AN INVESTIGATION OF DIMINUTIVES IN ENGLISH AND HAUSA LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY APPROACH

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Abstract

This study examined the form and pattern of universal linguistic phenomenon of two genetically unrelated languages (i.e English and Hausa Languages) at the level of prosodic morphology in relation to diminutives of names. The study investigated how diminutives are formed, categorised based on their morphological structures, the morphological processes they undergo, the parts of speech they incorporate and consequently some points of similarities and differences using prosodic morphology theory of McCarthy and Prince (1995, 1998). Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of these diminutive names. The study considered 20 names from both languages which could go with diminutive from selected documents. The data was sourced from *The Online Dictionary of First Names* (2006) *and English Japanese Name Truncation* (Avaram 2010) for English names. Also, *Onomastic Treasure of the Central Intelligence Agency 1965* and *Sunayen Hausawa na Gargajiya da Ire-Iren Abincin Hausawa* (Yahaya 1979) were consulted. The study found that the two languages share similar diminutive formation processes and differ in some aspects where both languages use syllables in their diminutive formation.

Keywords: Diminutives**,** Prosodic, Derivational, Morpheme, Truncation.

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Introduction

Diminutives represent an important issue for morpho-pragmatics. Among all morpho-pragmatic devices within derivational morphology, diminutives represent the category which has the widest distribution across languages and has stimulated the greatest number of morpho-semantic, morpho-tactic, and pragmatic studies. Diminutives are usually forms whose meaning were associated with 'a small of its kind' but have undergone a development whereby they come to express not merely an assessment of size, but also, or even exclusively the speaker's response to small things; a response ranging from affection through condescension to contempt. The term "diminutive forms" refers to the addition of a derivational suffix, mostly to a noun, which results in a new noun form conveying the general meaning of 'little' whether literally or metaphorically (Crystal, 1985:94). For example, '***kitchenette***' is a small kitchen and '***booklet***' is a small book. Moreover, the new formation of nouns is quite capable of expressing what the speaker feels in relation to the person or thing s/he referred to. Accordingly, this form can express intimacy, familiarity, endearment and even lack of respect (Aziz, 1985:145). On the other hand, in speech, this form can be used as a replacement form (Clark &Clark, 1977:322; Ibrahim, 2003:28). However, mere smallness devoid of some or any kind of feeling, to some extent, is to be found somewhere else, i.e. in adjectives like: minute, tiny, few, low, minor, less (Zandvoort, 1972: 302).

Diminutive forms exist in many languages; yet each language has its own unique way of realizing and expressing these forms. For instance, in Arabic the diminutive form of 'bāb' (a door) is 'buwayb' (a small door). Anyhow, the diminutive forms underlie, in one way or another, some important processes of word formation and they are

undoubtedly loaded with a rather wide range of meanings besides smallness, of course.

On the other hand, there are numerous contradictory opinions about diminutives which can be encountered in linguistic literature. To some extent, diminutives are believed to be a universal category, but at the same time they are treated as rare or even non-existent in some languages. In English, diminutive forms can be prototypical diminutives which are denominal suffixed nouns akin to name *Andrew* becomes *Andy* and *Patricia* becomes *Pattie.* Also, the Hausa name *Zubaida* become *Zubby* and *Fatima* becomes *fati* through loss of material from the source names. This is to tell you that diminutives exist in different forms from different languages and even some dialects of same language have different forms of diminutives, in Hausa, there are such cases of diminutive of names, but with a little difference with the English diminutive pattern. It clearly shows that diminutives are specific terms used for persons' names. However, the usage differs from one person to another. The differences in usage may be due to age, social group or work place. For Hausa speakers, the three variations in usage are respectively observed to avoid offending the bearer. Whenever diminutive is attached to person's name, it shows a certain level of familiarity from the speaker and the bearer. Schneider (2003) posits that diminutive which is a form of name truncation is used in vocative speech acts and it is use to define or negotiate the relationship between a speaker and hearer. The type of relationship often depends on the type of diminutive used, as well as on the identity of the speaker and the hearer.

