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## EDITORIAL

This is the second volume of *Uyo Online Journal of the Humanities*. UOJH is a multidisciplinary journal of the humanities. Articles for publication are selected after rigorous assessment. Those published must provide an insight into a current and topical issue in the writer's discipline with a potential of providing additional knowledge in the subject area. The seven articles in this volume touch on various aspects of the humanities.

In the opening article, Dr Anthony Ogu takes a look at the virgin area of the language of the Nigerian home video. The study takes a pragmatic approach to study a selection of the Nigerian home video films written and spoken in the variety of Nigerian English associated with the Igbo ethnic group. The study reveals that context and culture play a big role in the meaning of utterances in the data. The observation of conversational and politeness principles were also seen to be influenced by socio-cultural norms.

The second article by Professor Carlos Gussenhoven and Professor Inyang Udofot presents and discusses a perceptual experiment to debunk the hypothesis that Nigerian English does not 'deaccent' or have 'end stress'. It is shown that the notions 'stress' and 'accent' are inapplicable to Nigerian English and that word tones are not simply negotiable the way pitch accents are in English. Also, it has been shown that the syllables that are heard as stressed are not actually stressed in terms of the pitch accents of Germanic languages but in terms of raised and lowered tone and word-boundary lowering causing English listeners to interpret the pattern as if the stress placement comes on the wrong word. The traditional description of Spoken Nigerian English as syllable timed is therefore called to question.

The next paper by Dr Imoh Emenyi and Prof. Ebele Eko studies Sofola's dramatic works in order to examine her perspective on gender in her early and later works. It proposes that though she regrets Western modes of female assertion, her dramaturgy affirms, celebrates and advocates female individuality within traditional boundaries and affirms that Zulu Sofola is, therefore, a feminist writer in spite of herself.

The next two articles on Linguistics examine the grammar of two Nigerian Languages. The first by Dr. Ogbonna Anyanwu examines the Kana

and Tee personal pronominal systems. It has been observed that the extent of the close genetic relationship between Kana and Tee is reflected in the pronominal system of these two lects. To this extent, Kana and Tee personal pronouns do not reveal any significant morphophonemic variation. The minor variations observed are tonal and segmental in nature. The other paper is a contrastive study of English and Bokyi, a Cross River State language which investigates the inflectional patterns in the two languages with a view to highlighting areas of similarities and differences, and to showing how the differences/similarities affect the Bokyi speakers.

The next article by Dr. Nkereke Essien explores the pronunciation of English liquids and semi-vowels by the Ibibio. The objectives were to identify the differences and similarities between liquids and semi-vowels of English and Ibibio, to assess the effects of the similarities and differences on the performances of Ibibio speakers of English; to identify what problems the Ibibio learners of English are likely to have in their production of liquids and semi-vowels of English and also the linguistic factors other than differences and similarities that can affect the production of English liquids and semi-vowels by learners and users of English.

The last article by Dr. Julia Udofia analyses the stylistic features of Annang proverbs and shows that proverbs are used in all aspects of human communication in the Annang community. They can be employed to perform a variety of functions such as advice, rebuke, praise, ridicule or mockery and to emphasize a point. However, in addition to this relatively utilitarian aspect, proverbs in the purely literary aspect are used merely to embellish speech in a way that is admired and appreciated by the audience.

The editorial board heartily congratulates the authors whose articles got published in this volume and appreciates them for helping to keep *Uyo Online Journal of the Humanities* afloat.

**Professor Inyang Udofot**  
**Editor-in-chief**

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## INFLECTION IN ENGLISH AND BOKYI

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### **A**bstract

This study, entitled 'Inflection in English and Bokyi', investigated the inflectional patterns in the two languages with a view to highlighting areas of similarities and differences, and to showing how the differences/similarities affect the Bokyi speakers of English. Data were obtained through questionnaire, oral interview, composition writing, translation exercise, the library and resource persons. The study revealed that while inflection in English applies to nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives, inflection in Bokyi applies only to nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. While both systems show some markers for plurality in nouns, thereby making the use of English plural nouns relatively easy, there is a divergence in the inflectional pattern of verbs in both systems: English marks inflection morphologically, Bokyi indicates inflection phonologically. This makes the appropriate use of English tenses problematic for Bokyi speakers of English. Despite the differences in inflectional indications observed above, there are similarities in the inflectional patterns of English and Bokyi regular adjectives and adverbs. This makes the use of English regular adjectives and adverbs quite simple to the Bokyi speakers of English. While irregular and non-gradable adjectives are found in English, these are lacking in Bokyi. This makes the use of English irregular and non-gradable adjectives very tasking to the Bokyi learner-users of English. The paper concludes that contrastive studies of features of languages can highlight the peculiar features of individual language systems and help in the construction of linguistic theories.

