

**AN ANALYSIS OF SOME MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN EDO  
LANGUAGE**

**BY**

**Precious Mfonobong JOSEPH**

**ART2100784**

**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY.**

**OCTOBER, 2025**

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN EDO  
LANGUAGE

BY

JOSEPH PRECIOUS MFONOBONG

ART2100784

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY.

SEPTEMBER, 2025

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN EDO  
LANGUAGE

BY

JOSEPH PRECIOUS MFONOBONG

ART2100784

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS  
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE. IN  
PARTIAL FULFULMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS, LINGUISTICS  
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.

SEPTEMBER, 2025.

**APPROVAL PAGE**

I certify that this project work was carried out by **JOSEPH PRECIOUS MFONOBONG (Matric No. ART2100784)** in the Department of Linguistics Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

---

**JOSEPH PRECIOUS MFONOBONG**  
**(Author)**

---

**DATE**

---

**DR. O. O. EVBUOMWAN**  
**(Project Supervisor)**

---

**DATE**

---

**PROF. P.O. ETEFIA**

---

**DATE**

## **PLAGARISM CERTIFICATION**

I, **JOSEPH PRECIOUS MFONOBONG** with the matriculation number **ART2100784** declare that this work titled “**AN ANALYSIS OF THE MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN EDO LANGUAGE**” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test (with a score of       %) and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

**JOSEPH PRECIOUS MFONOBONG**

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to God Almighty for His grace and wisdom that have seen me through every stage of this journey, and to my Mum for her endless love and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to God Almighty for seeing me throughout the journey of this school, for his wisdom, strength and guidance throughout the period of this research. My heartfelt thanks goes to my mum, Mrs Edith Udoh for her love, her moral, financial, emotional and physical support; I wouldn't have made it this far without her. I also want to recognise and appreciate my siblings, Joseph Blessing Enobong, Joseph Favour Etiabasi and Joseph Divine Abasiama for their support in this journey; thank you for always being there staying with me till the very end. To my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Ikponmwen Christopher, thank you for your candid assistance on this project, your prayers and words of encouragement meant a lot to me. I am really grateful for the guidance and support of my aunties, uncles and cousin; Aunty Racheal, Aunty Faith, Aunty Peace, Uncle Godfrey, Uncle Osazee, Uncle Sylvester and Baby Faith. Special thanks to my brother, Frank Omon Giftbliss for his relentless love and for being my No 1 support throughout my stay in school, my stay in school would not have been complete without you my love.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr. O. O. Evbuomwan. I want to appreciate you sir for your corrections in the course of this research work; your invaluable guidance, patience and constructive criticism throughout this study. I am also grateful to my lecturers in the Department of Linguistics, University of Benin, for their academic support and I will not fail to mention my prominent lecturer, Dr. F. A. Ajala thank you for the advices and always giving me a listening ear. To my father, boss and mentor, Ubogu Ogheneochuko Blessing, I would not have come this far without you, thank you very much sir for the encouragement, the advice and for being my support system since time immemorial. To my boss turn friend Mr. Anege Abdulwahab, thank you for supporting me since day 1, I am grateful for the gift of you. To my friend who turned sister and stuck with me from 100 level even till now, Ejiogu Omasirichi Chidiebube (Omarddd), thank you for loving me, for being there and for always looking out for me. Thank you CASOR Shekinah Theatre for the gift of family and love.

I am equally grateful to the Edo native speakers who participated in providing data for this study. In no particular order, I want to appreciate these beautiful people who stood out for me, who showed care and in one way or another assisted me in the course of my study. Mr. Edet Jeobasetosam Emanu, Ehuhu Precious, Frank Odion, Ehikwe Daniel, Osarenren Desmond, Engr. Osarunwense Peace, Mama Choice Okunrobo, Elegu Joy, Kadiri Gift, Ogbeide Destiny, my tiktok and whatapp family.

Finally, I extend my appreciation to all those whose names may not have been mentioned but who contributed in one way or another during my stay in school and who saw to the completion of this research work, I am grateful. GOD BLESS YOU!.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Title Page

Approval Page

Plagiarism Certification

Dedication

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Abstract

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

1.0 Background of the Study

1.1 Methodology

1.2 Research Methods

1.2.1 Sources of Data

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1.3.1 Aim of Study

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

1.3.3 Research Questions

1.3.4 Statement of the problem

1.4 Significance of the Study

## 1.5 Justification of the Study

# **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

## 2.0 Introduction

### 2.1 Conceptual Review of Literature

#### 2.1.1 Morphology and Word Formation

#### 2.1.2 Theories of Morphology

#### 2.1.3 Morphology in African Languages

#### 2.1.4 Morphology in Edoid Languages

### 2.2 Review of Previous Studies

#### 2.2.1 General Studies in Edo language

#### 2.2.2 Review of Previous Studies on African and Nigerian Languages

#### 2.2.3 Morphology, Tone and Syntax

##### 2.2.3.1 Morphology

##### 2.2.3.2 Tone

##### 2.2.3.3 Syntax

### 2.3 The Concern of the Present Study

## 2.4 Summary

# **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## 3.0 Introduction

### 3.1 The Item-and-Arrangement Model

### 3.2 Basic Assumptions and Principles of the Item-and-Arrangement Model

#### 3.2.1 Basic Principles of the Item-and-Arrangement Model

3.2.2 Definition of “Item” and “Arrangements”

3.2.3 Representation of Morphemes (Each Having a Form and Meaning)

3.3 Application of the Item-and-Arrangement Model to Edo Morphological Processes

3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Model

3.5 Relevance of the Item-and-Arrangement Model to the Study

3.6 Why Item-and-Arrangement is Preferred

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

4.0 Introduction

4.1 Data Presentation

4.2 Affixation in Edo

4.2.1 Prefixation

4.2.2 Suffixation

4.2.2.1 Inflection for Tense

4.2.2.2 Inflection for Number

4.2.3 Suprafixation

4.2.4 Circumfixation

4.3 Reduplication

4.3.1 Types of Reduplication in Edo language

4.3.1.1 Total Reduplication in Edo

4.3.1.2 Partial Reduplication in Edo

4.3.1.3 Inherent Reduplication in Edo

4.4 Compounding

4.5 Frequency and Distribution

4.6 Interpretation of Data

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

5.0 Introduction

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.2 Implications of the Study

5.3 Limitations of the Study

5.4 Recommendations

5.5 Conclusion

References

**ABSTRACT**

This study specifically seeks to identify the major morphological processes in the language, analyze how they operate using examples from native speakers, identify their semantic functions, and describe the structural patterns and rules governing their use. The study is anchored on the Item-and-Arrangement theoretical framework, which explains how morphemes combine systematically to form complex words. Data for the study were collected through oral interviews with native Edo speakers and from written Edo texts. The sample population comprised adult native speakers of Edo language drawn from Benin City and its environs. The findings reveal that Edo employs several productive morphological processes such as affixation (prefixation, suffixation, circumfixation, and suprafixation), reduplication, compounding, and infixation. These processes play significant roles in deriving new words, marking grammatical categories, and extending meaning.

The study further shows that tonal variation functions as a suprafix, affecting word meaning and grammatical distinctions. The need for this study arises from the relative lack of detailed morphological description of Edo despite its linguistic richness. The hypothesis that Edo morphological processes are rule-governed and structurally patterned was confirmed. In conclusion, the study contributes to the understanding of Edo morphology and provides a basis for further linguistic research on Niger-Congo language.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.0 Background of the Study**

This study investigates morphological processes in Edo Language, with a focus on the strategies employed in word formation and word modification within the language. Morphology, being the study of the structure of words, deals with the rules and patterns that guides how morpheme combine to create meaningful units (Eugene A. Nida (1949). The work seeks to examine the different morphological processes that operates in Edo, such as affixation, reduplication, compounding, and other processes that contribute to the productivity of the language. The issues to be addressed include; identifying the types of morphological processes in Edo, describing how they function in the grammar of the language, and analyzing their significance in communication among speakers. This work is therefore an attempt to give a systematic account of Edo morphology as it relates to processes of word formation.

Elugbe (1989) observes that Edoid languages, including Edo, exhibit complex morphological and phonological systems that are crucial for understanding the structure of Niger-Congo languages. The Edo language is used in daily communication by the Bini's, traditional institutions, religious practices, commerce. As such, a study of morphological processes in Edo is not only linguistically relevant but also contributes to preserving the knowledge of the language and its functions.

#### **1.1 Methodology**

This project details the linguistics form that is being employed in carrying out the study of morphological processes in Edo language. It sets out the design, sources of data, methods of data collection, and the strategies for analysis. The purpose is to give a transparent account of how the study is conducted, so that another researcher could replicate or confirm the findings.

Primary data were collected through oral elicitation sessions and informal interviews conducted with the native speakers. The researcher prepared a wordlist containing items drawn from different semantic domains (such as body parts, natural objects, actions, and kinship terms). Informants were asked to provide the corresponding Edo lexical items, which were recorded and transcribed using the standard Edo orthography with tone markings where applicable. This procedure ensured the accuracy and authenticity of the data. Data is collected in Benin City and surrounding Edo-speaking communities. The choice was made because the area represents the core speech environment of the Edo language. Participants are selected based on their competence and fluency in Edo. Care is taken to include both male and female speakers from different age groups. All participants are native speakers of Edo and their participation is voluntary. A wordlist is presented to informants, and they are being asked to produce related forms such as plurals, reduplicated forms, verb inflections, and compound words. Their responses are recorded for accuracy. Beyond elicitation, spontaneous speech samples are also collected to reflect natural usage. To ensure reliability, the data that is being obtained from different informants are compared, and where inconsistencies occur, further elicitation is conducted to confirm the correct forms. The project relies on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is elicited through oral interviews and the use of a prepared wordlist that contains both basic vocabulary and morphologically complex words. A mobile recording device is being used to capture responses accurately.

