

MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE CHANGE IN TIV

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Abstract

Language change is an inevitable linguistic phenomenon that affects all natural languages and should not be viewed as a deviation from grammatical norms. In Tiv, grammatical change is ongoing and particularly impactful at the levels of morphology, graphology, phonology, syntax, and semantics. This study focuses on the morphological processes of language change in Tiv, specifically affixation, compounding, cliticisation, word separation, and clipping. It adopts Hockett's (1965) Item-and-Process Model, which views word formation as a process of derivation. Using the method of Internal Reconstruction, the study examines patterns within Tiv by analysing data from historical and contemporary sources. Words and expressions reflecting change were collected, classified according to the identified morphological processes, and analysed. Findings reveal that language change in Tiv occurs to accommodate new vocabulary, rectify incorrect spellings, and address tense and usage inconsistencies. The study observes that infixation may lead to consonant clusters and vowel lengthening, while cliticisation can result in hypercorrection, highlighting the interplay between morphology and phonology. It recommends that changes in Tiv be systematically examined across morphological, phonological, syntactic, semantic, and graphological levels.

Keywords: cliticisation, historical linguistics, language change, morphological changes, morphological processes, Tiv

Introduction

The name *Tiv* has tripartite connotations, such as the name of

a tribe in Nigeria, the name of an ancestral father and the name of a language. Tiv is a language that is spoken in Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba, and Plateau states in the North-central geopolitical area of Nigeria and Southern Cameroon (Ishima, 2018). It is obvious that the grammar of Tiv language is constantly changing, and these changes have a more dramatic effect on its morphology and take place over a long period of time. However, the study of language change in Tiv is still in its embryonic stage. The paucity of scholarly works on the language change in Tiv does not mean that Tiv language is still in its unsullied nature.

Existing Tiv texts show that the morphology of the Tiv grammar is changing, necessitating scholarly attention. For instance, *utakerada* (books) in Tiv as the plural of *takerada* (book) in the Book of Jeremiah 32:14 in the old version of the *Icighan Bibilo* (*Holy Bible in Tiv*) was based on analogy. The correct plural of *takerada* in Contemporary Tiv involves the prefixation of *i* before the root and infixation of *y* within the root, thus forming *ityakerada* books. Again, the word *takerada* has been changed to *takeda* by clipping the *ra* syllable from the already existing word, and its plural is *ityakeda*. Furthermore, there is a deletion of *i* in the formation of some plurals in Contemporary Tiv as captured in these words: *uiniongo* – *uniongo* feasts, *uinezwa* – *uniezwa* promises, *agumaiyôngo* – *agumayôngo* lambs and *ukaren* – *ukyaren* measures. Another interesting plural formation changes in the Old and Contemporary Tiv involve insertions and substitutions of morphemes as found in *ikpelaïor* – *ikpilaïor* crowds, *ikpelaigo* – *ikpilagyo* herds of swine and *igbenda* – *igbinda* or *igbyenda* ways or roads.

The rules of compounding in Tiv have been modified in Contemporary Tiv. Mzoo U Tiv (2019) states that ‘when two words are compounded and the second one begins with *i* that is not pronounced in such a word, *i* should be removed from such a compound word so that such a compound or name be pronounced or called as Tiv people call it’ (Our translation). For instance, *zua+ivyese* – *zuavyese* to wed, *kyaa+ice* – *kyaace* plenty hair, *atem+ityô* – *atemtyo* head-breaking and *bo+iyô* – *boyô* poisonous snake. Recently, an apostrophe ['] separates Tiv personal pronoun *m* meaning *my* or *me* from their hosts – *gbidyem gbidye'm* beat me and *nam na'm* give me. The above two words are clitics in the Tiv morphology.

It is undoubtedly clear from the foregoing paragraphs that the morphology of Tiv is fast changing and that this study attempts to fill such existing research gap by investigating affixation, compounding, cliticisation, word-separation and clipping as morphological features of language change in Tiv.

Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

Concept of Morphology

According to Greenbaum (1991:670), the word morphology is derived in the 'nineteenth century from the Greek morphs, 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 inflexion, but also derivation, and it also handles both inflexion 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) opine that morphology is a 'systematic study of morphemes or how morphemes join to form words'. Furthermore, O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011:116) refer to morphology as 'the part of the grammar that is concerned with words and word formation'.

In a nutshell, morphology studies the internal structure of words and their rules. The study of morphology offers important insights into how language works, revealing the need for different categories of words, the presence of word-internal structure, and the existence of operations that create and modify words in various ways. Morphological processes presuppose any of the formal processes or operations by which the forms are derived from stems or roots. These processes are compounding, affixation (prefixation, infixation, suffixation, etc), cliticisation, clipping, borrowing, backformation, abbreviation, reduplication and blending.

Concept of Language

Language is a structured system of communication used by humans, consisting of sounds, symbols, or signs. It enables the expression of thoughts, emotions, and cultural identity. Language is governed by rules of grammar, phonology, and semantics. It evolves and varies across communities and contexts.

