A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PLURALISATION IN URHOBO AND ENGLISH

BY

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NOVEMBER, 1999

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me, and that, it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of a bibliography.

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "A Comparative Analysis of Pluralisation in Urhobo and English" by Umukoro I. Newworld, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.) in English Language of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God for His loving kindness, abundant mercies and glorious favour which He bestowed upon me. It is also dedicated to my mother, my motherly sister and my little girl, Francesca Obukohwo Newworld Umukoro, for standing solidly behind and beside me whenever I am down.

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ABSTRACT

English language is an international language while the Urhobo language is a local one that is spoken in a part of Delta State of Nigeria. This thesis aims at a comparison of these two languages, but since nobody can claim a total or an absolute knowledge of a language, the concept of pluralisation is, therefore, chosen for comparison in the two languages.

This research work, "A Comparative Analysis of Pluralisation in Urhobo and English," is basically aimed at determining the possible similarities and dissimilarities in the manifestion of pluralisation in an international language and in a local Nigerian language. The theory of Universal grammar believes that all languages, no matter their composition and disposition, are not only structurally similar but also semantically equitable. This is the reason why this researcher looked at the meaning of the linguistic concept, pluralisation, in both the Urhobo and the English languages.

The concept is well studied, defined and documented in the English language, but the reverse is the case in the Urhobo language. That does not, however, mean the absence of the concept in Urhobo. This is another reason why the researcher looked into the concept in Urhobo to find out

how it is manifested vis-a-vis its realisation in the English language. By so doing, the concept of pluralisation is compared in both languages. This comparison, therefore, created the background and data for the analysis of similarities and dissimilarities of pluralisation in Urhobo and English.

To determine the similarities and dissimilarities of pluralisation in both languages, the researcher adapted the framework of Lado (1963:80). Lado suggestes that for effective comparative study of vocabulary of languages, the vocabulary be broken down into four parts. He assignes names to the four divisions, as follow:

1. Function words: These are words which signify questions, such as 'do', 'how', 'why', 'when', etc.
2. Substitute words: These are words which replace classes of words and several other subclasses, such as 'he', 'she', 'they', etc.
3. Grammatically distributed words: Words that show grammatical restriction in distribution, such as 'some', 'any', 'many', 'few', etc.
4. Content words: This class has the bulk of the vocabulary of every language. These are words which can further be classified into [1] things', 'places', 'people', 'processes', 'qualitiess', etc.

But this resaearcher decided to assign more general names to the grouping above to facilitate his research work. In other words, Lado (1963) was adapted for this analysis. The "function words" were discarded because they were not relevant to this study. The "substitute words", were given the traditional name PRONOUNS; "Grammatically distributed words" were named DETERMINERS; while "Content words", became NOUNS. This was done bearing in mind that pluralisation is a nominal category in the Urhobo and English structures.

After the analysis and comparative discussions on the data collected, the researcher concluded that there are functional and structural similarities in Urhobo and English plural systems, but structural and formal dissimilarities in the plural systems of both languages.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction: 13

2.1.1 The Regular Plural System in English: 32

2.1.2 The Irregular Plural Systems in English: 48

2.1.2a The -en Plural from old and Middle English: 50

2.1.2b The Vowel Mutation: 53

2.1.2c The Zero Structural difference: 55

2.1.2d Nouns in English of Foreign Origin: 57

2.2 Review of Related Literature on Pluralisation in Urhobo: 62

2.2.0 Introduction: 62

2.2.1 Pluralisation in Urhobo: 63

2.2.2 Urhobo oral vowels: 67

2.3 The plural systems in Urhobo: 69

2.3.1 The words that begin with /a/ Sound in Urhobo: 70

2.3.2 The words that begin with /e/ sound in Urhobo: 72

2.3.3 The words that begin with /ẹ/ sound in Urhobo: 74

2.3.4 The words that begin with /i/ sound in Urhobo: 75

2.3.5 The words that begin with /o/ sound in Urhobo: 76

2.3.6 The words that begin with /ọ/ sound in Urhobo: 79

2.3.7 The words that begin with /u/ sound in Urhobo: 81

2.3.8a Some other aspects of Pluralisation in Urhobo: 83

2.3.8b Summary of Pluralisation in Urhobo: 84

2.3.9 Morphophonemic process involved in Urhobo Pluralisation: 85

2.3.10 The basic plurality morph of the Urhobo language identified: 86

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction: 88

3.1 Methods of Data Gathering: 89

3.2 The Research Population: 90

3.3 Sources of Data: 91

3.3.1 The Primary Sources: 92
3.3.2 The Secondary Sources: 93

3.4 Analytical Procedure: 94

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction: 96

4.1 Discussions and Analysis of Pluralisation in English: 96

4.2.0 The English Plural Systems: 100

4.2.1 The Regular Plural Systems: 101
4.2.2 The irregular Plural Systems: 104

4.3 Discussions and Analysis of Pluralisation in Urhobo: 114

4.3.1 The Plural Systems in Urhobo: 120

4.4 A Comparative Analysis: 127

4.4.1 Structural Areas of Manifestation: 128

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

This research work is intended to focus on the use of language to communicate number in Urhobo and English Languages. It is a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English Languages. It will analyse how the Urhobo pluralises and how the English Language does the same. Then, a comparative work of the two plural systems will help us to draw conclusion with regards to similarities and dissimilarities in these Languages.

