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A Contrastive Analysis of English and Pero Mophemes: Implication for Pero Speakers of English as Second Language (ESL)

Malata Andrew Zakayo and Hannatu Samaila

Abstract

*This paper analyses and contrasts the processes of the morphemes of English and Pero and the implication to Pero speakers of English. Previous studies have observed that second language learners of English to face certain challenges in every aspect of language when they use English whether verbally or in writing. This paper is a contrastive analysis of the various rules and processes of formation of words in the two languages via morphemes which were identified and classified for this purpose. The procedure utilized is Nida's six principles for identifying morphological processes in languages. The book of Luke's translated version of the Bible in Pero is employed to provide the Pero data to be contrasted with English. In trying to identify the similarities and differences, the morphemes of both languages were compared in order to postulate the degree of possible interference the learner would have in learning English as a second language. The matching method of contrastive analysis was applied and it was found that all word-formation processes are generally rule-governed; but in spite of that the rules are sometimes very complicated and some processes overlap and interpenetrate each other. It was also found that general similarities appear in both languages in affixation where prefixes and suffixes are used in formation of words via morphemes in both languages. The area of divergence was identified such as the inflectional process in English but in Pero it is derivation in the form of prefixation, compounding and reduplication. Likewise, some formation processes in Pero are not found in English such as the positioning of the morpheme that accounts for the doer of an action which is placed before the stem in Pero but in English it is attached at the end of the stem: "**an** buree" for fight**er**. Therefore, the Pero speakers of English are bound to encounter certain forms of interference as they speak English.*

Keywords: Morphemes, Morphological Process, Pero Speakers, Second language, Interference

Introduction

Language is a means used by man to express his ideas and give meaning to his existence as Bloomfield and Newmark (1963) opine that it is a fundamental means by which humans communicate with each other.

Oyedokun-Alli (2014) describes language as a tool that is used for socialization and social intercourse in which it distinguishes man from other animals. Similarly, Babatunde (2002) explicates that it is the expression of culture. Therefore, language is a very important tool to human communication as it cannot be separated from the individual and the society. Every language of the world has a set of specified rules that are observed by its users to enhance understanding. These sets of rules are the concern of linguists.

In linguistics, morphology is the study of words, their formations and relationship with other words in a language. It analyses the structure of words such as stem or root word, affixes, bound or unbound morphemes. Morphology also looks at the class of words and how context can change the pronunciation and meaning of a word. Vocabulary is generally considered to be the smallest unit of syntax in most languages. Consequently, many words are related to other words by rules that collectively describe the grammar of a language, for example, English speakers recognize that the words 'dog' and 'dogs' are closely related and differentiated by the plurality morpheme '-s' only found bound to nouns in English. Therefore, the speakers of English recognize these relations from their tacit knowledge of English rules of word formation.

Unlike English that has many morphemes, Pero has very little morphology where it uses almost exclusively unbound (free morphemes) to convey meaning, for example, 'wala', 'chu', 'jori' for beautiful, eat and tall respectively. This is because most words in Pero are compound and roots bound. Thus, this paper contrasts the morphology of English and Pero to identify the similarities and differences between the languages and the implication that the differences pose to a Pero speaker of English as a second language.

The concept of contrastive analysis was first introduced by Fries (1952), and fully described by Lado (1957). Contrastive analysis is a systemic branch of Applied Linguistics which deals with the linguistic description of the structure of two or more different languages. Such descriptive comparison serves to show how languages differ in their sound systems, grammatical structures and vocabularies. The findings of such analysis are useful in language teaching as they point out areas of similarities and differences that inform the teacher on areas of difficulty that need more emphasis and practice by the students/learners of the second language. Fries (1952) and Nickel

(1971) aver that a scientific and parallel description of the second language and the native language of the learners provide effective materials for the teaching and learning of a second language.

Contrastive analysis has two schools of thought as the strong version by Fries and others and Wardhaugh's (1970) and his corroborators' weak version. In its strongest formulation, it claims that all errors in learning the L2 could be attributed to interference by the L1. However, this claim could not be sustained by empirical evidence that many errors predicted by contrastive analysis were inexplicably not observed the learners, uniform errors were made by learners irrespective of the difference of the L1. This clearly showed that contrastive analysis could not predict all learners' difficulties but yet it was certainly useful in various explanations of learners' errors. Consequently, the weak version that does not attribute all learners' errors to the influence or interference of L1 on L2, but that others factors contribute also to errors in second language learning.