Concept of Language Change

Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) see language change as a change in language which takes place over time. McArthur (1996:528) explains that language change is the modification of forms of language over time and/or physical distance. Such a change may affect any part of a language (pronunciation, orthography and vocabulary) and is taking place all the time.

Bussmann (1996:257) avers that language change is the 'study of diachronic processes of change in language elements and language systems.' In his words, Trask (1999) defines language change as a 'change in a language over time'. Every living language is constantly changing its pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary. When there are pervasive changes in a particular language, such a language may no longer resemble its ancestral forms in any way.

Campbell and Mexico (2007:92) simply state that language change is 'any mutation, alteration or innovation in language'. Shukla and Conner-Linton (2010:273) aver that all languages adapt to meet the changing contexts and needs of their speech communities. Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish (2015:311) assert that language change is within the purview of diachronic linguistics that 'studies language in its historical aspect'. Historical linguistics studies language change and its practitioners investigate 'change in language or languages over time' (Campbell, 1999:4). Languages often change because of contact with other languages (and their cultures), so language change reflects the social, political and military history of speech community. By studying changes in the Tiv language, scholars can better comprehend the history of Tiv culture.

Changes in the Tiv language can be seen in its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Morphological change is any historical change that affects the morphological structure of a language. Morphological change also refers to any change in the morphophonemic system (morphemes and their phonemic representation) of a language. Phonological change refers to any change in the sound system of a language, particularly its phonemes and their distribution. Syntactic change is the change in the syntax of a language. Harris and Campbell (1995) identify only three mechanisms of syntactic change such as reanalysis, extension, and borrowing. Semantic change is a change in meaning of words or expressions. The main kinds of

semantic change are degeneration (pejoration), elevation (amelioration), hyperbole, litotes, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, narrowing and widening.

Empirical Review

Scholarly studies have shown that natural languages are constantly changing. Oluijide (2001:12) asserts that language is 'subject to change and it is therefore in a constant state of flux, because it must grow'. Language change is an unavoidable phenomenon that should be welcomed with open hands. Native and non-native speakers should know that natural languages 'will not remain stable but that change, and variations are inevitable' (Yule, 2007:222). Language change did not happen overnight, but it happened gradually and 'probably difficult to discern while such changes are in progress. Syal and Jindal (2010:51) aver that 'changes in language are bound to occur as change is natural'. Language is a manifestation of human behaviour; it cannot be static and fixed, the same for all times. Change is, no doubt, a very slow but sure process. It sometimes goes unnoticed and becomes markedly prominent only over a long time.

In his words, Udubu (2013:55) attests that 'no language anywhere is static'. He further accentuates that all languages grow, change and expand to accommodate new inventions, ideas and discoveries as to adequately provide for, or satisfy the demands, yearnings and aspirations of the native speakers in their sociolinguistic environments. Tiv language is not an exception and is bound to change with the changing situation and time to satisfy its sociolinguistic environments. As new discoveries are being made, changes should also be affected to move the language forward.

Gyanggyang (1997: iii) observes that there were some Tiv spellings that were once accepted but now are obsolete. These spellings are '*ch, dz, ikegh, ikondo, iliam, orvaninya and wankundan*'. The correct versions of the above spellings are *c, z, ikyegh* fowls, *ikyondo* cloth, *ilyam* speech, *orvannya* a visitor and *wankyundan* an infant. Digraphs *ch* and *dz* are no more accepted in Tiv and are being represented by letter *c* and letter *z* respectively. Thus, letter *h* and letter *d* are deleted in contemporary Tiv spellings. There is an insertion of palatal sound /j/ in *kyegh, ikyondo, ilyam* and *wankyundan*. There is an elision of letter *i* in *orvannya*.

Orkar (2006: v) observes that ‘*ngise la i wa umiaghen-abaacaa mba ch, dz, dzw man ndz ken ortogerafi u Tiv. Shi ngeren ior er iyor. Kpa iyange i va sôr mnger ne cii man i mase ngeren Cighan Bibilo ye*’. This is translated thus: ‘in those days Tiv letters were combined (written as digraphs and trigraphs) as *ch, dz, dzw* and *ndz* in the Tiv orthography. Or *ior* meaning ‘people’ was written as *iyor* in some parts of Tiv land. But such writing was corrected before the *Holy Bible* was translated into Tiv. (Our translation).

Mzoo U Tiv (2019:7) cites these examples: *Ch* is written as *c*: *cia* (to be scared), *cier* (fearful), *ican* (suffering), *icam* (song) and *ice* (hair). *Dz* is written as *z*: *za* (go), *anza* (kinds/acts), *zua* (meet), *Zeuer*, *Zeramo* and *ziezie* (staggered gait). *Dzw* is written as *zw*: *zwa* (mouth), *zwadôsogh* (challenge), *zwar* (large gallon), *zwanyohon* (sweet-coated tongue), *ijoozwa* (unity) and *ityendezwa* (promise). *Ndz* is written as *nz*: *anzuul* (confusion), *nzuul* (to confuse), *kwaghnzuul* (something has confused). *Iyor* is written as *ior*. Tiv language has a word *or* (person) as a singular but when it is more than one, *i* is added to have *ior* (people) as its plural. Therefore, there is no reason to insert the letter *y* in *ior*.

