A STUDY ON SEMANTIC IMPLICATIONS OF MORPHOLOGICAL INTRAFERENCE AMONGST EDUCATED SPEAKERS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PORT HARCOURT

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Abstract
This work examined semantic implications of morphological intraference among educated speakers of the English language in Port Harcourt. The aim was to identify the morphological intraference, determine the causes of the common types of morphological intraference and examine the semantic implication of the morphological intraference in Port Harcourt. The Interlanguage theory was adopted as the framework of the study while descriptive method was adopted as the design of the study. The study uses a sample size of 227 teachers in 20 selected private nursery and primary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. Stratified and simple sampling techniques were used for selection of the participants. Data were collected through observation and secondary sources. The study found that the educated Nigerians exhibits morphological intraference in English nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, especially when dealing with difficult words. It also found that many types of morphological intraference are caused by overgeneralization, inadequate knowledge of grammar, hypercorrection, over-inclusion, mis-selection of morphemes, misanalysis, and in other cases coinage of new words. The study concluded that though morphological intraference distorts meaning to an extent, the errors can be decoded by listeners while the newly coined words are mostly acceptable among a community of users who share common linguistic environment. It was therefore recommended that there should be a collection of words that have elements of intraference as a data for teaching grammar in schools. Teachers should always adopt appropriate grammar teaching methods which will enhance knowledge of the English grammar among learners.
Keywords: Morphological Intraference, Second Language speakers, Semantics

Introduction

Languages vary widely in how words can be analysed into word elements, or morphemes. In English there are numerous examples, such as "replacement," which is composed of *re-,* "place," and *-ment,* and "walked," from the elements "walk" and *-ed.* Morphology therefore includes the processes of inflection and derivation. Inflection marks categories such as person, tense, and case, for example, the verbs "sings" contains a final *-s,* marker of the 3rd person singular. Derivation on the other hand, is the formation of new words from existing words; for example, "singer", noun is formed from "sing", verb and "acceptable", an adjective is formed from "accept", a verb. The derived words, such as nouns can also be inflected: "singers" from "singer."

Interestingly, language is governed by rules. Word formation in English follows rules and patterns that are peculiar to the English language grammar. Morphological rules are the building blocks of language, shaping how words are formed and modified. They govern how smaller units of meaning are combined to create new words or change existing ones. It also allows language users us to express complex ideas

efficiently. Understanding these rules helps the users to decode unfamiliar words and expand their vocabulary. While most words follow predictable patterns, exceptions like irregular verbs and borrowed terms add richness to English, reflecting its diverse linguistic heritage. Morphology accounts for the rules and patterns for word structure and formation with a focus on morphemes. Morphological rules govern how morphemes are combined, such as creating new words and determining affix attachment to base words. For example, morphemes categorised as free, stand alone in sentences while bound morphemes must attach to roots.

However, there is an existence of concept called 'intraference' in language use especially amongst second language users. Ekundayo (2013) describes the concept of intraference as the habit of redeploying the rules, dynamics and semantic properties of a language from a section where they have been established and acceptably operate to another section within the language where they hitherto used not to operate. He found that educated Nigerians deploy additional meaning to advance English words leading to new or additional meanings which may not be in Standard British English. Sometimes, features of their native or first languages are found in the process. If educated Nigerian second language speakers are not exempted from lexico-semantic intraference, morphological intraference can also be found in their use of English language. Intraference is concerned primarily with (nonnative) language speakers who do not understand their (second) language perfectly and are affected by such psycho-sociolinguistically relevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention, interest and sociocultural context. They are further affected by such linguistic dynamics as the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and orthographic rules and items that characterise their (second language, as they apply their knowledge in actual performance (Ogbulogo, 2005).

Educated Nigerians are advanced speakers of the English language based on their level exposure to English language. Even though they are nonnative speakers, most of them have gradually attainment a level of mastery in the use of English language. Educated Nigerians are persons who have attended a post-secondary school qualification like National Diploma (ND), National Certificate of Education (NCE), Higher National Diploma(HND), a first degree in any field, more than a first degree, senior government and private-sector workers and other literate Nigerians who may not have the qualifications listed above, but have had trainings, interacted widely with educated people over a time, or have travelled widely, or have a sound family and/or educational background. Most of these individuals to a great extent speak the English fluently.

However, despite serving as models for English learners in the Nigerian society, some educated Nigerians, to a great extent demonstrated that they are not native speakers of the English language. Subtly, their English use are marred by deviations in some levels of language analysis, such as phonology, morphology and syntax. As stated earlier, morphology deals with word formation. Some educated Nigerians can misapply certain morphological rules with the English language. Sometimes, this results from over generalization, substitution or deletion of morphological elements. For example, when two or more morphological patterns in a language conflict or overlap, it can lead to errors or inconsistencies as in the case of the English regular plural marker "s". Speakers might mistakenly apply the "s" in the wrong morphological environment as in "sheeps" instead of "sheep".

