

Interfixation in Tiv morphology

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Abstract: Tiv, one of the Bantoid languages spoken in Benue, Nassarawa, Taraba, Plateau states of Nigeria and Southern Cameroon, has tripartite connotations which it refers to a tribe, a language and an ancestral father. This study investigates various functions that interfixation performs in Tiv. This study adopts Hockett's (1954) Item-and-Process Theory which explains the morphological composition of interfixal process in Tiv and how it changes simple words to complex words. Methodologically, this study sourced data through primary (observation) and secondary sources. The secondary sources were obtained from journal articles, academic textbooks, dictionaries and encyclopaedias which boosted literature review of this study. The study used non-probability sampling procedure with a particular reference to deliberate sampling design. Data collection was done through personal observation in which words that have interfixes were jotted down, transcribed, grouped according to their formations and functions then analysed accordingly. The study revealed that Tiv interfixes have interfixed vowel 'a', syllable '-mba-' and interfixed words. It has also been discovered that interfixed vowel, syllable and words are mostly found in compound words and triplications. It has also been found out that Tiv interfixes and infixes have their distinctive features. The study has also shown that Tiv interfixes express futurity (shall); perform the prepositional functions of 'of' and 'with'; the plural morpheme '-mba' with adjectival roots and plural nominal roots and formation of triplications in Tiv. This study is, therefore, recommended to: linguists that have interest in morphology, scholars who wish to investigate interfixation as an affixation process, students who may wish to write their projects, dissertations and theses on affixal processes and lecturers who may intend to write articles or books on word-formation processes.

Keywords: Affixation, Infix, Interfixation, Interfixal vowels, Item-and-Process, Morphology, Tiv

1. Introduction

Tiv language is one of the languages that is spoken in the north-central geographical area of Nigeria. It is a major language spoken in Benue State of Nigeria. It is also spoken in Nassarawa, Taraba, Plateau states of Nigeria and the Southern Cameroon. Tiv, one of the Bantu languages, has tripartite connotations and it refers to a tribe, a language and an ancestral father. Tiv language has several word-building processes which are affixation, compounding, abbreviation/acronymy, clipping, cliticisation, conversion, just to mention but a few. This study centres on interfixation which is one of the kinds of affixation (the insertion of prefixes, infixes, interfixes, superfixes, suffixes and circumfixes to the root words) in Tiv. Prefixation and suffixation as kinds of affixation in Tiv have received much scholarly attention at the expense of interfixation. This is so because most scholars of Tiv language did not believe that Tiv affixation has interfixation, infixation, suprafixation and circumfixation. This study therefore debunks such an erroneous assertion that Tiv affixation has only prefixation and suffixation but establishes that Tiv interfixation is as viable as other kinds of affixal processes. Interfixation (the insertion, affixation and placement of bound morphemes between two root words) has been grossly understudied hence the reason to embark on this study. The prominent roles play by Tiv interfixation cannot be ignored in a hurry and this has become a research gap that this study attempts to fill.

2. Review of related literature

This section is dovetailed into conceptual reviews of morphology and interfixation with its distinctive features. It also discusses various cross-linguistic studies on interfixation and the existing research gap. What follows is the concept of interfixation as an affixal process.

2.1. Conceptualisation of Morphology

According to Greenbaum (1991:670), the word *morphology* is derived in the 'nineteenth century from a Greek *morph-* which means shape, structure, and *-ology* meaning the study'. Lyons (2009:103) maintains that morphology deals with the 'internal grammatical structure' of words and it 'includes not only inflection, but also derivation' and it also 'handles both inflection and derivation by means of rules operating upon the same basic units – morphemes. In the same vein, Matthews (2007) opines that morphology is the study of the grammatical structure of words and the categories realised by them. Syal and Jindal (2007:77) maintain that morphology is a 'systematic study of morphemes or how morphemes join to form words'. O' Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011:116) refer morphology to 'the part of the grammar that is concerned with words and word formation'. All the above cited authors unanimously agreed that morphology studies morphemes or internal structure of words. The definitions identified derivational and inflectional morphology. Morphology has many word-building processes which affixation is one of them. Affixation is the addition of morphemes before root words, inside root words, between root words, above sounds, before and after root words. Affixation is therefore compartmentalised into interfixation, prefixation, infixation, superfixation, circumfixation and suffixation. The concept of interfixation has been explained below.

2.2. Conceptualisation of Interfixation and its prominent Characteristics in Tiv Morphology

One of the prominent word-building processes in Tiv is affixation which affixes or inserts morphemes before root words (prefixation), inside root words (infixation), between root words (**interfixation**), above Tone-Bearing-Units (TBUs) (superfixation/suprafixation), after root words (suffixation), before and after root words (circumfixation). The umbrella term for prefix (or prefixation) and suffix (or

suffixation) is adfix (or adfixation). Adfixes are morphemes that come outside or surround root words. The antithesis of adfixation is therefore interfixation and infixation. The word ‘interfix’ is a derivation from two English words: ‘inter-’ and ‘-fix’. The prefix ‘inter’ means ‘between’ and ‘fix’ refers to ‘to place, affix, insert, link and put’. An interfix is therefore a morpheme that is affixed between two roots or between a root and a suffix. An interfix is also known by the following elocutions: bound morpheme, embedding morpheme, nesting morpheme, linker, linking phoneme, dependent element, phonomorpheme, stem extender, valence, connecting morpheme, linking morpheme, among others.

McArthur (1992) describes an interfix as an element that unites words and bases. This description points out that interfixes join, unite, fuse and amalgamate independent morphemes or dependent morphemes. Trask (1996:182) defines interfix as ‘an empty morph occurring between a stem and a meaningful suffix’. The import of the above definition is that an interfix must be nested between two roots. According to Rochelle (2022), an interfix is a part of a word that is inserted between two free morphemes and/or one free morpheme (root word) and a suffix. Interfix is a dependent morpheme that elongates the root words or stems to fuse with other roots, stems or affixes. Tiv interfixation has the following peculiar features as enunciated in the succeeding heading.

