

Progressive inflectional patterns in Tiv

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Abstract: The study entitled 'Progressive inflectional patterns in Tiv' is relevant because it complements the body of literature on Tiv inflection. Previously published papers on Tiv inflection at the disposal of the researchers do not treat progressive inflectional patterns in the language, let alone anchoring the study of progressive inflection in the Tiv language on Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM). Hence, the present study is designed to examine the progressive inflectional patterns in the Tiv language using the theoretical framework of Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM). The objectives of the study are to examine the progressive inflectional patterns featuring suffixation in the Tiv language and progressive inflectional patterns in the language featuring zero affixation. Since the study is designed to examine the progressive inflection in the Tiv language, the survey design was adopted. Data for the study were collected using semi-structured interviews and the researchers' introspection. The study discovered that progressive inflectional patterns in the Tiv language are marked using suffixation and zero affixation respectively. The findings also show that progressive inflections are marked in the verbal roots so that such verbs can fit in with the syntactic structures in order to express ongoing activities or actions in the Tiv language.

Keywords: Inflection, Morphology, Parameters, Principles, Progressive, Syntax

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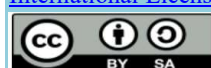
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1. Introduction

The relationship between morphology and syntax cannot be over-emphasised because morphology usually builds up word-forms by combining roots with other roots or affixes, for example; {boy} + {-s} → boys, {go} + {-ing} → going, {mother} + {in} + {law} → mother-in-law. Then, syntax combines the existing words to form phrases, clauses and sentences. Inflection is relevant to grammar because words are inflected in order to be used in sentences. (Anderson, n.d). Going by syntactic agreement, the subject of a sentence agrees with the verb in number, quantifiers and demonstrative adjectives agree with the noun they are preceding (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010). For example, in the sentence 'The baby cries', the subject "baby" is singular and the verb 'cries' is also singular. In the phrase, 'this boy', the demonstrative 'this' is singular and the noun 'boy' is also singular while in the phrase 'these boys', the demonstrative 'these' is plural and the noun 'boys' is also plural. Inflection in English language is not only limited to nouns which show numbers, but verbs are also inflected to mark tense, number, progressive as well as past participle. Inflection takes place in Tiv nouns to mark plurality and possession whereas in verbs, inflection marks tense and progressive forms in the Tiv language.

In view of the relationship between morphology and syntax, verbs are inflected to express progressive actions in sentences across languages but the surface ordering of progressive inflection is parameterised. In English, verbal roots undergo inflection through the suffix {-ing} to mark progressive actions, for example; becoming, punishing, visiting

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but in the Tiv language, progressive inflection is marked with different suffixes such as ‘in, -on, -n, -en, -in and zero affixation, for example, *gbidèn* ‘beating’, *kôôn* ‘ironing’ *civir* ‘respecting’ et cetera. Going by the idea of principles, it is believed that the Tiv language marks progressive forms just like any other language as in *téen* ‘selling’ *lámén* ‘talking’, but parameters such as suffixation using {-n}, {-on}, {-en} et cetera and zero affixation are used to mark progressive forms in the Tiv language. Thereby, the patterns for marking progressive forms in the Tiv language are different from those of the English language. Inflection of verbs to mark ongoing actions is a grammatical process because for progressive actions to be expressed in Tiv, verbs have to be inflected so that they can suit in their context of use.

Previous studies were carried out on Tiv inflections, however, the available literature at the disposal of the researchers does feature any study of progressive inflection in the Tiv language which was anchored on Paradigm Function Morphology. Hence, the present study of progressive inflectional patterns in the Tiv language is anchored on Paradigm Function Morphology. The theory is adopted for assessing the morphological changes in the internal structure of words which enable such words to fit in with the syntactic structures in the Tiv language. Owing to the fact that the study is theory-driven, the study is designed to prove the workability of Paradigm Function Morphology on progressive inflectional patterns in the Tiv language. The aim of the study is to analyse progressive inflectional patterns in Tiv and the objectives of the study are to examine the progressive inflectional patterns with suffixation and zero affixation in the language.