Despite the status of English as Nigeria's official language and the introduction of its teaching as a subject in Nigeria's educational system at the primary school stage and use as the medium of instruction from the upper primary school level through the tertiary education system, many educated Nigerians often exhibit morphological intraference in their use of English. This phenomenon occurs when word formation processes and phonological patterns of English are not properly applied while speaking English language. Inadequate mastery of English

morphological rules, generalization of rules or substitutions of morphemes lead to errors in word formation.

Morphological intraference might lead to miscommunication, loss of clarity, resulting **to** social or academic consequences. In language learning, it can lead to long-term mistakes or fossilized errors, making it harder for learners to reach native-like fluency. While it is a natural part of the language acquisition process, particularly for second-language learners, it is important to be aware of how these errors can affect both communication and attainment of proficiency. Therefore, this work examines the morphological intraference of English language spoken by educated Nigerians in Port Harcourt

Literature Review

Morphology, as a branch of linguistics deals with how words are formed and it focuses on studying word structure. Morphemes are the smallest grammatical unit which has meaning. They cannot be further divided into smaller units. Free morphemes and bound morphemes are kinds of morphemes. Free morphemes can be defined as morphemes that can stand alone because they already have meanings. A free morpheme is a grammatical unit that can occur by itself (Ogbulogo, 2009). The examples of free morphemes are book, deliver, table, learn, think, put, apple, etc. Unlike free morphemes, bound morphemes are morphemes which cannot stand alone and must be attached to free morphemes to get their meanings. A bound morpheme is a grammatical unit that never occurs by itself, but it is always attached to some other morphemes. The bound morpheme is not a word. They must be joined to other free morphemes (words). Bound morpheme consists of derivational and inflectional morphemes, known as. Examples: boy + ish = boyish, un + rest = unrest, book + s = books etc.

Morphology is therefore generally described as the study of the internal form of words and the rules of the organization of words in a language. From the examples given above, morphemes are categorized into two broad classes:

free morphemes and bound morphemes. A free morpheme can stand alone as an independent, single word. In contrast, a bound morpheme cannot normally stand alone and must be typically attached to another form. Thus, all affixes in English are bound morphemes and they include prefixes attached to the beginning of free morpheme (such as re- in words like reinvent, reopen and rewrite), and suffixes attached to the end of free morpheme (such as -er/-or in words like opener, inventor and writer). Finally, the morpheme to which an affix is attached is called the base or stem morpheme (Thomason, 2001).

Lexical and Functional Morphemes

Free morphemes are classified into two categories. These are lexical and functional morphemes. Lexical morphemes in English consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. These have inherent meaning and can transmit the content of the messages speakers want to convey. Typical examples of such lexical morphemes are *student, teach, spend, save, short, happy, frank*, and *honest*. Lexical morphemes can be added to both English and other languages; thus they are also described as content words or open class of words (Çelik, 2007). On the other hand, functional morphemes contain mainly the functional words in English such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions, quantifiers and pronouns. Some examples are the, *a/an, on*, with, *but, when, because, few, many, them and she*. Since new functional morphemes cannot be created in the English language easily, they are treated as a closed class of words.

Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes

Further distinction within the set of bound morphemes in English are classified into inflectional and derivational morphemes. Derivational morphemes are the types used to create new words or to "make words of a different grammatical class from the stem" (Yule, 2010, p. 69). For example, the addition of the derivational morpheme -'ize' changes the adjective *normal* to the verb *normalize*. Similarly, the adjectives *helpful* and *helpless* are derived by adding the derivational morphemes –'ful' and 'less' to the noun *help*.

Derivational morphemes are a powerful means of word formation in English, and it includes using numerous prefixes and suffixes.

The second type of bound morphemes in English are inflectional morphemes. They are used to show some aspects of the grammatical function of a word. Inflectional morphemes are used to indicate if a noun word is singular or plural, whether a verb is past tense or not, and whether some adjectives or some adverbs are comparative or superlative form. In fact, inflection exists in many languages, but compared to other languages of the world there is relatively little inflection in English (Muysken, 2000). Examples are attachments of the morpheme -ing to verbs to indicate tense- meet + ing (meeting), speak + ing (Speaking). Another involving nouns are the attactments of –s, as a plural marker to a noun- book + s (books), car + s (cars).

Word Formation Processes

Affixation is the most common way of forming new words in the English language. However, the human language is so enormous and creative that it goes beyond affixation and provides new ways of forming words (Winford, 2003). They are:

Coinage: Though not a very common word formation process, coinage refers to the creation of entirely new, previously nonexistent words or terms in a language. It is simply that speakers invent or coin new words to denote previously nonexistent objects or concepts (Winford, 2003). The word google is currently the most noticeable example of coinage in English. As the name of a company (Google), when used without the capital letter, the term *google* has today become a commonly used expression meaning "to use the Internet to find information about what you are searching (Yule, 2010).