Secondary materials such as textbooks, journal articles, dictionaries, and other scholarly works on Edo language and morphology are also being consulted to provide a background information and to cross-check the data.

Following collection, the data were systematically extracted, transcribed, and analyzed. A total of approximately one hundred (100) Edo lexical items were selected for analysis. These items were classified according to the morphological processes they exemplify, such as affixation, reduplication, compounding, borrowing, and clipping. Each lexical item was segmented into its constituent morphemes and glossed using standard interlinear morphological conventions. This facilitated the identification of structural relationships between morphemes and their grammatical or semantic functions.

The data were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and structural analytical methods. The descriptive method was employed to explain how different morphological processes operate in Edo, highlighting their grammatical and semantic implications. The structural method, on the other hand, involved the internal analysis of word forms to determine their constituent morphemic structures and the relationships between them. Both approaches were integrated to ensure a comprehensive account of Edo morphological patterns.

Furthermore, cross-checking was conducted between the primary and secondary data to ensure validity, consistency, and reliability in the findings.

## **1.2 Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine morphological processes that characterize the Edo language.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been set out:

1. To identify the morphological processes that occurs in Edo.
2. To analyze how these processes operate in the language, with example from native speakers.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the major morphological processes that occur in the Edo language?
2. What structural patterns and rules govern these morphological processes?
3. How do these morphological processes contribute to the grammatical system of Edo?

#### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

The problem under investigation is the gap in comprehensive documentation of Edo word-formation processes. While Edo is a widely spoken language in southern Nigeria, its word formation processes has not been given extensive or focused attention and while Edo has been the subject of various linguistic studies, detailed analyses of its word-formation strategies remain underexplored. As a result, there is insufficient systematic description of Edo morphology, linguistic material for comparative studies, language teaching, and preservation efforts. This gap in knowledge creates the need for a focus study that identifies, describes, and analyzes the morphological processes of Edo in a way that can be accessed and understood even by readers who are not specialists in the language.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Haspelmath (2002) notes that morphology occupies a central place in the grammar of every language, since word-formation links phonology, syntax, and semantics. This research is significant because it provides a systematic description of the morphological processes in Edo, a major Nigerian language spoken by thousands of people. Word

formation is central to the structure of any language, and by examining how words are formed in Edo, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of its grammar, communication system, and cultural identity. Also, it contributes to the body of descriptive linguistic knowledge on Edo, a major language within the Benue-Congo subfamily, by providing an empirical account of its morphological processes. The findings of this study will serve as a valuable reference for linguists, language teachers, students, and researchers who are interested in African morphology, typology, and comparative studies.

The study enhances efforts toward language preservation and development, as an accurate understanding of morphological structure is essential for dictionary compilation, orthography design, and literacy materials. Finally, this research has pedagogical significance, as it can assist in the teaching and learning of Edo as both a first and second language by clarifying how words are formed and how meaning is derived through morphological processes.

### **1.7 Justification of the Study**

Although numerous studies have been conducted on various aspects of the Edo language, such as its phonology, syntax, and semantics, there remains a relative paucity of research that provides a detailed and systematic account of its morphological processes. Existing works often mention Edo morphology only in passing, without offering an in-depth analysis of how morphemes combine to form complex word structures. This study is therefore justified by the need to fill this gap in linguistic research by offering a comprehensive description and analysis of Edo morphological processes. As languages continue to evolve under the influence of contact, borrowing, and modernization, there is a pressing need to document and analyze Edo morphology to preserve its structural features for both academic and cultural purposes. The study thus

responds to a scholarly and cultural necessity for a more elaborate understanding of Edo word-formation processes.

Furthermore, the research benefits the speakers of Edo by contributing to the preservation and documentation of their language. In a multilingual context like Nigeria, where indigenous languages face the threat of decline due to the dominance of English and Nigerian Pidgin, linguistic research serves as a form of language maintenance. Edo speakers stand to benefit from the availability of more linguistic materials that reflect their language in academic and practical domain. Also, the study has academic value for students, teachers, and researchers in linguistics. It provides a resource for teaching and learning about morphology, especially within the Niger-Congo family. It also serves as a reference point for further research in phonology, syntax, semantics and historical linguistics.

Finally, the study has broader social value. By documenting and analyzing Edo morphological processes, the research indirectly contributes to cultural preservation, educational development, and language policy in Nigeria. Government agencies, cultural organizations, and institutions concerned with indigenous languages can benefit from the findings of the study in their effort to promote local languages and enhance national identity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Every research work is built upon the foundation of existing scholarship. This chapter provides a survey of works that are directly or indirectly related to the study of morphology in the Edo language. By examining earlier studies, this chapter seeks to establish the relevancy in the study of Edo morphology and its word formation processes. The purpose is to provide a scholarly background against which the present research can be properly situated. The review is organized analytically and systematically rather than as a mere listing of references, in order to show clearly what has been achieved in previous studies and the gaps that this study intends to fill.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review of Literature**

This section provides a conceptual framework for the study by reviewing key ideas and terms that form the foundation of morphological analysis. It discusses the concept of morphology as a branch of linguistics concerned with the internal structure of words and the principles governing word formation. The review also examines core concepts such as morphemes, word structure, and morphological processes; including affixation, reduplication, compounding, and other relevant phenomena. Furthermore, the section highlights theoretical perspectives that inform the study of morphology, thereby situating the present research within the broader context of linguistic inquiry.

##### **2.1.1 Morphology and Word Formation**

According to Aronoff (1976), “morphology is the study of the internal structure of words and of the rules by which words are formed.” Spencer (1991) also defines

morphology as “the study of word structure and the principles of word formation in natural languages.”

Omoruyi (Thomas Q. Omoruyi, 1986) examines internal word structure in Edo (work on internal structure, deletion processes and morphophonological alternations), and provides descriptive and analytic evidence for how word-internal processes (e.g., vowel/consonant deletion, affixation patterns) shape surface forms in Edo. This is a direct, language-specific contribution to morphological description for Edo and in many African languages; these frameworks can be profitably applied to Edo phenomena such as alternations conditioned by tone, vowel elision, or reduplication.

Katamba (1993) defines a morpheme as the smallest grammatical unit in a language, while Spencer (2000) emphasizes that morphology provides insight into how languages organize meaning, grammar, and vocabulary. Morphology is generally divided into inflectional and derivational morphology. Inflectional morphology involves modifications to words in order to express grammatical features such as tense, aspect, person, number, and case. Derivational morphology, on the other hand, is concerned with the creation of new lexical items through the addition of prefixes, suffixes, and other morphological processes. Both types of morphology are evident in African languages, where inflectional markers often interact with tone to produce complex grammatical forms.

### **2.1.2 Theories of Morphology**

Scholars have developed several theoretical approaches to the analysis of morphology. The Item-and-process (IP) model, proposed by Charles Hockett (1954), emphasizes morphological rules and processes (such as reduplication, ablaut, and tone change) that transform base forms into new words. The Item-and-Arrangement (IA)

model, advanced by Leonard Bloomfield (1933), views words as strings of morphemes arranged linearly. The Word-and-Paradigm (WP) model, associated with Eugene Nida and Matthews (1960s and 1970s), treats morphology as the study of paradigms, where words are understood in relation to sets of inflected forms rather than morpheme-by-morpheme analysis.

In recent years, Distributed Morphology (DM) developed by Morris Halle and Alec Marantz in the early 1990s has emerged. Halle and Marantz (1993), in their framework of Distributed Morphology, argue that morphological structure is not pre-assembled but distributed across syntax, phonology, and semantics; combining syntactic and morphological analysis by arguing that word formation occurs in the syntax and is later realized morpho-phonologically. Similarly, Prosodic Morphology developed by McCarthy and Prince (1990), emphasizes the role of phonological structure (such as syllable templates and stress patterns) in shaping morphological outcomes. These theoretical models are useful for analyzing African languages, where morphology is not always purely linear but interacts with phonological and tonal systems.

### **2.1.3 Morphology in African Languages**

African languages are characterized by rich morphological systems that employ a wide range of processes including affixation, compounding, reduplication, and tone. According to Bamgbose (1992), morphology in African languages often involves multiple layers of meaning, where segmental and suprasegmental features combine to form complex word structures. For example, in Yoruba, reduplication can mark intensification (e.g., pupa “red” – pupapupa “very red”), while compounding is used extensively for lexical expansion. In Igbo, affixation plays a crucial role in derivation processes, such as nominalization (igba “to play/drum” – egwu “music”). Hausa, a Chadic language, exhibits templatic morphology where vowel patterns interact with

consonantal roots to express grammatical distinctions. These examples demonstrate the need for frameworks that go beyond linear affixation to capture the complexity of African word formation.

#### **2.1.4 Morphology in Edoid languages**

The Edoid groups of languages, to which Edo belongs, is spoken primarily in Nigeria. Elugbe (1989) notes that Edoid languages share typological features such as tone, vowel harmony, and the extensive use of reduplication. Morphology in these languages often interacts with phonology, making it difficult to analyze using purely segmental models. In Edo, for instance, tonal alternations may mark tense, aspect, or nominal class distinctions. Affixation, compounding, and reduplication are also productive processes, though their exact distribution and productivity remain under-researched.