Aronoff and Fudeman (2005) and Crystal (2008) say that inflection is the process of modifying the shape of a word without altering the grammatical category of the word so that it can fit in with a particular syntactic structure. This implies that the inflection of a word never alters its grammatical category. Babarinde (2009) and Lieber (2009) submit that inflection simply means the change made to the shape of a word to show its relation to other words in a sentence. According to Babarinde (2009), inflection is also called inflectional morphology which is a rule-governed process of changing the shape of words so that they can perform certain grammatical functions such as plural, past tense, progressive and possessive markings. Going by this view, we would say that inflectional morphology is the grammatical process of altering the shape of words so that they can perform some grammatical functions in sentences.

Booji (2010) on the other hand, says that inflection is the morphological process of altering the form of words for a grammatical purpose, and that so many languages feature inflection to mark number and case. According to Booji, inflections are morpho-syntactic categories because they can play a role both in morphology and syntax. He uses the Polish word *kot* ‘cat’ as an example, claiming that *koty* ‘cats’ is the plural form. Booji recognises the role of verbs in inflection by saying verbs are inflected to show tense, aspect and mood. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2011) define inflection as the process through which bound morphemes are attached to roots to mark properties such as tense, number and person. This definition considers inflection as the process of using a morpheme to mark a grammatical function such as tense, possession, progressive and number. The definitions of inflection given by the above authors imply that inflection is a grammatical process which can bring about a change in the form and pronunciation of a word to mark tense, number, case and gender in a sentence.

2. Review of related literature

Jija (2012) studied aspects of pluralisation in the Tiv language using the descriptive method. The study aimed at sorting out the morphological processes of pluralisation in Tiv as a vital aspect and step towards the standardization of the grammar of the Tiv language. The findings of the study show that plural inflectional features in Tiv language include pre-fixation, suffixation, infixation, replacives, and pluralisation by tonality. The present study departs from the previous study since it examines progressive inflectional patterns in the Tiv language using the notion of Paradigm Function Morphology.

Yina (2009) carried out a study on ‘Radical particles and inflectional processes in Tiv morphology’. The aim of the study was to explore inflectional processes in Tiv through the Intuitive Competence approach. He submits that inflections in Tiv are characterised by prefixation, additives, replacements and tone changes. The findings of the study were derived from the notion that every native speaker of Tiv has an intuitive competence for pluralisation in the language. However, the present study considers progressive inflection in Tiv as a morpho-syntactic process, where changes are made in the internal structure of words so that the words can occupy certain positions and mark grammaticality in the syntactic structures in the Tiv language.

Adzer (2016) studied Tiv morpho-syntactic relations. The aim of the study was to describe the link between morphology and syntax in the Tiv language. The study was anchored on theory of Generative Grammar propounded by Noam Chomsky. The findings of the study show that nouns are inflected in Tiv to show number, progressives and agreement between the subject of a sentence and the verb. The previous study focused on the link between morphology and syntax using Generative Grammar whereas, the present study examines the progressive inflectional patterns in Tiv using the theory of Paradigm Function Morphology.

Udu (2009) in the book entitled ‘Tiv language: A reference book’ asserts that progressive inflections are featured in Tiv language through suffixation. Udu studied progressive in the language using the descriptive approach. Orkar (2013) confirms the above assertion by Udu in the book titled ‘Essentials of Tiv language’. The researcher too studied progressive inflections from the descriptive perspective. Orkar submits that verbs in Tiv undergo inflections by suffixation to mark progressives. The present study differs from the previous studies on progressive inflections in Tiv because the latter is anchored on the theory of Paradigm Function Morphology.

3. Research methodology

The researchers held semi-structured oral interviews with select native speakers of Tiv during which he asked them questions such as ‘How do verbs in the Tiv language change to mark progressive inflection?, What are the different changes in the shape of verbs to mark progressive forms in the Tiv language? What are the verbs that maintain their original shape to mark progressive forms in the Tiv language? List the progressive forms of some verbs in the Tiv language’. Since the study is designed to examine the progressive inflection in the Tiv language, the survey design was adopted.

Data for the study were collected from native speakers of Tiv who hail from Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State. The aforementioned local government area in Benue State was chosen for the study because the variety of Tiv spoken around Gboko axis is considered to be the central Tiv since the variety is commonly spoken and understood by all native speakers of Tiv; the orthography of the variety is also used by most Tiv writers. Data for the study were also collected using the researchers’ introspection. The collected data were analysed based on the objectives of the study which are to examine the various patterns for progressive inflection in the Tiv language.

