

PLURALISATION STRATEGIES IN THE URHOBÒ LANGUAGE

BY

ODEH, BESTMAN ESEGBUYIOTA; IWVORIN, GODWIN
AVWEROSUOGHENE & NWAFOR, EBELE ANGELA

Abstract

This work examines plural markers in Ùrhòbò. The specific objectives are to identify plural markers in Ùrhòbò and to examine how plural nouns, pronouns, adjectives and plural compound nouns are formed considering their positions. This study adopts the descriptive approach in analysing data. Concerning data collection, the study used introspection to generate data for analysis. This work identifies four plural markers in Ùrhòbò. These include: vowel mutation, zero morpheme marker, cardinal number marker and post nominal marker. The identified markers occur as affixes and free morphemes in the language and they bring about change at the initial position of the word. The study further reveals that plural formation in Ùrhòbò is done by changing the initial vowel of the lexical item, mostly nouns and pronouns in the singular form to plural in Ùrhòbò. The finding also reveals that prefixes at initial position change to form plurality in Ùrhòbò. Some words in Ùrhòbò do not change both in singular and plural form (zero morpheme markers). The study proves that the plural morpheme of Urhobo is basically /e/ or /i/ and it is phonologically conditioned by the vowel harmony rule of the language. Thus, all + ATR vowel occupying word initial position in a noun changes to /e/ in their plural form. In describing a small or little quantity, the prefix 'emera' is used while the process of describing large quantity 'plenty or much', a suffix /buebu/ is used. The essence of plurality in Ùrhòbò is to show that a lexical item can appear more than one. The study encourages further researches on other aspects of Urhobo morphology as this work only looks at an aspect of inflectional morphology in Urhobo.

Key words: plural marker, vowel mutation, compound, language, Urhobo

1. Introduction

The study of human language is one of the most interesting social phenomena in the humanities. Although, language has been defined variedly, its basic social function remains unchanged. The communicative function of language is unchangeable and that man is the only known creature that can communicate with language is indisputable. Language is

an essential tool for communication. Linguistics studies language at four levels: Phonology and Phonetics, morphology, Syntax and Semantics. Phonology and phonetics look at sounds and their patterns, morphology studies the structure of a word; syntax combines those words to form a sentence, and semantics looks at meaning.

Morphology studies the internal structure of a word in a language such as Hausa, Idoma, Igbo, Tiv, Ùrhòbò, Yoruba etc and their relationship to other words in the same language. It analyses the structure of words and parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes, and suffixes. It also looks at parts of speech, intonation and stress, and the ways context can change the pronunciation of a word and its meaning. Ùrhòbò is an Edoid language which belongs to the Kwa group of Niger Congo with many speakers. The people of Ùrhòbò are widely known for fishing and farming. Ùrhòbò is widely spoken in Delta state of Nigeria and it is physically embedded in the Atlantic forest belt that stretches from Senegal in West Africa. Its sound system consists of thirty-one consonants and seven oral vowels which have nasal counterparts. The consonants are grouped into two, namely: single consonant and combined consonant or diagraph. Single letters are eighteen while double letters are thirteen. Ùrhòbò, being a tonal language, has three types of tone which include: low(marked), high (marked) and mid (unmarked) tone. It has a separate tier that is independent of the segment tier. Ùrhòbò has two gliding tones: low-high (LH) and high-low (HL) (Aziza).

How words are created in a language and how additional meaning is added to a word is the concern of morphologists. This brings derivational and inflectional morphology to limelight. On the differences, derivational morphology derives new words by either changing the meaning or the grammatical class while inflectional morphology neither changes the grammatical class nor meaning but only refines and gives extra grammatical information about the already existing word. Inflectional morphemes are bound morphemes attached to an already existing word in a language such as Ùrhòbò. They are used to show plurality (quantity), possession (ownership), continuity etc in a language. Ùrhòbò language involves in plural formation. Plural formation is possible in the Ùrhòbò language and it possesses some formal ways of expressing quantity. The basic evidence of the category is observed in the distinction between singular and plural in relation with nouns. Plurality is a concept of quality (i.e grammatical number) representing a value of more than one. In Ùrhòbò, plurality is commonly marked on nouns through inflectional affixes. Affixes are bound morphemes

attached to words to either change or maintain the class of the word and their meanings. Affixes include prefixes, suffixes, infixes, circumfixes, suprafixes etc. Prefixes are attached at the beginning of a word while suffixes are attached to the end of a word. Plurality does not bring about any significant change in a language. It is used to indicate more than one item.