Language Universalists claim that there are shared similarities amongst all languages. Some languages share similarities in various linguistics levels such as phonology, morphology and syntax, like English and Hausa language share a similarity in sentence structure (subject, verb object). However, the nature of morphological

diminutives in English and Hausa languages differ in form and pattern. This paper therefore, examines the form and patterns of diminutives thereby studying a universal linguistic phenomenon of two genetically unrelated languages (i.e English and Hausa Languages) at the level of prosodic morphology in relation to diminutives of names.

Crystal (1985) opines that, diminutive forms tend to exist in all natural languages, the present study is crucially intended to compare and contrast these forms in the two unrelated languages (i.e English and Hausa) in an attempt to investigate how they are formed, categorise based on their morphological structures, ascertain the morphological process they undergo and parts of speech they incorporate etc. Consequently, some points of similarity and difference will be highlighted.

Purposive sampling technique is used for the selection of these diminutives names. The study considers 20 names from both languages which can go with diminutive from selected documents. The sources of data for this study are secondary source of data which are; *The Online Dictionary of First Names* (2006) *and English Japanese Name Truncation* (Avaram 2010). On the other hand, *Onomastic Treasure of the C I A (1965) Sunayen Hausawa na Gargajiya da Ire-Iren Abincin Hausawa* (Yahaya 1979) are used for Hausa. The study employs comparative method of data analysis for data presentation. The data is sorted out manually and presented in the tables. The data is then analyzed based on identified similarities and differences. Twenty names from each language were identify and interpreted based on the identified variables in order to achieve a stated goals above.

Literature Review

Cross-linguistically, diminutives are characterised by the basic denotative meaning of dimensional smallness, and potentially by a large number of connotative meanings, such as endearment, as in English

bunny, *puppy*, *sweetie*, depreciation or contempt, as in Italian *attric-etta* 'starlet', Russian *donn-etta* 'woman of mean spirit' (Jurafsky, 1996; Barbaresi, 2003) and English *darkie* and *roughie* (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi, 2001), and 'non-seriousness' (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi, 1994, 2001). Diminutives tend to be used mostly by women in addressing and in reference to children, and in reference to women (Jurafsky, 1996; Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi, 2001). Most languages form diminutives by suffixation, with an iconic tendency towards palatal phonemes and/or high tonality, as in English *-ie*, *-y*, *-let*, *-ette*, German *-chen*, *-lein*, Spanish *-ito*, *-ico*, *-illo* and Czech *-ink-* (Jurafsky, 1996; Barbaresi, 2003). In some cases, diminutives are formed by reduplication (Jurafsky, 1996), particularly, but not exclusively, in children's language, as in English *puspus*, *weewee*, German *Wehweh-chen* and *Wehweh-tscherl* (< *es tut weh* 'it hurts') (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi, 1994), Tagalog *bahay* 'house' > *bahay-baha- yan* 'doll-house/game of house' (Jurafsky, 1996), and the San'ani Arabic verbs *dagdag* 'to knock several times lightly', *laflaf* 'to go round in small circles'.

Universally, diminutive formation applies most commonly to noun bases (Barbaresi, 2003; Dahl, 2006), followed by adjectives, adverbs and verbs. Diminutive verbs, whose denotative meaning often indicates the lightness/unimportance of the action of the verb and, sometimes, its fragmentation into smaller repeated actions (Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi, 1994), are attested in several languages, including Russian (Stawnicka, 2001), Czech, Oceanic and Salish. In Czech, diminutive verbs often refer to children's activity. Thus, *spa´t* 'to sleep' has the diminutive *spinkat* 'to sleep [child]', and *blı´t* 'to puke' has the diminutive *blinkat* 'to bring up [child, milk/food]'.