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.0 Inflection: Nature and Explication**

Inflectional morphology is concerned with the addition of inflectional morphemes to the endings of roots/stems. According



to Crystal (1994) 'inflectional morphology examines the way(s) in which words vary (or inflect) in order to express grammatical contrasts in sentences, such as singular/plural or past/present tense...' (p.238). Stump (2001) sees inflectional morphology as:

A branch of morphology concerned with the manner in which lexical items are combined with grammatical markers like plurality and tense. The class of the stem determines the grammatical marker to combine, for example, the English noun class cannot be combined with tense markers – eg. 'petered' from Peter, 'yaming' from yam ... and so on (p.231).

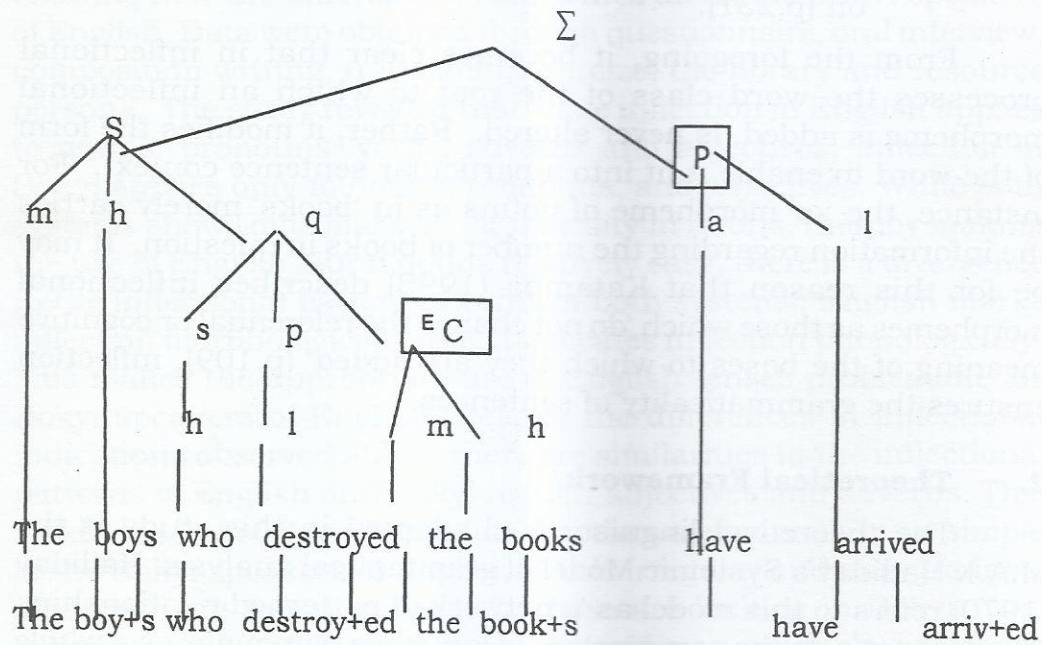
From the foregoing, it becomes clear that in inflectional processes the word class of the root to which an inflectional morpheme is added, is never altered. Rather, it modifies the form of the word to enable it fit into a particular sentence context. For instance, the '-s' morpheme of nouns as in 'books' merely carries the information regarding the number of books in question. It may be for this reason that Katamba (1993) describes inflectional morphemes as those which 'do not change the referential or cognitive meaning of the bases to which they are added' (p.109). inflection ensures the grammaticality of sentences.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical linguistic tool adopted in this study is the M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Model of grammatical analysis. Halliday (1970) refers to this model as 'a network of patterned relationships which constitute the organization of language. Language as a whole is then characterized as a system ... and often as a hierarchical arrangement of systems' (p.106). The model identifies four theoretical categories set up for the description of the grammatical pattern of any language. The categories include: Unit, Structure, Class and System. The analysis of whatever language is done within the categories.

