

A Comparative Study Of English And Kikongo Derivational Processes

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Abstract – Ce travail est une étude comparative du système morphologique de l'Anglais et de Kikongo sur le plan dérivationnel en mettant plus l'accent sur les ressemblances et différences entre les deux langues. Malgré qu'elles soient de différentes familles linguistiques, on sait trouver quelques ressemblances sur leur approche dérivationnelle.

Keywords – Kikongo, Derivational, And Processes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language stands at the center of human affairs; it is used for communication. Communication with language is carried out through two basic human activities: speaking and listening. In speaking people put ideas into words, talking about perceptions, feelings, and intentions they want other people to grasp [1]

A word is a minimal meaningful free form which can occur in isolation and in different positions in a sentence. Word formation is a process of creating new words by means of existing elements and according to the patterns and rules of a given language [2]. The followings are types of word formation processes: derivation, compounding, conversion, and quantitative changes.

The current article concerns the derivational process which is a kind of word-formation which occurs when a new word is formed by adding a derivational morpheme (suffix or prefix) to the root. Being a Kikongo speaker, the researcher attempts to investigate on the way the derivational process occurs in Kikongo and compare it with the English one in order to sort out similarities and differences if any.

Suffixation is a kind of word-formation which occurs when a new word is formed by adding a suffix to the root [2].

For example:

- Speak + er = speaker
- Love + Ly = lovely
- Free + dom = freedom
- Econom + ist = economist

Prefixation is a kind of word-formation which occurs when a new word is formed by adding a prefix to the root [2].

For example:

- A + political = apolitical
- Un + acceptable = unacceptable
- Dis + like = dislike
- Il + legal = illegal

As the derivational process exists in all the languages all over the world, and as English and Kikongo are languages, so they are concerned with the process.

Kikongo is the language of Ne-Kongo also called Monokutuba, Kikongo ya Leta, or Ikeleve. It is one of the four National languages which allow communication among tribes living Kwilu , Kwango, and Kongo Central Provinces. It is also spoken in Congo Brazzaville and Angola and a small extension in Tshikapa and Ilebo areas in Kasai province [3].

II. METHOD

A method is a tool or technique used to collect data. It is a procedure for obtaining knowledge based on empirical observation and logical reasoning [4].

As the study aims on the comparison of English and Kikongo derivational processes, the documentary technique as a qualitative research method that involves analyzing existing documents was used for the collection of data.

III. RESULTS

III.1. ENGLISH DERIVATIONAL PROCESSES

As the objective of the current work is to investigate on similarity and differences between English and Kikongo derivational processes, instead of working on all aspects of derivational process, the researcher focused only on some of them as illustrated in the following lines.

III.1.1. Nouns derived from nouns

In English, there exist nouns that derived from other nouns by the fact of adding simply a suffix or a prefix to the root as shown in the chart below.

Chart 1. Suffixation

Nouns/base form	Derivational Suffix	Derived nouns
Play	Er	Player
Cool	Er	Cooler
Friend	Ship	Friendship
Child	Hood	Childhood
Free	Dom	Freedom
King	Dom	Kingdom
Slave	Ry	Slavery
Engin	Eer	Engineer
Econom	Ist	Economist
Productive	Ity	Productivity
consumer	ism	consumerism

Chart 2. Prefixation

Nouns	Derivational Prefix	Derived nouns
Political	a	Apolitical
Player	multi	Multiplayer
Charge	counter	Countercharge
Text	hyper	Hypertext
Dose	over	Overdose
Conception	mis	Misconception

III.1.2. Nouns derived from verbs

Some other English nouns derived from verbs by suffixation and prefixation as seen in the chart below:

Chart N°3

verbs	Derivational suffix and prefix	Derived nouns
suffixation		
Read	Er	Reader
Keep	Er	Keeper
Act	Or	Actor
Build	Ing	Building
Agree	Ment	Agreement
Invest	Ment	Investment
Explor	Ation	Exploration
Pass	Age	Passage
Assist	Ance	Assistance
Correspond	Ence	Correspondence
Prefixation		
Like		
Conduct	Dis	Dislike
Drive	Mis	Misconduct
Form	Over	Overdrive
	uni	Uniform

III.1.3. Adjectives derived from nouns

It exists in English adjectives that derived from nouns by adding the suffix *al, ful, ish, ous, less y,* and the prefix *multi, il, uni,* and *over* to the root.