Karshima (2010) posits that when joining two words, one letter must be dropped. He therefore cites some of the following examples: *doo* + *ishima* *dooshima* good heart, *atem* + *ityogh* *atemtyo* head breaking, *kpar* + *iyou* *kparyou* a room. The deletion of letter *i* in the above words is in tandem with Contemporary Tiv morphology. Furthermore, Orkar (2013:122) maintains that ‘adjectives change to be in line with the plural nouns’. Usually, the adjectives and nouns become single or compound words, which are written thus:

Table 1: Formation of adjectival compounds in Tiv

Singular	Compound Words	Plural	Glosses
<i>abi iviha</i>	<i>abiviha</i>	<i>mba-abimbavihav</i>	big grasscutter(s)
<i>ajagba ivav</i>	<i>ajagbavyav</i>	<i>mbaajagba-mba-avevev</i>	big wound(s)
<i>atum icôngo</i>	<i>atumcôngo</i>	<i>mbaatuum-acôngov</i>	big fox(es)
<i>bo ici</i>	<i>boci</i>	<i>ubo-mba-cighiv</i>	poisonous drug(s)
<i>daang iwa</i>	<i>daang-wya</i>	<i>udaangmbawyaagh</i>	bad dog(s)
<i>icaver</i>	<i>icaverkyondo</i>	<i>Atsaverakyondo</i>	rag(s)
<i>ikyondo</i>			
<i>tse ikpya</i>	<i>tsekpya</i>	<i>Utsembakpaav</i>	old bag(s)
<i>tse ikyondo</i>	<i>tsekyondo</i>	<i>utsema-akondov</i>	old cloth(s)
<i>tse iyou</i>	<i>tseyou</i>	<i>utsemba-ayouov</i>	old house(s)

Source: Fieldwork 2025.

Obviously, letter *i* in the above compound words has been deleted to conform to the modern way of compounding Tiv words. Again, the singulars and plurals of the above compound words are perfectly formed.

Karshima (2012) observes that the white men that reduced Tiv language to its written form preferred using single letters instead of doubling similar letters. Karshima (2012:8) cites these examples: '*Gbooko* written as *Gboko*, *Tarka* for *Tarkaa*, *wang* for *waang* pure and *nagh* for *naagh* sacrifice'. Lack of doubling letters *aa* in *Tarkaa* and *oo* in *Gbooko* may affect their pronunciations. The use of a single *a* in *nagh* in the *Icighan Bibilo* (*Tiv Holy Bible*) that was published in 1964 may mean 'sacrifice' and 'his or her'. This may result in lexical ambiguity.

Mzoo u Zwativ (Tiv Language Studies and Development Association) (2019) revises various orthographies that were devised by non-natives and indigenes of Tiv to enhance uniform orthography. Mzoo U Zwativ (2019: iv) maintains that 'they started revising Tiv orthography in 2008, continued revising till the 2012 version was published'. The association can remove *hm*, *mh*, *mm*, *km*, *rr* and *vv* from the revised Tiv orthography. Early scholars of Tiv language included /ou/ as a diphthong in the phonology of Tiv. Currently, Orkar (2013:2) and Mzoo U Tiv (2019:8) have debunked that /ou/ is 'not a diphthong in Tiv' as claimed by some scholars. They maintain that combinations such as *ough* and *ough* do not exist and that what we hear are *o* and *gh* and *ô* and *gh*. The acceptable spellings are *ogh* and *ôgh* respectively. For instance, *ityough* becomes *ityogh* head and *ityôugh* is written as *ityôgh* pillar. Letter *u* is deleted in the above words. The deletion of *u* is an aspect of language change in Tiv. Modern scholars are already using some of these changes in their written work as can be seen in works by Tagesa Akpagher (2005); and DT Karshima (2013).

Aor (2021^a:35) classifies phonological implications of English loanwords on the grammar of Tiv language; discusses the implications of English loanwords on Tiv grammar; explores the phonological functions of English loanwords and states reasons that necessitate borrowing of loanwords. Aor affirms that English loanwords have expanded the morphological, graphological, semantic, syntactic and phonological components of Tiv language. Borrowing is one of the reasons that Tiv language changes its morphological, graphological, phonological and

semantic structures. In their study, Aor and Damkor (2021:1) classify sound changes in Tiv, state causes of sound changes in Tiv and explore implications of sound changes. Aor and Damkor (2021:10) attest that ‘palatal insertion is a phonological change in Tiv’ and their finding is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *Palatal Insertion as a Phonological Change in Tiv*