Language is a human possession. No other animal has been known to talk using language the way man does. Hence the Enclyclopedia Americana (1983:727) defines language as "The faculty and ability possessed by normal human beings and by no other specie, of using a spoken or written

utterances to represent mental phenomena or events". From this definition, it is now obvious that most fundamentally, language is the association of speech sounds with thoughts, concept or images in the mind, and the ability both to produce and interprete such sounds in recurrent patterns. The primary purpose of language, therefore, is to facilitate communication among persons. Natural human language by which man speaks his mind one to another, is the defining case of Language. Among these natural languages which facilitiate communication among native speakers are the Urhobo and the English Languages.

If all natural human Languages have this communicative function to perform, it follows that there is something common or similar about human languages. In spite of the fact that investigative studies have revealed the distinctiveness of individual languages in the world, Joos (1966:96) still contends that "There are numerous and far - reaching ways in which languages are alike". In other words, human languages, in spite of their differences and distinctiveness, are similar. This is also the contention of Universal grammarians.

In the study of language and in determining the similarities and differences of languages, like an open-ended question, several systems, patterns, structures and even conventions are available for investigation and analysis. In view of this fact, this research work intends to concentrate on comparison and analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English.

These two languages are chosen for comparison to discover the inherent distinctive features which will help to draw out the similarities and the dissimilarities which exist in the plural system of these languages.

The English Language is an international language while the Urhobo Language is a local language which is only spoken in restricted areas in Delta State of Nigeria. The derogatory use of terms to describe the status of some languages in the world, has not gone down well with many linguists, hence Halliday (1976:23) declares that:

> ***Linguistic research had demonstrated that there was no such thing as a primitive (inferior) language. All adult speech represented the same highly sophisticated level of linguistic evolution. Similarly, in all uses of language, however, abstract, and however complex, the social structure with which they were associated were to be explained in terms of certain very elementary functions.***

From the foregoing, it has becacome obvious that in spite of the distinctiveness and differences exhibited by human Languages, all human languages, still manifest the same sophistication. This is also the view of this researcher, hence the comparision of an international language and a Local one.

1.1 THE URHOBO PEOPLE, LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS

1.1.1 THE URHOBO PEOPLE

The 1991 population cencus of States by Local Government Areas shows that Delta State has a population figure of 2,570,181, out of which only the native speakers of Urhobo Language number 1,206,127. This is 46% of the total population figure of Delta State.

Delta State has twenty-five Local Government Areas. Out of this number, the Urhobo tribe occupies eleven, namely: Ethiope West, Ethiope East, Okpe, Sapele, Udu, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, Uvwie, Warri Central, Warri North, and Warri South Local Government Areas. (All figures and LGA names are from National Population Commission and the Federal Office of Statistics, Kaduna).

The Urhobo native speakers are bounded in the north by the Yoruba and Bini speaking people of Ondo and Edo States respectively. In the East, they are bounded by the Ukwani, Ibo and the Isoko speaking members of Delta State. It is bounded in the south by the Ijaw speaking tribe of Burutu, Bomadi and Patani Local Government Areas of Delta State while the "Bight of Benin" of the Atlantic Ocean bounded it at the western part.

Therefore, the Urhobo Language occupies a central portion which runs from the Eastern part through to the Western part of the State.
All these facts are shown pictorially in the following political map of Delta State (in appendix A).

1.1.2 THE URHOBO LANGUAGE

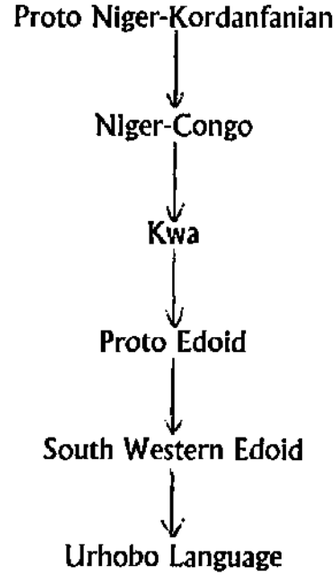
The Urhobo language is spoken widely in Delta State of Nigeria. In short, it is the most popular language in Delta State. Native speakers and their families, can, however, be found in other places but as immigrants to such places.

The language is a branch of the "Edoid" group of languages as suggested by Elugbe in a paper presented by Agheyisi (1982:4-5). She submits that, "More recently, Ben Elugbe, further suggested the use of the term "Edoid" to refer to the group of languages, as a means of resolving the ambiguity arising from the use of the term "Edo". The ambiguity being referred was on the use of the term 'Edo' to refer to both the people of Benin and the Language group.

The term 'Edoid' is, therefore, used to refer to a group of languages which include Bini and other languages that are spoken in and around the Bini language speaking area. These languages include the Esan, the Urhobo, the Isoko and the Degema languages.

Further investigations into the languages of Africa have revealed that the 'Edoid' group of languages with some other Nigerian languages - Yoruba, Igbo, Izon, Efik, etc - belong to another group called the Kwa family of languages. According to Greenberg's (1966) classification of Languages in Africa, the Kwa family also belongs to a higher language family, the Niger Congo, which is a branch of the Proto Niger-Kordofanian Phylum: Armstrong (1967), Gregersen (1977).