Characteristics of Tiv Interfixation

Characteristically, Tiv interfixation has the following distinctive features such as they are: inserted between two root words; always meaningful; mostly found in compound words; they do not change word-class; synchronically formed and affixed with linking morphemes such as ‘-a-’, ‘-mba-’ and middle stem of triplications.

Tiv interfixes juxtapose two root words. One of the distinguishing features of an interfix is that it sandwiches two independent morphemes. Independent morphemes can stand on their own and such free morphemes can be fused to form compound words. It is between the two free bases that an interfix is nested. For instance, a linking phoneme ‘a’ is affixed between ‘Ior’ (people) and ‘pine’ (ask) and ‘Ior’ (people) and ‘puu’ (criticise) thus forming *Iorapine* (people shall ask) and *Iorapuu* (people shall criticise). For clarity, the formation of Tiv interfix is shown in Table 1 below: Morpheme

Table 1: A linking phoneme ‘a’ juxtaposes ‘Ior’ and ‘puu’ (Iorapuu) in Tiv

Root word	Interfix	Root word
Ior	a	pine
‘People	shall	ask’

Tiv interfixes are mostly found in compound words. The favoured words for the formation of interfixes are compound words. Compound words are formed by joining two or more words together. It is when the two or more simple words are formed that interfixes are located. These interfixes cannot be seen in monosyllables or disyllables. For instance, ‘y’ in *ioyeren* (blessing) is not an interfix but an infix because it is fixed inside the root words *ver* (bless), ‘i’ is a prefix, ‘y’ is an infix and ‘en’ is a suffix. However, ‘a’ in *ambiabua* (cow dung) is an example of an interfix in Tiv. *Ambi* (dung) and *bua* are nominal root words which are joined by an interfixed ‘a’ that means ‘of’. A linking phoneme ‘a’ comes between two independent words, and not inside *ambi* or *bua*. If there are no compound words in Tiv, there are no interfixes in Tiv but their presence have provided many interfixes. All Tiv interfixes are compound words but not all compound words are interfixes in Tiv.

Most of the Tiv interfixes are always meaningful. Unlike interfixes in other languages, Tiv interfixes are highly meaningful. In some languages, interfixes may be meaningless. Müller (2015:268) opines that interfix 'lacks a semantic meaning'. Müller may be right to assert that because interfixes in the language he studied may be meaningless. For instance, *Iorhii* and *Iorahii* are not the same names in Tiv. The difference between the two names is signalled by the placement of a linking morpheme 'a' between 'Ior' and 'hii'. The name *Iorhii* means 'people have started' and *Iorahii* means 'people shall start'. The affixation of 'a' between 'Ior' and 'hii' expresses what shall be done. It therefore means that interfix 'a' in Tiv expresses futurity. This underscores the fact that Tiv interfixes are highly meaningful. Conversely, *Iorhii* which is not affixed with any morpheme means 'people have started'.

Tiv interfixes do not change word-class. The insertions of interfixed morpheme 'a' and 'mba' in Tiv do not change the part of speech they are affixed. The fusions of the stem extenders maintain the same word classes but have different meanings. By way of example, interfixation of 'a' between *akuhe* (bones) and *kyegh* (fowl), that is, *akuheakyegh* (chicken bones) does not change the two nouns to another part of speech. Again, the embedding of 'a' between *tôô a tôô* (take-take), *wua a wua* (kill-kill) and *zamber a zamber* (apologise-apologise) does not change the verbs to other parts of speech. Furthermore, the putting of *gbu* between *gbunô* and *gbunô* (*gbunô-gbu-gbunô*) meaning 'crooked' and the fixing of 'be' between *bema* and *bema* (*bema-be-bema*) meaning 'to behave in a silly manner' do not change the adjectives to other parts of speech.

Tiv interfixes are synchronically formed. The interfixation of Tiv words does not reflect a product of language change but it is a synchronic process of word-formation. For instance, the infusion of -*mba*- between two root words *uhyuren* (crooked) and *gbindav* (paths, ways, roads) is a synchronic process of plural formation in Tiv as evident in the Tiv word *uhyurenmbagbindav* (crooked paths). Conversely, the infixations of 'a' in *daang* (bad), 'e' in *feeng* (to open widely), 'i' in *viing* (quiet), 'o' in *boong* (conspicuous), 'ô' in *dông* (taut), 'u' in *tsuung* (greatly), 'y' in *ihyom* (hatred) and *ivyo* (goat) are instances of language change in Tiv. Undoubtedly, letters 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', 'ô', 'u' and 'y' are inserted in the above words to enhance proper pronunciations that Old Tiv did not consider. Tiv infixation is both diachronic and synchronic.

Tiv interfixes have linking morphemes '-a-', '-mba-' and middle stem in triplications. Among the commonest ways of forming interfixation in Tiv is the use of the linking morpheme 'a'. The insertion of the nesting morpheme 'a' in *Aôndohemen* (God leads) changes it to *Aôndo+a+hemen* (God shall lead). The linking 'a' shows futurity (shall) in Tiv. Furthermore, an interfixed 'a' means 'of' and it joins two nouns as witnessed in *abaamou* (bags of cotton wool). Additionally, a linking phoneme 'a' means 'with' unites two stems in Tiv as seen *Nguamo* ([He/she] is with me) and *Nguavese* ([He/she] is with us). An interfixed vowel 'a' joins adjectives and plural nouns as found in *anomaior* (brave people). A linking morpheme '-mba-' joins plural adjectives with plural nouns in *ugôgômbaayoughov* meaning 'tall houses' or 'towers'. *Ugôgô* is a plural adjective which is divided into *u* (plural prefix meaning 'more than one') and *gôgô* (tall). The word *ayoughov* means 'houses' which is prefixed with 'a' (plural marker), 'you' is a root word and 'ov' is a suffix. The middle linking words in the following Tiv triplications such as *shila-shi-shila* (to show restlessness) and *zemba-ze-zemba* (staggered movement or gait) are some of the formation processes in the Tiv triplications. The linking morphemes 'shi' and 'ze' that link or fuse 'shila' – 'shila' and 'zemba' – 'zemba' are linking morphemes.