Since our concern is with grammatical structure at the word level and the various processes of formation, the analytical approach deemed appropriate is that of the category of unit. This approach

undertakes a step-by-step description of grammatical units by identifying boundaries, segments or constituents through the use of brackets, tree diagramming or upright lines. It is the category set up to account for stretches that carry grammatical pattern. The unit has five sub-units of grammatical description, namely morpheme, word, group, clause and sentence viewed as a hierarchy either upwards or downwards. According to Berry (1990), one of the best approaches to text analysis is the use of a 'tree' diagram. A tree diagram shows a step-by-step description down the rank scale while preserving the sequence of the text' (p.120). Taking a morphological approach of grammatical description the sentence: would be analyzed as follows, using a tree diagram:



**Fig. 1:** A tree diagram showing immediate constituents using tree diagramming

The above diagram shows that the sentence consists of one main clause, a rank-shifted clause, three groups, eight words and twelve morphemes.

Each grammatical unit is in principle realizable by a separate chunk of phonological (or graphological) material. In the examples in (a) below the symbol '+' stands for the boundary of such a chunk, and not for syllable boundary (syllables are purely phonological units, and are established without reference to grammatical structure; for instance, while the word **fees** is monosyllabic it consists of two morphemes: fee+s).

(a)	reader:	read+er	/rid+ð/
	stolen:	stol+en	/stəul +ðn/
	musical:	music+cal	/mjuzik+l/
	sending:	send+ing	/send+iŋ/
	outspokenness:	out+spoke+en+ness	/aut+spəuk+ðn + nðs/
	translation:	trans+late+ion	/trænz+lei]+ðn/

The above examples according to Young (1990)

...are all of words segmented into two or more morphemes. The segmentability is not seriously affected by the fact that here and there is some mistiness or overlap at the borders of graphological or phonological chunks. It should be stressed that we are not saying that the grammatical unit actually is a stretch of spelling or sound, but that it is represented (or realized) by a stretch of spelling or sound (p.14).

Apart from the use of tree diagramming, the use of upright lines and bracketing are other ways of dividing a construction into its immediate constituents. The procedures for dividing the constituents of a construction using any of the above methods are essentially the same: the cutting proceeds in a binary fashion (Ndimele, 2003, p.135).

With brackets we can separate the immediate constituents of the sentence 'The boys pushed the cars' using the following steps:

- (i) Identify the subject and predicate of the sentence, and determine where their boundary is.

- (ii) Enclose the subject (the boys) in brackets, and do same for the predicate (pushed the cars)
- (iii) Know that the subject has two parts: the +boys; so use brackets to enclose (the) and do same for (boys).
- (iv) Know also that the predicate is made up of two parts: pushed which is the verb plus the cars which is the object; so enclose both in brackets.
- (v) The object also has two parts: the + cars; enclose each in brackets: (the), (cars).
- (vi) The head of the nominal group (boys), the verbal group (pushed) and the head of the second nominal group (cars) has two morphemes each, which must be enclosed in the brackets. If the procedure is strictly followed, the sentence can be represented as follows:  
(((The)(boy)(s))((push)(ed))((the)(car)(s))).

### 3. Data

Data on the inflectional processes of the two languages were obtained through questionnaire, oral interview, composition writing, translation exercise, and the library. The written test on guided composition and the translation test were administered to thirty randomly selected secondary school students of Bokyi origin. The topic of the written composition was 'The Bokyi new yam festival'. For the translation exercise, a passage in Bokyi was read to the students for translation into English. The test sought to find out the kind(s) of inflectional problem(s) that Bokyi speakers of English face in translating Bokyi texts into English.

The questionnaire, on the other hand, was administered to the lecturers, undergraduates, secondary school teachers and writers of texts on Bokyi language. It was designed to elicit information on the inflectional processes in Bokyi language. It consisted of thirty seven (37) items.

Also, an oral interview was administered to fifty (50) randomly selected aged Bokyi natives. As it was with the questionnaire, items in the oral interview were designed to elicit information on Bokyi inflectional processes. All information obtained through these instruments were analyzed vis-à-vis what obtains in English.