Find below, a descent tree of the Urhobo Language from the proto Niger-Kordofanian according to Greenberg's (1966) classification of Languages in Africa (descent arrangement is by this researcher).



The native speakers of most of the Edoid languages are called by the names of the Languages. Thus the native speakers of the Urhobo Language are called

'Urhobos'

1.1.3 THE URHOBO DIALECTS

Most languages, if not all, have variants or dialects and the Urhobo language is not an exception. The language has Twenty-two dialects or variants. According to Okumagba (1979:3), "The Urhobo nation is made up of twenty-two sub-tribes or clans and each has its own dialect of the language". These clans are Abraka, Agbarha-Otor, Agbarho, Agbon, Arhavbarien, Evwreni, Ewu, Idjerhe, Ughelli, Oghara, Ogor, Okpe, Okparebe, Olomu, Orogun, Udu, Ujevben, Uvwie, Evwro-Otor, Uwheru, Agbara and Okere.

It should, however, be noted that the dialectal variations are either tonal or phonological which are not enough to blur mutual intelligibility amongst the users of the language, to a large extent.

Most books in the Urhobo language are written using the Olomu dialect while news broadcasts and traslations in Urhobo language are relayed using the Agbarho dialect. So, for this thesis, the Olomu and the Agbarho dialects shall be used for the analysis of data in Urhobo because these dialects are more mutually understandable across the native speakers.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The universal grammarians believe that features which are present in languages considered to be universal are also present in all other languages in equal manner. The English language is a universal language and pluralisation has been well studied in it. The English uses the plural morpheme /-s/ to pluralise regular plural forms. This plural morpheme may be realised as /-s/, /-z/ or /-iz/. These variants are phonologically conditioned and are in complimentary distribution. Apart from the regular plural morpheme, the English Language also uses many other methods to pluralise the irregular forms: man-men, ox-oxen, child-children, memorandum-memoranda, larva-larvae etc.

On the other hand, pluralisation in the Urhobo Language has not been well studied. But it is a known fact that the Language uses the initial vowel mutation system, the zero plural system and the use of numerals among others to pluralise their singular nouns. Though, the Urhobo Language is a local language and not widely studied, these facts are evident in the few available literature.

Therefore, the major problems which this research work intends to solve in this write up are to answer the following research questions:

- What is pluralisation?
- How is it manifested in the Urhobo language?
- What are the possible similarities and dissimilarities of pluralisation in the Urhobo and in the English languages?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

So much work has been done on pluralisation in English and very little, if at all, has been done on the same subject in Urhobo. Each contributor to the development of these languages, especially, in the area of pluralisation, has done a tremendous job which is worthy of praise. These contributions, adequate and respectable as they are, have not in any way, compared pluralisation in the two languages under discussion. In other words, their foci are quite different from this work.

This research work, therefore, is an attempt at a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English. Apart from the basic objective of determining the similarities and differences of the two languages, it is also aimed as the researcher's contribution to the abundance of related literature on pluralisation in English.

Research materials in this area of linguistic science are not readily available in the Urhobo Language as they are in the English language. This is so because the Urhobo language has not been as widely studied as the English language. So this research work is intended to be a modest contribution of the researcher to the available literature on pluralisation in the Urhobo language in particular.

This work also has the potentials for stimulating further researches in these areas of Linguistic science - The study of African languages and Universal grammar.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As earlier stated, English language is an international language - globally spoken. This language has been well studied by distinguished linguists, and literature is always available for its researches and analysis. On the other hand, the Urhobo language is a local language in Delta State of Nigeria with a population of about 1.2 million native speakers. This language has not been well studied like English. Therefore, the literature for its researches and analysis is not always at the disposal of researchers. This work is, therefore, significant because it is a contribution not only to the literature on pluralisation of English but also to the scant literature on Urhobo language in general for learners and researchers.

The theory of Universal grammar can only be substantiated if languages are compared. It is only through comparison that common features of Language can be detected and examined. This work is a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English. It is important to look at this subject area because it will help us to determine the similarities and dissimilarities that exist in the two languages under review.

Nigerian languages which were erroneously grouped into two - 'major languages' and 'minor languages' - by Williamson (1970), have been regrouped by Agheyisi (1984) and Jibril (1990), as quoted in Bamgbose (1991:3). They re-grouped and named their groupings as 'the major languages', 'the main languages', and the "small group languages". This regrouping became necessary when it was discovered by the named linguists, as explained in Bamgbose (1991:3-4) that, "That some minority languages are more equal than others can be demonstrated by the use of such languages as Edo, Kanuri, Tiv, Efik, Urhobo, Fulfulde, Nupe, Igalla and Izon in the Federal Radio corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) news broadcast."

He also substantiated the inequality of the 'minority languages' further by saying that "with the creation and re-creation of states, languages which were formerly called 'minority languages' have now attained dominant status. This is true of Urhobo in Delta State and Igalla in Kogi State", to mention but a few.

From the above analysis by Bamgbose, it is clear that the Urhobo language which was under the 'Minority' group, has been elevated to the class of 'the main language' because of its expanded functions. It is one of the few Nigerian languages that are used for news broadcasts and translations, and other feature programmes on Radio Nigeria, Ibadan (The Station with a Vision) and Radio Delta, Warri (the best before the rest).