Borrowing: Borrowing, which means the taking over of words from other languages, is one of the most common processes of word formation in English. Due to the rapid advances in technology and communication, languages have borrowed numerous words from one another. Borrowed words, also known as loanwords, are common in English and other languages around the world. Throughout history, English has borrowed a great number of words from other languages. Typical examples of the words English has directly borrowed from other languages include *algebra* (Arabic), *yogurt, aslan, shish kebab*, (Turkish), *bergamot* (from French bergamote, from Italian bergamotta, ultimately from Turkish bey armudu, literally, "the bey's pear"), *croissant* (French), *piano* (Italian), *lilac* (Persian), *shish kebab* (Turkish), *sofa* (Arabic), *tattoo* (Tahitian), *tycoon* (Japanese), *zebra* (Bantu). In this process of borrowing, the borrowing language directly translates the elements of a word, term or phrase (Plag, 2003).

Compounding: The joining of two or more separate words to produce a single form is technically known as *compounding* and very common in English. Common examples of English compounds are *notebook, textbook, bookcase, girlfriend, footprint, fingerprint, wallpaper* and *waterbed*. Some compound words introduced recently into English are *Facebook, YouTube, power nap,* and *carjack* (Spencer, 1991). In English, *The White House, school bus,* and *decision making* are also compounds but written as two words. These examples of English compounds are mostly nouns, but it is also possible to produce compound adjectives (*icy-cold, bittersweet*) and compound words consisting of noun (*spoon*) plus verb (*feed*) as in *Start to spoonfeed your baby at around six months.* The most salient characteristic of this word formation process is that when the two words have the same grammatical category in common, the compound is also in this category (Fromkin et al. 2011). For example, *homework, girlfriend, landlord, paper clip* and *elevator-operator* are all *nouns* consisting of *noun* plus *noun*.

Blending: Blending is the word formation process in which parts of two separate forms combine to produce a single new word whose meaning is often a combination of the original words. Typically, two words are "blended" by taking the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word. The following are some common examples of everyday "blended" words with their meaning.

Brunch (combination of *breakfast* and *lunch*, which means food that combines both breakfast and lunch).*Smog* (a combination of *smoke* and *fog*, meaning a type of air pollution caused by the smoke and fog). *Motel* (a combination of *motor* and *hotel*, which means a hotel designed for travelers with vehicles).

When blending two existing words, we can also combine the beginnings of the two words (often terms from information technology, like *modem* (from *modulator* and *demodulator*) and *telex* (from *teleprinter* and *exchange*), but this type is infrequent. In summary, all these examples show that blending is a creative word formation process in which two words are merged into one and a new term is produced on the basis of sound structure.

Clipping: This process of word formation happens when a word of more than one syllable (*photograph*) is reduced to a shorter form (*photo*). Similarly, everyday *fax* is the clipped form for *facsimile*. Common examples of English clippings are *bike* for *bicycle, maths* for *mathematics, gas* for *gasoline, phone* for *telephone, bus* for *omnibus, van* for *caravan*, *prof* for *professor, fan* for *fanatic, ad* for *advertisement, telly* for *television* and *gym* for *gymnasium*. As Yule (2010) states, particularly educational environments encourage the process of clipping because so many of them are reduced as in such examples ad *chem, vocab, exam, gym, lab, math, phys-ed, poly- .*

Orthographically, there are also some *clipped abbreviations* such as *Dr.* (*doctor*), *Mr.* (*mister*) and *GB* (*gigabyte*) whose spellings have been shortened but whose pronunciations are not essentially different. Demirezen, (2002) describes another kind of clipping known as *ellipsis.* This form of clipping can be seen in English expressions such as *the baker's* (for *the baker's shop*), *a daily* (for *a daily newspaper*) and *white-collar* (for *white-collar-worker*). Some part of the structure or phrase is omitted "for reasons of economy, emphasis, or style (Katamba, 2005).

Backformation: A very specialized type of word formation process is known as backformation in which an actual or assumed derivational affix is removed from the base form of a word to create a new word. A good English example of backformation is the process whereby the verb *televise* was created from the noun *television* that was already in use. As in this example of backformation, one type of word (often a noun) is created to form another type of word (often a verb). Other common examples of words created by backformation are *edit* from *editor, donate* from *donation, enthuse* from *enthusiasm, babysit* from *babysitter, opt* from *option, euthanase* or *euthanize* from *euthanasia, sculpt* from *sculptor* and *liaise* from *liaison*. Consequently, this process of word formation seems to be an overgeneralization of derivational affixes because *-ion* and *-or* are mistakenly considered derivational affixes in the above examples (Katamba, 2005).

Conversion: When a word of one grammatical category becomes a word of another grammatical form without any changes to pronunciation or spelling, this process of word formation is generally known as *conversion*. In English, numerous nouns like *email, chair, vacation, bottle, butter*, and *host* have come to be used as verbs through conversion: *I will email you the document as soon as I finish revising it. Jessica chaired the meeting yesterday. Sue and Robert are vacationing in Marmaris this summer*.