However, most linguists distinguish four major processes of word formation: prefixation, suffixation, compounding and conversion (Zandvoort, 1972; Adams, 1973; Crystal, 1988; Katamba, 1993; O'grady et al, 1996). Consequently, a large number of nouns in English

is created or produced by the combination of a free morpheme and a derivational suffix (Scott et al, 1968). Diminutive forms are no exception in that they are formed by the addition of a diminutive suffix like: - ette, - et, let, etc. to a noun. Most of the nouns that can be diminuend are either personal proper nouns as in 'Bobbie' or common nouns as in 'leaflet'. A distinction between noun and name implies that noun refers to a single word while name 'may consist of more than one word (Quirk et al, 1985).

Diminutive Forms in Hausa Language

According to Longman dictionary of contemporary English (2008), affix is a group of letters added to the beginning or end of a word to change its meaning or use. Hartmann et al (1972) on the other hand defines affix as a collective term for prefix, infix and suffix, which are morphemes added to the base or root of a word to form a new stem. According to Crystal (2008), affixes are quite limited in number in a language, and are generally classified into three types depending on their position with reference to the root/stem of the word.

Affix is a grammatical element that is attached to a word stem to form a new word or modify its meaning. Both words and affixes are technically called morphemes. Morpheme as defined by (Hockett, 1958, in Abubakar, 2001) is the smallest meaningful grammatical unit. There is the *free morpheme* which can stand alone like words, while *bound morpheme* cannot stand alone such as *affixes*.

Affectionate Affixes in Hausa

In Sanusi, H. (2022) Affectionate Affixes in Hausa are *bound morphemes* that are attached to some names (name of person) to show extent of affection which results to formation of a new form of the names. Some are attached at the beginning of the word as *prefix*, while others are either attached at the end as *suffix*, or to both positions. They

are of different categories. There are some that are just mere repetition of the last syllable of the underlying form, while others bear no relationship with the last syllable of the underlying form.

Affectionate morphemes or affixes that are normally at the beginning (pre-fixes) are: **Dan** and **Ta.** While those that occur at the end (suffixes) include: **-lo, -ta, - ye, -le/lele/-li, -iya, -ti//ri, -de, -wa, yo,** etc

Prefixes

These are affixes that occur at the beginning of the name to form affectionate names. These affixes are **Dan** and **Ta.**

Diminutive Dan

In many languages, the meaning of diminution can be translated to mean *tiny*. In Hausa language, the basic functions of diminutive morpheme **Dan** can be either showing smallness of the object named, or showing relationship between them. However, In addition to this, diminutive is also used to show extent of affection between the speaker and the person addressed as discussed in this article.

In Hausa, diminutive morpheme **Dan** is attached to a name (name of person) as a prefix to form affectionate nicknames. It is attached to the beginning of the word and a suffixation which mostly is a repetition of the last syllable sometimes follows. The new form mostly maintains the tone of the underlying form.

Adàm	**Dan** Adàm
Aùta	**Dan**Aùta
Bàballe	**Dan**Bàballe

Diminutive Ta

The morpheme **Tá** in Hausa is a personal pronoun referring to 3rd person feminine singular as a subject in past tense (Bargery, 1993).

However, **Tá** is also used in Hausa as a prefix to form feminine affectionate names. It is attached to a feminine name (name of person) to get an affectionate name. The new form always ends in low tone.

Ábù   **Ta** Abu
Gwaggwò   **Ta** gwàggwo

Suffixes

This category contains affixes that bear no relationship with the last syllable of the name (name of person). They occur to the name (name of a person) as a suffix to form affectionate nicknames. Such affixes include: **-lo, -la, -ye, -le/lele/li, -iya, -ti/ri, -de, -wa, -yo,** etc**.**

-lo	affix	-la Affix		-ye affix		-le	
A'ì	A'í**lo**	Abù	Abù**la**	Làràbá	Làràbáyy**é**	Bàbá	Babale
Bintà	Bínta**lo**	Kànde	Kanda**la**	Nàná	Nànáyy**é**	Baffa	Baffale
Baffa	Baffalo	Jummà	Jummà**la**			Kaka	Kakale

Empirical Studies on Diminutives

Numerous studies were conducted by various scholars to ascertain the similarities and differences of English and Hausa Diminutives under the cover of Prosodic Morphology.