### **2.2 Review of Previous Studies**

This section presents a review of previous scholarly works that are relevant to the present study. It examines existing research on the morphology of Edo and related languages within the Benue-Congo family, as well as studies that address morphological theory and word-formation processes more generally. The purpose is to identify what has already been done in this area, highlight existing gaps in knowledge, and establish how the present study differs from or builds upon earlier research. By situating this work within the context of previous scholarship, the review provides a foundation for understanding the novelty and contribution of the current research on morphological processes in the Edo language.

#### **2.2.1 General Studies on Edo Language**

The Edo language, also known as Bini, has been the subject of research in various aspects of linguistics. Early documentation of Edo can be traced to missionary and colonial writings, which produced wordlists, Bible translations, and grammatical sketches (e.g., Melzian, 1937). These early works were primarily descriptive and aimed at facilitating literacy and evangelization rather than linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, they provide useful insight into Edo vocabulary and grammatical structure.

Several works have been carried out on Edo language, but only a few have addressed morphology directly, Omoruyi (1986) focused largely on Edo phonology, paying attention to tonal patterns, while briefly noting the role of reduplication in word formation. Elugbe, in His work *Comparative Edoid: Phonology and Lexicon* (1989) provided a classification of Edoid languages and highlighted some morphological patterns, though the work was primarily comparative rather than descriptive, meaning that detailed synchronic descriptions of Edo morphology were not his primary concern. Elugbe's work is significant for showing the historical and genetic relationships among Edoid languages and for outlining shared features such as vowel harmony, tone, and morphological reduplication.

Omozuwa (1990) studied compounding in Edo and showed that compound nouns are widely used in the lexicon, particularly in the naming of kinship terms, plants, and cultural items. However, his analysis was narrowly focused on compounding and did not explore its interaction with other morphological processes. Omozuwa also examined aspects of Edo language use in education, noting the challenges of developing Edo orthography and promoting literacy. His study contributes indirectly to morphology, since orthographic conventions often influence the analysis and representation of morphological structures in writing. Importantly, Omozuwa also pointed out that tone

distinguishes simple words from compounds, again highlighting the close interplay between morphology and phonology in Edo.

Ejele (1982), in a cross-linguistic study of reduplication, examined its role in Nigerian languages including Edo. He found that reduplication in Edo marks plurality, habituality, and intensity. His analysis shows that reduplication in Edo is not merely a lexical strategy but a productive morphological process with broad applicability. However, his study was not comprehensive enough and the Edo data was not explored in exhaustive detail to cover the full range of Edo reduplicative processes since the study covered several languages at once.

Agheyisi (1990), in her work on Edo grammar and lexicon, also touched on morphological aspects, especially nominal derivation and pluralization. She emphasizes that noun formation often involves both affixation and tonal modification, providing an early descriptive account of inflectional morphology in Edo. More recently, Osayande (1991) provided a detailed study of pluralization strategies in Edo nouns. His findings indicate that plural marking in Edo is not uniform but employs multiple strategies: prefixation, suffixation, reduplication, and tonal alternations. This suggests that Edo morphology is highly complex and not reducible to a single pattern. Edo morphology was also studied by Egbokhare (1990), where he discusses morphological processes such as affixation and reduplication, noting their productivity in the language. Osakwe (1992) highlights that reduplication in Edo serves both grammatical and semantic functions, marking plurality, intensity and emphasis.

In summary, existing general studies on Edo morphology reveals that; reduplication is highly productive and used for both grammatical and semantic purposes (Ejele, 1982). Also, tone interacts closely with morphological processes, particularly in verb tense/aspect marking (Omoruyi, 1986; Agheyisi, 1986). The study also reveals that,

compounding is an important mechanism of lexical expansion (Omozuwa, 1990) and pluralization strategies are multiple and diverse, combining affixation, reduplication, and tonal shifts (Osayande, 1991). Despite these contributions, no study has yet provided a comprehensive, unified analysis of Edo morphology covering all major processes (affixation, reduplication, compounding, derivation, and tonal morphology) within a single descriptive framework. Most studies are either fragmentary, focusing on one process, or are comparative, offering only brief references in Edo. This gap is what the present research tends to fill.

### **2.3 The Concern of the Present Study**

From the foregoing, it is clear that while Edo has a rich morphological system, existing studies have only provided partial or incidental accounts. Most studies have focused on individual processes such as reduplication or compounding, without presenting a holistic description of the language's morphology. Furthermore, many of the works were comparative, touching on Edo briefly while focusing on broader typological patterns.

This chapter has reviewed conceptual issues in morphology, highlighted the major morphological theories, and examined previous works relevant to the Edo language. From the review, it is clear that while scholars have provided useful insights into the aspects of Edo morphology, little or no extensive descriptive work has been done to account for its word formation processes in detail. The present study is therefore justified, as it seeks to contribute to the documentation and understanding of Edo morphology, and by extension, to the broader study of Niger-Congo languages.

### **2.4 Summary**

The present study seeks to fill this gap by providing a systematic and detailed analysis of morphological processes in Edo. Using data from the Swadesh 100-word list as a source of primary data which would examine how morphological processes interact to form words, describe the major morphological processes in Edo, with examples from natural data, analyze the interaction between morphology, tone and semantics in word formation, and identify unique features of Edo morphology that may challenge or extend existing morphological theories. The concern of this study also extends to documenting Edo morphology in a systematic and accessible manner, given that much of the available literature is scattered or too general. By adopting a theoretical framework like Distributed Morphology, this study aims to interpret Edo morphological patterns not merely as surface processes, but as operations that reveal the structure of grammar and the principles of word formation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.0 Introduction

Every scientific investigation requires a theoretical framework that provides the tools for analysis and interpretation. In linguistic research, a theoretical framework serves as the lens through which data are understood and organized. Since this study is concerned with morphological processes in Edo language, it becomes necessary to select a model of that only accounts for the internal structure of words but also explains the interaction between morphology, phonology, and syntax.

Over the years, different morphological models have been developed within linguistic theory, each proposing a unique way of analyzing word formation. Among the most influential are the Distributed Morphology (DM) model, the Item-and-Process (IP) model, and the Word-and-Paradigm (WP) model. While each of these approaches has contributed significantly to morphological theory, they also present limitations when applied to languages like Edo, where morphology is strongly intertwined with phonological and syntactic processes.

To overcome these limitations, this study adopts a theory that explains how words are systematically formed and structured. The Item-and-Arrangement (IA) Model of Morphology, propounded by Charles F. Hockett (1954) in his book “A Course in Modern Linguistics”, serves as the theoretical base for this research. The theory is appropriate because it focuses on how morphemes; the smallest units of meaning are linearly arranged to form words, which is directly relevant to processes such as affixation, circumfixation, and suprafixation in Edo.

### **3.1. The Item-and-Arrangement Model**

The Item-and-Arrangement Model is one of the earliest and most influential theories of morphological analysis. It was propounded by Charles F. Hockett in 1954 in his seminal book “A Course in Modern Linguistics”. The model emerged as part of the Bloomfieldian structuralist tradition (1933) whose earlier publication on “language” laid the foundation for the analysis, emphasizing the segmentation of words into minimal meaningful parts (morphemes) and the linear arrangement of these parts to form grammatical words. Hockett proposed that language could be analyzed as a sequence of items (morphemes) that combine according to specific arrangement rules. In this sense, the word is seen as a chain of morphemes, each carrying meaning or grammatical function. The IA model is, therefore, a morpheme-based and additive approach to word formation.

The model argues that complex words can be broken down into discrete, segmentable items (morphemes) arranged according to certain grammatical rules. In other words, words are “arrangements of items,” where each item corresponds to a morpheme that contributes a part of the word’s meaning or grammatical function. According to Hockett (1954:177), “The morpheme is the smallest individually meaningful element in the utterances of a language, and words are formed by arranging these morphemes in a particular order.” This linear ordering is the defining characteristic of the IA model. The theory belongs to the item-based approach to morphology, as opposed to the word-based (Item-and-Process) or realizational (Word-and-Paradigm) approaches. Its focus is on identifying and classifying the constituent morphemes that make up words.

The Item-and-Arrangement (IA) Model views morphology as a system in which words are composed of linear sequences of morphemes, each carrying a distinct

grammatical or semantic meaning. In IA, every complex word can be analyzed as a chain of morphemes (items) arranged according to specific grammatical rules. According to Hockett (1954), morphology is essentially about the arrangement of meaningful units; that is, how morphemes combine to form larger grammatical constructions. The model assumes a one-to-one correspondence between meaning and form: every morpheme represents a specific element of meaning, and meanings are realized by combining these morphemes in a particular order.

### **3.2 Basic Assumptions and Principles of the Item-and-Arrangement Model**

The IA model is based on several fundamental assumptions and principles:

1. **Morpheme as the Basic Unit:** The smallest meaningful unit of language is the morpheme. Each morpheme contributes a specific semantic or grammatical meaning to the word.
2. **Linearity of Structure:** Words are formed through a linear sequence of morphemes arranged one after another, much like beads on a string.
3. **One-to-One Correspondence:** There is a direct correspondence between meaning and form. Every morpheme contributes a particular meaning or function, and each meaning corresponds to a morpheme.
4. **Additive Word Formation:** Complex words are formed by the addition or concatenation of morphemes, such as prefixes, suffixes, infixes, or circumfixes.
5. **Segmentability:** Words can be segmented into distinct and identifiable morphemes based on their meaning and structure.
6. **Morphophonemic Adjustment:** When morphemes combine, certain phonological changes may occur (e.g., vowel elision, tone assimilation), but these changes do not affect the fundamental morphemic structure.