This common process of word formation is also labeled as "category change" or "functional shift" and sometimes referred to as 'zero derivation' or 'null derivation' because it is assumed that the formal class alteration between words leads to the insertion of an invisible morpheme. However, it is assumed to be a very productive word formation process like clipping and the like (Bauer, 2001). In English conversion is particularly a productive process, with new uses occurring commonly. It seems fair to state that the most productive form of conversion in English is *noun to verb* conversion, as in the above examples. However, it can also include verbs being converted to nouns (e.g., *guess, must* and *spy* as the sources of *a guess, a must* and *a spy*) and phrasal verbs becoming nouns (e.g., *to print out* and *take over* as the sources of *a printout* and *takeover*). As Yule (2010,

p. 57) exemplifies, verbs (*see through, stand up*) also become adjectives, as in *see-through material* or *a stand-up comedian*. Similarly, adjectives, as in *a dirty floor, an empty room, some crazy ideas* and *those nasty people*, can become the verbs *to dirty* and *to empty*, or the nouns *a crazy* and *the nasty*.

Acronyms: Acronyms, also called initialisms, are new words produced from the initial letters of a group of other words. For example, *DVD* is an acronym for *digital video disk*, *ATM* is another acronym for *automatic teller machine* and *VCR* is likewise an acronym for *video cassette recorder* where the pronunciation consists of saying each separate letter (D-V-D, A-T-M and V-C-R). Other common examples of acronyms in English include ***NATO*** /ˈneɪ.təʊ/ from North Atlantic Treaty Organization, ***NASA*** /ˈnæs.ə/ from National Aeronautics and Space Administration, ***UNESCO*** /juːˈnes.kəʊ/ from United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and ***UNICEF*** /ˈjuː.nɪ.sef/ from United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. These acronyms are typically pronounced as new single words and written in capital letters. In everyday English, however, many acronyms have lost their capital letters and become everyday terms, including *scuba* (*s*elf-contained *u*nderwater *b*reathing *a*pparatus), *zip* (*z*one *i*mprovement *p*lan) code, *laser* (*l*ight *a*mplification by *s*timulated *e*mission of radiation), and *radar* (*r*adio *d*etecting and *r*anging).

Intraference

Linguistic intraference was first used by Ekundayo (2006) in a research entitled "The Concept of 'Intraference' in ESL: Nigerian English Examples". Ekundayo coined intraference to denote the creative fabrications, deviations and variations based on the rules of English (as a second language: ESL). Since the deviations and variations in ESL emanating from a native and/or first language are called interference, a term that has become established, Ekundayo argues that deviations and variations caused by the application of the dynamics of the second language itself, without reference to the second language user's MT or L1 influence, should be called intraference because they are situated within the second

language, so that when we examine interference, we can also examine intraference to balance the scale.

Ekundayo's (2006, 2013) have described intraference as the habit of transferring the rules and dynamics of a language from a section where they have been established and where they acceptably operate to another section within the language where they do not operate. "Since such a transfer is within the language, it is better tagged intraference, which is the reverse of interference" (p. 20). Ekundayo (2013) states that intraference is concerned primarily with (nonnative) language speakers who do not understand their (second) language perfectly and are affected by such psycho-sociolinguistically relevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention, interest and socio-cultural context. They are further affected by such linguistic dynamics as the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and orthographic rules and items that characterise their (second) language, as they apply their knowledge in actual performance**.**

Intraference denotes intralingual variations and deviations. The coinage is intended as a counterpoint to interference, that is, interference versus intraference, so that when interference, which has become a well-established term is treated, intraference would be understood as its counterpart (Ekundayo, 2013). Intraference is coined from a consideration of three morphemes: inter-, intra and –ference. "Inter-" and "intra-" are productive affixes used to create words in English. The two affixes (prefixes) are mutually exclusive. The well-established interference itself is an amalgam of inter + ference (to strike). Thus interference means contact between two things.

Intra (being a bound form) has been combined with 'ference' to have 'intraference'. Analogically, intra (within) plus (+) ference (to strike or contact) means to disturb, strike or make two things contact each other within an entity. So, the combination of intra and ference will result in a clash or contact within a thing. In the context of this work, it is a contact within an entity, which is language at the level of morphology. The –ference is the noun formation, meaning an internal contact

or disturbance within that is linguistic "intraference" (Ekundayo, (2013). Intraference, which is the reverse of interference, is the transfer or redeployment of second language rules, items and system from sections where they operate in the language to sections of the language where they have hitherto not been operating.

In intraference, (second) language users consciously and/or unconsciously engage in self-correction using the rules of the (second) language, extend morphological or semantic features, apply linguistic items to have questionable or acceptable formations and extends segmental and supra-segmental features and rules to areas where they are not usually apply. A careful examination of English as second language (L2) shows that some variations are traceable to the deployment of the dynamics of the English language itself. Examples of these dynamics are in grammatical rules and exemptions, word formation rules and inconsistent phonetic and phonological applications. These features collectively, in addition to limited competence and sociolinguistic factors, form the extenuating circumstances in which L2 learners produce certain variations in ESL, as in the educated Nigerian English.