In view of this elevation of the Urhobo language, a study of this nature and magnitude becomes significant to ascertain the closeness of this language to a global language.

1.5 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

No book has been identified to contain all features of a language, as no man can claim a complete knowledge of one. This is the reason why this research work intends to concentrate on a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English languages and to see how these languages manifest this grammatical feature in their usages.

The English language has a well defined plural system. It has two ways of pluralising nouns, namely: the regular and the irregular plural systems.

On the other hand, pluralisation, being a universal phenomenon, is also believed to subsist in the Urhobo language; though, it is not yet well studied.

However, this study is going to be delimited in scope to the comparative study of the regular and irregular plural systems of English and the plural system of the Urhobo language.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concentrated on the review of related literature on pluralisation in English and Urhobo. Since the objective of this study is to compare pluralisation in the English and the Urhobo languages, the focus of this chapter would be the review of expositions of other linguists on pluralisation in both languages.

The chapter would be organised in two sections. They would be as follows:

i. The first section would deal with the review of literature on pluralisation in the English Language.
ii. The second one would handle the review of literature on pluralisation in the Urhobo language.

Therefore, this chapter would be particularly concerned with the following sub-headings:

2.1 Pluralisation in English

2.1.1 The regular plural system in English

2.1.2 The irregular plural system in English

2.2 Review of Related literature on pluralisation in Urhobo

2.2.1 Pluralisation in Urhobo

2.2.2 The Urhobo Oral Vowel

2.2.3 The plural systems in Urhobo.

2.1 PLURALISATION IN ENGLISH

Pluralisation is normally a grammatical category in English within the nominal phrase in the structure of clauses and sentences. It is a morphophonemic process across languages. Pluralisation is a system of number inflection. Number is usually indicated in nouns, pronouns and verbs in the structures of English. Pluralisation marks the difference between 'one' and 'more than one' in English structures.

This is a system that is manifested in the nominal group that forms the subject or object of a sentence, as shown in the following examples:

(i) (a) A boy/one boy jumped over the fence.

(b) Some boys/Two boys jumped over the fence.

(ii) (a) The boy is fond of jumping over fences.

(b) Some boys are fond of jumping over fences.

It would also be manifested in the verb, as shown in the following examples:

(i) (a) The boy is a student of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

(b) The boys are students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

(ii) (a) The boy has done his assignment.

(b) The boys have done their assignment.

(iii) (a) The boy does his assignments every day.

(b) The boys do their assignments every day

(iv) (a) The boy walks to school every day

(b) The boys walk to school every day.

From the above examples, it is obvious that pluralisation in English is not only marked in the nominal phrase that acts as the subject or object of a sentence but it is also manifested in the verb when the third person is used in the present tense.

Pluralisation, therefore, is the indication of plural number in a grammatical structure of English which shows that the subject or object of the structure is singular, that is, 'one' or plural, that is, 'more than one'.

Hornby (1995:889) makes it clearer when he says that, "plural is a form of a noun or verb which refers to more than one person or thing". In other words, it is an indicator which is manifested not only in the noun but also in the verb and used to show the grammatical number which is 'more than one'. The view of Hornby (1995) is also supported by several linguists who have dealt with this topic in English sentences.

Plural is usually indicated by inflecting the nouns or pronouns which automatically affect the following verb in the present tense. It tells us, therefore, that, it is the use of a noun that its number is more than one in a sentence.

This is also the view of Sledd (1959:70) when he says "the distinction between singular and plural numbers marks the difference between one and more than one" in a sentence. So, he sees singular and plural numbers as distinctive features of English which mark the use of one number and more than one number. To him, plural also means more than one.

In his own analysis of plural, Tomori (1979:27) cites examples of words like `oxen', 'children', 'memoranda', `larvae', 'hats', 'hoes', and 'churches'. He said that the morpheme /en/ in oxen, /-ren/ in children, /-a/ in memoranda, /ae/ in larvae, /-s/ in hats, /-z/ in hoes and /-iz/ in churches, have a common semantic distinctiveness. He further explains that they are all different in phonemic forms and that the differences, in the first four, cannot be phonologically defined, but that the differences are in complementary distribution, in the sense that, where one form occurs, the other form cannot. He also explains that all the forms listed above, take the plural forms of the verbs after them in English utterances. For example:

(i) The oxen <u>are</u> grazing in the field.

(ii) The children do their assignments always.

(iii) The memoranda have been sent.

He further declares that "the various words are plural forms of English nouns. The common semantic distinctiveness that they all exhibit is that of "more than one". Tomori (1979:27) believes also that plural is a mark of 'more than one' number which is reflected not only on the nominal phrase in subject position but also on the following verb in English utterances.

Most plural noun forms can be seen through the manners in which such nouns select their verbs when they function as subjects. The selection of verb, that is, the subject/verb agreement or concord of the subject and the following verb is the angle through which Aliyu (1996:153) looks at pluralisation when he says that "the traditional method of identifying plural forms is to assume that a noun is singular when it means one of the items and plural when it stands for more than one". He also explains that it is not just the structure of the word that can be judged to identify a singular noun or a plural one. The following verb has to be judged too, because there are times when the spelling of English words can be misleading, for instance, in the following sentences, the subjects sound like plurals, but the verbs tell us otherwise:

(i) Measles is a common disease in Africa

(ii) Linguistics is the scientific study of language.