Drake, S. (2018) examines the productivity and form of the morphological diminutive in Maltese. Maltese has lexical items and grammatical properties stemming from both Semitic and Indo-European roots. In addition, both the Semitic and Indo-European morphological diminutive may take several different forms in Maltese. The goals of this research are to determine whether native speakers of Maltese can use a morphological diminutive (like *wuggie*) rather than a lexical diminutive (like *little wug*); if they can, whether a default form exists for the morphological diminutive, and if so, whether the default

form is Indo-European or Semitic in nature. A novel word elicitation task was used to test how speakers use the diminutive, and the results may be explained using a variety of different theoretical frameworks allowing for a hierarchical selection of a diminutive allomorph.

In another study by I. Hamid & S. Faiq (2008) on the diminutive forms in English and Arabic as far as form, morphological process and parts of speech are concerned. Further, it sheds some light on the meanings of these forms in English and Arabic. It has been found that the two languages are similar to some extent with regard to the parts of speech and meanings of these forms. However, they are drastically different concerning the morphological process involved. English basically uses suffixation and pre-fixation while Arabic depends entirely on in-fixation where some strict patterns that are essentially determined by the morphology of the words to be diminuend are followed.

While in Chamonikolasová and et'al (2007), the paper is a corpus-based study for the use of diminutive expressions in English and Czech original texts and their translations. It compares the morphological and semantic features of diminutives in the two languages and outlines tendencies in translating diminutive meaning from the two languages. The classification of diminutives as diminutives proper, frozen diminutives, and semi-frozen diminutives, based on semantic and stylistic criteria, makes it possible to distinguish between functioning diminutives and lexicalized forms which have no or only a limited diminutive meaning. The analysis confirmed a very high frequency of the use of diminutives in Czech in comparison with English. The source texts do not seem to have affected the target texts in this respect: in terms of the frequency of diminutives, translations into Czech do not differ significantly from original Czech texts, and translations into English do not differ from original English texts. Despite fluctuations depending on the translator's individuality and on

the source text's genre and style, translators of the texts examined respected the target language conventions rather than 'copying' the source text structures.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted prosodic morphology theory of McCarthy and Prince (1995, 1998). Prosodic morphology may be seen as a theory of how phonological and morphological determinants of linguistic forms interact with one another. That is the interface between morphology and phonology where morphological structure appeared to influence the phonetic forms of complex forms through principles of alignment that require phonological boundaries to coincide with morphological ones. The interface phenomena can be explained as phonology makes use of morphological information or morphology making use of phonology which is found in natural languages. A case where the use of a particular affix is conditioned phonologically in the English comparative suffix -er, for example:

Green	-	greener
Silly	-	sillier
Obese	-	*obeser / more obese
Excellent	-	*excellenter / more excellent

Data Presentation and Analysis

S/N	English Diminutives			Hausa Diminutives
1	Jimmy	<	James	Haddy < Hadiza
	Mickey	<	Michael	Hanny < Hannatu
	Maggie	<	Margret	Jummy < Jummai
	Patty	<	Patricia	Zubby < Zubaida
2	Bomb	< Bomblet		Ɗanjariri
	Root	< Rootlet		Ɗan ƙaramin mutum
	Star	< Starlet		Ɗan ƙaramin yaro

3	Squirre ᑲ Squirreling Steer ᑲ Steering Gad ᑲ Gadling	Ƴarmitsila Yar ƙaramar mata Yar ƙaramar yarinya		
4	Kitchen ᑲ Kitchenette Welder ᑲ Welderette Linen ᑲ Linenette	ƙanana ƴan kasuwa ƴan ƙananan direbobi ƴan ƙananan buhuna		
5	Shamp ᑲ Shampers Lizz ᑲ Lizzikins Stev ᑲ Stevio; Soul ᑲ Soulipegs; Bar ᑲ Bariepoo; Kiss ᑲ kissypoos; Mikey ᑲ Mikeypoodles	Altine ᑲ Tine Tunau ᑲ Tuni Ɗanliti ᑲ Liti		

The data is analyzed in terms of comparison, starting with English. In English –y diminutive are disyllabic truncated names with a stress on first syllable, Avram (2010) adds that –y diminutive depict a particular feature in their morphology; extraction of a vowel from a prominent position of the source name (that is the stressed vowel or initial vowel) and a consonant on each side and then add the diminutive suffix /ie/ -y. However, in a number of forms more than one consonant is extracted as shown in the table below.