Interestingly, the above features of Tiv interfixation are diametrically opposed to infixation in Tiv based on the following distinguishing features. Interfixes are affixed between two root words whereas infixes are located inside root words. In addition to above, interfixes are mostly nested in compound words and triplications while infixes are affixed mostly in simple words. Furthermore,

interfixes do not change word-class whereas some infixes are susceptible to deriving new words. Again, interfixes are synchronically formed but infixes involve both diachronic and synchronic formation processes. Finally, interfixes in Tiv are conspicuously joined with linking morphemes such as '-a-', '-mba-' and middle stem of triplications while infixes have linking phonemes such as 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', 'ô', 'u' and 'y' to enhance correct pronunciations and for nominalisation.

2.3. Empirical review of studies on interfixation

Interfixation is an important affixal process in some languages but there is paucity of scholarly studies on it. Few of the critical studies have been reviewed to add credence to its existence, forms and roles of interfix in natural languages. McArthur (1992) identifies interfixed vowels, syllables and words in English. According to McArthur (1992), a thematic vowel *-i-* in *agriculture*, a thematic vowel *-o-* in *biography* and a thematic *-a-* in *Strip-a-gram* are examples of interfixed thematic vowels. He also lists *-ma* and *-ummy* as interfixed syllables which are seen in *whatchamacallit* and *thingamabob/thingummybob*. He also mentions *-in-*, *-cum-*, *-a-* and *-n-* as interfixed words in English. The aforesaid interfixed words are found in the middle of English words such as '*editor-in-chief*, *writer-cum-publisher*, *Rent-a-Car*, and *Sun 'n Sand*', according to McArthur (1992:522). The above interfixable elements perfectly fit into the language's rhythm as weak vowels and syllabic consonants such as [n] and [m].

Onukawa and Onukawa (2016) provide evidence of interfixation in Igbo which they maintain that it is used for the derivation of nouns that have dual constituents of morphological rank. They further substantiate that Igbo interfixation is a diachronic process of language. Another study that discusses interfixation was carried out by Boyede (2018) in which he identifies 'n' as an interfixation which sandwiched between two nouns in Úgwù language so as to block or prevent them occurring sequentially. Furthermore, Asuoha (2018) examines form, position and function of interfixation in Ngwa dialect of Igbo. Asuoha substantiates that interfix in Ngwa dialect of Igbo derives new words or changes the word class of the morpheme to which it is affixed. From his findings, Asuoha asserts that interfixation occurs between two bisyllables that have equal rank; only one interfix occurs with the root and reduplicated form and Ngwa interfixation comprises a single consonant such as [k], [l], [m], [r], [gh], [t] and monosyllabic CV structure such as [ta], [da] and [ri].

Nwokedi, Enemeradu, Umelo and Ude (2021) observe that interfix is the most understudied affixal process in natural languages. They further substantiate that Igbo interfixation is a very productive affixal process as great dynamic verbs lead themselves to it. They cite 'm', 'n' and 'r' interfixes in Igbo which are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Nwokedi, Enemeradu, Umelo and Ude's (2021) Interfixation in Igbo

Words	Interfix Morphemes	Words with Interfixes
<i>anu</i> (meat)	-m-	<i>anumanu</i> (mammal)
<i>nu</i> (drink)	-m-	<i>anumunu</i> (drunkenness)
<i>ri</i> (eat)	-m-	<i>erimeri</i> (banquet/feast)
<i>kwuru</i> (talk)	-n-	<i>ekwerekwu</i> (talkative person)
<i>fu</i> (wrap)	-r-	<i>afuruafu</i> (Indian hemp)

The above Table 2 shows that 'm', 'n' and 'r' are interfixed morphemes that link similar words such as *anu+m+anu* (*anumunu*) meaning 'mammal' and *afu+r+afu* (*afurafu*) (Indian hemp), respectively. Imu

and Cookey (2022) posit that the presence of interfixation in Ika language is for derivation of new words. Their study examines the form and word-building process of interfixation in Ika language. In their words, Imu and Cookey confirm that the morphological and semantic realisations of Ika interfixation are schematically represented as: verb stem + participle verb + interfix. Their study discovers that interfix is affixed in the middle of two similar words in which it serves as a linking morpheme. Interfixation is a meaningful affixal process in Ika which is diametrically opposed to other languages. The insertion of an interfix between two similar words results in adjectivisation.

The above studies have unanimously agreed that interfixes are affixed between two identical or dissimilar elements. The cited authorities have also concurred that interfixes are used for derivation (nominalisation and adjectivation). Again, the cited authorities also acknowledged that consonants are the primary linking elements of compound words and 'ni' which is an interfixed syllable in Úgwù language. Their studies greatly differ from the present study in the sense that Tiv language mostly uses interfixed morpheme 'a' for forming words. Tiv language also uses the plural marker '-mba-' (they, many) as an interfixal morpheme in her language. The above studies discussed interfixation in Igbo, Úgwù and Ika languages of Nigeria. None of the aforementioned critical studies dwelled on Tiv hence the reason to embark on this study. This study, therefore, investigates various functions that interfixation performs in Tiv language.