This work is written to identify plural marker in Ùrhòbò, examine how they are formed considering their positions, phonological features and the changes that occur in Ùrhòbò plural formation. Plural marker in Ùrhòbò has not been given enough attention. It is a known fact that vowel mutation is a common plural marker in the language. This work proves that there are other plural markers in Ùrhòbò. Ùrhòbò is a wide community with many speakers. Its local areas are Agbarho, Olomu, Abraka, Kokori, Burutu etc. This study adopts the descriptive research design for analysis of data. This work stands out among others to identify and examine plural marker and its formation in Ùrhòbò. This work has the potentials for stimulating further researches in this area of linguistics. It also contributes to the scanty literature on Ùrhòbò language in general for learners and other researchers. The scope of this study covers an aspect (plurality) of morphology in the Ùrhòbò language to enable the gathering of data for this analysis. Concerning gathering data for analysis, the researchers used introspection and also an unstructured interview to validate the data gathered through introspection. Also, Journals, Textbooks, seminar papers and Internet sources were consulted for analysis of data.

2. Literature review

Plurality as a grammatical term has been described variously in the linguistic literature. It is a linguistic universal, represented variously among the languages such as Urhobo as a separate word (free morpheme), an affix (bound morpheme) or by other morphological indications. Plurality has received tremendous scholarly attention. For instance, Omamode, in his work on Urhobo Nominals using a descriptive approach discusses how plurals are formed in Urhobo. The study finds out that in Urhobo, one item (òshàrè 'man') means a singular number while more than one item (éshàrè 'men') is a plural number in the language. Plurals are formed in Urhobo from the singular noun by replacing or alternating the initial prefixes in nouns in Urhobo. Omamode's study is similar to the current study as both look at plural markers in the same language but different approaches were given to the concept.

Umukoro carries out a study on a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English. This study aims at determining the possible similarities and dissimilarities in the manifestation of pluralisation in an international language and a local Nigerian language. The objectives are to identify the linguistic concept of pluralisation and how pluralisation is manifested in Urhobo, to determine the similarities and dissimilarities, Lado's framework was adopted, which suggests four division- function word, substitute word (pronoun), grammatical distributed words (determiner) and content words (noun). The findings reveal that there are functional and structural similarities in Urhobo and English plural system but structural and formal dissimilarities in the plural systems of both languages. Also, plurals in Urhobo are manifested when a singular entity changes to plural (more than one) in Urhobo. Umukoro's study is similar to the current study as both look at plural markers in Urhobo. The difference lies in the fact that Umukoro did a comparative analysis adopting a framework, while the current study only looks at plural markers in Urhobo, using a descriptive research design for analysis of data.

Akata carries out a study on the realisation of plural in Kana. The aim of the study is on the phonological realisation of plural forms in the Bangha dialect of Kana, using a descriptive approach. The paper argues that except the modifying numerals, which specify the number of the nominal items after them and which cannot co-occur with the plural markers, various plural markers exist in the language. The finding reveals that plurals in Bangha are phonologically realised by the reduplication of number classifiers, specifiers and some adjectives. Akata's study is different from Urhobo plural formation. Reduplicated words are not used to form plurals in the Urhobo language.

Anagbogu examines Koring plural formation using a descriptive approach. The objectives are: to identify pluralisation rules, state the function of demonstratives and pronominal system in koring. The result identifies three pluralisation rules which are Noun + Gbodoro 'many', phoneme alternation, and zero affixes. The study observes that pluralisation of a great majority of nouns involve a very productive process. The paper further observes that zero affixes in the plural forms are very productive in Koring. The paper notes that in Koring, demonstratives have singular and plural forms. Koring pronominal system is associated with the category of number because it has singular and plural forms whose occurrences are determined grammatically. Koring language uses phoneme alternation and

zero affixes in forming plurality. Anagbogu's study is similar to the Urhobo language. Plurals in Urhobo are formed commonly with vowel mutation or vowel alternation.