4. Theoretical framework

The study adopts the theory of Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM) which was propounded by Stump (2001) and applied to the study of inflection in English. PFM is a morphological theory that accounts for the inflection of words for a grammatical purpose. The theory strongly holds that different forms of the same root are central to the inflectional system of any language (Stump, 2012). The theory is realizational because it presumes that the inflectional patterns of a word are realised at the grammatical level of any language. PFM is inferential because it holds that word forms are derived from roots using the morpho-syntactic patterns of a particular language.

Stump (2012) asserts that rules for realising the pronunciation of an inflected word are not predicated directly over the cells in the content paradigm but rather, the rules are determined by the form paradigm; a set of forms sharing the same root. The theory of PFM is suitable for the study because it accounts for the morphological changes that occur in the shape of words, phonological realization of the set of cells and the relevance of such changes in the syntactic structure of the Tiv language.

5. Data presentation and discussions

5.1. Progressive inflection marked with zero affixation

This table presents progressive forms in the Tiv language that are marked using zero affixation.

Infinitive	Gloss	Progressive	Gloss
1a. kíí	press	kíí	pressing
1b. òvúgh	clean	òvúgh	cleaning
1c. yévésé	run	yévésé	running
1d. sôô	woo	sôô	wooing
1e. túghúr	push	túghúr	pushing
1f. cívír	respect	cívír	respecting
1g. wúesé	praise	wúesé	praising
1h. úlúgh	pull	úlúgh	pulling
1i. Terna ngù <i>túghur</i> hùndà la. 3SG SG-be pushing 3SG-DET ‘Terna is pushing the door’			
1j. Se mbá <i>úlúgh</i> kór. 1PL . AGR-PL PROG. 3SG ‘We are pulling a rope’			

Analysis

The data presented above portray that verbs are inflected in Tiv language through the zero affixation in order to mark progressives. This morphological process can be seen in 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f among others. It can be seen in the above data that verbs that undergo zero affixation to mark inflection in the Tiv language begin with /k/, /o/, /j/, /s/, /t/, /ts/, /w/ and /u/ and end with the following vowels: /i:/, /u:/, /e/ and /o:/ respectively. The inflection of verbs using zero affixation in the Tiv language is to mark a grammatical process as presented in 1i and 1j. The theory of Paradigm Function Morphology supports the above inflectional process since the theory holds that root forms are inflected by means of rules associating with particular changes in the form of words for a grammatical purpose. Going by the morphological structure of the progressive in the above category, the progressive formation rule is: *(Verbs) – ending with vowel /i:/, /u:/, /e/ & /o:/ - progressive → {zero morpheme}*.

5.2. Progressive inflection marked with the suffix {-n}

This table features progressive forms in the Tiv language that are marked using the suffix {-n}.

Infinitive	Gloss	Suffix	Progressive	Gloss
2a. víné	dance	-n	vínén	dancing
2b. téé	sell	-n	téén	selling
2c. hòô	decay	-n	hòôn	decaying
2d. náhá	stir	-n	náhán	stirring
2e. zéndé	walk	-n	zéndén	walking
2f. piné	ask	-n	pinén	asking
2g. ôô	wash	-n	ôôn	washing
2h. kôô	iron	-n	kôôn	ironing

- 2i. Mbáyév mbá zèndén angàhár.
3PL- PL.be PROG PL-ngùhár
'Children are going on foot'
2j. Mbá kôôn ákóndó
PL-pro PROG PL-OBJ
'They are ironing clothes'

Analysis

The data above show that progressive forms are marked in the Tiv language by suffixing the verbal roots with {-n} as can be seen in 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 2g and others. This process confirms the claims of the Paradigm Functional Morphology that words undergo inflections in their morphological shape. The inflection of verbal roots with {-n} results in a change of pronunciation as presented in 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 2g. It is evident in the data that verbal roots are inflected for a syntactic purpose, that is to say, verbs undergo inflections so that they can fit in with the syntactic structures as shown in 2i and 2j. Paradigm Function Morphology holds that the inflection of a word is predicated on the morpho-syntactic properties that the word features. Formation of progressive forms from the roots in the Tiv language is supported by the notion of Paradigm Function Morphology, and the change in the shape of the root can be seen in the examples above. The rule for the progressive formation is as follows: (verb) ending in /e/, /ɔ:/ & /a/ -progressive → {-n}.