### 3.2.1 Basic Principles of the Item-and-Arrangement Model

The Item-and-Arrangement (IA) Model, as developed by Charles F. Hockett (1954), is guided by certain key principles that explain how morphemes (items) combine to form words (arrangements). These principles reflect the structuralist notion that a word's morphology can be analyzed as a sequence of meaningful units ordered linearly according to specific grammatical rules.

### 3.3 Application of the Item-and-Arrangement Model to Edo Morphological Processes

The Edo language (spoken primarily in Edo State, Nigeria) exhibits a rich morphological system involving affixation, circumfixation, and tonal morphology (suprafixation). These processes align well with the assumptions of the Item-and-Arrangement model, which explains morphology as the linear arrangement of morphemes.

#### (a) Affixation

Affixation in Edo involves the addition of prefixes or suffixes to a root or base to derive new words or change grammatical categories.

#### EXAMPLE 1

a. “ò-mamwa’ewmi” → ‘teacher’

(nominal prefix (“ò-”) + root (mamwa’ewmi → teach)

Here, the prefix “ò-” is an item carrying the meaning of agentivity or nominalization, and the root “mamwa’ewmi” is another item denoting the verb ‘teach’. The arrangement of these items yields a noun meaning “one who teaches.”

According to Hockett's model, this can be represented as:

→  $N = \text{Prefix } (\text{ò-}) + \text{Root } (\text{mamwa'ewmi} \rightarrow \text{teach})$

(b) Circumfixation

Edo also employs circumfixes, where a morpheme is discontinuous and surrounds the root.

EXAMPLE 2

a. "u...mwe " + to (last long) → uto mwe (longevity)

(circumfix ("u...mwe ") + root (to → last long)

The IA model explains this as a morphological arrangement in which two bound morphemes jointly contribute a grammatical function. The prefix "ò-" and the suffix "-é" work together to nominalize the verb "tà".

Representation:

→  $N = \text{Circumfix } (\text{"u...mwe "}) + \text{Root } (\text{to})$

(c) Suprafixation (Tonal Morphology)

Tone plays an important role in Edo morphology and can serve as a grammatical marker—a process referred to as suprafixation.

EXAMPLE 3

a. óba → 'king'

òbà → 'kingship'

The IA model accounts for this by recognizing tone as a suprasegmental morpheme, or suprafix, attached to the same segmental base. Thus, the difference in tone represents different grammatical meanings while the root remains constant.

Representation:

→ *Root (oba) + Suprafix (ó) and (à) → (High-Low tone pattern)*

These examples illustrate how the IA model captures Edo word structure through the systematic combination and arrangement of morphemes.

### **3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Model**

Strengths:

1. **Clarity and Analytical Precision:** The model provides a clear and straightforward method for segmenting words into morphemes and describing their combination rules.
2. **Systematic Structure:** It allows for the systematic representation of morphological patterns, making it easier to classify word-formation processes.
3. **Applicability to Concatenative Morphology:** The model is especially effective for analyzing languages like Edo, where morphology is largely concatenative (based on the attachment of affixes).
4. **Empirical and Descriptive Utility:** The IA model has a strong descriptive basis and can be easily applied to real linguistic data without requiring abstract transformations.

Weaknesses:

1. **Overly Linear Representation:** The model assumes that morphology is strictly linear, which makes it less capable of handling non-concatenative processes such as internal vowel alternations or reduplication.

2. Limited in Semantic Representation: It does not adequately capture situations where a single morpheme expresses multiple grammatical meanings simultaneously (portmanteau morphemes).

3. Surface-Oriented Analysis: Because the IA model is mainly descriptive, it may overlook underlying abstract representations that influence word structure.

4. Tone and Prosody Challenges: Although Edo data can be analyzed using the IA model, tonal and prosodic features sometimes exceed the model's strictly linear framework.

### **3.5 Relevance of the Item-and-Arrangement Model to the Study**

The Item-and-Arrangement (IA) Model, propounded by Charles F. Hockett (1954) in his seminal work "A Course in Modern Linguistics", is particularly relevant to the present study on Morphological Processes in the Edo Language. The model's focus on the linear arrangement of morphemes makes it especially suitable for analyzing languages like Edo, where word formation relies heavily on the concatenation of affixes, tone, and root morphemes to express grammatical and semantic relationships.

The IA model is also highly relevant to this study because Edo morphology exhibits numerous processes that involve the addition and linear arrangement of morphemes. Affixation, circumfixation, and suprafixation in Edo can be systematically described using the IA model's principles. The model helps to: Identify and classify Edo morphemes (roots, prefixes, suffixes, circumfixes, suprafixes), explain how morphemes combine to form words, describe the morphological rules governing word formation in Edo. These are further broken down into:

1. Affix-Oriented Language: Edo employs extensive affixation and morphological concatenation, which are best analyzed through a model that treats morphemes as discrete, linearly arranged units.

2. Clarity in Morphological Segmentation: The IA model facilitates the clear identification of morphemes, which is essential for describing Edo's affixation patterns and word formation.

3. Compatibility with Edo Morphology: The model's emphasis on linear arrangement aligns with the structure of Edo words, where meaning is often built up additively through morpheme combination.

4. Descriptive and Analytical Simplicity: The IA framework allows for a transparent description of morphological processes such as prefixation, suffixation, circumfixation, reduplication, and suprafixation, all of which are present in Edo.

In summary, the Item-and-Arrangement model provides the theoretical foundation necessary to describe, analyze, and interpret the morphological processes observed in Edo language data and adopting the IA framework, this study achieves a structured and theoretically grounded analysis of morphological processes in Edo language.

### **3.6 Why Item-and-Arrangement is Preferred**

The Item-and-Arrangement model is highly relevant to this study because it:

1. Reflects the concatenative nature of Edo morphology.
2. Provides a straightforward method for analyzing affixation.
3. Maintains a transparent relationship between form and meaning.
4. Accommodates tonal and affixal morphemes effectively.
5. Aligns with the descriptive objectives of the research.

Therefore, this model provides the most appropriate theoretical foundation for analyzing morphological processes in the Edo language, especially those involving affixation and tonal modification.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of data collected for the study. The aim is to examine the morphological processes of Edo language and explain how they function in the grammar of the language. The data analyzed here are representative samples, while the larger dataset is provided in the appendix. This chapter also aims to present and analyze the data collected on morphological processes in Edo. The processes under investigation are affixation (prefixation and suffixation), circumfixation, suprafixation, reduplication (full and partial), compounding, and other morphological processes present in the Edo language. The analysis is framed within the theoretical perspective introduced in Chapter Three (Item-and-Arrangement models) and contextualised with the typological literature on Niger-Congo and Edoid languages. Determining which processes are most productive, how they interface with phonology (especially tone and vowel) and what they reveal about the morphological system of Edo.

#### 4.1 Data Presentation

The data are presented through lists of items, written extracts, tables, and diagrams. In this chapter, the following morphological processes in Edo are analyzed and discussed:

1. Affixation (prefixation, suffixation, suprafixation, circumfixation)
2. Reduplication
3. Compounding

The discussion also interprets the distribution of these processes and draws out their significance in the structure of Edo grammar.

#### 4.2 Affixation in Edo

Affixation is the attachment of bound morphemes (prefixes, suffixes) to roots/stems to form new words or mark grammatical distinctions (thereby adding another meaning or changing the meaning of a given word). Affixation is one of the most productive morphological strategies in Edo. It occurs primarily as prefixation, with limited cases of suffixation. In Edo, affixation often helps to: derive nouns from verbs or adjectives, indicate tense, aspect, or mood, show nominalization or verbalization.

#### 4.2.1 Prefixation

Prefixation is the process of attaching a bound morpheme before the base or stem of a word. The resulting word often has a different grammatical category or meaning. According to Thomas O. Omoruyi, in Edo many nouns begin and end in vowels, while verbs begin with consonants and end with vowels; many simple verbs permit the derivation of nouns through the prefixation of oral vowels to them.

There are seven oral vowels present in the Edo language and nouns can be formed from verbs and adjectives by prefixing any of the seven oral vowels to them. The seven oral vowels include: “A, E, Ẹ, O, Ọ, I, U”.

EXAMPLE 4:

The vowel “A”

a. “a-” + *hio* (urinate) → *ahio* (urine)

b. “a-” + *hoo* (desire) → *ahoo* (wish)

c. “a-” + *khie* (mourn) → *akhie* (mourning)

d. “a-” + *ze* (choose) → *aze* (choice)

e. “a-” + *rùé* (circumcise) → *arùé* (circumcision)

f. “a-” + *be mwe* (stammer) → *abe mwe* (stammerer)

g. “a-” + *fyàngbè* (bless) → *afyàngbè* (blessing)

The data in Example 4 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “a-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun).

#### EXAMPLE 5:

The vowel “E”

a. “e-” + *yámà* (to put a mark) → *(ì)eyámà* (an identification mark)

b. “e-” + *kpá* (to vomit) → *ekpá* (vomiting)

c. “e-” + *zùro* (be stupid) → *ezùro* (stupidity)

d. “e-” + *ve n* (wrestle) → *eve n* (wrestling)

e. “e-” + *faa* (disgrace) → *efaa* (disgrace/humiliation)

The data in Example 5 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “e-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun). The data in example 5a has “ì” because that’s the way it is pronounced (*iyámà*) and not with the vowel “e-”; changing its classification and at the same time the pronunciation of the word.