Jija studies Aspects of pluralisation in the Tiv language using a descriptive method. The study aims at sorting out the morphological processes of pluralisation in Tiv as a vital aspect and step towards the standardisation of the grammar of the Tiv language. The objectives are to identify the features of pluralisation in Tiv and the grammatical rule of the Tiv pluralisation. The result identifies nine features of Tiv Pluralisation which include: morpheme prefixation, inflectional prefix, 'a' and 'u' prefix, 'U' formation, pluralisation by suffix, the double 'M' formation and replative, suppletive morpheme, additive plural form and pluralisation by tonality. The study observes that the grammatical rule of pluralisation in Tiv is that nouns take prefix morphemes *l*, *a*, *u*, *m*, 'mba' copular as well as 'ev', 'ov' and 'v' suffixes to form plurals (noun must be prefixed and suffixed by a corresponding morphemic element and the prefix and suffix as a rule must occur at the noun initial and final positions to form a plural. Jija's study is different from the current study in the language understudy.

Ikegwuonu and Nweze examine the expression of plurality in Igbo using a descriptive method. Their paper examines the strategies for expressing plurality in Igbo. The result of the analysis shows that the Igbo language employs different strategies in the plural formation such as: uses of numerals, nouns, pronouns, reduplication of pronouns, quantifiers, enclitics, certain inherently plural verbs and phrases in grammatical constructions. The study also discovers that plurality can be expressed either in a lexical form, phrases or clauses or sentences. The paper reveals that Igbo is unique in the sense that it does not express any overt morphological feature to indicate plural and this is contrary to what is obtainable in languages such as English, French and Latin. These languages mark plurality using overt inflection suffixes. Some languages formally express plurality through tonality. Such languages include: Finnish, Slovene, Sanskrit, Swahili etc. Ikegwuonu and Nweze's study is similar to the current study as both look at plural marker but in different languages.

Nkamigbo carries out a study on Ayu plural Morphology, using a descriptive approach. The objectives of the study are to examine pluralisation strategies in Ayu, study how plurality is formed in Ayu and study the influence of tone in forming plurality. The study reveals five pluralisation strategies which include: nasal insertion, zero affixation, prefix addition or

alternation, tonal permutation and phoneme mutation. The study observes that nasal is either inserted or deleted to form plurality in Ayu. The study explains further that tonal changes result in the distinction along the dichotomy of singularity and plurality in Ayu nouns and identifies three tone level in Ayu (High (marked), mid (unmarked) and low (marked) . Ayu language uses tone to indicate plurals, unlike Ùrhòbò, which is also a tonal language but tone has no effect in forming plurality in Ùrhòbò,. This work is similar to Ùrhòbò, when looking at the prefix alternation and phoneme mutation. Ùrhòbò, also alternate prefixes at the Initial positions in forming plurals and also phonemes are involved in Urhobo plural formation just like Ayu language.

Achadu, Agbedo and Iloene study inflection as a morphological process in the Idoma language using a descriptive approach. The objectives of the study are to examine inflection as a morphological process in Idoma and to investigate whether verbs constitute a veritable source of inflectional processes in the Idoma language and to establish the various ways which words inflect to denote such grammatical functions as time (tense/aspect) and plurality. From the analysis, the work reveals that Idoma verbs constitute a veritable source of inflection in the language. In Idoma, affixes are used to mark tense and aspect without inflecting the grammatical function. Also, the future and future progressive tenses are represented by the same prefixes *m/nge* – 'I will' and also, verb inflection is achieved through affixation '*ò le ewú nmò e'* in the language. The paper also reveals the various ways which words inflect to denote grammatical functions. These include person, genitive possessive case and number. Achadu, Agbedo and Iloene's study is similar to the current study but in different languages.

Objectively, the review shows that much has been done on plural markers in other languages but few works have been done in Ùrhòbò. Plural markers in Ùrhòbò are yet to be given much attention. This work stands to identify the plural markers in Ùrhòbò, filling the gap of limited works done by scholars in the language.

3. Data presentation and analysis

Preamble

In this section, the data gathered through introspection, oral interviews and other sources will be used for this analysis based on the objectives of the study.

3.1 Plural Marker in Ùrhòbò

Plural makers are affixes or elements attached to singular nouns to make them plural. Once a plural marker is added to a singular noun, that noun becomes countable. This is possible in the Ùrhòbò language. Traditionally, plural markers are used to show or indicate more than one in a language. Ùrhòbò like other languages exhibits plurality in diverse ways. There are four plural markers identified in the Ùrhòbò language. They are vowel mutation, zero marker, cardinal number 'íve 'two', erha 'three', éne 'four etc and post-nominal 'bùèbun' 'many/plenty'. The plural markers identified above will be discussed below.