#### 4. Presentation of Data

This section presents the analysis/discussion of data on the inflectional processes of English and Bokyì obtained through the instruments stated in section 3.

##### 4.1 Noun Inflection in English

Nouns in English usually inflect for number and possession. For plurality, regular nouns inflect by adding the '{s}' morphemes to the base. This plural morpheme {-s} changes its form depending on the phonological environment that it finds itself: it can be /s/, /z/ or /ɪz/. These three sets of {-s}' morpheme are generally covered, in realization parlance, by one term - the Z morpheme (Eka, 1994, p.78). When the Z morpheme relates to plural formation, it is called  $Z_1$  morpheme; when it is concerned with the formation of possessives, it is called the  $Z_2$  morpheme and when it has to do with changes in verb forms, it is referred to as  $Z_3$  or Concord morpheme.

Since the focus in this section is on the inflection of English nouns, the discussion shall be limited to the plural morpheme ( $Z_1$ ) and the possessive morpheme ( $Z_2$ ). In English, the plural morpheme ( $Z_1$ ) has four allomorphs: /s/, /z/, /ɪz/ and /∅/. The morph /s/ occurs with words ending in voiceless sounds except /s/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ as in cats /kats/, books/buks/cups/kʌps/. The Z allomorph occurs with words ending in voiced sounds including all vowels and voiced consonants as in the following examples: mangoes /mæŋgəuz/, boys /bɔɪz/, and bags /bægz/. The /z/ is selected by words which end in alveolar or alveo-palatal sibilants (that is, consonants with sharp hissing sounds as /s, z, tʃ, ʒ/ as in the words bushes /buʃɪz/, fishes /fɪʃɪz/, churches /tʃʌtʃɪz/, judges /dʒʌdʒɪz/. The zero allomorph /∅/ occurs with words which normally do not have number (plural) indication, as in sheep, salmon and deer. Also, some loan words (borrowed into English from Latin) do not take the plural morpheme / $Z_1$ /; rather, a consonant or vowel is changed, replaced or added to have its plural, eg larva - larvae, schema - schemata, stimulus - stimuli, datum - data, ox - oxen, child - children, goose - geese, tooth - teeth, thief - thieves, man - men.

Another inflection of the English noun is the addition of the genitive marker – the marker realized orthographically as –'s at the end of the root/base. The ( $Z_2$ ) morpheme is similar in distribution to the ( $Z_1$ ) morpheme. The only difference is in the orthographic representation. Whereas plurals are not written with apostrophes, possessives have the apostrophe in a specified position. The distribution of the  $Z_2$  morpheme in English is as follows:

- /s/ occurs with words ending in voiceless sounds except the sibilant consonants as in Mark's /mæks/, Margaret's /mægrɛts/.
- /z/ occurs after voiced sounds other than sibilants as in James' /dʒeɪmz/, Martins/Ma:tinz/
- /ɪz/ occurs after sibilant sounds as in nurse's /nɜ:sɪz/, Rose's /rəʊzɪz/
- /ə/ occurs with words which end with sibilant sounds which may be plurals or words that naturally end with the letter 's' as in Jones' /dʒəns/ and students' /stju:dənts/, Agnes /əgnɪs/ etc.

The English possessive morpheme is often replaced with 'of + noun phrase constructions as in: 'The Army of Nigeria' instead of 'Nigeria's Army' 'The Vice Chancellor of the University of Calabar' instead of 'University of Calabar's Vice Chancellor', etc.

Despite all the phonological variants, certain possessive pronouns are indicated by suffixing '-s' (without the apostrophe) to the base pronominal form: 'yours, ours' except mine (mine). Besides, pronouns in English select sentence positions in which they occur. These pronouns are modified by the sentence to serve syntactic functions. For instance, it will be syntactically unacceptable to use 'she' at the objective position of a sentence. Consider the following:

- \* I slapped she yesterday
- ✓ I slapped her yesterday

Thus, the morphological shape of the pronoun 'she' (in the subjective case) changes to her (in the objective case).