2.4. Theoretical framework

This study adopts Hockett's Item-and-Process (IP) model of 1950s. According to Hockett (1966), IP is a process through which the configuration of words moves from one pattern to another or longer part of the pattern. Hockett mentions eight processes that a linguistic item could undergo such as suffixation, prefixation, vowel change, consonant change, vowel and consonant change, suppletion, infixation, reduplication and juxtaposition. Asiyanbola (2003:48) states that Item-and-Process explains the process of a particular root or base undergoes rather than representing morpheme with a morph as in Item and Arrangement theory. This presupposes that in IP model, the formation of new words depends on applying the rules that alter a word-form or stem in order to produce a new one.

Crystal (2008: 257) opines that in Item-and-Process model, the 'relationships between words are seen as processes of derivation' and exemplifies that the item *took* is derived from the item *take* by a 'process' involving vowel change. According to Matthews (2007: 206), Item-and-Process is a 'model in which an initially simple element or root undergoes successive processes of internal change' as maintains that *unsung* /ʌnsʌŋ/ might be derived from the root *sing* /sɪŋ/ by an internal change of /ɪ/ to /ʌ/, which forms the participle, followed by the addition of the prefix *un-* /ʌn/, which forms a negative prefix.

Item-and-Process model is vitally important in this study because it explains the composition of morphemes and morphemic changes that result in Tiv meanings. The model can be handy to explain the morphological composition of interfixal process in Tiv and how it changes simple words to complex words. Again, this model helps in applying morphological rules to the formation of interfixes in Tiv language. The formation of interfixes is governed by rules such as inserting 'a' between two equal stems to express futuristic action as evident in *Aôndoqhemén* (God shall lead); interfixed 'a' also means 'with' as in *Nguavese* (He/she is with us) and interfixed 'a' means 'of' as exemplified in *akeseqtematu* (baskets of tomato). By and large, Item-and-Process is a cornerstone in morphology that affixation (interfixation) cannot do without it.

3. Research methods

Research methodology is seen as a structured and scientific approach used in collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data to answer research questions or to test hypotheses. The study principally makes use of primary and secondary sources of data elicitation. Chaudhary, Mahamuni, Manjunathan and Vinitha (2024: 18) define primary data as data that a 'researcher collects for a specific purpose of investigating the research problem at hand'. The commonly used primary data include observations, surveys, interview transcripts, stratified data and works of art. The primary source was obtained through participant-observation method which was made possible because the researchers are of the Tiv extraction. The use of primary data provides raw information and firsthand evidence. Primary data also give direct access to the subject of a research. Furthermore, secondary sources of data were also used for obtaining data. Secondary data are the data that have not been collected for the immediate study at hand but for purposes other than the problem at hand. These primary data comprise journal articles, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and academic books. They provide secondhand information and commentary from other researchers. A secondary source of data describes, interprets and synthesises primary sources. McGinn (2008: 803) maintains that researchers employ secondary source of data to 'investigate new research questions, corroborate or extend the original analyses, or compare to other data sources'. The deployment of secondary data boosts the literature review section of this study and establishes the existing research gap.

This study sampled data that contained interfixed vowels, syllables and words. According to Alberto (2014: 3), sampling is a very significant part of humanity research design because of 'feasibility of the research, lower costs, economy of time and better organisation of work'. The sampling procedure employed in this study is non-probability sampling procedure. Tavakoli (2023) defines non-probability sampling as a sampling procedure that comprises 'a number of strategies that try to achieve a reasonable representative sample using resources that are within the means of the ordinary researcher'. Morgan (2008:800) opines that 'the common use of non-probability samples in research matches an approach to data collection and analysis strategy that typically relies on the careful interpretation of a small number of very rich data source such as data containing interfixed vowels, syllables and words. The sampling design adopted in this study is deliberate/purposive sampling method that involves 'deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe' (Tavakoli, 2012: 563).

Data collection was done through observation. VandenBos (2015:282) asserts that data collection is a 'systematic gathering of information for research or practical purposes'. Qualitative research of this kind uses small and indepth samples from which to elicit data. It generates vivid description which is seen in creative and narrative forms. The role of the researcher is interactive and include participation in the study. The researcher is the main data collection tool and findings are presented in the form of words and pictures. Data collection strategies include observations, mail surveys, interviews, laboratory experiments and psychological testing. The collection strategy adopted in this study is observation. According to Salkind (2010:1129), observation is a 'direct, firsthand account or accounts obtained by the researcher through hidden or known roles'. VandenBos (2015) concurs that observation is the 'careful, close examination of an object, process, or other phenomenon for the purpose of collecting about it or drawing conclusion'. Heath, McKinley and Baffoe-Djan (2020: 92) describe observation as 'watching, recording, interpreting and reflecting on human activity and behaviour'. This study has made use of participant-observation for obtaining data. In his words, VandenBos (2015:7 65) opines that participant-observation is 'a quasi-experimental research method in which a trained investigator studied a preexisting group process and bias the data'. In this study,

the researchers are active participants who participated in the entire gamut of data collection, According to Givens (2008:829), the goal or role participant-observers is to 'gain an understanding of the various activities and experiences of those being observed in their natural setting'.

The data which the researchers elicited through personal observation in which words that have interfixes were jotted down, transcribed, grouped according to their formations and functions. For instance, words with interfixed 'a' were compartmentalised into: those expressing futurity in Tiv name; serving as a preposition 'of'; an interfixed vowel 'a' meaning 'with' joining adjectives and an interfixed vowel 'a' comes between two nouns in Tiv. Also, an interfixed syllable 'mba-' comes before plural nouns in Tiv compound words and interfixed words join triplications in Tiv. The study finally analysed the said data using prose style, tables and figures.