3.1.1 Vowel mutation

This is a regular change of a sound when it occurs adjacent to another. This process involves a change of a vowel(s) in the singular form of the noun to get the plural form. Linguistically, vowel mutation is a change in a vowel sound caused by a sound in the following syllable. This is a plural marker or a process of forming plurality in Ùrhòbò. This process is the commonest of all plural marker formations in the language. Here, we see the initial vowels changing or being substituted with another vowel(s) in order to form plurality. Examples are:

Example 1:

Ovuovo (singular)	Ebuo (plural)	Vowel change
afíòtò 'Rabbit'	efíòtò 'rabbits'	(a \Rightarrow e)
àgbàrà 'Chair'	ègbàrà 'chairs'	(a \Rightarrow e)
àyè 'Wife'	èyà 'wives'	(a \Rightarrow e)
ékpèti 'Box'	íkpèti 'boxes'	(e \Rightarrow i)
èsì 'Pig'	ìsì 'pigs'	(e \Rightarrow i)
òbò 'Hand'	àbò 'hands'	(o \Rightarrow a)
ọhò 'Chicken'	éhò 'chickens'	(o \Rightarrow e)
ọkpáko 'Elder'	èkpáko 'elders'	(o \Rightarrow e)
ọmó 'child'	émó 'children'	(o \Rightarrow e)
ọshàrè 'Man'	éshàrè 'men'	(o \Rightarrow e)
ọmòtè 'Girl'	emote 'girls'	(o \Rightarrow e)
óníọvò 'Sibling'	íníọvò 'siblings'	(o \Rightarrow i)
ọshàrè 'Man'	éshàrè 'Men'	(o \Rightarrow e)
òvìè 'Chief'	ìvìè 'Chiefs'	(o \Rightarrow i)
ùnè 'Song'	ìnè 'Songs'	(u \Rightarrow i)

In the examples above, vowels at the initial positions of the nouns changed to another vowel in forming plurality in Ùrhòbò. This explains the fact that morphology has a relationship with phonology (sound). Plurality is a morphonemic process which involves not only morphology but also phonology of the Ùrhòbò Language.

3.1.2 Zero Marker

This is a morphological process that is also possible in forming plurality in Ùrhòbò. Some nouns in Urhobo retain their form in their plural formation. The morpheme /i/ and /e/ word initial does not change in their plural form, a case of zero vowel changes. There are few irregular plural forms of some nouns which also exhibit zero change. These are either uncountable nouns or abstract nouns. Examples include:

Example 2:

S/N	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss	Zero vowel change
1.	eton	hair	Eto	Hairs	ɛ⇒ϕ
2.	ebo	charm	ebo	Charms	ɛ⇒ϕ
3.	evwe	Goat	eve	Goats	ɛ⇒ϕ
4.	igho	Money	Ígho	Money	i⇒ϕ
5.	ide	Thatch	Ide	Thatch	i⇒ϕ
6.	ìrhíbó	Pepper	ìrhíbó	Pepper	i⇒ϕ
7.	ame	Water	ame	Water	a⇒ϕ
8.	ason	Night	asọ	Night	a⇒ϕ
9.	uriri	Glory	Uriri	Glory	u⇒ϕ
10.	oma	Body	Oma	Body	o⇒ϕ
11.	ede	Day	ede	Days	ɛ⇒ϕ

In the data above, the singular and the plural forms of the words are the same. This confirms the difference between zero plurality in Urhobo and English.

Example 3: Structure of zero marker in Urhobo

- ìgògóló àmè ene 'four buckets of water'
bucket water four
- ékpu ìrósù ive 'two bags of rice'
bag rice two
- àkòn éjóbi 'teeth'
tooth all

- d. úde evo 'some pomade'
pomade some
- e. ígho bùèbún 'plenty money'
money plenty
- f. iko èwrì ihwe 'ten jars of oil'
cups oil ten

The examples above are modifiers used to show quantity in Urhobo. The nouns used are uncountable (i.e. they cannot be counted) and can only be counted either with numbers or other modifiers as seen in the examples above. The quantifier 'every' is signaled through a process of prefixing an element 'ke' (whose vowel is always elided) to the noun and then reduplicating the entire form (Aziza). Examples are:

Example3:

- a. kamwakamwa 'every clothes'
- b. kozekoze 'every basin'
- c. kayekaye 'very woman'
- d. kukokuko 'every cup'

(culled: Aziza)

Other examples are:

- e. kohwokohwo 'every human'
- f. koniovokoniovo 'every brothers'
- g. kighokigho 'every money'

3.1.3 Cardinal Number plural Marker

In measuring quantity in Urhobo, cardinal number is used to show plurality. Number here is singular and plural. Singular means one while plural is more than one. Numbers in Urhobo include: íve 'two', érho 'three', éne 'four', èsan 'six' etc. These numbers are used to show plurality of Urhoboun countable nouns.