(iii) Statistics is not popular among many students.

In spite of the fact that the subjects appear structurally like plural nouns, the following verbs tell us that they are singular nouns. However, Aliyu's contenti too is that plural indicates 'more than one' item in a grammatical structure of English.

Pluralisation is a morphological process in the noun phrase of a clause. This is contention of Adive (1989:101) when he says "pluralization is normally a grammatical category within the nominal phrase in the structure of the clause sentence". True, as this statement may be, the fact still remains that pluralizat is not only marked in the nominal phrase of the clause or sentence but also in verb of the clause, especially, if the clause is in the present tense. His submiss however, agrees with those of other linguists when he backed it up with the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
A person	People
A woman	Women
A man	Men
A visitor	Visitors
A child	Children

A wife Wives

In the above arrangement, all the nouns that appear under singular are single items (one) while those under plural indicate more than one. He is, therefore, saying that plurailisation is a morphological process in the noun phrase which denotes more than one indivudual in the noun phrase.

English plural systems do not affect adjectives and particles. Numbers could be used as signifier of singular or plural in a sentence structure but this can only affect the noun phrase (subject) and the following verb in the sentence or clause. Jesperson (1974:198) says:

> ***We have grammatical expressions of number in most substantives, in some pronouns and some verbal forms but neither in adjectives nor in particles. While some languages distinguish a singular (for one), a dual (for two) sometimes even a trial (for three)- and a plural, English like most of the cognate languages, has now only a singular and a plural. The only remainder of a dual in English is "both".***

Further, Jesperson explaines that plural can only be manifested in nouns, pronouns and verb forms in English utterances. He also explained that the English language, unlike some other languages which have different expressions for one (singular), two (dual) and three (trial) items, has grammatical markers for 'one' (singular) and 'more than one' (plural), except 'both' which is used for 'two entities'. English can, therefore, only distinguish between singular (for one) and plural (for more than one). In other words, he believes that English singular

means `one' and plural means `more than one'. This feature can be manifested in the substantives (nouns), pronouns and verbal forms in a sentence or clause.

Leech and Svartvik (1986:252) are also in support of the fact that plurality can only be marked in nouns, pronouns and verbs. They also believe that plural is indicative of more than one entity in a structure when they state:

> *In English, number is a feature of nouns, demonstratives, personal pronouns and verbs. Nouns have singular and plural number and verbs in the third person vary for singular and plural agreement with the subject noun .... The only nouns which normally occur in the plural are Plural count nouns, that is, nouns denoting 'more than one', eg. two boys, the tables, these ideas etc.*

These distinguished linguists have helped to further substantiate the idea that English plural system marks more than one element in a sentence, and that plural is usually expressed through nouns, pronouns and verbs. The idea of subject/verb agreement was also discussed in their analysis. They postulate that a plural subject must take a plural verb and a singular subject must also march with a singular verb in third person and in the present tense.

In his analysis, Roberts (1964:32) states:

> *In English, singular and plural number is still indicated by forms in nouns , pronouns and verbs.... Number inflections are much reduced in the modern English verbs;except for the verbs 'to be', we have a distinction only in the third person, present tense of the indicative: 'He weeps' but `they weep'.*

Robert (1964) believes, like other linguists that, plural number can only be marked in the nouns, pronouns and verbs. He, however, added that apart from the nouns, pronouns and verbs which are usually marked for plurality in modern English, old English used to mark other elements in a sentence. He further explained that apart from indicative verbs which are marked in the present when they are used with the third persons, other verbs that are also marked to indicate plural number are that verbs 'to be'. His conclusion was also that plural number indicates 'more than one'.

Some linguists look at singular and plural numbers from the angle of form and meaning.They then argue that there is no one-to-one correspondence between singular and plural numbers in forms.Palmer (1979:34-35) is one of such linguists. Though, he believes in the traditional definitions of singular and plural numbers, he still argues that "We can not, however,say in all seriousness that 'oats' are plural (i.e, more than one),while 'wheat' is singular (one), in construction like : the oats are....., and the wheat is....., though, these are the traditional definitions of singular and plural". In his submission , Palmer (1979:34 - 35) believes that singular means 'one', but the fact still remains that some nouns that end with -s, as we have in news, linguistics, physics and so forth, are still singular. He further postulates that it "is only right to assume that `oats' is gramatically plural and `wheat' is gramatically singular". But, that, if the

speakers of English insist that the English think of oats as plural and of wheat as singular, "Then, there is no clear one-to-one relation between the grammatical categories of singular and plural, and counting in terms of 'one' and 'more than one". In spite of his argument for the close relationship between singular and plural, he still contends that, "the English say, one dog, but five dogs, forty dogs etc, using the plural, 'dogs', with all the plural numerals", Palmer (1979:22).

On a general note, Palmer believes that singular means'one' and plural means 'more than one' semantically but structurally (form), the demarcation between the two cannot be clearly expained.