Old Spellings	Tiv	Modern Spellings	Tiv	Epenthetic Sound	Glosses
<i>adiguve</i>		<i>adigyuve</i>		Y	harp
<i>bughpupu</i>		<i>byughpupu</i>		Y	splashing
<i>ifan</i>		<i>ifyan</i>		Y	curse
<i>iferor</i>		<i>ifyeror</i>		Y	evil person
<i>igo</i>		<i>igyo</i>		Y	pig
<i>igungu</i>		<i>igyungu</i>		Y	hill
<i>ihom</i>		<i>ihyom</i>		Y	hatred
<i>ikaior</i>		<i>ikyaior</i>		Y	the young
<i>ikav</i>		<i>ikav</i>		Y	goods
<i>ikese</i>		<i>ikyese</i>		Y	basket
<i>ikônough</i>		<i>ikyônough</i>		Y	chair
<i>ikov</i>		<i>ikyov</i>		Y	generations
<i>ikua ikua</i>		<i>ikyua ikyua</i>		Y	near
<i>mbaihomov</i>		<i>mbahyomov</i>		Y	enemies

Source: Fieldwork 2025.

The difference between OT spellings and MT spellings is the insertion of a voiced palatal approximant /j/. The pronunciations and meanings of words in the OT spellings and MT spellings are the same.

Furthermore, Aor, Iorember and Tseveda (2022:13-14) assert that palatalisation is ‘a sound change device’ in Tiv. They further maintain that words that were not written with palatal sound /j/ in the OT spellings now have *y* /j/. Books written by early Tiv scholars have minimal use of palatal sound as reflected in the *Tiv Holy Bible*, which was published in 1964. The emergence of /j/ reflects that Tiv phonology has undergone some changes over time. The OT spellings and MT spellings have proven that palatalisation is a sound or phonological change device in Tiv.

Tiv (2021) and Wuese (2022) apostrophised their spellings by separating nouns or verbs from personal pronouns. An

apostrophe is inserted between nouns or verbs and *m* for syllabification. The morphological process of attaching the personal pronoun *m* to their hosts is known as cliticization. Examples of Tiv's (2021) words that show examples of clitics in Tiv are *ver'm* bless me, *Ngô'm* my mother, *Ter'm* my father, *kôr'm* catch me, *na'un* give him or her, *sar'u* you desire and *ker'u* look for you. Wuese's (2022) examples of clitics are *wua'm* kill me, *ôr'u* tell you, *ôr'm* tell me, *pine'm* ask me, *na'm* give me, *kôr'm* catch me, *nyia'm* defecate on me, *kimbi'm* pay me, *er'm* do for me, *hia'm* burn me, and *tindi'm* send me.

Most of the changes identified in the Literature Review centred on the graphological and phonological levels. The review identified elision, epenthesis, dissimilation and substitution as features of phonological changes. Also, wrong spellings or combinations of letters such as *ch*, *dz*, *ndz* and so on are some of the graphological changes. It is evidently clear that there is a paucity of literature on morphological changes in Tiv, and that is why this study has attempted to fill this existing gap.

Item and Process Theory

This study has adapted Hockett's Item and Process (IP) model from the 1950s. According to Hockett (1966), IP is a process through which the configuration of words moves from one pattern to another or a 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 IP explains the process of a particular root or base undergoing rather than representing a morpheme with a morph as in Item and Arrangement theory. This presupposes that in the IP model, the formation of new words depends on applying the rules that alter a word-form or stem to produce a new one. Crystal (2008:257) opines that the IP model, the 'relationships between words are seen as processes of derivation' and exemplifies that the item *taken* is derived from the item *taken* by a 'process' involving vowel change.

According to Matthews (2007:206), IP 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 /I/ to

/ʌ/, which forms the participle, followed by the addition of the prefix *un-* /ʌn/, which forms a negative. An inflectional rule takes a stem, changes it as required by the rule, and outputs a word-form. A derivational rule takes a stem, changes it as per its own requirements, and outputs a derivational stem; a compounding rule takes word forms and similarly outputs a compound stem. Furthermore, a clipping rule takes a word form, slurs or deletes syllables and forms a shorter version of words (*uwua* *wua* guinea corn, *ateakombo* *atekombo* shrine and *mzough* *mzoo* association) and a cliticisation rule takes a stem, adds personal or possessive pronoun *m* to the hosts or root words and inserts apostrophe ['] between hosts and *m*, thus changing them to clitics. For instance, *wasem* becomes *wase'm*, help me, and *yilam* becomes *yila'm*, call me.

The Item and Process model is vitally important in this study because it explains the composition of morphemes and morphemic changes inherent in Tiv's utterances. The model can be handy to explain the morphological composition and changes in simple and complex utterances. Finally, this model is not only useful in morphology but also helpful in the analysis of language change or historical linguistics. The deployment of IP aids in analysing morphological processes of language changes in Tiv, such as affixation, compounding, clipping, syllable-separation and cliticisation.