When a child acquires the native language, the child develops the language behavior which gradually becomes stronger and stronger but as the child learns a second language; they are very much influenced by the native language behavior. Where the structures of the two languages are the same or similar, no difficulty is anticipated but where the structure of the second language (L2) differs from the L1, difficulty can be predicted in learning as well as in performance. The more the differences in the structures of the two languages; the greater the difficulties a learner faces in learning the second language. Therefore, there is the need for learners to change their language behaviours to that of the target language. In this respect, contrastive analysis is useful as teaching is directed at the points of structural differences. Hence, the contrastive study of English and Pero morphemes.

This study on English and Pero languages via the linguistic tool of comparative analysis is to establish how Pero demonstrates morphological processes comparable with that of English as the Pero learns and uses English language as a second language.

The objectives employed to contrastively analyse the morphological structures of English and Pero are: identify the contrast between English and Pero morphemes; analyse the contrast between English and Pero morphemes; and explain the reason (s) for the contrast between English and Pero morphemes. The research limits its analysis to the contrast of the

morphological constituents of English and Pero using secondary data from documented English texts and Pero texts, music, sermons and oral interviews. This is so for the Pero language because of the dearth of documented texts in the language.

Literature Review

Several studies have been carried out that compared and contrasted the morphemes of English and other languages in respect of English as a second language some of which are reviewed here.

The concept of morphology avers that it is part of linguistics that deals with the study of the structure of words. It is interested in how a user of a given language understands complex words and invents new lexical items. Morphology is also the arrangement of morphemes to form words as it also concerns the forms of words in different uses and constructions. It is related to phonology as it concerns word forms, to lexical studies as it examines patterns used to create new words, linked with semantics as it deals with the meanings of words.

Morphology is basically differentiated as derivational or inflectional. Derivational concerns relationships of different words and the ways in which vocabulary items can be built from some elements as in 'un-speak-able'; while inflectional deals with the forms that a word takes up depending on its grammatical functions in sentences.

In morphology, the morpheme is the smallest unit of semantic or grammatical meaning that is the minimal unit of grammatical description that conveys meaning or minimal linguistic unit or the smallest, indivisible unit of semantic content or grammatical function of words (Nida, 1946; Katamba, 2006; Tomori, 2004; Booij, 2007). For instance, the word 'house' consists of one morpheme that can stand by itself called free morpheme, 'houses' consists of two morphemes with 'house' as free morpheme and 's' as bound morpheme because it cannot stand by itself, 'house' then is a stem. Bound morphemes are usually attached to a stem. Free morphemes are either lexical or functional morphemes. Morphemes are also either derivational or inflectional. Derivational morphemes are those which produce new words or change the function of the word. This is achieved by means of affixation (adding a prefix, suffix or infix) while inflectional morphemes only show the grammatical

function of words. This shows that morphemes are segmental, isolatable and analyzable into meaningful construct.

Morphological classes are sets of nouns that have the same number marking (Mark, 2010). Pero has about thirty, of which most are postponed, some plural markers are proposed or circumposed but it is not clear whether these markers should be analyzed as affixes or separate words. This is because they are probably not a homogenous group in terms of their degree of morphological bonding. Hence, they are all represented here as affixes. Class markers are also provided without tone marking because the underlying tone is not always clear, nor partly or fully lexically determined. The tone of the markers '–ra, -ta and –o', for instance, is usually high if the last syllable of the noun is high, but medium if the last syllable is medium; and when it is low, the tone of the class markers is not predictable.

The concept of contrastive analysis was introduced by Fries in 1945. He opines that the most effective materials in foreign language teaching are those that are based on scientific description of the language to be learned in parallel comparison to the native language of the learner. Later Lado (1957) used this proposal and the assumption that foreign language teaching can be improved by comparing the learners' native language with the language to be learned came to be known as the contrastive hypothesis with its basic assumptions as: first language acquisition and foreign language learning differ fundamentally; every language has its own specific structure where similarities will cause no difficulties but differences will occur due to negative transfer or interference; a systematic comparison between the mother tongue and foreign language to be learnt reveal both similarities and contrasts; such comparison enables the prediction or even the ranking of learning difficulties that in turn enables the development of strategies for making foreign language teaching/learning more efficient. In spite of CA's shortfalls to adequately account for the difficulties faced by second language learners, it still was useful despite the shift in focus to pragmatics and discourse studies which introduced new empirical methods that were corpus based. Recently, structural aspect of contrastive comparison has been brought back into the focus of attention, for example, Konig and Gast (2006).