There are some writers who believe that since pluralisation is a universal phenomenon, the definition could be taken for granted. One of such linguists is Crew (1987: 403-408). He takes the definition of singular and plural numbers for granted and omits them but proceeds to discuss rules on how plural could be formed in English. For example, his opening statement reads,"Form the plural of most nouns in English by adding-s or es to the singular", and went ahead to supply the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Class	Classes
Shoe	Shoes

House	Houses
Summons	Sommonses
Watz	Watzes

From the interpretation of the rules which are put forward by this linguist, it is obvious to observe that he is one of the postulators of the traditional definitions of singular and plural; 'one' and ` more than one' respectively.

Another linguist who talks about how to over-come pluralisation problems without explicity explaining what it is, is Forest (1984: 128-129). In his work on pluralisation, he draws our attention to the problems of some irregular plurals and shows us how to pluralise them. He says, "certain irregular plurals should be noted", and supplies the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Analysis	Analyses
Basis	Bases
Crisis	Crises
Oasis	Oases

He also discussed the issue of singular nouns that end their spellings with o, and shows how to pluralise them when he states that "words ending in- o, are a source of difficulty. Some form their plurals by simply adding- s, for examples:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Piano	Pianos
Solo	Solos
Dynamo	Dynamos
Radio	Radios

Others take the plural ending -oes, examples:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Cargo	Cargoes
Echo	Echoes
Hero	Heroes
Molquito	Mosquitoes
Volcano	Volcanoes

This philologist did not openly tell us the demarcation between the singular and the plural numbers. Even what they stand for is not mentioned. But from his illustration, it is very clear that his singular list consists of singular (individual) items while his plural one consists of plural (more than one) items.

Corder (1982:231) deals with the regular plurality morpheme and some demonstratives which signify plurals. He says "English marks plural nouns with -s or -es with only a few exceptions". This submission is wholly in consonance with

the ideas of Forest (1984) when he gives us a list of words that end with -o and also explains how they are pluralised. Apart from Forest's lists, many English singular nouns are usually pluralised by simply adding the plural morpheme, s, as a suffix to the singular noun-stem. Corder, this researcher believes, means this when he explains how English pluralises regular nouns and supplied the following examples: boy-boys, church-churches.

Corder (1982:231) also discusses the issue of some determiners which signify plurality in English noun phrases when he writes "in English, there is a series of determiners which unequuivocally signal a singular noun phrase - a, one, this, that, each, another; whilst some are ambiguous - the, some, my, your, other, any, etc. Only 'these' and 'those' are markers of plurality". In other words, his analysis shows that when some determiners precede a noun, the quantity of the noun can be determined even before the noun is heard or seen. In a series like the following, one does not wait to hear or see the noun before one concludes that the determiners precede singular nouns. They always qualify singular nouns, for example:

A Mango

One Mango

This Mango

That Mango

Each Mango

Once the determiner is mentioned, you may not listen further to know the number of the following nouns, being singular, that is marking a singular noun. That is how it is also when one hears:

These Mangoes

Those Mangoes

What Corder (1982:231) is explaining is that the number of a noun is not only determined or marked on the noun, pronoun or verb alone, but also by the determiner that precede the noun. His analysis is wholly in consonance with the traditional idea that plural means "more than one".

In his work, Cook (1988:36-37) treats pluralisation under verbal agreement in a sentence. He says, "A sentence can be either singular or plural in number, "The boy falls over the step" versus "The boys fall over the step". This aspect of the sentence, traditionally called 'number' is an abstract feature called agreement that indicates whether singular or plural is required". In other words, the subject of the sentence which is the manifestor of singular or plural number must be in agreement with the verb that it takes. This is the only reason why 'The boy' (singular subject) agrees with 'falls' in the above sentence, while "The boys" agrees with the verb `fall'.

It is, therefore, the number of the subject which governs the verb that follows, if the structure is in the present tense. This is why he also talks of government in the elements of English sentences when he writes," A more particular use of government is to deal with the agreement between elements in the sentence; in English, the verb agrees with the subject in number:
"He smokes a cigar", but "They smoke pipe", (Corder 1983:154).

Cook (1988), agrees wholly with the traditional idea of plural. He believes that singular means 'one' while plural means 'more than one'. From his analysis of subject/verb agreement, it is this idea that he had at the back of his mind when he submits that the subject, which is always either singular or plural, must determine the verb it takes. The plural number subject must be followed (in the present tense) by a verb without the -s ending, but the singular number subject must be followed by a verb with the -s ending, so subject/verb agreement is an off-spring of the knowledge of singular and plural numbers.

The subject and verb agreement in English sentences is a very popular topic in the study of English. The number system is another popular area in English linguistic studies. Agreement and number cannot be wholly studied divorced of singular and plural systems. Quirk et al (1974:165 and 1986:297), treat the topic

under the number system. They write:

> ***The English number system constitutes a two term contrast: singular, which denotes 'one' and plural, which denotes 'more than one'. There is number agreement between subjects and finite verbs, i.e. a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb:***
>
> ***The bird is flying***
>
> ***The birds are flying***

Quirk and his team of linguists completely agree that singular number denotes an entity while plural entails 'more than one' entity in a sentence. They went further to explain that the subject selects the verb. In other words, the number of the subject determines the verb to be used. Plural subjects take plural verbs, that is the verbs end without -s, but singular subjects take sigular verbs, that is the verbs end with -s in the present tense if the third person is used. Hence we have structures like:

The bird flies

but

The birds fly.