Process	English		Hausa	
	Base form	-Y Diminutive	Base form	-Y Diminutive
-Y diminutive	James - Jimmy Michael - Mickey Margret - Maggi Patricia - Patty		Hadiza - Haddy Zubaida - Zubby Hannatu - Hanny jummai - Jummy	

Table 1 Source: Survey 2022

In English diminutives which has to do persons names changes may occur in the segmental make up of –y diminutives; /**ei**/ turns into

/i/, /ai/ into /i/and /aː / into /a/ as in table above. It is claimed that across languages all word classes are eligible as input in diminutive formation. However, the prototypical word class of the base word is a noun. In English the noun is generally the class of input for diminutives, yet it is possible to form diminutives from adjectives as well, e.g., *sweet* "adj" > *sweetie* "N". However, it seems that across languages the suffixes which are used to derive diminutives from nominal, adjectival, or adverbial bases are not applied to form diminutives from verbs, for which different formation processes are used (Schneider 2003: 6). On the other hand –y diminutives in Hausa are as the result of English influence over Hausa people especially those that attain western education thereby imitating the existing English Y-diminutives that is a correspondence or partial similarity of English –Y diminutive as shown in the above table.

Apart from English –y diminutive suffixes, other type of diminutive form exist in English such as (*LET), (ETTE), (IE), (KIN), (LE), (LING), (A), (EEN), (ER), (0), (PEG), (POO), (POP),* and (*S*). Starting with (LET) the suffix is appended refers to an object, the suffix adds a purely quantitative component. This means that diminutive forms represent their referents as small members of their kind. When the base word refers to an animal, (LET) adds the component (+young) Formations with (LET) which refer to youngness and corresponding smallness do not necessarily have to carry a positive attitude.

Process	English		Hausa	
Suffix	Base form	Diminutive	Base form	Diminutive
(Le)t and (Ɗan)	Bomb, Root -	Bomblet, Rootlet	Kare -	Ɗankwikuyo
	Frog, Pig -	Froglet, Piglet	Kaza -	Ɗantsako
	play, Star -	Playlet, Starlet	Yaro -	Ɗan ƙaramin yaro
	Book, leaf -	Booklet, leaflet	Jariri -	Ɗanjariri
	Arm, Necklace	Armlet, Necklet	Mutum -	Ɗan ƙaramin mutum

Table 2 Source: Survey 2022

In the above table, the primary function of the (LET) suffix is to form diminutives which mean small inanimate objects, Small of a species' or 'young of a species' and words with a slightly disparaging meaning. However, there are several semantic patterns among derivatives with this suffix, the output words for these processes also denote contempt, and articles of jewelry as in Armlet, Necklet. On the other hand in Hausa the /ɗan/ diminutive suffix (morpheme) is for masculine gender. However, the (**Dan**) diminutive suffix can be used for non-diminutive context for instance (Dan Malam) which means teachers' son (Dan kasuwa) Businessman; here there is no diminution in the use of (**Dan**) unlike in *Dan jariri*. Also the (Dan) diminutive suffix is used for time as in (Dan bani lokaci…) give me little time. (Dan bani wuri) give me a small space. . (Dakin ɗan mitsitsi ne) the room is very small.

The (**LING**) suffix is usually appended to *nous*. *Adjectives* and *verbs* also frequently act as words of input.