Hawkins (1986) carried out a contrastive analysis of relative clause formation and wh-question formation in English and Pero where he found out that these operations must be kept apart, that is nominal modification versus

elicitation of value in an open proposition; both operations can be described in English and Pero in terms of some comparative concepts (extraction) and that they differ in terms of the external distribution of the relevant clauses of nominal modifier versus interrogative main clause. The operation of extractions as shown by Hawkins is subject to different restrictions in English and Pero where English allows extractions out of finite complement clause and non-finite adverbial clause and Pero does not allow extraction out of finite or adverbial clauses but extractions are possible only out of finite complement clauses.

Theoretical Framework

Nida's principles of identifying morphemes are used to identify English and Pero morphemes which are then compared and contrasted to show their areas of similarities and difficulties and the challenges that a Pero speaker or learner of English would face due to the areas' dissimilarities. Out of Nida's six principles, four are employed in this study because the other two are specific to Nida's theoretical assumptions and are less useful for this purpose.

Principle 1: forms which have a common semantic distinctiveness and an identical phonemic form in their occurrence constitute single morphemes. Semantic distinctiveness refers to similarities in the meaning postulate of a group of words to which a particular bound morpheme is attached. Also, similarities in the phonological realization of the bound morphemes affixed to the root of the words can be referred to as a single morpheme, for example, the '-er' element which in most cases indicate a doer of an action in words like dancer, singer, painter and so on.

Principle 2: forms which have a common distinctiveness but differ in phonemic forms may constitute a morpheme provided the distribution of formal differences is phonologically definable.

Principle 3: homophonous forms with distinctly different meaning constitute different morphemes. Homophonous forms are identifiable as the same or different morphemes on the basis of the following: homophonous forms with different meanings constitute different morphemes; those with related meanings constitute a single morpheme if the meaning classes are parallel by distributional differences, but then constitute multiple morphemes if the meaning classes are not parallel by distributional differences.

Principle 4: a morpheme is isolated if it occurs in isolation or in other combinations. A morpheme is isolated if it occurs: in isolation; in multiple combinations in at least one of which the unit with which it is combined occurs in isolation or in other combinations; in a single word provided the element with which it is combined occurs in isolation or in other combinations with non-unique constituents.

Methodology

The method employed for data collection include review of documents/texts, tape recorded music, sermons and oral interviews with the local chiefs, religious leaders and elderly in the community. The data was analysed by the juxtaposition of the Pero language and the English language to show the similarities and differences. This was done using Nida's principle of identifying morphemes to examine the morphemes in both languages. There are six principles proposed by Nida, and four of them were applied in isolating and identifying morphemes: forms which have a common semantic distinctiveness and an identical phonemic form in all their occurrences constitute a single morpheme, forms which have a common distinctiveness but differ in phonemic form, homophonous forms with distinctly different meaning constitute different morphemes, and a morpheme is isolated if it occurs in isolation or in other combinations. The other two principles are specific to Nida's theoretical assumptions hence, less generally useful for this purpose.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Eclectic analytical model where a number of sources such as documents/texts, tape recorded music, sermons and oral interviews for the Pero data were used for identification, isolation of morphemes and analysis of some morphological processes of English and Pero; translations are also part of the analytical model employed for analysis. The data gathered is first presented followed by the analysis that attempts more details to establish the extent to which differences occur in both languages. The two languages are described from the point of view of the morphemes, sentence units and the processes they employ.

Each language has its unique morphosyntactic rules and morphemic variations (Tomori, 1977; Language Files, 2004). These variations which are

a series of change in the shapes of linguistic forms matched with a series of change in position are common in English morphemes but they are in partial existence in Pero morphemic system where Pero morphological process does not subscribe to inflection but to derivational processes such as prefixation, compounding, and reduplication.