Chart N°4

Nouns/base forms	Derivational suffix and prefix	Derived adjectives
Suffixation		
Nation	Al	National
Power	Ful	Powerful
Fool	Ish	Foolish
Danger	Ous	Dangerous
Power	Less	Powerless
Cream	Y	Creamy
Duty	Ful	Dutiful
Snob	Ish	Snobbish
Prefixation		
Lingual	Multi	Multilingual
Liberal	Il	Illiberal
Active	Over	Overactive
Form	uni	Uniform

III.1.4. Nouns derived from adjectives

Other English nouns derived from adjective by simply adding *ness*, *ity*, *dom*, *hood*, *ism*, *il* and *here* to the root.

Chart N°5

Adjectives	Derivational suffix and prefix	Derived nouns
Suffixation		
Great	Ness	Greatness
Creative	Ity	Creativity
Free	Dom	Freedom
Adult	Hood	Adulthood
Effective	Ness	Effectiveness
Professional	Ism	Professionalism
Prefixation		
Legal	Il	Illegal
After	here	Hereafter

III.1.5. Verbs derived from adjectives

Verbs also derived from adjectives by adding the suffix *ify*, *en*, *ize*, to the root.

Chart N°6

Adjectives	Derivational suffix	Derived verbs
Simple	Ify	Simplify
Bright	En	Brighten
National	Ize	Nationalize
Intense	Ify	Intensify
Rational	Ize	Rationalize
Moist	En	Moisten
quality	ify	qualify

III.1.6. Adverbs derived from adjectives

Adverbs are generally derived from adjectives. This is usually done by adding the suffix “*ly*” and the prefix “*a*”, and *here* to the base form (adjective), as it is shown in the following chart.

Chart N°7

Adjectives	Derivational suffix and prefix	Derived adverbs
Suffixation		
Slow	Ly	Slowly
Correct	Ly	Correctly
Back	Ward	Backward
Perfect	Ly	Perfectly
Brief	Ly	Briefly
Prefixation		
Far	A	Afar
After	here	Hereafter

III.1.7. Verbs derived from verbs

The English verbs derived from other verbs are generally made by adding the suffix “*s*” and “*ed*” to the root for regular verbs but irregular verbs operate differently. Here emphasis is put only on regular verbs.

Chart N°8

Verbs	Derivational suffix	Derived verbs
Ask	s, ed	Asks, asked
Bake	s, ed	Bakes, baked
Close	s, ed	Closes, closed
Dress	s, ed	Dresses, dressed

III.2. KIKONGO DERIVATIONAL PROCESSES

III.2.1. Nouns derived from nouns

In Kikongo there are nouns that derived from other nouns, the prefix “*ki*” is attached in front of the already existing noun. The structure is “P+N”

Chart N°9

Nouns/base forms	Derivational prefix	Derived nouns	Interpretation
Ntete (first)	Ki	Kintete	Monday
Zole (two or second)	Ki	Kizole	Tuesday
Nsukami (slave)	Ki	Kinsukami	Slavery
Mvuama (rich man)	Ki	Kimvuama	Richness
Tatu (three)	ki	Kitatu	Wednesday

Note:

- Kintente (Monday) = kilumbu ya ntete (the first day) or kilumbu kia ntete
- Kitatu (Wednesday) = kilumbu ya tatu (the third day) or kilumbu kia tatu

The prefix “*bi*” expresses the plural form of some words such as:

- Kilumbu(day) = bilumbu (days)
- Kiteki (toy) = biteki (toys)
- Kitendi (piece of cloth) = bitendi (pieces of cloth)

III.2.2. Nouns derived from verbs

As said above, there are other nouns that derived from verbs by prefixation. They are formed by adding a nominal prefix to a simple verbal root or to a verbal theme already containing one or more derivational prefixes.

