words:

Deer - deer  
Sheep - sheep

There are cases of phonetic change within the word e.g.

Woman - women	}	Partial
Crisis - Crises		Suppletion
good - better	}	Complete
go - went		Suppletion

### Pronouns

The basic morphological divisions of the English pronoun are: personal, relative and demonstrative. Below are the

English pronouns and their inflectional forms:

Subjective	Objective	Epithetic Possessive	Predicative Possessive
I	Me	My	Mine
We	Us	Our	Ours
You	You	Your	Yours
He	Him	His	His
She	Her	Her	Hers
It	It	Its	Its
They	Them	Their	Theirs
Who	Whom	Whose	Those
Which	Which		
That	That		
This	This		
Those	Those		
These	These		

We have noted that inflectional affixes are uncommon in *Afenmai*, but the *Afenmai* pronouns are similar to that of English in variety and use. Consider:

Free Forms	Bound Forms	Possessive Forms
mhe (I)	mhe (Me)	itsemhe (Mine)
ghue (You, singular)	ghue (You plural)	itse (Yours)
o (He, She, It)	o (Him, Her, It)	itso (His, Hers, Its)
mha (We)	mha (Us)	itsemha (Ours)
ghue (You)	itse (Your)	nitse (Yours)
itse <sub>a</sub> (They, Them)	itse <sub>a</sub> (They)	nitse <sub>a</sub> (Theirs)

The *Afenmai* “mhe” (I) and “ghue” (You) can be used both as subject and object pronouns, being free forms; this type of usage is not applicable to the bound forms. As the name implies, bound forms cannot be used both as subject and object pronouns. For example: “mhe” (Me) is always an object pronoun.

The *Afenmai* possessive pronoun “kimhe” (Mine) is a contraction of two morphemes “iki” and “imhe” of which the vowel “-I” in the first word is eluded. As they mean “something that is mine”, the two items are used as a single lexical item in the language. The *Afenmai* interrogatives “oha” (Who?) and “eme” (what?) show no change but the first syllable is usually reduplicated that is, “itseo” (whose?) in the interrogative and possessive forms. However, the demonstrative pronouns “ona” (this) and “lokh<sub>o</sub>” (That) are free forms. Contextual factors indicate whether the use of these demonstratives is emphatic or possessive. When for example a speaker says, “itsemhe lokh<sub>o</sub>” he means “that is mine”. Also, when he says, “ona li kē” he means “I like/want this”. The study has observed that in *Afenmai*, just as in English, inflections do not alter tense or mood of sentences. For example:

- i. ike lo o - (I have done it.)  
 ii. imhe lo o - (I, myself, have done it.)  
 iii. o ke lo o - (He has done it.)

In the above sentences, tense remains unchanged and the only difference is the emphatic pronoun; only the subject is affected.

### Verbs

Unlike the English verbs which undergo inflection, the *Afenmai* verbs do not; an example is, the verb "la" (to go) in the following *Afenmai* sentences:

I	la	- (I go/went.)
ma	la	- (We go/went.)
ē	la	- (They go/went.)

It could be observed from the above sentences, that *Afenmai* verbs do not indicate tense. It is the contexts of use that tell whether the verbs are present or past. Consider:

ē - la	- (They go/went.)
ē - la ēnōde	- (They went yesterday.)

The fact that a speaker added "enekpode" (yesterday) communicated to the hearer that a past action is predicated.

The English continuous tense is marked with the "-ing" which is a suffix. But in *Afenmai*, this tense is marked with a prefix. Consider the following sentences:

e me lema  
 They are eating.  
 They -ing eat  
 i mi nyēma  
 I am cooking.  
 I -ing cook  
 ma khē la  
 We are going  
 We -ing go

Thus, *Afenmai* places emphasis on aspect rather than tense.