Theoretical Framework

Interlanguage theory is adopted to guide the study. The term 'interlanguage' was initially proposed by Larry Selinker (White, 2003). He stated that interlanguage is a linguistic system that is used by the L2 learners and it is influenced by the L1 (mother tongue). When the learners learn the target language, the learners build their own system of language which is different from their L1.

Saville-Troike (2006) described interlanguage as 'transfer', meaning a transition of prior knowledge from L1 to L2, as one of the processes that is involved in interlanguage development. Further, she identifies two types of transfer: positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when an L1 structure or rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is appropriate or "correct" in the L2. Meanwhile, negative transfer occurs when an L1 structure or

rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is inappropriate and considered an "error". In this process of transfer, the aspects of language involved are vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and all other aspects of language structure and use.

There are five central processes that exist central to second language learning. First, language transfer; second, transfer of training; third, strategies of second language learning; fourth, strategies of second language communication; and fifth, overgeneralization of TL linguistic materials. In the first process (language transfer), some of the rules in the interlanguage system may be the result of transfer from the learner's first language. The learners use their mother tongue to create their own language system and this is not an error but the process that must be passed by the learners when they learn the second language (Ekundayo, 2013).

In the second process (transfer of training), some of the components of the interlanguage system may be the result from transfer of specific elements through which the learners is taught the second language. In the third process (strategies of second language learning), some of the rules in the learners' interlanguage may be the result from the application of language learning strategies as a tendency on the part of the learners to reduce the TL to a simpler system. In the next process (strategies of second language communication), interlanguage system rules may also be the result of strategies employed by the learners in their attempt to communicate with native speakers of the target language.

At the last process, overgeneralization, some of the rules of the interlanguage system may be the result of overgeneralization of specific rules and features of the target language. For instance, the learners can say "I goed home" to overgeneralize English rules by adding -ed at the end of verb to express the past form. This error happened because of learning strategies. It is at this point that intraference comes into play. Although the educated Nigerians are considered to have attained a high level of mastery in the

second language, it should be in mind that they are second language speakers. It is in the process of applying a learned rule that this error comes in. Some educated Nigerians sometimes use a particular morphological rule in situations where they ought not to. This theory is suitable to this study because it can help to describe those areas of morphological intraference in the usage of some educated Nigerian English speakers.

Methodology

This work adopted a descriptive research design. This design helps to explain an existing phenomenon. The study uses a sample size of 227 teachers in 20 selected private nursery and primary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. This study focuses on the English language of educated Nigerians particularly primary school teachers. The researcher observed and compiled a list of statements that suites the aim of the study from participants. Respondents were engaged in series of conversation. Secondly, data were collected from social media group chats (such as WhatsApp and Facebook chats), personal chats and texts with some of the participants of the study. This aided the collection of data on morphological intraference from the selected private nursery and primary school teachers.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Morphological intraference associated with noun

S/N	Expressions	Morphological intraference
1	I hate gossipers	Gossiper (gossips)
2	Talking of braveness, our director is brave	Braveness (bravery)
3	The non-effectiveness of the policy saved the manufacturer	non-effectiveness (ineffectiveness)
4	Godfatherism is the major problem of Nigerian politics	Godfatherism (Benefactor)
5	I am a sickler	Sickler (sickle cell carrier)
6	Most of our SS 3 are jambites	Jambites (students seeking admission into tertiary institutions)
7	Nudeness is no longer a sin in our society	Nudeness (nudity)
8	She is her co-wife	Co-wife (wives in a polygamous family)
9	That particular hospital doesn't have equipments at all	Equipmnts (equipment)
10	Corpers are federal government properties	Corpers (corps members)

Morphological intraference associated with verbs

S/N	Expressions	Morphological intraference
1	I was the one that shined light for them to see	Shine (shone)
2	My little baby has awoken	Awoken (awaken)
3	I freezed everything	Freezed (froze)
4	The little girl choosed fish instead	Choosed (chose)
5	I intentionally ghosted them	Ghosted (ignored)
6	We are Vibing	Vibing (enjoying)
7	Voting takes place after a voter has been accreditated	Accreditated (accredited)
8	Why is she vexing	Vexing (angry)

9	I have collected bounded copies of my project	Bounded (bound)

Morphological intraference associated with adverbs

S/N	Expressions	Morphological intraference
1	I paid Installmentally	Installmentally (installment)
2	I just bought it now-now	Now-now (on the spot)

Morphological intraference associated with adjectives

S/N	Expressions	Morphological intraference
1	Politicians are very Trickirious	Trickirious (tricky)
2	The criminals were Armless	Armless (Unarmed)
3	I don't like all these arrangee marriage	Arrangee (matching-making marriage)
4	They had the bestest moment	bestest (best)
5	Her beautifulness is deceiving her	Beautifulness (beauty)
6	She is plumpy	Plumpy (plump)
7	What I don't about her is her notice-me attitude	notice-me (showy)

As the tables show, the morphological intraference occur with all open class words, which are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. This is because, these words allow attachment of prefixes and suffixes for the creation of new words which may or may not change the grammatical class and function of the newly created word. Its importance therefore lies in its ability to enhance meaning, expand vocabulary, and convey grammatical relationships. The finding therefore is that morphological intraference occur in the English usage of nursery and primary school teachers with all the open class words.