4. Data analysis

VandenBos (2015: 765) describes data analysis as 'the process of applying graphical, statistical, or qualitative techniques to set of observation or measurements in order to summarise it or to find general pattern'. The thrust of this study centres on the functions of interfixation in Tiv. The data presentation for this study is therefore presented thus:

- a. An interfixed vowel 'a' expresses futurity in Tiv names.
- b. An interfixed vowel 'a' serves as a preposition 'of'.
- c. An interfixed 'a', a Tiv preposition meaning 'with', joins two wordsd.
- d. An interfixed vowel 'a' joins adjectives and plural nouns.
- e. An interfixed vowel 'a' comes between two nouns in Tiv.
- f. An interfixed syllable '-mba-' comes before plural nouns in Tiv compound words.
- g. Interfixedword join triplications in Tiv.

5. Data findings and discussions

This section discusse functions that interfixation performs in Tiv. The major findings of this are: an interfixed vowel 'a' expresses futurity in Tiv names, an interfixed vowel 'a' serves as a preposition 'of', an interfixed 'a', a Tiv preposition meaning 'with', joins two wordsd, an interfixed vowel 'a' joins adjectives and plural nouns, an interfixed vowel 'a' comes between two nouns in Tiv, an interfixed syllable '-mba-' comes before plural nouns in Tiv compound words and interfixed words join triplications in Tiv. The discussion of this paper is based on the above findings.

An interfixed vowel 'a' expresses futurity in Tiv names. Names have meanings in every culture. These meanings are made possible by using certain affixes (prefixes, infixes, interfixes and suffixes) and events in the lives of a given nation. The study of naming is what is known as onomastics. One of the functions of using an interfixed 'a' in Tiv is to express future action. Without the use of an interfixed 'a' in Aôndoaseer (God shall increase) and Aôndoaver (God shall bless), the above two names would have been Aôndoseer and Aôndover, respectively. Other words with an interfixed 'a' are Aôndoana (God shall give), Aôndoawase (God shall help), Aôndoahemén (God shall lead), Aôndoakura (God shall protect), Because of the prominence of the interfixed 'a' in the Tiv names, letter 'o' in *Aônda* tends to be muted or deleted in rapid speech as observed in Aôndoaseer – Aôndaseer, Aôndoaver – Aôndaver, Aôndoawase – Aôndawase and Aôndoahemén – Aôndahemén. Other names that bear interfixed 'a' in Tiv are Ioraaô (people shall say), Ioraapine (people shall ask), Ioraapuu (people shall criticise), Ioraaember (people shall rejoice), Ioraatuhwa (people shall insult), Oraaduen (Somebody shall be emerging), Ioraafa (people shall know), Ioraaer (people shall do), Tyôafa (kinsmen shall know), Tyôakura (kinsmen shall protect), Tyôafa (kinsmen shall know), Tyôakôso

(kinsmen shall discuss), Nyiakura (what shall protect), Tyôaôr (kinsmen shall say), Tyôarumun (kinsmen shall accept) and Iorahii (people shall start).

Table 3: Names with Interfixes and Names without Interfixes

Names with Interfixes					Names without Interfixes	
Names	Root 1	Interfix Vowel	Root 2	Glosses	Names	Glosses
Aôndo <u>a</u> seer	Aôndo	a	seer	God shall increase	Aôndoseer	God has increased
Aôndo <u>a</u> ver	Aôndo	a	ver	God shall bless	Aôndover	God has blessed
Aôndo <u>a</u> na	Aôndo	a	na	God shall give	Aôndona	God has given
Aôndo <u>a</u> wase	Aôndo	a	wase	God shall help	Aôndowase	God has helped
Aôndo <u>a</u> hemen	Aôndo	a	hemen	God shall lead	Aôndohemen	God has led
Aôndo <u>a</u> kura	Aôndo	a	kura	God shall protect	Aôndokura	God protected
Ior <u>a</u> ôr	Ior	a	ôr	people shall say	Iorôr	people have said
Ior <u>a</u> pine	Ior	a	pine	people shall ask	Iorpine	people have asked
Ior <u>a</u> puu	Ior	a	puu	people shall criticise	Iorpuu	people have criticised
Ior <u>a</u> ember	Ior	a	ember	People shall rejoice	IoreMBER	people have rejoiced
Ior <u>a</u> tuhwa	Ior	a	tuhwa	people shall insult	Iortuhwa	people have insulted
Ior <u>a</u> fa	Ior	a	fa	people shall know	Iorfa	people knew
Ior <u>a</u> er	Ior	a	er	people shall do	Iorer	people have done
Nyi <u>a</u> kura	Nyi	a	kura	What shall protect?	Nyikura	What protection?
Or <u>a</u> duen	Or	a	duen	somebody'll emerge	Orduen	somebody has merged
Tyô <u>a</u> fa	Tyô	a	fa	kinsmen shall know	Tyôfa	kinsmen knew
Tyô <u>a</u> kura	Tyô	a	kura	kinsmen shall protect	Tyôkura	kinsmen protected
Tyô <u>a</u> kôso	Tyô	a	kôso	kinsmen shall discuss	Tyôkôso	kinsmen discussed
Tyô <u>a</u> ôr	Tyô	a	ôr	kinsmen shall say	Tyôôr	kinsmen said
Tyô <u>a</u> rumun	Tyô	a	rumun	kinsmen shall accept	Tyôrumun	kinsmen accepted

The above Table 3 shows that Tiv names with an interfix 'a' expresses future actions whereas names without letter 'a' denote past actions.