Pero unlike English mostly employ the use of derivational processes as indicated in the Pero verbs below:

1.	English:	fight	fights	fighting	fought
	Pero:	bure	bure	bure	bure
2.	English:	talk	talks	talking	talked
	Pero:	paaro	paaro	paaro	paaro
3.	English:	sleep	sleeps	sleeping	slept
	Pero:	shina	shina	shinani	shingo
4.	English:	burn	burns	burning	burns
	Pero:	kuru	kuru	kurani	kurko
5.	English:	plan	plans	planning	planned
	Pero:	shiri	shiri	shiriyani	shirigo
6.	English:	open	opens	opening	opened
	Pero:	abu	abu	abani	apukgo
7.	English:	cut	cuts	cutting	cut
	Pero:	karu	karu	karani	kargo
8.	English:	lift	lifts	lifting	lifted
	Pero:	chadu	chadu	chadani	chadago
9.	English:	answer	answers	answering	answered
	Pero:	meno	meno	menani	menago
10.	English:	pronounce	pronounces	pronouncing	pronounced
	Pero:	Kabu	kabu	kabana	kapgo

The morphemes in the above lexis show that English makes use of inflections to express grammatical notions, but Pero is not that much inclined. Therefore, Pero is not morphosyntactic and does not mostly show morphemic variations and syntactic functions with regard to the indication of tense. This means that for Pero speakers of English, there would not the use of inflections, instead the tendency is for such a speaker to use only the simple/based form in constructions where the continuous or passed forms are needed, that is, instead of saying 'he cuts' it will be 'he cut' or instead of 'she is cutting' it

will be 'she is cut'. For most of the English and Pero above it is observed that Pero base forms and the present forms are the same unlike that of English where the present form takes on the 's' morpheme. Also, the continuous and passed forms in Pero are those that changes are noticeable in their forms indicating the continuous and passed actions. But even with that, the forms are irregular in Pero, for instance, number 1, 'bure' is for the continuous form and in number 2, 'paaro' for continuous form; and in number 3 shinani for continuous form while in English the 'ing' form is what is obtainable for the continuous form. Similar differences are also indicated in the Pero passed forms in the examples above,

Following Nida's principles of identifying and isolating morphemes, principles 1-4 are used below in contrasting English and Pero morphemes where the similarities and differences are pointed out.

Principle 1: identifies forms that show common semantic distinctiveness and identical phonemic form. The –er element which in most cases indicates the doer of an action has been identified as a morpheme based on the fact that it expresses same phonemic forms and common semantic distinctiveness in such words as: teacher, driver, singer, banker, worker and so on. Since this morpheme accounts for a doer of an act or performer, it is therefore expected that it will be applicable to all-natural languages which will ordinarily subscribe to this principle. Pero like any other natural language conforms to this principle, though that of English it is attached at the end of the stem morpheme while that of Pero is prefixed to words (stems), for instance "an buree" is fighter as analysed below:

1. buree (fight) - Anburee (fighter) - Ummo anburee (this is a fighter)
2. noddanwee (sin) - annoddanwee (sinner) - banimo annoddanwee (here is the sinner)
3. konom (love) – an konom (lover – na wego an konom (I got a lover)
4. jere (friend) – anjere (a friend) – ummo anjere – (this is a friend)
5. fonog (song) – anfonog (singer) – banimo anfonog (here is the singer)
6. chuber (teach) – an chuber (teacher) - ne an chuber (I [am a] teacher)

The above examples, indicate that Pero morphemes display the same semantic distinctiveness but not the same semantic form as that of English is suffixed to words: singer, teacher, driver; and that of Pero is prefixed to words: 'anburee', 'an konom', 'anjere'. Therefore, morphemes are identifiable, isolatable and analyzable in Pero.

Principle 2: morphemes show common semantic distinctiveness, but different phonemic forms. This implies that the difference in the phonemic forms do not affect the semantic implication of such morphemes and the differences in form are accounted for by the law of phonological conditioning, for instance, the English morphemes "il, im, ir, in, un' whichall express the sense of 'not'based on the appropriateness of the phonological conditioning in the different forms where 'il' comes before alveolar lateral sounds; 'im' before bilabial plosives; 'ir' before liquid sound; and 'in' before vowels. Pero does not exhibit common semantic distinctiveness and different phonetic forms in its use of negative markers. Instead emphatic markers are used especially in denials to indicate negation where the bound morpheme 're' in Pero, which usually comes at the end of the structure shows that despite the sameness of form, there is no common semantic distinctiveness with the morpheme 're' in Pero because in one instance it is an emphatic marker and in another instance it is a negation while in English different phonemic forms show common semantic distinctiveness. This implies that phonemic forms do not affect semantic distinctiveness either in English or Pero, for example:

're' as emphatic marker in Pero:

Pero: // an jeddere//

English: they are friends

Pero: //ninya mur piccire//

English: those people

Pero: //la yeere//

English: a young man

're' employed in Pero as negation marker:

Pero: //Nayu paaro kangke foori ticcire//

English: I did not mention you or I did not talk to you.