5.3. Formation of progressive with the suffix {-on}

This table presents data of verbs that are inflected to mark progressive forms using the suffix {-on}.

Infinitive	Gloss	Suffix	Progressive	Gloss
3a. ngör	shout	-on	ngörön	shouting
3b. ör	read	-on	örön	reading
3c. hōr	sharpen	-on	hōrön	sharpening
3d. kōgh	erase	-on	kōgh	erasing
3e. kōr	sew	-on	kōrön	sewing
3f. zōr	join	-on	zōrön	joining
3g. pōn	expose	-on	pōnön	exposing
3h. öv	peel	-on	övön	peeling
3i. Sé mbá övön ikýülèkè	PL-PRON PL.be PROG PL-maize			
	'We are peeling maize'			
3j. Ngodoo ngu hōrön pénsùl.	3SG.Ngodoo. SG.be PROG. SG.pencil			
	'Ngodoo is sharpening a pencil'			

Analysis

The data above show that progressive forms are marked in the Tiv language by suffixing the verbal roots with {-on} as can be seen 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e et cetera. The verbal roots suffixed with {-on} begin with the phonemes: /ng/, /o/ /h/, /k/, /z/ and /p/ and end with the following phonemes: /r/, /o:/, /v/ and /n/. The progressive inflection shows that morphology has a link with phonology since a change in the shape of the verbs brings about a change in their pronunciation. This morphological process confirms the claim of Paradigm Function Morphology that words undergo changes in shape to mark inflections. In 3i and 3j, the data show that verbs are inflected so that they can perform a syntactic function. Thus, the claim of Paradigm Function Morphology that inflectional morphology is a grammatical process is justified in the above data. The rule for the above progressive pattern is as follows: (verb) ending in /r/, /o:/, /n/ & /v/ -progressive → {-on}.

5.4. Formation of progressive inflection with the suffix {-en}

This table features progressive forms in the Tiv language that are marked using the suffix {-en}.

Infinitive	Gloss	Suffix	Progressive	Gloss
4a. kër	search	-en	kèrén	searching
4b. gbér	cut	-en	gbérén	cutting
4c. pér	cross	-en	pérén	crossing
4d. yáv	sleep	-en	yávén	sleeping
4e. yám	buy	-en	yámén	buying
4f. kilé	wash	-en	kilé	washing
4g. tám	chew	-en	támén	chewing
4h. hár	hang	-en	hárén	hanging
4i. M ngu yávén gá	1SG SG.be PROG.NEG			
	'I am not sleeping'			
4j. Sewuese ngu pérén gbéndá	3SG-Sewuese. PROG. SG-road			
	'Sewuese is crossing the road'			

Analysis

The above data portray that verbs are inflected in the Tiv language using suffixation as presented in 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e and others to mark progressive inflection. The suffix used for the progressive inflection is {-en} and the inflection of

the verbs result in the change of their pronunciation, hence, we would say that progressive inflection accounts for morphophonemics in Tiv. The idea of Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM) is applicable to the inflectional morphology of Tiv language as discovered through the analysis of the present study. Verbal roots inflected with /en/ to mark progressive inflection begin with the phonemes: /k/, /gb/, /p/, /j/, /k/, /h/ and /t/ and end with /e:/, /v/, /m/ and /e/. The data also support PFM's claims that words are inflected for a syntactic purpose as found in 4i and 4j. The verbal roots in the sentences are inflected so that they can occupy a position and play the role of expressing continuous actions in the sentences. The rule for the above progressive pattern is as follows: (verb) ending in /e:/, /v/ & /m/ - progressive → {-en}.

5.5. Formation of progressive inflection with the suffix {-un}

These data feature the formation of progressive pattern using the suffix {-un}.