Example:

- Yungula (sieves) + “*mu*”= Muyungulu (the sieve)

The nominal derivational prefix accordingly takes the place of the final affix. In Kikongo however, such altered verb forms are then attached to noun class prefixes, thanks to which they are assigned a noun-class. This has the structure “prefix-root-suffix” “P-R-S”, generally attached the prefix “*mu*”(ba), “*lu*”, “*ki*”, or “*n*”(ba) in front of the verbal root before adding the suffix “*I*”, or “*u*” by the replacement of the final vowel as illustrated in the chart below.

The prefixes “*mu*” “*n*” express the singular form whereas “*ba*” expresses the plural form. For example:

- Muteki (the seller) = bateki (sellers)
- Ntwadisi (leader) = bantwadisi (leaders)

Chart N°9

Verbs	Derivational prefix and suffix	Derived nouns	Interpretation
Kuteka (to sell)	Mu(ba), i	Muteki, bateki	The seller, sellers
Kuzinga (to live)	Lu, u	Luzingu	The life
Kufwa (to die)	Lu	Lufwa	The dead
Kuyungula (to sieve)	Ki, u	Kiyungulu	The sieve
Kuloba (to fish)	Mu(ba), i	Mulobi, balobi	Fishman, fish men
Kubutuka (to born)	Lu, u	Lubutuku	Christmas day
Kutwadisa (to lead)	N(ba), i	Ntwadisi, bantwadisi	The leader, leaders

In the above chart, the verbal roots are “teka”(sell), “zinga”(live), “fwa”(die), “yungula”(sieve), “loba”(fish), “butuka”(born), and “twadisa”(leading) to which “mu”, “lu”, “ki”, and “n” have been prefixed and “i” or “u” have been respectively suffixed by replacing the final vowel.

For example:

- Kuloba (to fish) = mulobi (fishman): the suffix “i” in mulobi is used in replacement of the final “a” of the verb “kuloba”.

III.2.3. Adjectives derived from nouns

As in English, it exists in Kikongo adjectives that derived from nouns which are formed by adding the prefix “ki” to the root noun as illustrated in the following chart.

Chart 10.

Nouns	Derivational prefix	Derived adjective	Interpretation
Mbeni(enemy)	Ki	Kimbeni	Enmity
Ngunza(young)	Ki	Kingunza	Indecent
Ndumba (prostitute)	Ki	Kindumba	Indecent
Mbuta (elder)	Ki	Kimbuta	Eldest
Longi (teacher)	ki	Kilongi	Education

III.2.4. Nouns derived from adjectives

Like other Bantu languages, Kikongo resorts to the process of deriving nouns from adjectives. This is achieved through the process of prefixation, which is illustrated in the structure “P+adj” where “p” stands for prefix and “Adj” for adjective

Chart N°11

Adjectives	Derivational prefix	Derived noun	Interpretation
Zoba (fool)	Bu	Buzoba	Foolishness
Nkufi (short)	Bu	Bunkufi	Shortness
Molo (lazybones)	Bu	Bumolo	Laziness
Mbi (bad)	Ma	Mambi	Worse
Nene (big)	Bu	Bunene	Bigest
Ndoki (sorcerer)	ki	kindoki	sorcery

It can be said that the process of nouns deriving from adjectives takes place in attaching the prefix “*Bu*”, “*m*”, and “*ki*” in front of the already existing adjectives.

III.2.5. Verbs derived from verbs

The notion of verbal derivation is better approached through the processes of derivational verbal affixes. These are verbal extensions. They involve the addition of semantically well-defined affixes to a given verbal root. The extension of the root will specify the orientation of the meaning conveyed by the root.