#### 4.2 *Inflection of English verbs*

English verbs inflect for tense as a lexical property. Five inflectional forms are regularly identified: the base or infinitive form (V), the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular form (V+-s), the progressive (V+-ing), the past imperfective (V+-ed<sub>1</sub>) and the past perfective (V+-ed<sub>2</sub>). The way each of these forms inflect depends on whether the verb is regular or irregular. In English, a verb is said to be regular if it fits into a paradigm that yields consistent inflectional suffixes, marking the base form from the modified forms.

Like the Z morpheme discussed earlier, the past tense inflectional morpheme (also referred to as the D morpheme) yields three allomorphs arising from the phonological conditioning in their environments. The past tense morpheme (-ed) has the following allomorphs /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/ e.g:

kicked /kɪkt/  
 ministered /mɪnɪstəd/  
 wanted /wɒntɪd/

From the above, we realize that:

- /t/ occurs after bases ending in voiceless sounds except /t/
- /d/ occurs after bases ending in voiced sounds except /d/ and
- /ɪd/ occurs after bases ending in the sounds /t/ and /d/.

We also have the zero allomorph /∅/ which occurs where in an irregular verb, there is no change in the morphological shape of the verb to signal past time or present time. Examples:

hit (non past), hit (past)  
 put (non past), put (past) etc.

#### 4.3 *Adjective Inflection in English*

English adjectives, generally, inflect for degree and generally have two inflectional forms: the comparative, and the superlative. Whereas the regular adjectives inflect by adding the degree morpheme -er/more and -est/most to the base to form their comparative and superlative degrees respectively, the irregular adjectives on the other hand, form their comparative and superlative degrees in a variety of unpredictable ways. Below are a few examples of how the regular and irregular adjectives are inflected in English:

## (i) Regular adjectives

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
Tall	taller	tallest
Short	shorter	shortest
Beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

The above examples reveal that some regular adjectives inflect morphologically (eg. tall – tall-er), while some others inflect syntactically using the construction more and most (eg. more beautiful, most beautiful).

## (ii) Irregular adjectives

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
Good	better	best
Bad	worse	worst
Little	less	least

From the regular adjectives above, it can be seen that polysyllabic adjectives take the comparative adverb 'more' and its variant 'most' for their modification, to give them their comparative and superlative forms, while the monosyllabic adjectives take the morphemes '-er' and '-est' for their comparative and superlative forms respectively.

However, there exists another class of adjectives (the non-gradable adjectives). This class of adjectives names absolute or extreme qualities. Such qualities cannot therefore be compared or expressed in degrees. A few examples are *fatal*, *superior*, *unique*, *terrible*, *ghastly*, *wrong*, *right*, *round* etc. (Eka, 1994, p.76).

**4.4 Adverb inflection in English**

Adverbs in English have varied morphological shapes: those formed through the addition of a derivational morpheme to the base, for example:

- (i) anyway - 'any' being prefixed to 'way'
- (ii) intelligently - '-ly' being suffixed to 'intelligent'

Those formed through the addition of an inflectional morpheme to the base, e.g.



- (i) sooner - '-er' being suffixed to 'soon'  
 (ii) nowhere - 'no-' being prefixed to 'where'

and those not derived through affixation e.g. here, there, now, soon, fast, within, behind, well etc.

This section specifically deals with the inflection of English adverbs; that is, adverbs derived through the addition of inflectional affixes to the base, without altering its word class. In this circumstance, we find that adverbs inflect in the same way as adjectives do, for examples:

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
fast	faster	fastest
early	earlier	earliest
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest
quickly	more quickly	most quickly

#### 4.5 Inflection in Bokyì

While inflection in English as shown in Sections 4.1 to 4.4 is indicated mostly by suffixes; in Bokyì, inflection appears to use mostly prefixes. In the following sub-sections the inflectional patterns in Bokyì are discussed.

##### 4.5.1 Noun inflection in Bokyì:

This study reveals that Bokyì nouns are inflected by taking on any one of the following plural markers at the beginning of the word: 'ba-', 'bu', 'bi-', 'a-', 'e-'. However, the choice of anyone of the above as plural marker is not arbitrary; it is determined by the initial sound(s) of the relevant stem or base:

- (i) nouns that have 'bu-', 'n-', and 'm-' as initial sound/syllable (as the case may be) would take on 'ba-' as the plural marker, eg the plural of bukwan (bee) is bakwan (bees), nsang (writer), basang (writers), mbi (builder), bambi (builders) etc .
- (ii) Nouns that have 'di-' as initial syllable take on 'a-' as plural marker, e.g. the plural of difi (door) is afi (doors).