Process	English		Hausa	
The (Ling) and (**Yar**) diminutive suffix.	Base form	Diminutive	Base form	Diminutive
	Squire - Squireling		Mitsila - Yarmitsila	
	Steer - Steerling		Mata - Yar ƙaramar mata	
	Gad - Gadling		Yarinya - Yar ƙaramar yarinya	

Table 3 Source: Survey 2022

The (LING) suffix adds a diminutive respectively depreciative nuance to the person, animal or plant denoted by the root and weak type used for names of things, the suffix has an individualizing force (Marchand 1960). However, the (LING) suffix is not appended to proper names of persons. Typically, (LING) is attached to monosyllabic bases; disyllabic bases are also quite common. Bases up to four syllables in length are possible, although tetra-syllabic bases are very rare; the resultant formations are nowadays considered as obsolete. In Hausa /ƴar/ is for

feminine gender, the (**ƴar**) diminutive suffix may also take additional suffix in expressing diminution (**ƙarama or ƙaramar**) (ƴar ƙaramar mata) small woman, (Mitsila-Mitsitsi) it is diminutive which mostly attach to animate and innominate objects (ƴarmitsila) a very small girl.

Formations with (**ETTE**) tend to fall into several semantic patterns. Three such patterns are mentioned in the Oxford English Dictionary hence. First, (ETTE) is used to form nouns denoting small or brief examples of the thing named by the base word, e.g., **disk > diskette essay > essayette.** Second, formations with (ETTE) name fabrics intended as imitations of those denoted by the base word, such as *flannelette, leatherette, suedette*. Third, the (ETTE) suffix forms nouns referring to women or girls linked with or carrying out a role indicated by the base word, as *Major > majorette Suffrage > suffragette Usher > usherette.* (Schneider 2003: 95).

Process	English		Hausa	
The (ETTE) and (ƴan) suffix	Base form	Diminutive	Base form	Diminutive
	Kitchen - Kitchenette Welder - Welderette Linen - Linenette		kasuwa - ƙanana ƴan kasuwa Direbobi - ƴan ƙananan direbobi Buhuna - ƴan ƙananan buhuna	

Table 4 Source: Survey 2022

As mentioned earlier that derivatives with the (ETTE) suffix can carry a number of meanings. First, there are formations which denote smallness, in some cases with some overtones of disparagement, e.g., *clubette* or *suburbette*.   Second it involves words naming rooms and buildings: *dinette,* **hangarette, hotelette, kitchenette, loungette, maisonette, pullmanette, roomette,** and *sleeperette*. The (ETTE) suffix can be also appended to names of fabrics; the resultant derivatives transmit the meaning 'fake, imitation', e.g., *flannelette* and l*eatherette.* Finally, the largest group of words with (ETTE) embraces derivatives referring to females. It is worthy to note that many such coinages are

disparaging. And at the same time (ETTE) "may, in fact, be the main gender-marking suffix available in English, more used than **-ess**"(Bauer, Lieber and Plag 2013). On the other hand, in Hausa diminutive the (ƴan) diminutive suffix cannot express diminution unless is modified by another suffix (ƙananan) without the additional suffix there will be no diminution in the expression; (.ƴan kasuwa) businessmen (ƙanana ƴan kasuwa) small businessmen. But for (ƴan ƙananan buhuna) small sack, expresses diminution (ƴan buhuna nan) without the additional suffix it can still serve the purpose in expressing diminution. From the tables above it can be seen that diminutives in Hausa come as modifiers of the names that is Diminutive + Adjective + Noun; ɗan ƙaramin yaro.

Diminutive formation involving multiple suffixes

There exists diminutive formation in English which involves not only simple suffixation as shown in the previous discussions, but also multiple suffixations consisting in the consecutive application of two or more different diminutive suffixes. Construction morphology offers a way of accounting for multiple affixation processes as it allows for the unification of word formation schemas. There are 14 possible suffix combinations which can be applied to coin English diminutives as in the table below:

Process	English		Hausa	
Multiple Suffixes	Base Form	Diminutive	Base Form	Diminutive
	Shamp -	(er) + (s) shampers	Altine - Tine	
	Lizz -	(ie + (kin) + (s) lizzikins	Tunau - Tuni	
	Stev -	(ie) + (o) stevio	Ɗanlaiti - Liti	
	Soul -	(ie) + (peg) + (s) soulipegs		
	Bar -	(ie) + (poo) bariepoo		
	Kiss -	(ie) + (poo) + (s) kissypoos		
	Mikey -	(ie)+(poo)+(le)+(s) mikeypoodles		