This finding agrees with Wayar and Saleh's (2016) study which contends that educated Nigerians fall short in English grammar. This finding also corroborates Wayar and Saleh's (2016) view that extent of grammatical errors among Nigerian speakers are determined by many factors such as level of education and exposure to English language. This is because, most often, using English does not present complex challenges to those who have acquired it from birth or have opportunities for proficient usages. Morphological intraference among this category of speakers minimal compared to others who lacked good background and did not attend quality schools. The finding also agrees with Tinuola (2023) that among the numerous issues associated with second language acquisition, error identification has been acknowledged as the most inevitable even among educated Nigerians. With morphological intraference being an aspect of English grammar that many educated Nigerians still struggle to overcome due to less exposure to English language and other factors.

For instance, some of the teachers had difficulty with the use of –*ing, -ed* and transformation of irregular verbs. Therefore they attached the past tense maker or the progressive maker to verbs that do not require such regardless of their uniqueness. With the pluralization of nouns, not all nouns use –*s* for formations of plural and many words are exempted from this rule. Lack of knowledge of these restrictions result to attaching –*s* morpheme to words such as *equipment-equipments*, *furniture-furnitures.* Other class changing morphemes are also regularly misapplied. For example, *-er* is wrongly applied to the words *gossip* and *corps* to create nouns, *gossiper* and *corper* respectively. This misuse of their morphemes is attributed to already existing morphological process of deriving nouns from verbs by the use of the derivational suffix –er.

The level of education of speakers significantly impacts the frequency of morphological intraference among educated Nigerians. Nigerians with higher educational qualifications or those who have studied abroad

tend to commit fewer errors compared to those who have limited exposure to formal education.

Classification of the Type of Morphological Intraference
(Based on Heydari and Bagheri (2012), James (1998), Hanna (1986) on intralanguage)

S/N	Expressions	Morphological intraference	Classification of intraference
1	I hate gossipers	Gossiper (gossips)	Overgeneralization
2	Talking of braveness, our director is brave	Braveness (bravery)	Misanalysis
3	The non-effectiveness of the policy saved the manufacturer	non-effectiveness (ineffectiveness)	False analogy
4	Godfatherism is the major problem of Nigerian politics	Godfatherism (Benefactor)	Coinage
5	I am a sickler	Sickler (sickle cell carrier)	Overgeneralization
6	Most of our SS 3 are jambites	Jambites (students seeking admission into tertiary institutions)	Coinage
7	Nudeness is no longer a sin in our society	Nudeness (nudity)	Misanalysis
8	She is her co-wife	Co-wife (wives in a polygamous family)	Coinage
9	That particular hospital don't have equipments at all	Equipmnts (equipment)	Overgeneralization
10	Corpers are federal government properties	Corpers (corps members)	Misanalysis
11	He was an academician	Academician (academic)	Overgeneralization
12	Our Sufferness here is getting out of hand	Sufferness (suffering)	Misanalysis
13	I was the one that shined light for them to see	Shine (shone)	Overgeneralization
14	My little baby has awoken	Awoken (awaken)	Inadequate knowledge
15	I freezed everything	Freezed (froze)	Inadequate knowledge
16	The little girl choosed fish instead	Choosed (chose)	Overgeneralization
17	I intentionally ghosted them	Ghosted (ignored)	Coinage
18	We are Vibing	Vibing (enjoying)	Overgeneralization
19	I paid Installmentally	Installmentally (in installment)	Misanalysis
20	I just bought it now-now	Now-now (on the spot)	Coinage
21	Politicians are very Trickirious	Trikirious (tricky)	Misanalysis
22	The criminals were Armless	Armless (Unarmed)	Mis-selection
23	I don't like all these arrangee marriage	Arrangee (match-making) marriage	Coinage
24	Her beautifulness is deceiving her	Beautifulness (beauty)	Overgeneralization
25	She is plumpy	Plumpy (plump)	Overgeneralization
26	What I don't like about her is her notice-me attitude	notice-me (showy)	Coinage

These intraference result from the misuse of morphological process of deriving words or word forms, such as affixation (derivations and inflections) and coinage with coinage being the dominant cause of the intraference. Derivations are situations where words change from a word class to the other while inflections only extend the meaning of a word, especially showing the tense in the case of verbs and showing plurality in the case of nouns. This means that morphological intraference can affect content and grammatical words in English.