### Adjectives

We have noted that the syntactic characteristics of *Afenmai* adjectives, is worthy of mention. Just like English adjectives which demonstrate syntactic characteristics, for example, in the use of the comparative (more) and the superlative (most), there are *Afenmai* adjectives which are not inflected with the use of

morphemic affixes. Rather, they are inflected periphrastically. Consider:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
giēghē	gieghe ne	gieghē neha
tall	tall more	tall most
somi	somi ne	somi neha
good	good more	good most

### Adverbs

Derivational prefixes are present in *Afenmai*, but derivational suffixes which are indeed present in English, are absent in *Afenmai*. The examples below are illustrative:

	Verb		Adjective
"no" prefixed to	"giēghē" (to be tall)	to form	"nogiēghē" (which is tall)
"no" prefixed to	"togia" (to be hot)	to form	"notōgia" (which is hot)

To form derivational suffixes, English sometimes makes use of more than one morpheme. In *Afenmai*, such cases involve multiple prefixes. For example, in the word "mechanization" the suffixes are (-ize) and (-ation). Similarly, in *Afenmai*, there exists a word like "onomooya" (one who has people) in which the morphemes (ōno-) and (mo) are prefixed to "oya" (person).

### Morphemic Derivation

The "primary" and "derived" words are the basic morphological groups of the English words. Primary words may or may not contain a free form. Some primary words consist of more than one bound form. For example, in the word "deceive" we have "de-ceive" and in "retire" we have "re-tire". There abound morphemes with a single free morpheme as in "dog", "eat", "hut". But a derived word consists of at least one root and a number of bound or free morphemes. In the word "interdependent", there is one root morpheme and a number of bound morphemes as can be seen below:

"Depend"	-	Root
"Inter"	-	Derivational prefix
"-ed" and "-ness"	-	Derivational suffixes

There are cases where two or more root morphemes are conjoined e.g. "flower-girl" (a compounding process). There abound also, cases where a derived word has more than one root and bound morpheme e.g. "bricklayer" where we have:

"brick" - Root

- “lay” - Root
- “-er” - Suffix

The study has found out that English suffixes are of greater grammatical functions than prefixes. On the other hand, prefixing is a dominant morphological process in *Afenmai* as stated earlier on. Similarly, a morphological process such as reduplication that is dominant in *Afenmai* is not so in English; reduplication is rare in English.

We have also noted that like English words, *Afenmai* words have two basic morphemes: (a) the base e.g. “ōbō” (hand), “warē” (come), etc. and (b) derived words e.g. “onotogia” (one who is hot-tempered) consisting of the root “togia” and the morpheme “onō” (third person singular pronoun), “ikhō-ma” (our house) consisting of the two roots “ikhō” and “ma” (a noun phrase).

This study has noted that the use of suffixes to derive word class shift is salient in English. But in *Afenmai*, prefixes achieve this. Nouns were derived from verbs as seen above; a structure which showed the agent in a sentence or the state expressed. For example, “onoviē” (one who cries) showed a state of being.

Going by the euphonic concord rule, the vowel that serves as a prefix to “n” should be the same as the initial vowel of the root. For example:

- “ēnēlemha” (those who know us)
- “onomiōde” (one who sees)
- “onokho” (one who fights)

**Reduplication**

- “giēgiē” from “gié” (to be tall)
- “gbomogbomo” from “gbomo” (to kidnap)
- “ojojo” from “ojo” (to be older)
- “omomo” from “omo” (to be younger)
- “kàkà” from “k à” { to be strong}

**Compounding**

*Afenmai* accommodated compounding process, which involved compounding nouns with other nouns or with verbs. The expression “ēbē owēna” (study book) is a noun-noun compound while “ēlami òkōgwā” (bush meat) is an example of noun-verb compound. Compounding is salient in English, and this can therefore be seen as one area in which *Afenmai* is similar to English.

**Calquing**

This is a process of reducing an entire phrase or sentence to a single word. For example to form a single noun *Afenmai* contracts “Ēmēts<sup>o</sup>ya” (what reaches someone) “ukpōn<sup>o</sup>pa” (white cloth), “Ēmikē’ (what I want).