Methodology

The method used in this study is internal reconstruction, which involves the observation of patterns within an individual language to arrive at hypotheses regarding an earlier stage of that language, without considering information from outside languages. When a language changes, 'traces of the changes are often left in the language's structure as allomorphic variants or irregularities of some sort' (Lyle and Mexico, 2007:86). Internal reconstruction compares such variants and irregularities – different allomorphs in paradigms, derivations, stylistic variants and the like. The researchers read old and contemporary studies on Tiv, jotted down words or expressions that showed such changes then grouped them under affixation, compounding, cliticisation, word-separation and clipping as morphological processes of language change in Tiv.

Data Analysis of Morphological Change Processes in Tiv

The morphological structure of the Tiv language has experienced tremendous changes. The processes of word formation, such as affixation, compounding, cliticisation, word-separation and clipping, have been modified or changed. Morphological processes of language change in Tiv have been discussed below:

Affixation as a Morphological Change Process in Tiv

Affixation is a morphological process in which morpheme or morphemes are added before root words (prefixes), within root words (infixes) and after root words (suffixes). Affixal processes that change the morphology of Tiv are prefixes and infixes. Nouns in Tiv, such as *loji* sickle, *vange* lizard, *una* granary and *ura* rain, were not prefixed in the OT and MT. However, there is a prefixation of *a* before *loji* *aloji* and *vange* *avange*; *w* prefixes *ura* *wura* and *ura* *wura* in Contemporary Tiv.

Furthermore, the insertion of the letter *y* in the root words is an affixal change process in Tiv. The following are examples of infixes in Tiv: *ivo* *ivyo* goat, *igo* *igy* pig, *iba* *ibya* bag/sack, *ihom* *ihyom* hatred, *igungu* *igyungu* hill, *ikausu* *ikyausu* charcoal, *iwen* *iwyen* stone, *iwani* *iwyani* deformity, *iwambe* *iwyambe* vaccination, *iwanger* *iwyanger* light, *iwuese* *iyuese* praise and *iwua* *iyua* sacrifice. There is an insertion of *w* in the Tiv root words that is an instance of infixation. These examples include: *ityokyaa* *ityokwagh* reason, *ruam* *rwam* food, *ruamabera* *rwamabera* scroll, *tsue* *tsuwe* hook, *vue* *vuwe* powdered substance and *sue* *suwe* to support.

There is an infixation of similar vowels in the words that were written with single vowels. The addition of vowels makes the words that were written with short vowels in the Old Tiv and Middle Tiv become long ones. The colonial government, through the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) in the 1930s, outlawed the use of long vowels or double vowels in the Tiv language (Tsumba, 2013:10). The absence of long vowels in the Tiv words at that time had affected the written and the spoken Tiv. To enhance or obtain correct spellings and pronunciations, vowels are doubled in the Tiv words in contemporary times. Examples of infixal vowels include *bang* *baang* scarlet, *cing* *ciing* not clear, *nagh* *naagh* sacrifice, *tsung* *tsuung* very well, *wang* *waang* clear, *ving* *viing* quiet, *hweng*

hweeng very deep, *bong boong* widely opened and *dông dông* very serious. The foregoing words showed that *aa*, *ee*, *ii*, *oo*, *ôô* and *uu* are doubled and words that bear them are pronounced longer than the former ones written with a single *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *ô* and *u* respectively.

Compounding as a Morphological Change Process in Tiv

Another common morphological change process in Tiv is compounding, the combination of two already existing words. O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011:625) state that compounding involves 'the combination of lexical categories to form a larger word'. Mzoo U Tiv (2019) states that '*zum u i magh asembler ahar man ishember i shar uhar la i lu a 'i' ken mhii la man i kporogh in ken myila u ishember la ga yô, i dugh 'i' la kera ken mnger u imiaghen ishember sha er a yilan imiaghen ishember, shin iti or la er Tiv ve yel la yô*'. This is translated thus: 'when two words are compounded and the second one begins with *i* that is not pronounced in such a word, *i* should be removed from such a compound word so that such a compound or name be pronounced or called as Tiv people call it' (Our translation).

The above quote is vital because the second words that form compound words in Tiv start with the letter *i*, which is deleted in contemporary Tiv grammar. For instance, the word *inya* in Tiv means soil, sand, ground or down, and when combined with the first word to form compound words, the letter *i* in *inya* is deleted or removed. Thus, we have *temanya* sit down, *haanya* pour sand, *sharnya* sit on bare ground, *kpelanya* snake, *tanya* throw down/to respect, *gbanya/gbidyenya* fall down, *kôrnya* to be soiled, *shinnya* in the soil/grave, *tumenya* hit on the ground, *sarnya/sambenya* scatter the earth, *ngulunnya* bend down, *yavnya* lie down, *yanya* eat sand, *kulanya* pack sand, *avernya* cross soil, *hôrnya/shoghornya/ nungwanya* mix sand, *timenya* dig the earth, *tsulenya* hit on the ground, *vuenyar* dry earth, *wanya* to provide earth to plants or crops and *zendenya* livestock.