Pero: //Ayu achakkai yeere//

English: He did not do it or He is not the one who did it.

Pero: //Kudukeju waru piccire//

English: They refused to go there.

Pero: //kudukeju waru chale anmire//

English: They refused to go to their savior

Pero: //nakam tugu kufure//

English: I wasn't on the grave yard

In the English examples of 'il, im, ir, in, un' it is implied that variants exhibit semantic distinctiveness and phonemic differentiations due to the environment of occurrence, but Pero does not have explicit negative markers as English, instead the emphatic marker is used to achieve negation in the instances of denials. This indicates that the context of occurrence determines whether the morpheme that has been used is for emphatic or negation purposes. It also shows that Pero unlike English does not use phonological conditioning with regard to negative markers. This contrast indicates that the morphological composition of words differs from one language to another in certain aspects or areas as seen in the differences between English and Pero.

Also, principle two further explains that phonemes or order of the phonemes may constitute a morpheme provided the distribution of formal differences is phonologically definable. This is found in English where some words show irregularities in their plural state or word class, for example, ox becomes oxen and child becomes children. In Pero, the idea of plurality is achieved by prefixation of 'bound' morphemes to words using prefixes such as 'la, an, ti and n'.

Principle 3: forms that sound alike, that is, homophonous forms. They are identified as the same or different morphemes on the basis that:
i.   Homophonous forms with distinctly different meanings constitute different morphemes, for example:
   a. Advice – an opinion recommended   //munukokko paaro chi ikko//
   b. Advise – the act of advise   // tamungo munukokko paaro//
   c. Allowed – to permit   //ma wacho mayu//
   d. Aloud – to speak audibly   //mawacho mayu paaroi bang//

The above examples are homophonous morphemes that though they sound alike, they mean different things in the English examples. Similarly, the Pero examples indicate that the concept of homophonous forms are obtainable in the language.
ii.   Homophonous forms that are related in meaning connote a single morpheme depending on the distributional difference, otherwise they constitute multiple meanings, for instance:
   a. He would <u>water</u> flowers (V)   //<u>tamunu</u> am ta filawa//
   b. He jumped into the <u>water</u> (N)   //<u>jubbugo</u> ya am ni chakka//
   c. Adamu might <u>smoke</u> tomorrow (V)   //Adamu ta <u>cho</u> tuwa doji//

d. Adamu ended up in <u>smoke</u> (N)	//Adamu <u>chego</u> tuwa//
e. He would <u>humble</u> you (V)	//ta<u>medigon</u> lawu//
f. He is <u>humble</u> (N)	//<u>medigon</u> kuni lawu//

The above sentences clearly demonstrate that there exist some grammatical differences in the order of occurrence of the underlined morphemes in the strings. Based on the position of occurrence, for instance in example 'a', the word <u>water</u> indicates an action (verb) on the flower; and in 'b' the same word indicates that it is a thing (noun). Also, in the Pero examples, there are grammatical differences in the order of occurrence of words as in sentences 'a' and 'b' of the Pero examples above. The morphemes assume the status of nouns and verbs, but still constitute the same morphemes because they constitute the same meaning in spite of the distributional differences. This has been criticized by modern linguists who say that a form appearing in different grammatical classes should constitute different morphemes but same lexeme. The concepts of homophonous forms are also observed in Pero as seen in the examples above.