This theory also implies in Kikongo where suffixes are attached to the verbal roots, which have fixed meaning. In order to apply verbal derivation in Kikongo the distinct derivational verbal affixes can be applicative, reciprocal, static, possessive and causative respectively. This is illustrated in the following chart.

Chart N°12

Verbal roots	Derivational suffix	Derived verb	Interpretation
Kutuba (to speak)	Ila (applicative)	Kutubila	To speak to someone
Kutanga (to read)	Ila (applicative)	Kutangila	To read for someone
Kusonika (to write)	Ila (applicative)	Kusonikila	To write for someone
Kupesa (to give)	Maka (applicative)	Kupesamaka	Given by
Kufuta (to pay)	Maka (applicative)	Kufutamaka	Paid by
Kuzola (to love)	Na (reciprocal)	Kuzolana	Love each other
Kuzaba (to know)	Na (reciprocal)	Kuzabana	Know each other
Kuvila (to lost)	Disa (causative)	Kuvidisa	Lost something
Kudila (to cry)	Isa (causative)	Kudidisa	Make cry someone
Kutuba (to speak)	Isa (reciprocal)	Kutubisa	Make speak someone
Kukanga (to arrest)	Ma (static)	kukangama	To be arrested

In Kikongo the derived verbs are formed by adding one of the following suffix to the root: “*ila*”, “*maka*”, “*na*”, “*isa*”, “*ma*”, and “*disa*”. The suffix “*ka*” is used to express the action in the past. For example:

- Kupesamaka (has been given)
- Kuzolanaka (loved)

- Kufutamaka (paid)

III.2.6. Adverbs derived from adjectives

Adjectives	Derivational prefix	Derived adverbs	Interpretation
Ntama(far)	Na	Na ntama	Very far
Kati (in)	Na	Na kati	Inside
Zulu (on)	Na	Na zulu	Above
Mpembe(white)	Ya	Ya mpembe	Whiteness
Fioti (small)	Ya	Ya fioti	Smaller
Madidi(cold)	ya	Ya madidi	coldly

As in English, there exist in Kikongo adverbs derived from adjectives, they are made by adding a prefix such “na” or “ya” to the root as illustrated in the chart above.

III.3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

On the morphological level, it is obvious that, although these two languages are not from the same linguistic family, however they exhibit some similarities in terms of derivational processes. Thus Kikongo like English is characterized by nominal affixes and roots.

The main objective pursued in this study has been the comparison between English and Kikongo derivational processes. The stress has been put on similarities and differences between both languages.

In fact, these two languages exhibit some morphological similarities and differences in the sense that, they both apply derivational processes, especially prefixation and suffixation as it has been demonstrated above.

Although, they both use derivational processes; they do not apply them in the same way as illustrated in the chart below.

Derivative forms	English derivational process	Kikongo derivational process	Similarities
Nouns from Nouns	Suffix and Prefix	Prefix	Prefix
Nouns from Verbs	Suffix and Prefix	Suffix and Prefix	Suffix and Prefix
Nouns from Adjectives	Suffix and Prefix	Prefix	Prefix
Adjectives from Nouns	Suffix and Prefix	Prefix	Prefix
Adverbs from Adject.	Suffix and Prefix	Prefix	Prefix
Verbs from Verbs	Suffix	suffix	Suffix

IV. CONCLUSION

This article entitled “A comparative study of English and Kikongo derivational processes” tends to establish the similarities and differences between English and Kikongo derivational processes by putting the stress on the morphological aspect of the two languages. As a matter of fact, different affixes used to derive nouns from other nouns; adjectives; adverbs, verbs from adjectives as well as from other verbs were picked out.

It is worth concluding that, those two languages share similarities and differences. For example, while English uses suffixation and prefixation to create new nouns from existing ones, Kikongo uses only prefixation; while English uses suffixation and prefixation to create new nouns from verbs, Kikongo also uses the same derivational processes (see the chart above)

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