In addition to the above, these compound words in Tiv that show that Tiv language has changed include the following: *atemtyo* head breaking, *nomgyo* boar, *ngôgyo* sow, *tatyogh* hit with head, *pendatyo* favourite wife, *beeyol* to be old, *saanyol* to be happy, *waryol* to make use of something, *gbayol* need/desire, *vôryol* to be tired, *vihiyol* to be sick, *sôryol* body treatment, *kileyol* wash body, *kurayol* protection, *dooyol* to have good luck, *suleyol*

to be patient, *murayol* bloated body, *kondoyol* surprising thing, *gbidyeyol* to fight, *kumayol* disturbing issue, *umayol* to dry body, *gurayol* to be sick, *mkpeyol* enjoyment, *kpilighiyol* a marvelous thing, *surshima* to comfort and *dooshima* good heart. Other examples of compounding in Tiv include *nyamgyo* pork, *nyamwya* dog's meat, *nyamvyo* goat's meat, *nyamiyôngo* mutton, *nyamshu* fish, *nyamviha* grass-cutter's meat, *ityôryôngo* sheepfold, *wanyôngo* lamb, and *ikyôce* plenty hair. Compounding is also seen in *tuleyôngo*, *ityôkwagh* reason, *orvannya* a visitor, *nomikya* billy monkey, *ngokya* nanny monkey, *atôndowyenge* larva, *atekombo* shrine, *tangeyol* to be stingy, *moryol* to boast, *tiônshu* half fish, *tiônsha* half rosary and *atamakyon* fruits.

Finally, *kpyanyar* purse, *tsekpya* old bag, *ikyôkyon* forest of wood, *abiviha* giant grasscutter, *sulegyoo* piggery, *yamshe* exchange marriage, *kpeshe* to cancel initial bargaining, *pirshe* to have blinded eye, *saashe* to spoil, *wanshe* pupil, *dooshe* cheap to buy, *goshe* to look at somebody scornfully, *atewya* blacksmith's hut, *ambiagyoo* pigs' dung, *zuavyese* to wed, *kyaace* plenty hair, *guarce* strand of hair, *boyô* poisonous snake, *tacia* to defend yourself, *haakyondo* wear cloth, *sendetyogh* to cause trouble, *gberndyer* to cut talking drum vividly show that Tiv compound words have some changes in their formations (Tagesa, 2018).

Cliticisation as a Morphological Change Process in Tiv

Trask (1996:65) defines cliticisation as 'any process by which an independent word is reduced to a clitic'. Similarly, Carr (2008:28) looks at cliticisation as a 'process in which full words are 'demoted' to the status of clitics'. Matthews (2007:60) asserts that a clitic is 'any grammatical unit that is not straightforwardly either an affix or a word on its own'. He maintains that cliticisation is a syntactic process or historical change by which a word becomes a clitic. In their words, O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011:624) define clitic as a 'morpheme that is like a word in terms of its meaning and function but is unable to stand alone as an independent form for phonological reasons'. Clitics must always be pronounced with another word or their host. Tiv clitics are members of a lexical category, such as verbs and nouns.

Aor (2020^a:59) affirms that when *m* comes after its host, it is called a clitic. By way of example, Aor (2020^a:60) maintains that '*hembam* greater than me and *wuam* kill me are objects and

they behave as clitics do'. Aor (2021:16) attests that Tiv language has enclitics, that is, 'a personal objective pronoun *m* is added after verbs to change them' to clitics. He therefore propounds **M Codalisation Theory** for the formation of Tiv clitics, thus: 'when a voiced labio-dental nasal /ɱ/ comes after their hosts, mostly verbs, then the formed words are called encliticised words. The rule can be schematically stated thus: **Verbs + Final M = Enclitic**' (Aor, 2021:16). The *m* must be a coda, final consonant. The *m* is not used as an affix for pluralisation. It is one of the ways of forming new words in Tiv. Furthermore, Aor (2023:11) cites examples of clitics in the Tiv morphology, such as: *gbidyem* *gbidye+m* beat me, *kasem* *kase+m* besiege me, *nam* *na+m* give me, *pinem* *pine+m* ask me, *tuhwam* *tuhwa+m* curse me, *undum* *undu+m* leave me, *wasem* *wase+m* help me, *yilam* *yila+m* call me, *yimam* *yima+m* help me, and *zungwem* *zungwe+m* pity me. When the letter *m* /ɱ/ is added to the above words, it refers to *me*.

In the Old Tiv, Middle Tiv and Early Contemporary Tiv, objective personal pronoun *M* was added after verbs of one syllable ending with a vowel, as in *kpem* weaken me, for the formation of clitics. Again, a vowel was inserted and *m* is added after verbs of one or two syllables ending with a consonant such as: when the last vowel in the base is *a* or *e*, *e* is infixes before the *m* is added – *verem* bless me; when the last vowel in the base is *ô* or *o*, *o* is sandwiched before the *m* is added – *torom* hasten me., and when the last vowel in the base is *i* or *u*, the *i* or *u* is duplicated and *m* is added – *tsughum* deceive me.