3.1.4 Post-nominal plural marker (bùèbun) 'many/ plenty' and 'emera' 'little' /imi/ or /ama/'some'

This is also used to show plurality in Urhobo and they are used to indicate emphasis in the language. Examples are:

Example 4:

S/N	Noun	Gloss	Plural marker	Gloss	Procedure
1.	amẹ	Water	amame	some water	Prefix
2.	amẹ	Water	emerame	little water	Prefix
3.	ékpe	Sand	emekpe	some sand	Prefix
4.	Ìrhíbó	Pepper	imirhibo	some pepper	Prefix
5.	Ígho	Money	ighobuebun	much/plenty money	Suffix
6.	àmẹ	Water	amẹbuebun	much water	Suffix
7.	Èràvè	Animal	eravebuebun	plenty animals	Suffix
8.	Èmù	Food	ememu	some food	Prefix
9.	Ìrhíbó	Pepper	irhibobuebun	Plenty pepper	Suffix
10.	Ékpu	Bag	ekpuivẹ	Two bags	Suffix
11.	ẹde	Day	ẹdera	Three days	Suffix
12.	enẹ	Yam	enẹivẹ	Two yams	Suffix

From the data above, it seems to be that the forms /imi/, /ama/ and /eme/ are variants of the stem /emera/ which occur as a result of phonological transformation and ease in pronunciation. The concept of some or little and number are marked by prefixation while the concept of much or plenty is marked by a suffix.

3.2 Plural marker formation in Urhobo

Plurals are mostly and commonly formed within the domain of noun and pronoun. Noun and pronoun in Urhobo are used to indicate quantity. In indicating quantity, Òrhòbò commonly use vowel alternation within the domain of a noun to show plurality in the language.

Plurality is also formed in Pronoun. Pronouns are used to replace a noun in Urhobo. Examples are:

Example 8:

Singular	plural
mẹ (i)	àvwánre (we)
wẹ (you)	ovwan (you)

3.2.1 Plural formation process of Urhobo nouns

Urhobo nouns have a syllable structure V-CV. The initial 'v' that starts the noun differentiates most nouns from their plural counterpart, a

productive word formation process whereby the initial vowel in a word is replaced with an appropriate plural morpheme which is also a vowel. The following are examples of singular nouns with their plural counterpart derived through initial vowel change:

S/N	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss	Initial vowel change
1.	ágógó	bell	Ígógó	Bells	a⇒i
2.	èsisò	sack	Ìsisò	Sacks	e⇒i
3.	ókò	friend	Íkò	Friends	o⇒i
4.	omoko	parrot	Imkoko	Parrots	o⇒i
5.	òzé	basin	Ìzé	Basins	o⇒i
6.	úfi	rope	Ífi	Ropes	u⇒i
7.	upe	mark/spot	Ipe	marks/spots	u⇒i
8.	ukpe	bed	Ikpe	Beds	u⇒i
9.	urhi	law	Iri	Laws	u⇒i
10.	úrhé	tree	Íré	Trees	u⇒i

From the data above, it is observed that Urhobo has a complex and dynamic system of plural formation process which generally involves the phenomenon of initial vowel change in common nouns. To encode attributive adjectives, Urhobo employs noun. These attributes have all the characteristics of nouns, inflecting for number (singular – plural), have vowel prefixes that agree with the nouns they modify (Aziza, 2007). Examples are:

Example 7:

- | | Singular | plural |
|----|-----------------|--------------------|
| a. | omamo | emamo 'good' |
| b. | otete | itete 'small' |
| c. | ofefe | ifefe 'empty' |
| d. | onana | enana 'this (one)' |
| e. | oyena | eyena 'that' |

(Culled from: Aziza)