- (iii) Nouns that have 'ka-' as initial syllable take on 'bu-' as plural marker for example, the plural of kati (pot) is buti (pots).
- (iv) Nouns that have 'ki-' as initial sounds take on 'bi-' as plural marker, e.g. the plural of kichi (seat) is bichi (seats).

In all of the above cases the plural marker is found to replace the initial syllable of a given word.

From the above, it can be seen that Bokyi nouns inflect by alternating the initial syllable - bu with ba, ki with bi, ka with bu and ki with bi respectively.

#### 4.5.2 Adjective inflection in Bokyi:

Like English adjectives, Bokyi adjectives inflect for degree and have three forms, namely, the positive, the comparative and the superlative. But, whereas English adjectives inflect by adding the degree morpheme -er/more and -est/most to the base to form their comparative and superlative degrees, the Bokyi adjectives inflect by placing the enclitic 'kishuom'/'oshuom' and 'kishuom gbat'/'oshuomom gbat' immediately after the base to form their comparative and superlative degrees respectively. The following examples illustrate the formation of the comparative and superlative forms of Bokyi adjectives:

Positive + Kishuom/Oshuom P comparative  
(more than)

Positive + Kishuom gbat / oshuom gbat P superlative  
(More than all)

The above may be interpreted as follows:

- (i) The positive form of the Bokyi adjective has either 'ki-' or 'o-' as initial sound (inflection markers).
- (ii) Where 'ki-' is the initial sound of the positive form of the adjective, its comparative form would consist of the positive + kishuom, while its superlative form comprises the positive + kishuom gbat.

- (iii) Where 'o-' is the initial sound of the positive form of the adjective, its comparative form would consist of the positive + oshuom, while its superlative form would consist of the positive + oshuom gbat.

Bokyi has no irregular adjectives, and the comparative and superlative forms inflect in a consistent and predictable manner.

## 5. Similarities and Differences in the inflectional processes of English and Bokyi

The data analysed above reveals that while inflection in English applies to nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives, inflection in Bokyi applies to nouns and adjectives only. While nouns in English inflect for number and possession, the Bokyi noun inflection occurs only with regards to number. Also, while English forms its plural nouns by suffixing the plural morphemes '-s' or '-es' to the base, Bokyi forms its plural by prefixing any of the following plural markers to the base noun stem: 'ba-', 'bu-', 'bi-', 'a-', 'e-'. However, the choice of any of the above as plural marker is dependent upon the initial sound(s) of the base. Thus, nouns that have 'bu-', 'n-', and 'm-' as initial sound/syllable (as the case may be) would take on 'ba-' as the plural marker; nouns that have 'di-' as initial syllable take on 'a-' as plural marker; nouns that have 'ka-' as initial syllable take on 'bu-' as plural marker. Examples:

bukwop (road) — bakwop (roads)  
nkan (temptation) — bankan (temptations)  
mpan (judgement) — bampan (judgements)  
dikan (farm) — akan (farms)  
kati (pot) — buti (pots), etc.

The problem the Bokyi learners of English usually encounter in the area of English plural formation is not prompted by the fact that English forms its plural through suffixation and Bokyi through prefixation, but by the fact that while the Bokyi noun inflection are basically regular, the English plural noun inflection is sometimes irregular. This irregular inflection in English poses a serious problem to the Bokyi learner of English as a second language. This accounts for the difficulty which the Bokyi English users who

responded to the questionnaire for this study could not produce the plural form of words such as **larva**, **memorandum**, **agendum** and **schema**. It was also observed that the addition of the suffixes '-let', '-nette', '-en' to the relevant bases, rendered some of the sub-classes of English nouns diminutive. This feature of English inflection is equally alien to Bokyi learners of English. This area of difference need be noted by the Bokyi/English bilinguals and language instructors.

Also, English nouns inflect for the genitive case by adding the possessive morpheme '-{s}' to the base through suffixation. By contrast, Bokyi lacks the possessive marker. Possession in Bokyi is indicated in context. Consequently, Bokyi speakers of English tend to impose this feature of their  $L_1$  on English while performing in the  $L_2$ . The following was discovered from the translation exercise given to the Bokyi subjects studied.