An interfixed vowel 'a' also serves as a preposition 'of'. Tiv morphology can amalgamate several free and bound morphemes in one word. Words that would have been separated are perfectly fused together. The morphological process of forming new words by amalgamating two or more words is called compounding. Compounding may fuse lexical items that belong to same or different parts of speech. The succeeding examples therefore show that the interfixed vowel 'a' is neatly nested between two compound nouns and it means 'of'. For instance, *abaacinkafa* (bags of rice) is divided into three: *aba+a+cinkafa*. *Aba* (bags) and *cinkafa* (rice) are nouns interfixed with a preposition 'a' to form compound noun. All the examples listed below are compound nouns sandwiched by vowel 'a' and they include: *abaanune* (bags of locust beans), *abaaceegh* (bags of melon), *abaakpor* (bags of cassava chips), *abaasuwanbin* (bags of soybeans), *abaagbaaye* (bags of iron-tree beans), *abaamkegh* (bags of pepper), *abaashase* (bags of cashew), *abaamou* (bags of cotton wool), *aseghamkule* (gallons of oil),

aseghamnger (gallons of water), *aseghazaryoughogh* (gallons of honey), *aseghatyoo* (gallons of palm-wine), *aseghahôrave* (gallons of locally brewed liquor), *aseghakwananii* (gallons of kerosene), *aseghacigh* (gallons of medicine) and *aseghakunu* (gallons of gruel).

Furthermore, the amalgamating role of the Tiv 'a' vowel is evident in *amendeayou* (foliages of yam), *akooqwua* (chaff of guinea-corn), *asumeakye* (bunches of palm-tree), *akpeatyoo* (bottles of palm-wine), *ambusuatsoogh* (sides of canoe), *atamakyon* (fruits of tree), *atamaaceegh* (fruits of melon), *atamatat* (fruits of fig tree), *atamaqur* (fruits of custard apple), *atôndoakyon* (firewood), *agburakyon* (logs of wood), *anyianor* (tusks), *anyianyiya* (horses' teeth), *akeakya* (monkey's testicles), *ambiabua* (cow dung), *ambiagôngo* (fox's excreta), *ambiagafa* (eagle's excreta), *ambiagyoo* (pig's excreta), *ambiakyegh* (chicken's dropping), *ambiqor* (human faeces), *ambiatyuu* (iron-pipe's wax), *ambiqvyo* (goat's excreta) and *ambiyôngo* (sheep's excreta). Again, Tiv interfixed vowel 'a' is found in *akomboasule* (farm protection), *mnyimatyuu* (iron-pipe's smoke), *adeghior* (young people), *akeseashu* (baskets of fish), *akeseatsahul* (baskets of soap), *agôndoamnger* (waves), *akuheayô* (bony snakes), *akuheavyo* (goat's bones), *akuheakyegh* (chicken bones), *akuheakya* (monkey's bones), *akuheanor* (human bones), *akpaabar* (bags of salt), *akpaatar* (sixty naira), *akpaanyiin* (eighty naira) and *akpaataan* (one hundred naira).

An interfixed vowel 'a' means 'of' and it joins two plural nouns. Examples of an interfixed vowel 'a' are *akusuabua* (cow's forelimbs), *akusuagyoo* (pig's forelimbs), *akpaawyaav* (bellows), *akpeamkule* (bottles of oil), *ajenagbaaye* (poultices of ironwood beans), *ajenanune* (poultices of locust-beans), *ajensuwabin* (poultices of soybeans), *ajenatur* (poultices of fig tree), *ajenarwam* (balls of food), *akpeabia* (bottles of beer), *akpeacigh* (bottles of medicine), *akpeagbinda* (road sides), *akpeakunu* (bottles of gruel), *akpeagogoro* (bottles of gin), *akpeamnger* (river banks), *akpeamsôr* (bottles of alcoholic drinks), *akpeayouhogh* (bottles of honey), *acianyam* (piece of meat) and *akômagbinda* (highways). In a similar vein, interfixed 'a' is seen in *aciabua* (pieces of cow), *aciakyegh* (pieces of chicken), *aciagyoo* (pieces of pig), *aciqor* (pieces of human-being), *aciavyo* (pieces of goat), *asôngoashu* (lean pieces of fish), *asôngoanyam* (lean pieces of meat), *akpongoaceegh* (ball of melon), *akpongoatswarev* (round rectum), *agbendeakurugh* (tortoise's shell), *agbendeashôhô* (cowries) and *akôakyon* (forest of wood).

Last but not the least, interfixation is also found in *aôndoqimegh* (dusk), *anuuqakase* (virgins), *asheqian* (shyness), *agbeanduhwar* (handles of hoe), *akembeayou* (yam barks), *akpeamsôr* (bottles of alcoholic drink), *atôraqyegh* (chicken pens), *atôrabua* (cow pens), *atôragyoo* (pig pens), *atôrayôngo* (sheepfold), *agumakyomon* (young locusts), *afoutya* (war tents), *asagherawua* (guinea-corn sheaves), *adeghakyon* (tender sticks), *akeseayou* (baskets of yam), *ayegherakyon* (twigs), *akeseakpor* (baskets of cassava chips), *akeseamou* (baskets of cotton wool), *akeseasase* (baskets of cashew) and *akeseacamegh* (baskets of shea tree).

An interfixed 'a', a Tiv preposition meaning 'with', joins two words. An interfixed 'a' links two Tiv names meaning 'with' as evident in *Aluamo* (S/he is with me), *Ioram* (people with me), *Memana* (rest with him/her), *Nyiamo* (it is with me), *Nguacia* (S/he has justification), *Nguakwagh* (S/he is with something), *Nguakyôr* (S/he is with luck), *Nguamo* (S/he is with me), *Nguashima* (S/he is with heart), *Nguatyô* (S/he is with kinsmen), *Nguavese* (S/he is with us), *Nguayongo* (S/he is with conflict), *Peramo* (cross with me) and *Yemana* (go with him or her).