This finding agrees with Alobo (2008) that most educated Nigerians, especially the students increasingly find it difficult to compose an English writing without grammatical errors especially in their use of lexical verbs, which may affect meaning of their expression. Many educated Nigerians who are less exposed to English language encounter problems in different areas of language including morphology and others. Word formation is a critical aspect of English grammar that takes time to learn. This is compounded by the fact that many English words are Latinate or French. Many others have been borrowed from other languages due numerous language contact. Hence, English words show high level of inconsistencies with the use of prefixes and suffixes. Similarly, while some have zero tolerance to affixation, such as *equipment*, others slightly change their spellings as seen in *shine-shone*. Therefore, second language learners of English the English morphological system and enough exposure to master each word and how they transform.

As this finding revealed, the educated Nigerians are likely to use the processes of inflection, derivation and conversion to fabricate words that may not be found in native English varieties. This habit of forming and using the words is what Quirk et al., (2003), described as "nonce and hybrid formations" and because such words carry the memory of similar established words in the language and Ekundayo (2013) called it intraference." Verbs and nouns are mostly affected in morphological intraference.

This study also agrees with Ridha (2012) that two factors responsible for the learner's error in the second language (L2) learning. They are the influence of the first language (L1) which is called external factor, and the process of learning the second language itself (L2). The first factor for learners' error in the second language is called inter-lingual transfer, which is usually known as the first language interference. Brown (1994, p. 224) states that "especially in the initial periods of learning a second language, before the structure of this second language is being acquainted; the first language is the only preceding linguistic structure upon which the learner can draw". Therefore, at this level the error manifests in the learner's activity due to their familiarity with the first language. So the effect of transfer, whether directly or indirectly from the first language to the target language, is somehow inevitable. This form of transfer can be positive if the elements match but if they do not closely match, the transfer is said to be negative.

The second factor to learners' error in the second language is intra-lingual errors, which is related to the system of the second language (L2) itself. As such, it can be caused due to the learner's insufficient learning or lack of grammar knowledge, faulty teaching, simplification, overgeneralization, avoidance, confused thinking or lack of contrast of both languages (Ho, 1973, cited in Tinuola, 2022). Thus, Richards (1971) in Tinuola, (2022, p. 12) description of intralingual errors as "those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to the learning conditions for rule application, the learner attempting to build up hypothesis about English from his limited experience" can be related to intraference because they are error. As the errors that are initiated within the structure of English itself, due to the misconception of the rule of grammar in the English language.

For   instance,   the   process   of **overgeneralization** is a way to evade grammatical inadequacy, second language

learners prefer to select the simplest forms in the structure instead of the complex ones. Examples include: vibe + ing (vibing), equipment + s (equipments), corps + er (coper), sickle+er (sickler) and others. In the same way, man educated Nigerians do not possess conscious knowledge of morphological rules of English. This inadequate knowledge shows up as intraference at the morphological level. Many irregular verbs do not follow a specific rule instead they must be learned individually. Where the speaker lacks the knowledge of any of them, the error shows up. For example, 'awaken' can be presented as 'awoken', 'froze' can be presented as 'frozed'. Speakers sometimes find ways to avoid difficult words thereby using the simpler ones or the wrong ones.

Coinage is a strategy educated Nigerians have used to capture ideas within the social environment. This process leads to creation of certain morphological processes that are not in existence in the Standard English. Coinage can be seen as creativity in language because speakers maneuver linguistic elements to produce words that can help them to express their ideas. Many words have been created through this process. Examples are 'vibing' (enjoying), 'ghosted' (to ignore), 'co-wife' (wives of a polygamist), 'Jambites' (students seeking admission into tertiary institutions) 'notice-me' (showing an attitude of being good to deceive others) 'arrangee' (to organise) 'now-now' (immediately) and others.

According to Heydari and Bagheri's (2012) hypercorrection and James' (1998) over-inclusion, speakers adhere to certain rules and do not care about exceptions to the rules. They apply the rules in locations where others have occurred. For example, instrument accommodates -s, complement can accommodate –s and increment can also accommodate –s. Therefore, second language speakers can zealously attach –s to equipment (equipments), -s to staff (staff), and –s to sheep (sheeps). Over-inclusion or hypercorrection results from the learners' over cautious and strict observance of the rules.

Mis-selection as identified by James' (1998) is another class of morphological intraference in the analysed data. It has to do with the wrong selection of morphemes and attaching them to roots. Examples are trick + y (tricky), explain + ation (explanation), arm + un (unarm). However, some speakers might select other morphemes that break morphological rules. For example, explain + ment (explaniment), trick + ious (trickirious), etc. Mis-selection is common in inflections.