A monosyllabic verb can also be combined with a monosyllabic noun as in:

“le ēbē” (to have knowledge of books) from “le” (know) and “ēbē” (book).

In *Afenmai*, verbs are normally monosyllabic. For example:

- la - to go
- lu - to do
- mo - to have

Functionally, adverbs in *Afenmai* may be nouns or adjectives in certain contexts. However, *Afenmai* adverbs are not indicated by a special suffix like the “-ly” in English. Sometimes, different words are combined to form adverbs e.g. “elegekpo” (always). There are also cases of adverbs formed by reduplicating a syllable or a word as in “nyanya” (quickly). To express degrees using adverbs, *Afenmai* employs “ne” (more) and “neha” (most).

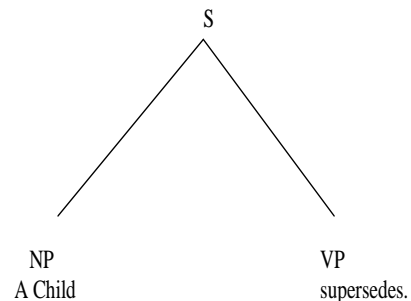
**Nouns**

A word that is made a nominal occupies either subject or object position in *Afenmai*. For example, the adjective “togia” (hot) occupies either subject or object position when it used as a noun “itogia” (hotness). Consider:

- “kha zoo togia” (Do not let it be hot)
- “ēmētōgia” ôsomi” (Something hot is not good)
- “ēgbēme o tōgia” (My body is hot)

As can be seen above, “l” which changes an adjective to a nominal in *Afenmai*, functions as a prefix.

The fact that *Afenmai* names have the status of sentences, has showed that *Afenmai* naming words exhibited agglutination. For example, the name “Omōnē” (A Child supercedes) could be represented thus:



**The Semantic Functions of Morphology**

Either in isolation or in linguistic patterning, *Afenmai* words have semantic components: contextual, denotative, connotative, collocation, polarity, gender, diminutives, approximation, compounding, back-derivations, tenses and word-class shift are some of the semantic qualities in *Afenmai* words. Some of these notions have been explained in the foregoing discussion, for example, the *Afenmai* negation marker “ō” which

changes polarity, the agentive marker “ono”, the comparatives, and superlatives (adverbs of degree) indicated by “ne” and “neha” respectively, the “i” which indicates word-class shift (i.e. nominal prefix, etc.) The examples below are illustrative:

“oyo khiomo” (He said he does not have)  
 “o nolēma” (One who eats)  
 “tōgia” “tōgia ne” “tōgia neha”  
 hot hotter hottest

#### Note:

“tōgia” (hot)  
 “itōgia” (hotness)

#### Tone Marking

Ojo (Noun) - Senior  
 Ô joo (Verb) - to be senior  
 Omo (Noun) - junior  
 Ô moo (Verb) - to be junior

We have noted that the semantic functions of tone-marking in *Afenmai*, are worthy of scholarly attention; there are words whose meanings depend on the placement of the correct accent marks. For example:

With the correct placement of *Afenmai* punctuation marks (tone marks) on the word, the difference between the noun form and the verb form was made clear. In English, superscript strokes (<sup>1</sup>) and subscript stroke (<sub>1</sub>) are used to indicate the primary and secondary stress on syllables respectively. When the primary stress is placed on the first syllable of words, they are nouns, but when placed on the second syllable, they become verbs e.g. <sup>1</sup>convict/con<sub>1</sub>vict; <sup>1</sup>export/ex<sub>1</sub>port (noun and verb respectively).