EXAMPLE 6:

The vowel “E”

a. “e -” + *fè* (be rich) → *e fè* (wealth/prosperity)

b. “e -” + *fùá* (be white) → *e fùá* (whiteness)

c. “e -” + *wia* (smell) → *e wia* (smell/odour)

d. “e -” + *rhu* (cover) → *e rhú* (hat/cap)

e. “e -” + *hòhó* (blow) → *e hóhò* (wind)

The data in Example 6 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “e-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun).

EXAMPLE 7:

The vowel “O”

a. “o-” + *tue* (greet) → *otue* (greet)

b. “o-” + *nàa* (narrate) → *onà(a)* (narration)

c. “o-” + *khian* (walk) → *okhian* (walking)

d. “o-” + *vbie* (sleep) → *ovb(i)è* (sleeping)

e. “o-” + *zàan* (criticize) → *ozà(a)n* (criticism)

f. “o-” + hòó (be dizzy) → ohòó (dizziness)

g. “o-” + bàlo (painful) → obàlo (pain/misery)

h. “o-” + so no ṛ(irritate) → oso no ṛ(irritating sight)

i. “o-” + ghàghá (to brag/show off) → oghàghà (boast/swagger)

The data in Example 7 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “o-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun). The data in Example 7b, 7d and 7e are distinct; In that, when these words are being pronounced in rapid speech the letters (a), (i) and (a) respectively are silent and also absent in the transcription. That is; the Edo oral vowel “o” when being added to the base form of these words as prefix changes the pronunciation and the orthographic nature of these words.

Tonal alternations can also be seen in words derivation from prefix. An example can be drawn from example 7i, the high tone in the word “ghàgh(á)” changes to a low tone (à) after the prefix has been added (oghàghà).

#### EXAMPLE 8:

The vowel “O”

a. “o -” + xìé (mourn) → o xìé (mourner)

b. “o -” + fùá (perish) → o fùá (destruction/annihilation)

c. “o -” + fùrré (be calm) → o fù(r)rè(tranquility/calmness)

d. “o -” + xo o (evil) → o xo o → (malicious act/evil deed)

e. “o -” + mo (bear/germinate) → omò (child/fruit)

The data in Example 8 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “o-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun). The data in Example 8c is distinct; In that, when the word is being pronounced in rapid speech the letter (r) is silent and also absent in the transcription. That is; the Edo oral vowel “o” when being added to the base form of the word (ofúrrè) as a prefix changes the pronunciation and the orthographic representation of the word.

Tonal alternations can also be drawn from the same example (8c); the low tone in the word “f(ù)rré” changes to a high tone (ú) and the high tone (r) changes to a low tone (r̀) after the prefix has been added (ofúrè).

#### EXAMPLE 9:

The vowel “U”

a. “u-” + ghán (behave haughtily) → ughán (arrogance/haughtiness)

b. “u-” + wú (die) → uwú (death)

c. “u-” + kpàbò (washing hands) → Ukpàbò (bowl for washing hand)

d. “u-” + kpàkò n (Washing teeth) → ukpàkò n (chewing stick)

e. “u-” + guè (to cover) → uguè (covering)

f. “u-” + *ghèé* (to look) → *ughè(é)* (looking)

g. “u-” + *le è* (run) → *ul(e)è* (running/ race).

The data in Example 9 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “u-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun). The data in Example 9f and 9g are distinct; In that, when the words are being pronounced in rapid speech the letter (e) and (é) respectively are silent and also absent in the transcription. That is; the Edo oral vowel “u” when being added to the base form of the word (*oḡurrè*) as prefix changes the pronunciation and the orthographic representation of the word.

#### EXAMPLE 10:

The vowel “I”

a. “i-” + *mù* (catch) → *imù* (bondage)

b. “i-” + *roó* (think) → *ir(o)ó* (thought)

c. “i-” + *Lèlé* (follow) → *ilèlé* (procedure)

d. “i-” + *mósè* (beautiful) → *imòsè* (beauty)

e. “i-” + *lòvbié* (sleep) → *ilòvbiè* (sleeping)

f. “i-” + *kuú* (play) → *ik(u)ù* (playing)

g. “i-” + *vè* (price) → *ivè* (a price)

i. “i-” + *yàyì* (believe) → *iyayî* (belief)

j. “i-” + *tótàá* (sit) → *itótà(á)* (sitting)

k. “i-” + *zòzó* (wander) → *izózò* (wandering)

l. “i-” + *yámà* (put a mark) → *iyámà* (an identification mark).

The data in Example 10 shows the addition of the Edo oral vowel “i-” as a bound morpheme to the base form words which brings about nominalization, thereby glossing the shift from verb to noun (vowel prefix+ root verb/adjective= noun). The data in Example 10b, 10f and 10j are also distinct; In that, when the words are being pronounced in rapid speech the letter (o), (u), and (á) respectively are silent and also absent in the transcription. That is; the Edo oral vowel “u” when being added to the base form of these words as prefix changes the pronunciation and the orthographic representation of the word. Tonal alternations are also present in the data.

#### **4.2.2 Suffixation**

Affixation is the process of adding bound morphemes (called affixes) to a base or root to create new words or modify their meaning or grammatical category. The added element is called an affix while the original word is called the root or stem. In Edo, words can be formed by adding affixes to base words which may be verbs, adjectives, adverbs or nouns, depending on the meaning to be expressed. Such word may be inflected for number or tense. The choice of the suffix used depends on the vowel that is occurring in the stem verb.

In Edo grammar studies (e.g., Agheyisi 1986; Elugbe 1989), verbs are sometimes described as having: a base stem, optional derivational extensions (-lv), optional inflectional suffixes (-rv).

The pattern looks like this:

Root + (-lv) or Root + (-rv)

In Edo linguistics, “-lv” and “-rv” are abbreviated notations used in some grammatical descriptions to refer to suffix types attached to verb roots. They are not literal letters in Edo spelling, but theoretical representations used by linguists especially when describing verbal extensions or inflectional morphology.

#### 4.2.2.1 Inflection for Tense

Inflected tense refers to tense that is shown through changes in the form of a verb, usually by adding inflectional morphemes (such as affixes, tone changes, or vowel alternations) to indicate time of action; past, present, or future.

EXAMPLE 11: The suffix “-re” (past tense marker) + -rv

a. *se* (sew) + “-re” (past) → *sere* (see) → *sewed*

b. *de* (buy) + “-re” (past) → *de re* (de e) → *bought*

c. *gba* (tie) + “-re” (past) → *gbare* (gbae) → *tied*

d. *lo* (grind) + “-re” (past) → *lo re* (lo e) → *ground*

e. *le e* (run) + “-re” (past) → *le e re* (le e) → *escaped*

f. *hue* (learn) + “-re” (past) → *hue re* (we re) → *learned/learnt*

*g. va (split) + “-re” (past) → vare (vae) → split*

*h. hia (to try) + “-re” (past) → hiare (haie) → tried*

The data in Example 11 shows the addition of the Edo suffix “-re” as a bound morpheme to the base form verb thereby glossing the shift from present tense to past tense (Root + “-re” = past tense). The data in the third bracket of each word (in Example 11a to 11h) are the pronunciation of the words in rapid speech after they are being derived (ie.; “see”, “dee”, “gbae”, “loe”, as well as the others).

EXAMPLE 12: The suffix “-ne” (already (present perfect marker) + -rv

*a. khue (bathing) + “-ne ” (pp) → khue ne → already bath*

*E.g.: Uyi khue (Uyi is bathing) → Uyi khue ne (Uyi has already taken a bath)*

*b. kpolo (sweeping) + “-ne ” (pp) → kpolo ne → already swept*

*E.g.: Osahon kpolo (Osahon is sweeping) → Osahon kpolo ne (Uyi has already swept)*

*c. evbare (eating) + “-ne ” (pp) → evbare ne → already eaten*

*E.g.: Itohan evbare (Itohan is eating) → Itohan evbare ne (Itohan has already eaten)*

d. *gbe n* (writing) + “-ne ” (pp) → *gbe n ne* → already written

E.g.: *Osato gbe n* (Itohan is writing) → *Itohan gbe n ne* (Osato has already written)

e. *dee* (coming) + “-ne ” (pp) → *dee ne* → already came

E.g.: *Osas gbe n* (Osas is coming) → *Osas gbe n ne* (Osas has already come).

The data in Example 12 shows the addition of the Edo suffix “-ne” as a bound morpheme to the base form verb thereby glossing the shift from present participle to present perfect marker (Root (present participle) + “-ne” = present perfect).

#### 4.2.2.2 Inflection for Number

Inflection for number refers to a morphological process where a word (especially a noun, pronoun, verb, or adjective) changes its form to show whether it is singular or plural, that is; to indicate “number.” It is the modification of a word to express quantity, whether it refers to one (singular) or more than one (plural). Yuki and Omoregbe (2012:195) claim that the “-lv” suffix marks a multiplication of the activity designated by the verb. They further proposed that “the “-lv” suffix in Edo can be interpreted as iterative; it designs an action that reoccurs. The verb in question unfolds unceasingly” (Yuki and Omoregbe (2010:13). He also argues that “when “-lv” occurs with a verb, it encodes repetition of the action designated by the verb”.