The formation of Tiv clitics in the LCT has been modified by inserting an apostrophe between the hosts and the personal pronoun *m*, as seen in *kilem* wash me becomes *kile'm* and *pavem* is written as *pav'm* operate me. According to the Tiv Language Studies and Development Association (TLSDA), *m* is graphologically separated from its hosts because it belongs to a different syllable. *M* is added to verbs that end with vowels to form clitics in Tiv, or an apostrophe is inserted after hosts (verbs), and then *m* is added. *M* means *me* or *my* as seen in: *beem* *bee'm* resemble me, *bendem* *bende'm* touch me, *bulam* *bula'm* harm me, *daam* *daa'm* push me, *dem* *de'm* don't allow me, *dondom* *dondo'm* follow me, *doom* *doo'm* good for me, *duem* *due'm* bring me, *duram* *dura'm* thunder me, *erem* *er'm* do for me, *esem* *ese'm* clean me, *fam* *fa'm* know me, *fehem* *fehe'm* blow

me, *gbam gba'm* create me, *hondom hondo'm* shave me, *hurem hure'm* fold for me, *iim ii'm* bury me/steal my, *kaam kaa'm* tell me. Other examples of clitics are: *kehem kehe'm* enlarge me, *kuvem kuve'm* hug me, *laham laha'm* criticise me, *mandem mande'm* knock me, *nyohom nyoho'm* sweet for me, *ôôm ôô'm* wash me, *paam paa'm* rescue me, *soom soo'm* love me, *timem time'm* dig me, *vam va'm* bring me, *wasem wase'm* help me, *yese'm* nurse me and *zôrom zôro'm* pluck me.

Furthermore, other clitics are formed by deleting vowels that come after stems that end with consonants, an apostrophe is inserted, and *m* is added. Examples are: *bamem bam'm* provoke me, *banem ban'm* I lack, *caghem cagh'm* crush me, *cirim cir'm* cover me, *danem dan'm* confuse me, *dughum dugh'm* release me, *gerem ger'm* cut/bite me, *gurum guru'm* hem for me, *herem her'm* screen me, *horom hor'm* sharpen for me, *keghem kegh'm* wait for me, *kerem ker'm* search me, *lamem lam'm* discuss me, *marem mar'm* give birth to me and *nderem nder'm* wake me up. Finally, the following words are good examples of clitics in Tiv: *numum num'm* attack me (on the way), *ôrom ôr'm* tell me, *ponom pon'm* expose me, *sônom sôn'm* ask me, *tôvom tôv'm* investigate me, *verem ver'm* bless me, *wamem wam'm* apologise me, *yerem yer'm* hide me and *zerem zer'm* tie/ cloth me (Akpagher, 2025).

Clipping as a Morphological Change Process in Tiv

The morphological process of lopping off or subtracting one or more syllables from a word is a property of the Tiv language. Quirk and Greenbaun (1973:448) define clipping as the 'subtraction of one or more syllables from words'. Furthermore, Udang (1992), Katamba (1999), Trask (1996) Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish (2001), Crystal (2006) Matthews (2007) and Aarts, Chalker and Weiner (2014) view clipping as the loss, removal, shortening, reduction, abbreviation, subtraction, deletion and dropping of one or more syllables to form shortened words. Aor (2020^b) identifies four types of clippings in the morphology of Tiv to include fore-clipping, medial clipping, fore-and-aft clipping and back clipping. Fore-clipping slices or cuts off the initial portions or syllables (*atsengeityu* to *ityu* wooden pipe). Medial clipping entails the subtraction of letters or syllables in the middle of words (*ônovmbanomsou* *ônmbanomsou* male children). Fore-and-aft clipping removes initial and final syllables (*anikyurice* to *ikyur* information or inkling). Back clipping deletes

last portion or portions of words (*akevanune* to *akeva* locust beans).

Clipping as a morphological change process in Tiv presupposes the removal of initial, medial and final portions or syllables of words to make them shorter. In the Old and Middle Tiv, *agbaga* prostitute, *uwua* guinea corn, *yamishe* exchange marriage and *mdzough/mzough* were accepted but in Contemporary Tiv there are omissions of *a* in *agbaga*, *u* in *uwua*, *i* in *yamishe* and *gh* in *mzough* to form *gbaga*, *wua*, *yamshe* and *mzou* or *mzoo*. Thus, we have fore-clipping in *gbaga* and *wua*; medial clipping in *yamshe* and back clipping in *mzou* or *mzoo* respectively. The initial clipping of letter *a* in *agbaga* prostitute and letter *u* in *uwagh* river, *uwar* grave, *uwer* month or moon, *uwo* and *uwua* guinea corn shows that the structure of Tiv words has changed. The word *agbaga* is a trisyllabic word /a.gba.ga/ in OT and MT Tiv but in Contemporary Tiv, it has been clipped to *gbaga* /gba.ga/, a bisyllabic word. Again, the lopping off of initial *u* in *uwagh*, *uwar*, *uwegh*, *uwer*, *uwo* and *uwua* results in *wagh*, *war*, *wegh*, *wer*, *wo* and *wua*.