So, Quirk et al (1974 and 1986) are among the traditionalist who postulate that singular means 'one' and plural means 'more than one' in English utterances.

Murphy (1987:156) discusses the difference between singular and plural. He treated nouns which are always plural, the use of 'person' and 'persons', and talked about some words which end with -s but which are not plurals. His ideas

are in consonance with those of Aliyu (1996), Stageberg (1981) etc when he writes:

(a) We use some nouns only in the plural. For example: trousers, jeans, shorts, pyjamas, scissors etc. You can also use "a pair of....." with these words to signify whether singular or plural.

(b) We do not often use the plural of 'person' (persons). Instead we use people. For example; he is a nice person, but, they are nice people.

(c) These nouns end in -s but they are not usually plural: Mathematics, Physics, Economics, Athletics, Gymnastics, News etc. For example:

(i) Athletics is my favourite sport

(ii) Physics is a difficult subject to many students.

His ideas and analysis of singular and plural also show that he believes also that singular means one because it takes the singular verb, 'is', while plural denotes 'more than one'.

Stageberg (1981:132-136) argues seriously against using meaning and form to determine what is singular and what is plural. He writes:

> *A noun is singular if it means one and plural if it means more than one. But meaning does not always work as a test of numbers. Take for instance this sentence: I like your hair. Is 'hair' singular or plural...? Neither will form always do, since nouns ending in -s seems to be singular e.g. physics, and others without -s plural seem to be plural, e.g. several salmon.*

His argument is simply that we cannot use meaning and form alone to determine a noun that is singular or plural. So, he went ahead to suggest three ways to determine singular and plural:

(i) A noun is singular if it can take one of those substitutes: he/him, she/her, it, this, that. It is plural, if it can take a sustitute like they/them, these or those.

(ii) The number of a noun may be pointed out by a modifiers like several, many, this, that, these, those, fifteen etc.

(iii) When a noun functions as subject of a verb, its number is sometimes shown by the form of the verb.

In his argument, if the noun can be substituted or modified by the elements in (i) and (ii) above, and the utterance still remains grammatical, then the number of the noun can be determined, otherwise, the verb will show the number of the noun.

Gregersen (1977:60-62); Greenberg (1978:93-95); Allerton (1979); Reid (1991); Burton Roberts (1995:52-53) etc are reknowned linguists who also believe in the traditional definition of pluralisation in English. They explain that plural in the English Language, means more than one item in a clause or sentence.

The discussions above have shown how much have been said and written on pluralisation in the English language. At this stage of the review of related literature, this researcher wants to believe that pluralisation is a morphophemic process that is manifested on the noun phrase which acts as the subject or object of a sentence. It is a grammatical category that is marked on the noun phrase of an English utterance. Pluralisation is a system of number in English. Therefore, the number system cannot be treated divorced of singular and plural. The system of plural is basically manifested in the subject noun phrase or pronoun which evenutally affects the verb if the sentence is in the present tense. In other words, the plural system affects not only the noun or the pronoun, but also the verb of the clause or sentence.

There is a general concession that the English number system constitutes a two term contrast: singular and plural. This is so because the terms used for 'dual' and 'trial' in the old English have been phased out, except 'both' which still signals two (a daul marker). So, the old English four-term contrast: singular (for one), dual ((for two), trial (for three) and plural (for more and three), has been re-dressed and reduced to a two-term number contrast in modern English, hence we have only singular number (for one) and plural number (for more than one), that is, singular denotes 'one' (person, place or thing) while plural means 'more than one' (person, place or thing) in English clauses and sentences.

In the next two sub-sections, we are going to concentrate on what linguists say about the systems of English plural. Basically, there are two plural systems in the English language: the regular and irregular plural systems. These are going to be examined separately in the next two sub-sections with foci on what other linguists say about them, that is, examination of related literature on pluralisation systems of English.

2.1.1 THE REGULAR PLURAL SYSTEM IN ENGLISH

Most nouns in English are variable nouns. They are nouns which can take two distinctive forms of singular and plural. In other words, most nouns in English can be made plural by simply adding the plurality morpheme, -s, to the singular noun form.

The plurality morpheme has both a meaning (more than one) and a function (subject or object of a verb). Hence, a morpheme is defined in the Language Files (1979 number 50), as "the minimal linguistic unit which has a meaning or a grammatical function"

The plurality morpheme of English is the suffix, -s, which is added at the end of a singular noun form to produce another meaningful unit, plural. Orthographically, the plurality morpheme, that is the suffix -s, looks like the letter, s, but phonologically, it is realised differently in different contexts. This is the basic

assumption or belief of this researcher, hence the scope of this write up falls under morphology and phonology.

Morphology is the study of the minimal units of meaning, called morphemes, in a language while phonology is the systematic study of speech sounds, that is the study of the minimal units of speech sounds, called phonemes, in a language. The inter-play between morphology and phonology is what linguists call morphophonology or morphophonemics. In other words, it is the rule that governs the actualisation of the various pronunciation of a particular morpheme that is called morphophonemics. So, it is this process or rule that determines the variants of the plurality morpheme to be used with any particular word. Fromkin and Rodman (1974:155) have this to say about morphophonemic rule, "The rule that determines the phonetic form of the plural morpheme is a rule which has traditionally been called a morphophonemic rule, in that, its application is determined by both the morphology and the phonology... A single morpheme may have different realisations".