Infinitive	Gloss	Suffix	Progressive	Gloss
5a. búr	butcher	-un	búrún	butchering
5b. búgh	open	-un	búghún	opening
5c. bùm	swear	-un	bùmún	swearing
5d. sôn	request	-un	sônún	requesting
5e. dúgh	remove	-un	dúghún	removing
5g. vúr	break	-un	vúrún	breaking
5h. núm	disperse	-un	númún	dispersing

5i. Se mbá búrún nyám.

PL-we PL.be. PROG.butchering SG.meat

'We are butchering meat'

5j. Nadoo ngu sônún mó nyárégh.

SG-Nadoo. SG.be PROG.asking PRON.me SG.money

'Nadoo is asking me money'

Analysis

The above data portray that verbs are suffixed with {-un} in the Tiv language to mark progressive inflection as presented in 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e and others. The verbal roots are inflected so that they can express progressive actions in the syntactic structures of the Tiv language. The morpho-syntactic features of progressive inflections in the Tiv language is a confirmation of the claim of Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM) that the inflection of a word is predicated on the morpho-syntactic properties that the word features. The inflection of the infinitives in the Tiv language with the suffix {-un} results in a change of pronunciation of the inflected verb which could be seen in 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e. The morpho-syntactic relation of progressive inflections in Tiv can be seen in 5i and 5k where the verbal roots are inflected so that they can fit in and express progressive actions in the sentences respectively. Verbal roots that take /-en/ to mark inflection begin with /b/, /s/, /d/, /v/ and /n/ and end with /r/, /u:/, /v/ and /m/ respectively. It is evident in the data that the inflection of the verbal roots brings about a change in the pronunciation of verbs. Going by the above data, the rule for the above progressive pattern is as follows: (verb) ending in /r/, /v /, /u: / & /m/ -progressive → {-en}.

5.6. Formation of progressive inflection with the suffix {-in}

This table presents data on the marking of progressive forms using the suffix {-in}.

Infinitive	Gloss	Suffix	Progressive	Gloss
6a. pír	quench	-in	pírín	quenching
6b. pír	switch off	-in	pírín	switching off
6c. tím	annihilate	-in	tímín	annihilating
6d. chír	cover	-in	chírín	covering
6e. gbír	lay	-in	gbírín	laying
6f. ív	fill	-in	ívín	filling
6g. mír	soak	-in	mírín	soaking

6h. Mama ngu gbírín wán sha gámbe.

3SG.mother SG.be PROG.laying. baby. SG. prep -on. bed-SG

'Mama is laying the baby on the bed'

6i. Mbá pírín úsú.

PL.they.PROG.quenching SG.fire

'They are quenching the fire'

Analysis

The data above show that progressives are formed in the Tiv language by suffixing the verbal roots with {-in} as presented in 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e and others. Verbal roots that take the suffix {-in} to mark progressive inflection begin with the phoneme /p/, /t/, /gb/, /i/ and /ts/ and end in /r/ and /v/ respectively. The inflection of verbs to mark progressive forms in the Tiv language brings about a change in the pronunciation of the verbs, for example; the infinitive in 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e do not have the same pronunciation as their corresponding progressive forms and this grammatical process shows that morphology interacts with phonology in the inflection of verbs for progressive formations. Suffixation of the verbal roots with {-in} as a morphological process supports the claim of Paradigm Function Morphology that words are subjected to structural modifications to mark inflections. In 6h and 6i, the data show that verbs are inflected so that they can perform a syntactic function which is the expression of an ongoing action. Thus, the claim of Paradigm Functional Morphology that inflectional morphology is a morpho-syntactic process is justified in the data.

6. Conclusion

The study was designed to examine the progressive inflectional patterns in Tiv using the theoretical framework of Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM). Hence, the study discovered that PFM accounts for the progressive inflectional patterns in the Tiv language. Findings of the study show that suffixation using {-on}, {-n}, {-en}, {-un} and {-in} and zero affixation are used to mark progressive inflection in the Tiv language respectively.

The findings also show that progressive inflections are marked in the verbal roots so that such verbs can fit in with the syntactic structures in order to express ongoing activities or actions in the Tiv language. The findings of the study show that inflection of verbs for the formation of progressive forms in the Tiv language is predominantly morpho-phonemic.

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