#### RESULTS

The word formation process known as derivation is common in *Afenmai*. However, inflections are rare therein; thus, English is synthetic while *Afenmai* is analytic. The study has established that the morphological processes common to English and *Afenmai* are prefixing, compounding, derivation of one word-class from another and reduplication. Reduplication is more salient in *Afenmai*, while suffixation (both inflectional and derivational) is a more productive morphological process in English than in *Afenmai*; it is rare in *Afenmai*. Also, unlike *Afenmai*, English pronouns show clear-cut functional inflections. The two basic ways of forming words in English are “derivation” and compounding. Inflection which is a change in the form of a word to convey grammatical concepts such as

agentive, word-class shift, tense, number, etc. could be derived through affixation, internal change of word elements, reduplication and prosodic features such as tone placement.

#### DISCUSSION

The study has investigated morphological processes in English and *Afenmai*, through a contrastive-analyst approach. Peculiarities in the morphological processes of the two languages as well as their areas of differences and similarities, believed to be of pedagogical relevance, have been elucidated. The paper has observed that morphology is very relevant to grammar: the rules of word formation in English and *Afenmai*, and by extension, in other languages of the world, help us to know the word-class (parts of speech) of different words. For example, the word “manage” which is a verb, becomes a noun when the suffix “-ment” is affixed to it. Similarly, *Afenmai* “mié” (see) which is a verb, becomes an adjective when the prefix “ono” (agentive) is affixed to it to form “onomié” (one who sees); also, the rules of word formation makes it clear to us that there are cases of zero morpheme in the shifting of words (word-class shift from one part of speech to another). In English, we have:

ex<sup>1</sup>port - verb  
 export - noun  
 im<sup>1</sup>port - verb  
 import - noun  
 optimetum

In *Afenmai*, there is “nosomi”, an adjective formed from “somi” “to be good”. Areas of convergence and divergence in the morphological processes of English and *Afenmai* are worthy of scholarly interest, and should therefore not be ignored by the contrastive linguist. Unlike English which utilizes different affixation processes as seen in our foregoing discussion, *Afenmai* is more prone to the process deriving new words via prefixing. This explains the rare use of suffixes in *Afenmai*. The paper has observed that *Afenmai* prefixes are more potent in changing the grammatical class of a word, than English prefixes which may retain the grammatical class of a word. Consider English examples below:

happy - adjective  
 unhappy - adjective

In *Afenmai*, consider:

“somi” (good) - adjective  
 “onosomi” (that is good) - adjective

We have deemed it necessary to state that morphology that morphology is not preoccupied with the classification of words, as this is the role of syntax. However,

morphology provides starting-point insights on the parts of speech to which different words belong.

Tone marking in Afenmai is not a morphological process; it is used for lexico-semantic differentiation. Unlike stress shift which changes the word-class of a word, tone marking is used for vocabulary building.

## CONCLUSION

We have examined the structure and word formation processes in Agenebode dialect of Afenmai, and invariably, in human language. Minute elements known as morphemes; abound in many Afenmai and English words. However, these elements could be classified in binary opposition: free as opposed to bound, root as opposed to affix, prefix as opposed to suffix. The morphemic components could be combined in a variety of ways in the process of word formation both in English and Afenmai. Indeed we have aligned with Chomsky [11] who has contended that languages have universals. Through a contrastive linguistic analysis, this paper has examined the English and Afenmai morphological processes. The writer has stated where both languages are similar or divergent in word-formation processes, as well as the morphological processes that were more salient in either of the languages. Also, the paper has aligned with the idea that although morphology is a discrete field of language study, it is linked with other fields of language study; phonology, syntax and semantics, which are basic to all languages. Indeed, more research is needed in minority languages in Nigeria, Afenmai inclusive.

## Notes

1. Some of the Auchu phonemes are not in Agenebode dialect of Afenmai. Hence, the writer has provided just the Auchu translation. These phonemes are highlighted in (8, 13, 31, 32, 44 and 46).

2. “-” on “e” in Afenmai words, has the similar phonetic realisation as the English S /eI/ while its placement below; “e”, has similar phonetic realization as the English /e/.

3. “^” on a vowel represents a rising tune, which shows negation in Agenebode dialect of Afenmai.

4. The Agenebode /h/ dominantly appears after /m/.

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