EXAMPLE 13: The suffix “-le” (plurality) + -lv

a. *de* (buy) + “-le” → *de le* → *buy* (repeatedly)

b. *De* (fall) + “-le” → *De le* → *fall* (repeatedly)

c. *se* (sew) + “-le” → *sele* → *sew* (repeatedly)

d. *kpè* (wash) + “-le” → *kpèle* → *wash* (repeatedly)

e. *khue* (swim) + “-le” → *khue le* → *swim* (repeatedly)

The data in Example 13 shows that the function and addition of the Edo suffix “-le” is generally to extend events as a bound morpheme to pluralize the base form verb thereby glossing the shift from present participle to an activity verb showing habitual or repeated action (Root (present participle) + “-le” = activity/action verb).

EXAMPLE 14: The suffix “-lo” (plurality) + -lv

a. *so* (weep) + “-lo” → *solo* → *weep* (repeatedly)

b. *fi* (throw) + “-lo” → *filo* → *throw* (repeatedly)

c. *wù* (die) + “-lo” → *wùlo* → *die* (repeatedly)

d. *vù* (uproot) + “-lo” → *vùlo* → *uproot* (repeatedly)

e. *sàá* (burst) + “-lo” → *sà(á)lo* → *burst* (repeatedly)

The data in Example 14 shows that the function and addition of the Edo suffix “-le” is generally to extend events thereby glossing the shift from present participle to an activity verb or action (Root (present participle) + “-lo” = activity/action verb).

EXAMPLE 15: The suffix “-no” (plurality) + -lv

a. *sùn* (crawl) + “-no” → *sùn no* → *crawl (repeatedly)*

b. *bún* (break) + “-no” → *bún no* → *break (repeatedly)*

c. *tín* (fly) + “-no” → *tín no* → *fly (repeatedly)*

d. *sàn* (jump) + “-no” → *sàn no* → *jump (repeatedly)*

e. *gbe n*(write) + “-no” → *gbe nno* → *write (repeatedly)*

The data in Example 15 shows that the function and addition of the Edo suffix “-le” is generally to extend events thereby glossing the shift from present participle to a habitual action/activity verb (Root (present participle) + “-lo” = activity/action verb).

#### 4.2.3 Suprafixation

According to Crystal (2008) in “A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics”, suprafixation is a morphological process in which a suprasegmental feature (such as tone, stress, or pitch) is used to distinguish one word or grammatical form from another. A suprafix is not an added sound (like a prefix or suffix), but a change in tone, stress, or intonation pattern that carries grammatical or lexical meaning. It involves changing the tone or stress pattern of a word to mark differences in tense, aspect, number, or meaning. In tone languages like Edo, tone is important because it functions as a change in the meaning of an utterance. So, tone itself functions as a morphological marker.

Thus, suprafixation in Edo occurs when tone patterns (High, Low, or Mid) change to form new words or grammatical contrasts. The tone acts like an affix, but it is suprasegmental; it sits “above” the segments (consonants and vowels).

EXAMPLE 15:

a. òwè (LL) → *leg*

ówé (HH) → *broom*

b. owa (mid) → *house*

ówá (HH) → *shop/shed*

c. úwú (HH) → *inside*

ùwú (LH) → *death*

d. èkén (LH) → *egg*

èkèn (LL) → *sand*

e. òsà (LL) → *God*

òsá (LH) → *debt*

f. úkpò (HL) → *road*

ùkpó (LH) → *year*

*g. ódó (HH) → mortar*

*ódò (HL) → a type of potash*

*h. íbá (HH) → evil*

*íbà (HL) → mud seat*

The data in Example 15 shows that the segmental structure stays the same, but the tone pattern changes to express grammatical or relational meaning unlike prefixation and suffixation (which adds sounds), suprafixation modifies the prosodic (tone/stress) feature of an existing word. The structure remains the same but the suprasegmental pattern changes to express new meaning. Example 15a to 15h shows the distribution of disyllabic words with the tonal patterns: LL, HH, LH, HL and Mid pattern. Suprafix is represented as (Base (Root) + Suprasegmental Feature (Tone/stress change)).

#### **4.2.4 Circumfixation**

Circumfixation (also called discontinuous affixation) is a morphological process in which a single grammatical or derivational meaning is expressed by two parts of an affix; one placed before (prefix) and one placed after (suffix) a base or root word. A circumfix is an affix that consists of two parts occurring simultaneously at the beginning and end of a base to express a single meaning or grammatical function. Crystal (2008) defines a circumfix as a type of affix consisting of two parts, one prefixed and the other suffixed to a root, both functioning together to signal one meaning.

In Edo language, circumfixation is one of the productive morphological processes used to form nouns, verbs, and sometimes abstract or stative meanings from verbal or

adjectival roots. It operates by placing a vowel prefix and sometimes a nasal or vowel suffix around a verb or adjective root to derive a new word, most often a noun.

EXAMPLE 16: The circumfix “u...mwe”

- a. “u...mwe ” + *so* (cry) → *usomwe* (tears/crying)
- b. “u...mwe ” + *de* (buy) → *ude mwe* (buying)
- c. “u...mwe ” + *to* (last long) → *uto mwe* (longevity)
- d. “u...mwe ” + *tan* (tall) → *utanmwe* (tallness)
- e. “u...mwe ” + *gbe* (dance) → *ugbemwe* (dancing)

EXAMPLE 17: The circumfix “o...omwa”

- a. “o ...o mwa” + *sinmwi* (save) → *o sinmwio mwa* (saviour/rescuer)
- b. “o ...o mwa” + *su* (lead) → *o suo mwa* (leader)
- c. “o ...o mwa” + *do lo* (repair) → *o do lo mwa* (counselor)
- d. “o ...o mwa” + *kpokpo* (trouble) → *o kpokpo mwa* (troubler)
- e. “o ...o mwa” + *lo gho* (difficult) → *o lo gho mwa*  
(problem/difficulty)

The data in example 16 and 17 shows the insertion of verbs and adjective root words to the circumfix (o...omwa) to derive a new word. The structural pattern of the

circumfix is: Circumfixation= (Prefix + Root + Suffix). That is; the prefix and suffix are parts of one single morpheme that surround the root.

### 4.3 Reduplication

“Reduplication is a morphological process in which the root or stem of a word, or part of it, is repeated to mark a grammatical or semantic contrast.” (Katamba, F. (1993). Morphology. London: Macmillan). It is the repetition of a linguistic form (either the whole word or part of it) to indicate a grammatical function (like tense, aspect, number, or intensity) or a semantic modification (like repetition, emphasis, or diminution).

Reduplication in Edo is a highly productive morphological process, used for pluralization, intensification, habitual aspect, distributive meaning, and emphasis. It can involve full reduplication (entire root repeated) or partial reduplication (only part of the word is repeated, sometimes with vowel changes).

#### 4.3.1 Types of Reduplication in Edo language

There are different types of reduplication in the Edo language, analyzing the differences between full and partial reduplication while also examining the less common occurrence of inherent reduplication or triplication.

##### 4.3.1.1 Total Reduplication in Edo

This is also referred to as full or complete reduplication. In this type, the root morpheme is reduplicated fully. Egbokhare (1990) explains that the total reduplication occurs when the duplicate is an exact repetition of the base resulting in a fully reduplicated structure.

EXAMPLE 18: Total Reduplication

a. *zai* (fast) → *zai + zai* (*zaizai*) → *fastly*

b. *khérhé* (small) → *khérhé + khérhé (khérhékhérhé)* → very  
*small/tiny*

c. *owa* (house) → *owa + owa (ow'owa)* → *houses*

d. *ukpo* (year) → *ukpo +ukpo (ukp'ukpo)* → *yearly/annually/every*  
*year*

e. *ame* (fast) → *ame + ame (am'ame )* → *constant rain*

f. *uki* (month) → *uki + uki (ukiuki)* → *monthly/every month*

g. *eve* (fast) → *eve + eve (ev'eve)* → *constant tears*

h. *mose* (beautiful) → *mose + mose (mosemose)* → *very beautiful*

i. *kpànnò* (rough) → *kpànnò + kpànnò (kpànnò kpànnò →* very  
*rough/uneven*

j. *so guo* (soft) → *so guo + so guo (so guo so guo→)* very  
*delicate/tender*

In the above data, the apostrophe is used to indicate that there is an elision of the vowel occurring at the end of the first word that is being joined to the second word and also aids in the pronunciation of the word. In that; the words in the second brackets in the

above data (18a – 16j) are written the way the words are being pronounced in rapid speech. The structure is: Reduplication= Reduplicant + Base/Root = BaseBase /RootRoot.

#### 4.3.1.2 Partial Reduplication in Edo

Only a part of the word (a syllable or segment is repeated). A syllable, usually the last two sounds of the base word, is added to the root morpheme in partial reduplication. In Edo, the ‘part’ is appended as a suffix to the base word and reduplicated in part.

EXAMPLE 19: Partial Reduplication

a. *mose* (beautiful) → *mose* + *mose* (*mosee*) → very beautiful

b. *mie mie* (sweet) → *mie mie* + *mie mie* (*mie mie mie*) →  
*sugary/extremely sweet*

c. *gbìgbì* (spread like the wind) → *gbìgbì* + *gbìgbì* (*gbìgbìgbì*) → strong  
*wind/tornado/banging*

d. *ghe ghe*(manage) → *ghe ghe ghe ghe* (*ghe ghe ghe*) → very  
*old/delicate/ unsteady*

e. *réghé* (high-up) → *réghé* + *réghé* (*réghéé*) → very high/far beyond  
*reach*

In the above data, partial reduplication in Edo refers to the repetition of the base form's final syllable. The derived reduplicated words are present in the second brackets which shows the removal of a part of the syllable.