Table 4: Fore-clipping in Contemporary Tiv Morphology

Words	Shortened Words	Clipped Portions	Glosses
<i>Agbaga</i>	<i>gbaga</i>	<i>A</i>	a prostitute
<i>Uwagh</i>	<i>wagh</i>	<i>U</i>	river
<i>Uwar</i>	<i>war</i>	<i>U</i>	grave
<i>Uwegh</i>	<i>wegh</i>	<i>U</i>	hand
<i>Uwer</i>	<i>wer</i>	<i>U</i>	moon
<i>Uwo</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>U</i>	mountain
<i>Uwua</i>	<i>wua</i>	<i>U</i>	guinea-corn

Source: Fieldwork 2025.

There are many words that have medial clipping in the Tiv morphology. Letters *a*, *i*, *u* and digraph *gh* are clipped in the middle of Tiv words to show morphological changes. There is a clipping of *a* word in the following words: *ateqkombo* *atekombo* shrine, *gbire ahu* *gbirehu* the removal or uncapping of heap caps, *kwagh-ahir* *kwagh-hir* tale and *kwaghalôm* *kwaghlôm* theatrical performance. There is a deletion of the letter *i* in the middle of the following Tiv words: *kondoikyer*, *kondokyer*, to be dumb; *uikyangen*, *ukyangen*, to be in exile; *wanikyegh*, *wankyegh*, a

chick; *mbaihomov*, *mbahyomov*, enemies; *ngôiyôngo*, ewe; and *nomivo*, *nomvyo*, he-goat. Letter *u* is removed in the middle of *ityough* *ityogh*, *mough* *mogh*, *mngbough* *ngbogh* plenty and *gbough* *gbogh* rod. Lastly, digraph *gh* is clipped in the middle of *ilyeghe* *ilyeegh* member, *aikighe* *aikie* evening, *lighe* *lighe* lie lie thoroughly, and *vighe* *vighe* *vie* *vie* vividly.

Contributions to Knowledge

The following contributions have been made:

1. The study has clearly shown that compounding, affixation, cliticisation, clipping and word-separation are processes of word formation in Tiv, and they result in morphological changes as well.
2. Another contribution of this study is the foregrounding of a hyphen and an apostrophe. The apostrophe is used in this study for forming clitics (*na'm* give me).
3. Morphological change processes can be compared using different phases or periods of language change in Tiv.
4. This study also contributes significantly to the other genres of linguistics and linguistic theory.
5. Language change provides researchers or scholars with a much better understanding of language in general, of how languages work and how their pieces fit together.

Summary of Research Findings

From the foregoing research, the following findings have been made.

1. Languages change to accommodate new vocabularies, to correct deviant spellings, wrong usages and tenses.
2. Cliticisation as a morphological change process in Tiv may result in hypercorrection, that is, when a 'changed form is mistakenly assumed to be more correct than a correct form, which it replaces' (Shukla and Connor-Linton, 2010:296). For instance, *wase'm* instead of *wasem* help me, *bee'm* in the place of *beem* resemble me, and *sôr'm* in lieu of *sôrom* visit me, can lead to hypercorrection.
3. Morphological changes in Tiv should not be seen as morphological deviations or aberrations.
4. Infixation as an affixal morphological change process in Tiv results in consonant clusters (*ifan ifyan* a curse, and

- nguhar nguhwar* leg) and vowel lengthening (*ving viing* to be quiet).
5. This study has a link between Tiv morphology and phonology, hence clipping, cliticisation and compounding delete or elide letters or syllables; affixation adds letters or syllables, and the word-separation process shows syllables, nominalisation and plurality.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is unarguably clear that the study of Tiv language change is still at its infancy. The Tiv language that was reduced into writing by the missionaries has considerably changed over time by borrowing lexical items, correcting wrong spellings, discarding words that have become obsolete to meet the changing contexts and needs of its community. All levels of Tiv grammar, such as morphology, graphology, phonology, syntax and semantics, have changed, and these changes are seen in the revised *Tiv Holy Bible*, contemporary literary works and the innovative activities of Tiv Language Studies and Development Association (TLSDA). Language change provides strong evidence that the various components of language are critically interdependent: phonological changes can lead to morphological and syntactic changes, and lexical changes like borrowing can lead to phonological changes.

The foregoing study, therefore, critically examined various stages of Tiv language change by identifying features of each stage that distinguished it from the other. The study looked at some of the morphological processes of language change (affixation, compounding, cliticization, clipping and word-separation) in Tiv and stressed that these changes have affected Tiv morphology considerably. Tiv language change should not be seen as a deviation or an aberration from the established norms, but it is a way of enhancing its growth or development. Native and non-native speakers of Tiv should be aware that Tiv language has changed and is still changing, and that they should accept such changes with open arms. The study therefore recommends that both the spoken and written Tiv should reflect such changes at its morphological, graphological, phonological, syntactic and semantic levels.

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