Sweet - (ie) + (pop) + (s) sweetiepops Milk - (ie) + (s) milkies Frang - (le) + (kin) + (s) franglekins Cuddle - (le) + (s) cuddles Shaz - (s) + (a) shazza, bazza, dazza Mom - (s) + (ie) momsie; Fat - (s) + (o) fatso	

Table 5 Source: Survey 2022

The morphological representations of the suffixes coincide with their invariant spelling. As regards the phonological shape of the suffixes, following patterns can be observed. These are, with decreasing frequency:

a. Consonant vowel consonant (CVC): /kɪn/, /let/, /lɪt]/, /peg/, /pop/
b. Vowel (V): /ə/, /i/, /əu/, / ə(r)/
c. Vowel consonant (VC): /i:n/, /(ə)1/, /et/
d. Consonant vowel (CV): /pu:/
e. Consonant (C): /s z/

Prominent consonants are */p/* and */I/* with four and three occurrences respectively (three and two in initial position), and also the dental nasals /n, ŋ/ and *N* with three and two occurrences, all in final position. Among the thirteen vowels, there are only two long vowels and one diphthong. Prominent vowels are fronted or centered, viz. /i/, /e/, and /ə/, with three occurrences each, plus /i:/. These observations seem to support claims about prototypical sounds associated with diminutive meaning. Five of the suffixes examined – (*KIN), (PEG), (POP), (LE)* and *(POO)* - no longer occur independently, but only in suffix combinations. On the other hand, four further suffixes – *(EEN), (ETTE), (LET),* and *(LING)* - never occur in combinations. The base words in the process of diminutive formation are nearly exclusively nouns. Adjectives are also used as bases, but the use of all other word classes is negligible. Prototypically, the base words are monosyllabic

lexemes. If they are polysyllabic, they are, as a rule, truncated and only one syllable, usually the syllable carrying primary stress, is retained. However, truncation does not occur with *(EEN), (ETTE), (LET),* and *(LING).* In fact, all formations with (*LET*) found in the present data are actually derived from monosyllabic words only. However, for this category of Hausa diminutive, subtraction occurs within the source name that is the first syllable is taken away (truncated) and the remaining segment resulted in diminutive form expressing smallness of the source name; a trisyllabic name Altine > tine, Al-ti-ne "Al" vowel consonant (CV).

It can be deduced from the forgoing that meaning of diminutives in hausa is largrly depend on the diminitive suffix(morpheme) that premodify the noun, unlike in the English –y diminutives where the loss of material from the source name is replaced with –y, ee ie. The default values are: noun > noun, suffixation, [+small], and [+positive] or [+negative] attitude. The /ɗan/, /ƴar/ and /ƴan/ are syntactic diminutions where the diminutives in Hausa function as indicators of superiority. By using the above diminutives, the speaker assumes a superior status and at the same time downgrades the addressee. The addressee is belittled; thus, the diminutive maximizes dispraise of other as in **Ɗanjariri** and **Kanana ƴan kasuwa.**

Diminutives in assertive acts are applied to express an evaluation, that is, speaker's positive attitude and familiarity towards the referent of the diminutive, which can be either a person or an object. The form of –y diminutive in Hausa usually goes with person, as in *Hannatu > Hanny* and *zubaida > Zubby*

Conclusion

The analysis of English and Hausa has shown some similarities and differences that are found in their diminutive formations, thus the study concludes both languages are prosodically operated over syllable

or feet in which the syllables of the source names provides, multiple suffixes are featured in the formation of diminutives in English and Hausa and –y diminutives are also found in both languages where changes in segmental make up of -y diminutives is only realised in English. It is noted that both languages portrayed truncation as another diminutive formation process and as such English diminutive formation, not all suffixes can occur to base words from all semantic classes.

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