An interfixed vowel 'a' joins adjectives and plural nouns. Interfixed vowel 'a' amalgamates plural adjectives and plural nouns. Vowel 'a' is found in *abumeqior* (foolish people), *acanaqior* (poor people), *agumaior* (young people), *aseerqior* (weak people), *anomaqior* (brave people), *akôraqior* (giant people), *anomagyoo* (male pig [boars]), *anomyôngo* (male sheep [rams]), *anomabuav* (male cattle [bulls]), *anomanyiigh* (big teeth), *anomakyegh* (male fowl [cock]) and *anomavyo* (he-goat). As noted in the above words, the prefix 'a' has been used to pluralise adjectives in Tiv which is usual in a language like

English. These plural adjectives are *abume* [*a+bume*] (more than one foolish), *atsan* [*a+tsan*] (more than one suffering), *agum* [*a+gum*] (more than one youth), *aseer* [*a+seer*] (more than one weakling) and *anom* [*a+nom*] (more than one male). The interfixed 'a' thus fuses plural adjectives with plural nouns such as *ior* (people), *igyoo* (pigs), *iyongo* (sheep), *buav* (cattle), *ikyegh* (fowls) and *ivyo* (goats).

An interfixed vowel 'a' comes between two nouns in Tiv. Orkar (2013) avers that expressions with repetition of words are found in Tiv Language for emphasis. Orkar (2013:148) further maintains that 'for emphasis, 'a' is added to any tense, followed by the infinite verb.' Orkar's submission therefore underscores the relevance of an interfixed vowel 'a' in the word-building process in Tiv. Examples of some words that 'a' interfixed them in Tiv are *bee a bee* (finish-finish/resemble-resemble), *bunde a bunde* (postpone-postpone), *cia a cia* (fear-fear), *fa a fa* (know-know), *gba a gba* (fall-fall), *gema a gema* (convert-convert), *gure a gure* (kneel-kneel), *kpe a kpe* (died-died), *môgh a môgh* (uproot-uproot), *naha a naha* (drive-drive), *rumun a rumun* (accept-accept), *tuna a tuna* (argue-argue), *sôn a sôn* (request-request), *se a se* (laugh-laugh), *seer a seer* (increase-increase), *tema a tema* (sit-sit), *til a til* (stays-stays) *tôô a tôô* (take-take), *wua a wua* (kill-kill), *zamber a zamber* (apologise-apologise), *zenda a zenda* (move-move), *zua a zua* (meet-meet), *zungwe a zungwe* (mourn-mourn). For clarity, Orkar (2013: 147) gives these examples that illustrate the centrality of an interfixed vowel 'a' despite any tense used.

Table 4: Morphosyntactic functions of an interfixed vowel 'a' in the repeated words

Tiv Version	English Version	Tenses
<i>M ngu yan a ya beredi.</i>	I am eating bread.	Present Continuous Tense
<i>M ya a ya iyogh.</i>	I ate yam.	Past Tense
<i>Me va ya a ya ikyewe.</i>	I shall eat coconut.	Future Tense
<i>M ye a ya logo.</i>	I do eat cassava.	Habitual Tense
<i>Nyise m yaan a ya logo.</i>	I used to eat yams.	Past Participle
<i>Yange m lu yan a ya.</i>	I was eating.	Past Continuous
<i>Se va yaan a ya.</i>	We shall be eating.	Future Continuous

The above table 4 indicates an interfixed 'a' and infinitive verb 'ya' (eat) did not change.

An interfixed syllable '-mba-' comes before plural nouns in Tiv compound words. Tiv language is rich in agglutination. It can build its words by agglutinating several free and bound morphemes. The presence *-mba-* between adjectives and nouns does not have any morphological functions but nested in compound plural nouns such as: *zege* (great) + *kwagh* (thing) but when compounded as a singular noun, the formed singular compound is *zegekwagh* (great thing). The plural form of *zegekwagh* is *uzege* (big) *akaa* (things) but the insertion of *-mba-* (plural marker) between *uzege* and *akaa* has resulted in *uzegembaakaav* (great things). The *mba-* affix precedes *akaav* but does not have any grammatical relevance here. It can also be emphasized that Tiv morphology has plural adjectives which are preceded by a plural bound morpheme *-u* as evident in *ucighan* (holy), *ugbilin* (useless), *ugôgô* (tall), *utumbuluu* (foolish), *uil* (black), *uhogholoo* (narrow), *unyian* (red), *ugbogbo* (big) and *ugbanger* (wide). Example of *-mba-* affix that interfixed plural adjectives and plural nouns are: *upilambaior*, *udyambaiorov* (adulterers), *ucighanmbaiorov* (holy people), *ugbilinmbaiorov* (useless people), *ugôgômbaayoughov* (towers), *utumbuluumbaior* (foolish people), *uilmbaiorov* (black people), *uhogholoombagbindav* (narrow roads), *unyianmbaiorov* (fair people), *utyavenmbaiorov* (tall people), *ugbogbombaasheev* (big eyes), *udyambaukasev* (adulteresses) and *ugbangermbaijôôv* (wide mouths). The

above examples of interfixed '-mba-' words are also good examples of circumfixation in Tiv because they all have plural prefix 'u' and end with plural suffixes '-v', '-ov', '-ev' and 'ôv' respectively.

Figure 5: Interfixed syllable '-mba-' in *ucighanmbaiorov* (holy people)

Adjectival root <i>ucighan</i>		Interfix <i>mba</i>	Nominal root <i>iorov</i>		
prefix <i>u</i>	adjective <i>icighan</i>	<i>mba</i>	prefix <i>i</i>	root <i>or</i>	suffix <i>ov</i>
'Holy			people'		

The above Table 5 shows how an interfixed plural marker '-mba-' joins *ucighan* (holy) and *iorov* (people) in the word *ucighanmbaiorov* (holy people). The adjectival root *ucighan* is divided into *u* (prefixal adjectival plural morpheme marker) and an adjective *cighan* (holy). The nominal root comprises *i* (a prefixal plural marker), *or* (root) and *ov* (suffixal morpheme marker).