Principle 4: certain forms are not isolatable in English, for example: receive, ladder and so on. Any attempt to split such words will alter the meaning, but in Pero, a word can be isolatable when used in a sentence, for instance:

'Fili' means land - //Ngmo fili mu// means this is our land

'wala' means beauty - //Wala garimu// means the beauty of our land

'Mina' means house - //ngmo minamu// means this is our house

'Gadda' means room - //gagdamu// means our room

'Deleng' means pot - //chadu delengmo// means carry this pot

'Chudei' means wood - //ngmo chudemu// means this is our wood

'Tagha' means shoe - // ngmo taghana//means this is my shoe

'Shira' means hand - //mamu shwaaluko shirim shin bong-bong ar ipu kelko nim// means if you ignore the good teaching, you will not be forgiven

'mamu' and 'ngmo' cannot stand in isolation except in a sentence. This indicates that, although Pero is agglutinative as can be seen in the examples above where there are no morphemes that do conform to it as the examples of 'mamu' and 'ngmo' do not conform to the fact that in agglutination each element is considered to be a separate word capable of being used as such. So, in Pero, the agglutinative elements depend on the adjourning elements in the 'word-sentence' to make meaning. Therefore, irrespective of the forms 'mamu' and 'ngmo' that resemble independent morphemes in comparison to

the other morphemes obtainable in Pero, English and other languages; these ae bound not free morphemes in Pero. This might not affect the Pero speaker of English instead the reverse might be the case when an English speaker or any other language speaker learns Pero. The tendency is for such a speaker to appropriate 'mamu' and 'ngmo' as free morphemes.

Discussion of Findings

The findings that ensued from the data analysis are the uses of derivational morphemes of affixes are found in both English and Pero. While in English the affix indicating a doer appears at the end of the word as a suffix, in Pero, it appears at the beginning as a prefix. This shows that the affix for the doer is inverted in Pero: 'anburee' – fighter, 'anfong' – singer, and 'anchuber' – teacher, in contrast with that of English that is added at end of the word.

Another finding is the use of negative markers to show the sense of 'not' which has to do with the phonological built up of the words. In English, the morphemes have a common distinctiveness but differ in phonemic forms as 'il, in, im, ir' while in Pero, there is no exhibition of common semantic distinctiveness and different phonemic forms. Instead, the words do exist in isolation and can also stand for denial or negation. The area that this study dwelt on was that of negation in sentences not in isolation as that of English, for example: 'ayu a chakkai yeere' – he is not the one who did it.

Linguistic forms that are homophonous and have different meanings were also identified in both languages. This shows that there are words in both languages that sound alike but differ in meaning. Therefore, in Pero like English, the environment /context that the homophonous word appears in determines the meaning of the word, for example:

English: allow (permit), aloud (speak audibly), bank (of river), bank (financial institution)

Pero: 'ya bong no sherko bong bong (I am calm within me), 'la minjire sherko ka merge' (that boy stopped walking'.The above examples indicate that principle 3 is applicable to both English and Pero.

It was also found that in English and Pero, there are some morphemes that are not isolatable in words, for instance, receive, ladder, finger where the 're-' and '-er' are not separable from the 'ceive' and 'ladd' to indicate that they are morphemes. Irrespective of the similarities in their forms, the re- and

–re are not morphemes as in the case of rework, singer and so on. Likewise, in Pero, there are words that cannot stand on their own, except in a sentence, for example, 'mamu' and 'ngmo' as indicated in the sentences under principle 4 in the analysis above. The differences observed between English and Pero point to the fact that languages differ in terms of words and sentences as what is isolated in English might not be isolated in Pero.

Consequently, as observed in the literature review, it is expected that these contrasting of English and Pero morphological processes would enable the prediction and ranking of the expected learning difficulties by the Pero learner of English. This will in turn enable the development of strategies by the Pero English learner and the second language teacher of English to Pero speakers for the efficient teaching and learning of English.

Conclusion

The contrastive analysis of English and Pero morphemes indicate that there are areas of convergence as in the case of morphemes indicating the doer of an action and homophonous forms with distinct meanings constitute different morphemes as presented in the analysis under principle 3 i and ii; and divergence between the two languages where English uses inflections and Pero uses derivations in the form of prefixation, compounding and reduplication. The convergence enhances the learning of English by the Pero speakers while the divergence may make them encounter certain forms of interferences when they speak English as a second language. Therefore, the Pero speakers of English as well as their English language teachers need to be mindful of these areas of divergence, such as, inflections, position of affix formations and others.

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Malata Andrew Zakayo, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, Gombe State University. She specializes in phonetics and phonology and has interest in sociolinguistics. **Email**: zakayomalata@gsu.edu.ng

Hannatu Samaila is a graduate with B. A. English degree from the Department of English, Gombe State University. **Email**: hannatusamaila52@gmail.com