3.2.2 Plural formation of Urhobo compound nouns

A compound word is a word that is formed by joining two or more formerly independent roots to form a single word (Ndimele). Compounding in English

according to Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish is seen as new words that are formed from already existing words. They also note that compounds are not limited to two words. Compounding is a rich source of new words in especially the Urhobo language. Kari (pp.98) defines compounding as “the process of forming words by combining two or more independent morphemes or words”. Like the English language and other languages of the world, Urhobo has some of its words formed through the morphological process of compounding. For instance; two independent nouns (noun + noun) can form a compound noun. It should be noted that not all nouns can be combined to form compound. The examples below show how plurals of compound nouns are formed in Urhobo

S/N	Noun+Noun	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss	Vowel Change
1.	om̩o 'child' + om̩share 'man'	om̩oshare	Boy	em̩om̩share	Boys	o⇒e
2.	oni 'mother' + aye 'wife'	Oniaye	Wife's mother (mother-in-law)	Iniaye	Mother-in-laws	o⇒i
3.	àyè 'woman' + uku 'inheritance'	Ayeuku	Widow	eyauku	Widows	a⇒e
4.	agbada 'bridge' + izobo 'sacrifice'	Agbadaizobo	Alter	egbadaizobo	Alters	a⇒e
5.	ewu 'cloth' + awo 'leg'	Ewuawo	Trousers	iwuawo	Trousers	e⇒i
6.	osu 'leader' + igod̩e 'sheep'	osuigod̩e	Shepherd	isuigod̩e	Shepherds	o⇒i

In the examples above, it is also observed that compound nouns operate both initial and medial vowel change, with few exceptional cases of irregular plural formation.

Using the principle of majority rule, the general pattern of vowel change plural formation process can be described thus:

- a. All nouns that begin with the open central front unrounded vowel /a/ changes initially to /e/,

- b. All nouns that begin with the close-mid front unrounded vowel /e/ changes to /i/, a close unrounded vowel,
- c. All nouns that begin with the close front unrounded vowel /i/ does not change, a process referred to in this work as zero change,
- d. All nouns that begin with the close mid back rounded vowel /o/ changes to /i/ a close front unrounded vowel,
- e. Generally, nouns that begins with the open mid back rounded vowel /ɔ/ changes to /e/, a close-mid front unrounded vowel,
- f. Most nouns that begin with the close mid back rounded vowel /o/ changes to /i/, a close front unrounded vowel, and
- g. All nouns that begin with a close back rounded vowel /u/ changes to /i/, a close front unrounded vowel /u/ changes to /i/, a close front unrounded vowel.

4. Conclusion

This work identifies four plural markers in Ùrhòbò which include: vowel mutation, zero marker, cardinal number and post nominal marker. These markers identified are used to form plurality in Ùrhòbò. Just like other languages, plural markers in Ùrhòbò are used to show or indicate quantity. This work reveals that some plural markers do not change but yet form plurality in Ùrhòbò. For example, zero plural marker. The vowel mutation marker is the commonest process of forming plurality in Ùrhòbò. Plurality is formed in Ùrhòbò only within noun phrases domain and pronouns. In Ùrhòbò, there is no subject-verb agreement manifested in forming plurality. It marks one number quantity as singular and more than one number quantity as plural. For examples: óshàrè 'man' (singular), éshàrè 'men' (plural), ónì 'mother' (singular), ínì 'mothers' (plural) and many others. Plurality as a linguistic concept is an incremental mark of a morphophonemic process which increases a singular quantity to a plural one. Based on the findings, this work claims that plural markers exist in Ùrhòbò. The study proves that the plural morpheme of Urhobo is basically /e/ or /i/ and it is phonologically conditioned by the vowel harmony rule of the language. Thus, all + ATR vowel occupying word initial position in a noun changes to /e/ in their plural form. In describing a small or little quantity, the prefix 'emerha' is used while the process of describing large quantity 'plenty or much, a suffix /buebu/ is used. The essence of plurality in Ùrhòbò is to show that a lexical item can appear more than one. The study encourages further researches on other aspects of Urhobo morphology as this work only looks at an aspect of

inflectional morphology in Urhobo. The result of this study has shown that plural formation of nouns in Urhobo can be described linguistically like every other human language. The survey showed a strong relationship between morphology and phonology in the process of initial vowels change from singular to plural form. This study suggests that the phonemes which replace each other in a corresponding part can be explained to be members of a morphophoneme.

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