#### 4.3.1.3 Inherent Reduplication in Edo

Inherent reduplication refers to words that are permanently or originally reduplicated. That is, their reduplicated form is an inherent part of the word itself, not the result of a productive (grammatical) process. In other words, the reduplication is fixed in the word's structure and does not mark tense, aspect, number, or any grammatical meaning. It's simply part of the lexical (dictionary) form of the word. Some Edo words are also in their triplicated forms. Katamba F. (1992), in his work "Morphology", said "Inherent reduplication occurs when a word is lexically reduplicated, meaning that the repetition is not productive but forms part of the permanent structure of the word". The Edo language has some words that are inherent.

EXAMPLE 20: Inherent Reduplication

a. *kángúnkángún* → *especially/particularly*

b. *kátékáté* → *especially/particularly*

c. *kpâìkpâì* → *very few*

d. *likpàlikpà* → *describes a rough surface*

e. *rùbùrùbù* → *describes something round and smooth*

EXAMPLE 21: Triplicate Reduplication

a. so so so → excessively foamy (soapy water)

b. lélélé → swollen and big (referring to a corpse)

c. ge nge nge → tightly shut

d. wo wo wo → describes brightly burning fire

e. zùzùzù → describes an offensive/unpleasant smell

From the data above, it is shown that inherent reduplication is a type of reduplication where the repetition is built into the word's form and meaning, not used for grammatical marking. Its structural representation is: Root+ Root. Whereas, Triplicate reduplication is a morphological process in which a word or a part of it is repeated three times to express intensification, plurality, continuity, or emphasis in meaning. It is an extension of total or partial reduplication, but the repetition occurs three times instead. The structure is represented as: Root + Root + Root.

#### **4.4 Compounding**

Compounding is a morphological process in which two or more independent words (free morphemes) are combined to form a single new word with a distinct meaning. Each element of the compound can often stand alone as a word, but when joined, they create a new lexical item. Bauer (1983) defines compounding as “the formation of a new lexeme by combining two or more lexemes” Katamba (1993) describes it as “a word-formation process in which two or more roots combine to produce a single compound word.” Compounding functions as: word formation which creates new vocabulary, semantic expansion; gives precise or new meanings,

productivity; which functions as one of the most productive word-formation processes in languages and economy; responsible for combining concepts efficiently into one word. Words can be formed by combining two verbs, a verb plus a noun or a verb plus a particle in Edo. Each part of the compound can often stand on its own, but together they produce a new concept that may differ semantically from the sum of its parts.

Through compounding, words that are categorized into verb or noun class can be combined to become one of different structural forms. Such compound words can further be modified by means of a variety of strategies to derive nominals with different thematic roles such as; agentive nominals, instrumental nominals, abstract nominals. Some of the six oral vowels of the Edo language (A, E, E, O, O, I, U) can take part in this process.

EXAMPLE 22: “A”

a. “a-” + hòó (look) + be kún(unsuccessful) → ahóbe kún(a state of being lost)

b. “a-” + gbé (bring about/cause) + e te (sore/ulcer) → agb(é)e te (afflicted with bodily injuries/ ulcer)

c. “a-” + gbé (cause) + ákpán (bald head) → agb(é)ákpán (a bald person)

d. “a-” + kho o n (fight) + mie (see) + oto (ground) → akh(o )o nmi(e )oto (victory)

e. “a-” + *la* (pass) + *ghee* (look) + *odaro* (front) → *alagh(ee)odaro*  
(progress)

f. “a-” + *rhio* (rise) + *kpaa* (lift) + *egbe* (body) → *a rhio kp(a)ægbe*  
(ressurrection)

The data in example 22; shows the realization of compound words by adding the Edo vowel “a-” at the beginning of the word which results in the derivation of a compound noun. The structural pattern of the nouns derived from example 22a to 22c is; Verb + Noun= Noun, while the structural pattern of the nouns derived from example 22d to 20f is Verb + Verb + Noun = Noun. Some of the derived compound words have brackets between them to differentiate the orthographic form from the way it is being transcribed or pronounced. That is; In rapid speech, the words in bracket are not pronounced.

EXAMPLE 23: “I”

a. “i-” + *wó* (strong) + *ako* (tooth) → *iw(ó)ako* (greed/avarice)

b. “i-” + *bo* (build) + *òwá* (house) → *ib(o)òwá* (house/building)

c. “i-” + *miamia* (forget) + *egbe* (body) → *imi(ami)aegbe* (forgetfulness)

d. “i-” + *ziin* (hold) + *egbe* (body) → *iziinegbe* (patience)

e. “i-” + *balo* (pain) + *egbe* (body) → *ibal(o)egbe* (harseness)

The data in example 23 shows the realization of compound words by adding the Edo vowel “i-” at the beginning of the word which results in the derivation of a compound noun. Some of the derived compound words have brackets between them to differentiate the orthographic form from the way it is being transcribed or pronounced. That is; In rapid speech, the words in bracket are not pronounced.

EXAMPLE 24: “O” and “Q”

- a. “o-” + *mú* (carry) + *he n*(begin) → *omúhe n*(beginning)
- b. “o-” + *lèé* (run) + *gàá* (round) → *olè(é)gàá* (ring)
- c. “o-” + *mú* (carry) + *rhia* (spoil) → *o murhia* (wastefulness)
- d. “o -” + *mu* (make/carry) + *ru* (do) → *omuru* (deceit)
- e. “o -” + *na* (narrate) + *inye* (news) → *o n(a)inye* (newscaster)
- f. “o -” + *do* (trade) + *e ki* (market) → *o d(o)e ki*(trader)
- g. “o -” + *gbé* (make/carry) + *ugbo* (farm) → *o gb(e)ugbo* (farmer)
- h. “o -” + *gbé* (carry/pick) + *èhe n*(fish) → *o gb(é)èhe n*(fisherman)
- i. “o -” + *má* (mould) + *àxé* (clay pot) → *o m(á)àxe*(potter)
- j. “o -” + *lè* (cook) + *íze* (rice) → *o l(è)íze* (boiling rice)

The data in example 24 shows the realization of compound words by adding the Edo vowel “o-” and “o-” at the beginning of the word which results in the derivation of a compound noun. Some of the derived compound words have brackets between them to differentiate the orthographic form from the way it is being transcribed or pronounced. That is; In rapid speech, the words in bracket are not pronounced or heard.

EXAMPLE 26: “U”

- a. “u-” + *gbé* (kill) + *ùdyàn* (tsetse fly) → *ugbidyàn* (fly-whisk)
- b. “u-” + *kpè* (wash) + *ábo* (hand) → *ukp(è)àbo* (bowl for washing hands)
- c. “u-” + *kpè* (wash) + *àko* (teeth) → *ukpàko* (chewing stick)
- d. “u-” + *ghèé* (look at) + *e de* (day) → *ughè(ée)de* (eye glasses)
- e. “u-” + *gba* (tie) + *e kun* (waist) → *ugb(a)e kun* (belt)

The data in example 26 shows the realization of compound words by adding the Edo vowel “u-” at the beginning of the word which results in the derivation of a compound noun. Some of the derived compound words have brackets between them to differentiate the orthographic form from the way it is being transcribed or pronounced. That is; In rapid speech, the words in bracket are not pronounced or heard.

#### 4.5 Frequency and Distribution

A frequency accounts for the data showed in the distribution of morphological processes. In this work of morphological processes in Edo language, frequency and

distribution refer to how often certain morphological processes occur (frequency) and where they appear in the grammar (distribution). This analysis helps us know which morphological operations are core and which are peripheral.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Morphological Processes in Edo

Morphological Process	Number of Occurrences	Percentage (%)	Examples
1. Prefixation	53	28.65%	“a-”+hiṛ (urinate) ahiṛ(urine)
2. Suffixation	35	18.92%	lo (grind) + “-re” (past)→ lo re (lo e) → ground
3. Suprafixation	15	8.11%	òwè (LL) → leg ówé (HH) → broom
4. Circumfixation	17	9.19%	“o ...o mwa” + gbé (kill)→o gbéo m wa (murderer)
5. Reduplication	32	17.30%	khérhé (small) → khérhé + khérhé (khérhékhérhé) → very small/tiny
6. Compounding	33	17.84%	“o -” + do (trade) + e ki (market) → o d(o)e ki(trade

			r)
Total	185	100%	—

#### 4.6 Interpretation of Data

Interpretation refers to drawing meaning from the analyzed data. It involves explaining what the results of the analysis mean in relation to your research questions and objectives. In this study, the analysis of Edo morphological processes reveals how different morphological operations function in word formation and meaning extension in the Edo language.

From the analyses we observe that:

1. Edo uses both concatenative (affixation, compounding) and non-concatenative (reduplication, suprafixation) strategies.
2. Morphological markers in Edo serve both grammatical (tense, plurality) and semantic (emphasis, meaning) purposes.
3. Affixation (prefixation and suffixation) is the most dominant morphological process in Edo language accounting for 28.65% percent and 18.92% respectively, of all observed data. This shows that the prefixes are highly productive in word formation, especially in deriving nouns from verbs and adjectives.
4. Circumfixes occur less frequently (8.11%), showing that they are less productive or restricted to specific lexical items.
5. Suprafixation, represented by tone modification (9.19%), highlights the crucial role of tone in distinguishing grammatical categories and meanings in Edo.
6. Reduplication (17.30%) also plays a significant role in indicating plurality, intensity, or continuity of action.