Semantic Implication of the Morphological Intraference

S/N	Expressions	Semantic implications
1	Politicians are very <u>Trickirious</u>	Crafty, cunning, untrustworthy
2	The criminals were <u>Armless</u>	possessing no arms, unarmed
3	I was the one that <u>shined</u> light for them to see	Indicating past tense of shine, which is shone.
4	My little baby has <u>awoken</u>	Indicating past tense of awake, which is awaken.
5	I <u>freezed</u> everything	Indicating past tense of freeze, which is froze.
6	I paid <u>Installmentally</u>	Payments were made in parts or installments
7	I just bought it now-now	Emphasizes the time it was brought, which is just a moment or munites ago
8	We are <u>Vibing</u>	Vibe is a noun, which means feeling or atmosphere. Vibing expresses feeling of happiness or enjoyment.
9	What I don't like about her is her <u>notice-me</u> attitude	Flamboyant and showy to deceive others or in a tricky way.
10	I don't like all these <u>arrangee</u> marriage	Arrangee is coined from arrange. it is as an adjective to describe match-making between a man and a woman who

		might be compatible for marriage
11	This product is finer than others	'Finer' stands for 'better'. It describes physical beauty
12	I hate gossipers	Gossip is one of the words (nouns) that do not undergo any changes except when it indicates plural. Gossip refers to an abstract idea of harmful remarks on someone and also refers to the person who makes the remark.
13	Talking of braveness, our director is brave	'Braveness' is from the root, brave.
14	The non-effectiveness of the policy saved the manufacturers	This suggests the word, ineffective.
15	I am a sickler	Careers of sickle cell anemia are generally called 'sicklers' in Nigeria
16	Most of our SS 3 are jambites	JAMB is an examination body and in charge of tertiary education in Nigeria. Students who enroll in universal tertiary matriculation examination seek admission into a tertiary institution. They are called jambites
17	Nudeness is no longer a sin in our society	Nudeness is a wrong presentation of nudity
18	She is her co-wife	In a polygamous community, women who are married to a man are considered 'co-wives'
19	That particular hospital don't have equipments at all	Equipment is one of the words (nouns) that are considered neutral in terms of being singular or plural. However, second language speakers attach –s as way of indicating plural.
20	Corpers are federal government properties	'Coper' is from the French word, corps, originally referring to a division of the military. Participants are referred to as 'corps members'. In Nigerian English, young graduates who engage in national assignment are called 'corpers'.

Morphological intraference occurs when a speaker applies the rules or structures of a language in a wrong way in the process of using words. Morphological intraference is common in prefixes and suffixes. Morphemes carry units of meaning and helps the speaker to express his or her ideas. When speakers are unable to master the morphological rules ad applies them wrongly, the listeners will definitely encounter difficulties in assimilating the ideas of the speaker. Misapplication of rules leads to incorrect word formation.

The speaker might incidentally create a grammatically incorrect words, which disrupts the clarity of the sentence. For example, the use of *sheeps* and *equipments* creates confusion among listeners. Since *sheeps* and *equipments* do not exist in English language, some listeners might wonder if the speaker intends to pronounce 'ships', 'cheeps' or other words that have similar sounds. Again, meaning of words and sentences are affected when the speakers fail to use appropriate tenses during speech. Words that do not reflect the grammar of the language makes communication look unnatural and unserious. Such errors might change a context of interaction to informal. It definitely leads to misunderstandings.

In other situations where listeners understand that a speaker is deficient in the grammar, his errors creates distraction among listeners. Even though the listener has the ability to deduce meaning, he is still distracted because he needs more time to process the utterances of the speaker and to draw conclusion on the actual meaning of the expressions. Morphological intraference affects meaning by causing errors in the structure of words, leading to misunderstandings or awkward expressions. While

some errors may still be comprehensible, they can alter the intended meaning or make communication less clear. Mastering the morphological rules of a second language helps avoid such interference and ensures clearer and more accurate communication.

Conclusion

Morphological intraference is an area in grammar that has received little attention from language researchers. As far as English language is used as second language among educated Nigerians, errors cannot be completely erased from their expressions. Errors can manifest at the phonological level as well as morphology and syntax. At the level of morphology, speakers are affected by interference and intraference. Language intraference is a pervasive phenomenon among second language learners of English, which reflects the complexity of the English language. As a result of exposure to English because of education, language intraference occurs more frequently in the speech instead writing. Furthermore, the intraference types observed suggest that English language in Nigeria has acquired remarkably characteristics leading to uniqueness of the Nigerian variety of English. While language intraference may be viewed as a deviation from standard language norms, it also underscores the creative and adaptive nature of language use among non-native users, which educated Nigerians belong. Intraference affects meaning negatively but most speakers are able to decode the expressions of others. Also, creativity in language in form of coinages, which might be described as intraference have helped to enhance communication instead of hindering communication.

Recommendations

Following the outcome of the research, the following recommendations are made:
1.   The teachers of English should have a collection of words that have elements of intraference as a data for teaching grammar in schools. This teaching material will enhance easy identification of words affected by intraference and to fully understand the meaning of language intraference among English second language learners.
2.   Teachers should always adopt appropriate grammar teaching methods which will enhance knowledge of the English grammar among learners.
3.   Language scholars should examine the meaning potentials of coined words, which are also influenced by intraferenece to determine if they will be fully adopt as words since they represent meanings within the Nigerian linguistic environment.

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