<u>English</u>		<u>Bokyi</u>
Paul's father	-	bonchi Paul (father of Paul)
Janet's book	-	nwet Janet (book Janet) or nwet mu Janet (Book of Janet)

From the above, it can be seen that unlike English nouns, which are preceded by adjectives, adverbs or nouns serving adjectival function (e.g. University Council), Bokyi reverses the order so that the head of the Bokyi nominal group takes the position of what in English is the adjective. This indicates that possession in Bokyi is expressed syntactically, not morphologically. The data gathered also revealed that there is zero plural morpheme in certain English and Bokyi words; a situation which should ordinarily facilitate the learning process. But, a learning difficulty is posed by the fact that there is no one-to-one corresponding relationship between the English and Bokyi words that have zero plural morpheme. For instance, while the word 'sheep' has zero plural morpheme in English, it does not have in Bokyi. The tendency, therefore, is for a Bokyi/learner user of English to misuse those English nouns that have zero plural morphemes.

Our analysis of the English verbs (in the early part of this section) revealed that while the regular English verbs are inflected through suffixation (a pattern that is consistent and predictable) the English irregular verbs are inflected in a unique

and unpredictable manner. By contrast, Bokyí verbs are inflected by first adding the pronominal prefix 'o-' or 'okuo-' (as the case may be) to a verb stem. While the addition of the prefix 'okuo-' to the base will simply produce the progressive form of the verb, the addition of the prefix 'o-' to the same base would produce a structure that would require the application of tone to have the other four forms of the same verb, namely, the past imperfective, the past perfective, the present tense (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular) and the negative form of the verb. So, while English uses suffixes to show tense Bokyí uses pronominal prefixes and tone to indicate tense. Table 1 below shows the process of verb inflection in Bokyí:

**TABLE 1**  
Table Showing Tonality in Bokyí verbs

<b>A</b> Base	<b>B</b> Present (v+-s)	<b>C</b> Past imperfective (v+-ed1)	<b>D</b> Past perfective (v+-ed2)	<b>E</b> Progressive (v+-ing)	<b>F</b> Negative (does not +v)
Ki (give)	Okí (gives)	Okí (gave)	Ókí (given)	Okuokí (giving)	Òkí (does not give)
Fi (return)	Ofí (returns)	Ofí (returned)	Ófí (returned)	Okufí (returning)	Òfí (does not return)
Juab (drink)	Ojuáb (drinks)	Ojuáb (drank)	Ójuáb (drunk)	Okuojúab (drinking)	Òjuab (does not drink)
Fe (put)	Ofé (puts)	Ofè (put)	Ófè (put)	Okuofe (putting)	Òfe (does not put)

The result of the questionnaire and the oral interview administered to Bokyí speakers of English revealed that many Bokyí learners of English as a second language have no problem with the English progressive form. This may have resulted from the fact that the production of the progressive form in both English and Bokyí have the similarity of adding something to the base – a suffix (-ing) to the English verb base, and a prefix (okuo-) to the Bokyí verb base.

The two languages realize the other forms of the verb differently – while English uses the suffixes ‘-s’ and ‘-ed’, Bokyí uses tone. This difference may account for the following expressions from the composition test administered to the secondary school students.

- (i) They are all run to school.
- (ii) I have give him his book.
- (iii) The like to eat chewing gum every time.
- (iv) My father see gain from the chair business.

Also, Bokyí lacks the exact equivalents of the English modal auxiliary verbs – shall, should, will, would, can, could, may, might. All of the above are expressed by the Bokyí verb ‘nchi’. This poses a serious learning problem to the Bokyí learners of English as a second language. The study also revealed that whereas there is regularity in the realization of the various forms of the Bokyí verb, the English tense system is complex, as some past time verbs (irregular verbs) are realized through the process of substitution where vowels of the roots are replaced by other vowel sounds. It was also revealed that pronouns such as personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and demonstrative pronouns operate in the two languages – English and Bokyí. The personal pronoun in both languages operate at the level of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural, and at the subjective, objective and possessive cases. This shows a considerable level of similarity. But, examining closely the composition/operation of each type of pronouns, one discovers that there exist glaring differences between the pronouns of English and those of Bokyí. It shows that while some Bokyí pronouns have one to one corresponding relationship with some English pronouns (e.g. nki-yen @ itself, kira @ which, etc), others represent two or more English pronouns (e.g. the Bokyí equivalent of the English pronouns he, she, him and her, is yi, while the Bokyí equivalent of the English possessive pronouns his, hers and its is emen). The tendency over this situation is for Bokyí learners of English to misuse those English pronouns that are equally represented by a particular Bokyí pronoun.