7. Compounding (17.84%) demonstrates how the language combines two or more words to form new lexical meanings.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

The analysis and interpretation of data reveals that Edo morphological structure is rich and systematic, involving both segmental (prefix, suffix, circumfix) and suprasegmental (suprafix and reduplication) processes. This chapter presents and analyses the morphological processes in Edo. The findings reveal that Edo employs multiple strategies; affixation, reduplication, compounding, and tonal alternations which interact with phonology and syntax. Tone (as a suprafix) plays both morphological and grammatical roles. The analysis not only provides a systematic description of Edo morphology but also demonstrates the relevance of the Item-and-Arrangement model in accounting for the interface nature of morphological processes in African languages.

The problem identified at the beginning of the study (the lack of detailed description of Edo morphology) has been addressed, at least to a considerable degree, through the systematic data presentation and analysis in this chapter. Hence, the objectives of the research have been achieved, and the findings contribute to the understanding of Edo morphology and its role in the general theory of word formation in African languages.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This research set out to investigate the morphological processes of the Edo language with the aim of providing a descriptive account of how words are formed, how affixes operate, and the extent to which tone contributes to morphological distinctions. Edo, belonging to the Edoid branch of the Niger-Congo language family, is widely spoken in southern Nigeria and exhibits a wide range of morphological processes. The study examined prefixation, suffixation, reduplication, compounding, tone-based morphology, and the interactions between morphology, phonology, and syntax.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that prefixation and suffixation are among the most productive morphological strategies in Edo. Prefixes often serve inflectional purposes, such as marking tense, aspect, mood, and person, while suffixes are largely derivational, contributing to the creation of new lexical categories. For example, verbal prefixes mark subject agreement and temporal categories, while nominal prefixes help to indicate number and definiteness. The study also discovered that reduplication is a central word formation strategy. It is not only used to mark plurality in nouns but also plays an important role in intensifying the meaning of adjectives and verbs, expressing habitual actions, and emphasizing certain semantic features. This shows that reduplication in Edo has both inflectional and derivational functions, making it a highly versatile process.

Another finding is that compounding plays a significant role in lexical expansion. Edo forms new words by combining two or more free morphemes. These compounds often acquire idiomatic meanings beyond the sum of their parts, thereby enriching the

vocabulary and expressive capacity of the language. The study further established that tone-based morphology is indispensable in Edo grammar. Tonal alternations were observed to signal contrasts in tense, aspect, and number, as well as to differentiate otherwise segmentally identical words. For instance, minimal pairs in Edo (reduplication) often differ only in tone, underscoring the functional load of tone in morphological distinctions.

Finally, morphology-phonology interaction was evident in processes such as vowel elision, tone alternation, which occur when morphemes combine. These phonological adjustments ensure smoother pronunciation and reflect the close integration between sound patterns and word formation. The research showed that morphology and syntax are closely interwoven in Edo. Morphological markers contribute significantly to syntactic functions such as subject-verb agreement, case assignment, and word order. In this sense, morphological processes are not isolated but serve as essential building blocks for sentence construction and grammatical well-formedness.

## **5.2 Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications for the study of Edo morphology and linguistics in general.

Firstly, the study has shown that morphological processes such as affixation, reduplication, compounding, circumfixation, suprafixation, and infixation in the Edo language are systematic and rule-governed. This implies that word formation in Edo is not arbitrary but follows identifiable morphological patterns that can be described and taught. Consequently, the findings contribute to the general theory of morphology by providing data that support the universality of morphological rules across languages.

Secondly, the study has theoretical implications for the interaction between morphology and phonology in Edo. The occurrence of tone as a suprafixed demonstrates that tonal features are not merely phonetic but can function as morphological markers. This finding implies that tone plays a grammatical role in Edo, thereby expanding the understanding of tone as a morphological device in African languages. The results of this research have pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of the Edo language. Understanding how words are formed through different morphological processes will help teachers, students, and language developers design more effective teaching materials and methods. It will also assist in standardizing Edo orthography and improving literacy materials.

Finally, the study has implications for language documentation and preservation. By systematically describing Edo morphological processes, this research provides a reference point for future linguistic studies and contributes to the preservation of the Edo language in written form. The study provides a foundation for further research in related areas such as syntax, semantics, and phonology. It suggests that further investigation into the relationship between tone and morphology, or between derivation and word class change in Edo, will deepen our understanding of how meaning and structure are encoded in the language.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

Like every scholarly work, this research is not without limitations. First, the data were largely based on examples, most of them which were gotten from native speakers of the language, some from the Swadesh 100-word list, while some were cited from previous works and existing literature, supported by elicited forms from a limited number L1 speakers. This means that the analysis may not fully capture the entire morphological complexity of Edo. A larger corpus drawn from natural speech data from

diverse people could yield even more nuanced findings. The study did not cover dialectal variations within Edo. Given the existence of sub-varieties and dialects, it is possible that morphological processes may differ slightly across speech communities. These differences could enrich our understanding of Edo's morphological system if they are systematically explored.

Finally, the study was constrained by time and resources. Broader fieldwork, including audio documentation and computational analysis, would have allowed for more robust conclusions. Despite these limitations, the study provides a useful foundation for future research on Edo morphology.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In light of the findings and limitations of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. For future research: Scholars should undertake more extensive fieldwork on Edo morphology, with special attention to dialectal variations and natural discourse data. This will ensure that findings reflect the full linguistic richness of the language.
2. For language documentation: A comprehensive corpus of Edo should be developed, incorporating both written and spoken texts. This would not only serve academic purposes but also aid in the preservation and revitalization of the language.
3. For pedagogy: Edo should be taught with greater emphasis on its morphological and tonal structure. Language teaching materials should clearly illustrate processes such as reduplication, affixation, compounding, and tone-based distinctions so that learners can fully appreciate the grammatical system.
4. For orthography and literacy: Orthographic conventions for Edo should consistently reflect tonal and morphological contrasts. Doing so will strengthen literacy efforts

and ensure that the written form of the language corresponds more accurately to its spoken reality.

5. For comparative studies: Future linguistic research should compare Edo with other Edoid and Niger-Congo languages. Such comparative studies will help establish typological generalizations and shed light on the historical development of morphological systems in the region.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study has demonstrated that Edo is a morphologically rich language where both affixation and suprasegmental features such as tone interact to shape meaning. The hypotheses guiding this research, particularly the claim that Edo morphology is productive and that tone plays a central role in grammatical distinctions have been confirmed. Edo exhibits a balance between grammatical and tonal processes, showing that morphology in African languages must be studied beyond linear affixation to include suprasegmental features. The research has also highlighted that Edo morphology does not function in isolation but interacts with phonological and syntactic structures. Word formation processes in Edo therefore provide insights not only into the language itself but also into broader linguistic theories of morphology. Edo demonstrates how a language can employ multiple morphological strategies simultaneously to achieve economy and clarity in communication.

## REFERENCES

- Agheyisi, R. (1986). *An Edo-English dictionary*. Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation.
- Agheyisi, R. (1990). *Bini-English dictionary*. Benin City: Ethiope Publishing.
- Aronoff, M. (1976). *Word formation in generative grammar*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ashton, E.O. (1944). *Swahili grammar (including intonation)*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Awobuluyi, O. (1978). *Essential transformational syntax*. Ibadan: University Press Limited.
- Booij, G. (2005). *The grammar of words: An introduction to linguistic morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crystal (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*
- Doke, C. M. (1981). *Textbook of Zulu grammar*. Cape Town: Longman
- Egbokhare, F. (1990). *Morphological processes in Edo*. *Journal of West African Languages*, 20(2), 23–41.
- Elugbe, B. O. (1989). *Comparative Edoid: Phonology and lexicon*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Emenanjo, E. N. (1978). *Elements of modern Igbo grammar*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Essien, O. E. (1990). *A grammar of the Ibibio language*. Ibadan: University Press Limited.
- Greenberg, J. H. (1963). *The languages of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Halle, M., & Marantz, A. (1993). *Distributed morphology and the pieces of inflection*. In K. Hale & S. J. Keyser (Eds.), *The view from Building 20: Essays in linguistics in honor of Sylvain Bromberger* (pp. 111–176). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Haspelmath, M. (2002). *Understanding morphology*. London: Arnold.
- Hyman, L. M. (1975). *Phonology: Theory and analysis*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Inkelas, S. (1993). *Prosodic constituency in the lexicon*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- Katamba, F. (1992). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Kenstowicz, M. (1994). *Phonology in generative grammar*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Laurie B. (1983). *English word formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Matthews, P. H. (1991). *Morphology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ndimele, O. M. (1992). *Morphology and syntax of Igbo verbs*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Newman, P. (2000). *The Hausa language: An encyclopedia reference grammar*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Osakwe, M. (1992). Reduplication in Edo and its semantic functions. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics*, 13(1), 57–74.
- Osayande, A. (2017). *Introduction to Edo morphology*. Benin City: Ambik Press.
- Omogbe, E. (2012). *The basic clause: A morpho-syntactic analysis of Edo clausal verbs*\_Ph.D thesis, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria
- Omoruyi, O. (1986). *A descriptive analysis of Edo morphology*. Benin City: University of Benin Press.
- Omozuwa, V. (1990). *Studies in Edo word formation*. Benin City: Ambik Press.
- Spencer, A. (1991). *Morphological theory: An introduction to word structure in generative grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Spencer, A., & Zwicky, A. M. (Eds.). (1998). *The handbook of morphology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Welmers, W. E. (1973). *African language structures*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Yusuf, O. (1990). *A grammar of Yoruba*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.