Interfixed Words join Tripletions in Tiv. Tripletion is a morphological process which involves double copying of morphemes. Tripletion is pigeonholed into absolute and partial duplication of morphemes. Absolute tripletion double-copies free or independent morphemes. It is also known as complete or total tripletion. An example of absolute tripletion is found in *ze-ze-ze*, a Tiv word meaning 'staggered movement'. Contrastively, partial tripletion double copies morphemes of unequal status. That means the first reduplicant differs from the root and the last reduplicant. The sandwiched morpheme is known as interfixed word that is dissimilar to the root word and the last word. The purpose of the sandwiched morphemes of this nature may lack linguistic function in Tiv yet it is found in words. Interfixed words are dichotomised into *verbatim copying* of the first syllable of the root words and *nonverbatim copying* of the root words. Examples of partial tripletions that involve verbatim copying of the first syllable of the root words are *bee-be-bee* (to show seriousness or lack of enthusiasm), *bema-be-bema* (to behave in a silly manner), *gen-ge-gen/kerak-ke-kerak* (discomfiture or restlessness), *gben-gbe-gben/ gbuôn-gbu-gbuôn* (crooked or meandered), *mile-mi-mile* (to do something in secret), *pera-pe-pera* (to act in a careless or carefree manner), *shila-shi-shila* (to show restlessness), *tum-tu-tum* (to behave in a foolish way), *zemba-ze-zemba* (staggered movement or gait).

As shown from the above examples, the interfixed words are *be*, *gbe*, *ge*, *ke*, *mi*, *pe*, *shi*, *tu* and *ze* are the first syllables of *bema*, *gben*, *gen*, *kerak*, *mile*, *pera*, *shila*, *tum* and *zemba* respectively. Without infixing the aforesaid words, the meanings of the above words would have been maintained. Instances of interfixed words that involve nonverbatim copying of the root words are *daase-de-daase* (swaying of grasses, branches of trees by wind), *ngaa-nge-ngaa* (springy movement or gait), *tuse-se-tuse* (to act carelessly or recklessly). It is obvious that *de* and *nge* do not resemble their root words (*daase* and *ngaa*) whereas *se* copies the last syllable of *tuse*. Generally, Aor and Iorember (2025) reinforce that Tiv tripletion describe, show actions, movements and emotions. They describe roads, paths and snakes that are zigzag, windy, bending and rough. They also indicate hurried or abrupt actions. Finally, tripletions express restlessness as in *gbila-gbi-gbila*, *kerak-kerak-kerak* and *sha-sha-sha*.

6. Contributions of the study

The following contributions of the study have been stated below.

Tiv morphology has a type of affix known as interfix which is inserted between two independent morphemes.

- a. The study identifies an interfixed vowel 'a', interfixed syllable '-mba' and interfixed words (*be, gbe, ge, ke, mi, pe, shi, tu* and *ze*) as primary triggers of Tiv interfixes.
- b. This study also proves that interfixes have morphosyntactic functions in Tiv as against the erroneous impression that interfixes have no functions.
- c. This study further debunks a hackneyed view that Tiv affixes have only prefixes and suffixes whereas Tiv morphology has other affixes such as interfixes, infixes, superfixes and circumfixes with clearly defined functions and formative processes.
- d. Finally, the study also vividly differentiates between infix (morpheme that is inserted inside the root words) and interfix (morpheme that is affixed between two root words).

7. The Implications of the Study

This study is highly impactful and the following implications have been stated thus:

- a. Pedagogically, this study will serve as a ready-made material for the study and teaching of word-formation processes, especially, in Tiv.
- b. Methodologically, the use of observation as a primary source of data elicitation is highly impactful in this study.
- c. Theoretically, Item-and-Process model is vitally important in this study because it explains the composition of morphemes and morphemic changes that result in Tiv meanings.
- d. Curriculum designers and textbook writers should emphasise other affixal processes such as interfixation, infixation, circumfixation and superfixation.

8. Conclusion

The study of the Tiv morphology has gained momentum in recent times as her word-building processes have been examined and reexamined so as to correct erroneous impressions that were seen in some of the previous studies and to contribute to the growing body of literature. Affixation as a morphological process has received much attention as scholars are not tired of discussing formations and functions of affixes, formation of suffixes, plural formation of Tiv nouns, just to mention but a few. This study has discussed the functions of Tiv interfixation. The study revealed that Tiv interfixes have interfixed vowel '-a-', interfixed syllable '-mba-' and interfixed words between similar spelt root words (*daase-de-daase* meaning 'swaying movement'). These interfixed vowels, syllables and words are mostly found in compound words (*uzegembaakaav* 'great things') and triplications (*zemba-ze-zemba* 'staggered movement'). The study has clearly shown that Tiv morphology has plural adjectives (*u+zege* 'more than one great') interfixed with 'mba' (plural marker) and end with nominal roots (*iorov* 'people').

Thus, *uzegembaiorov* is formed by a plural prefix 'u', an interfixed '-mba-' (plural interfix marker), plural prefix marker 'i' and a suffix 'ov'. Tiv affixes have both interfixes and infixes which have different formative processes and functions. It is obvious that a single word in Tiv may have more than two affixes. Interfixation as a word-building process in Tiv is vitally important as other affixal processes in Tiv. Yet, there is a paucity of scholarly studies on the Tiv interfixation which this study has attempted to fill. It can thus be concluded that affixal processes work together so as to have well-formed words in Tiv. The clipping or deletion of one affixal process will result in a new word or will distort the morphology of the affected word. This study is, therefore, recommended to linguists that have interest in morphology, students who wish to write their projects, dissertations and theses on affixal processes and lecturers who may intend to publish articles or write books on word-formation processes.

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