In other words, a Bokyí learner of English as a second language may follow the generalization that English possessive

pronouns himself/herself, they/them, their/theirs, whom/whose/who respectively can be used interchangeably. This may account for the errors recorded in the translation exercise administered to the secondary school students and the primary school teachers. The following are the sentences recorded:

- (i) Who bag do you carry
- (ii) The goat put it mouth in the water
- (iii) The teacher give Oka him money yesterday...
- (iv) Me I will no go to fetch the water
- (v) The book is his own (his)

The English inflectional suffix '-selves' is usually added to a word to show plurality of reflexive pronouns (e.g. myself & yourselves, herself or himself & themselves) on the other hand, Bokyì inflectional suffix '-yen' is usually added to the stem of a personal pronoun to show plurality, for example:

be-yen (ourselves)  
 ben-yen(yourselves)  
 mbe-yen(themselves)

The two languages therefore have a similar system of plurality of personal pronouns, which does not pose learning problems to a Bokyì learner of English as a second language.

While English has both the regular, irregular and the non-gradable adjectives, Bokyì has just the regular adjectives (see sections 4.3 and 4.5.2). Like the English regular adjectives, the Bokyì adjectives, which are also regular, are inflected in three forms namely, the positive, the comparative and the superlative. But, whereas, the English adjectives (regular) are inflected by adding the degree morpheme -er/more and -est/most to the base to form their comparative and superlative degrees, the Bokyì adjectives are inflected by placing the enclitic **kishuom/oshuom** and **kishuom gbat/oshuom gbat** immediately after the base to form their comparative and superlative degrees respectively. This has already been discussed in the early part of this section. So, in Bokyì the above adjectival groups consistently serve as the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. The Bokyì adjectives are, therefore, similar to the English regular adjectives in terms of consistency/

regularity and predictability. This enhances the learning process in both languages.

But, the Boki learners of English as a second language experience difficulty in the learning of irregular adjectives as well as non-gradable adjectives. This may be caused by the fact that such types of adjectives are lacking in Boki. The following written expressions of some SSS III students in the questionnaire shows the students' areas of difficulty in English adjectives

(i)	high	<u>higher</u>	<u>highest</u>
(ii)	great	<u>greater</u>	<u>greatest</u>
(iii)	short	<u>shorter</u>	<u>shortest</u>
(iv)	bad	<u>bader</u>	<u>badest</u>
(v)	little	littles	?
(vi)	many	?	?
(vii)	Well	<u>wells</u>	?
(viii)	round	<u>rounder</u>	<u>roundest</u>
(ix)	fatal	?	?
(x)	superior	?	?

This calls for serious pedagogical attention to irregular and non-gradable adjectives.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has revealed that there are areas of similarities as well as areas of differences between English and Boki inflectional patterns. The areas of similarities tend to enhance and facilitate the learning process, whereas the differences tend to pose learning difficulties for the Boki learners of English.

The study revealed also that while English words inflect suffixally and prefixally, Boki words inflect by means of prefixation only. Though inflection in Boki as a morphological process is not as productive as that of English, inflection in both languages applies to nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs respectively. It needs be noted that the learning of English inflectional processes is usually problematic to a Boki learner/user of English. This results from the fact that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the inflectional processes of English and Boki in most cases. This major area of English morphology (inflectional suffixation



and prefixation) therefore requires extra attention by teachers who teach English to Bokyi learners. A teacher's good knowledge of the target language must be combined with the ability to adequately analyze the two languages (L<sub>1</sub> and the target language) showing areas of similarities and differences and their pedagogical implications. The English language text writer can avail himself/herself of this wealth of knowledge to guide him/her as these linguistic phenomena occur in many other African languages.

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