It is obvious from the fore-going that the systems of pluralisation in English are basically under the morphophonemic processes and that the plurality morpheme which has been identified as the suffix -s, is not only realized as -s but also in some other forms and sounds.

The plurality morpheme can be realized in different forms and sounds and the forms are called allomorphs of the plurality morpheme. Herdon (1976:93) defines allomorphs as "the member morphs of a morpheme. They may or may not be similar in sound, but they do show a pattern of complementary distribution among other morphs". Wardhaugh (1977: 78) is also in support of Herdon (1976:93) when he writes, "the various allomorphs of a morpheme occur in complementary distribution with each other or simply put, they are morphemic alternants". It is understandable from the above discussions therefore, that allomorphs are the member morphs of a morpheme and that the allomorphs are always in complimentary distribution because where one of the allomorphs occurs, the others cannot.

The regular plural system of English, therefore, has only the plurality morpheme, -s, which is added in its various alternants to singular noun forms to produce plural units. The plurality morpheme of the regular English plural system has three morphemic alternants or allomorphs which are phonologically conditioned and are in complementary distribution. The allomorphs of the plurality morpheme are: /-s/, /-z/ and /-iz/.

Different linguists identify with the above variants. Gregersen (1977:22) identifies the three allomorphs when he writes, "The English morpheme indicating 'plural' has a variety of shapes: z in 'bakers', s in 'books '; es in 'watches'...". In

his submission, the singular nouns: 'baker', 'book' and 'watch' are simply made plural by the addition of the plurality morpheme, which, of course, is realized differently in the three words. They are actualized as bakers /-z/, books /-s/ and watches /-iz/.

In the works of Quirk et al (1974:304 and 1986), they identify regular plurals as variable nouns that can have two forms: singular and plural. The regular plurals, according to them, have "three different pronunciations, /-iz/, /-z/ and /-s/, depending on the final sound of the base; examples:

(i) /-iz/ after bases ending in sibilants:

/s/ as in horse - horses; box-boxes

/z/ as in size - sizes; prize - prizes

sh /S/ as in rush-rushes; bush-bushes

ch /tS/ as in church - churces; bunch - bunches

/ / as in mirage - mirages; marriage - marriages

/d / as in language - languages; judge - judges.

(ii) /z/ after bases ending in vowels and voiced consonants other than sibilants:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Day	Days
Boy	Boys

Bed	Beds
Bag	Bags.

(iii) /s/ after bases ending in voiceless consonants other than sibilants:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Bet	Bets
Month	Months

From the analysis of regular plural morpheme of English, it is obvious that Quirk and his group are in consonance with the ideas of Gregersen (1977) as to what regular plural is in English. These linguists also suggest contexts for the individual usage of the three allomorphs of the plurality morpheme of the regular plural system. These reasons have been tested by this researcher and found acceptable in English utterances as explained below. Quirk el al (1974 & 1986) agree with the traditional three allomorphs of the regular English plural system and suggest that / -iz/ occurs after sibilants, /-z/ after vowels and voiced consonants (but not after voiced hissing sounds) and /-s/ after voiceless consonants but not after voiceless hissing sounds.

These linguists however identify some exceptions to the above rules. It is a general knowledge that there is no rule without an exception theoretically. But because of the scope and the delimitation of this research work, the exception to the general rules of regular plural system in English would be left

out of this work.

In written English, we form the regular plural by adding -s or -es to the singular noun forms, often with no other changes, for example:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Ship	Ships
Tree	Trees
Lane	Lanes
Book	Books
Edge	Edges
Card	Cards
Stitch	Stitches
Wish	Wishes
Church	Churches
Potato	Potatoes

However, most words ending in -y, preceded by a consonant sound, change the y to i before adding -es; examples:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Lady	Ladies
Baby	Babies

Party	Parties
Lorry	Lorries
Fly	Flies
Flurry	Flurries

But when the y is preceded by a vowel sound, the change does not occur as shown in the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Boy	Boys
Foray	Forays
Day	Days
Toy	Toys

If a word ends in -f, preceded by l or a long vowel, the-f, sometimes, changes to -v before adding -es, which is the plural morpheme, as in the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Calf	Calves
Half	Halves
Thief	Thieves
Loaf	Loaves
Knife	Knives

But as a result of the tendency for regularizing all plural forms, some words ending in - f preceded by long vowels retain the f in their plural forms; examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Grief	Griefs
Strife	Strifes
Belief	Beliefs
Goof	Goofs

When spoken English was considered, it was discovered that the -s morpheme is realized differently. The realization of the spoken -s plural morpheme as discussed above is in consonance with the ideas of Roberts (1964:33 - 34) when he writes:

> *Aside from consonant changes, there are three varieties of the -s plural in spoken English :an s sound, a z sound and iz sound:*
>
/s/	*/z/*	*/iz/*
rats	*pads*	*churches*
caps	*cabs*	*boxes*
picks	*pigs*	*misses*
cliffs	*hives*	*hedges*
books	*tomatoes*	*smashes*

> *The sound, iz, is added after hissing sounds (ch,x,s,z,dg,sh); s is added after voiceless consonants other than hissing sounds (p,t,k,f), and z is added after vowels and voiced consonants (b,d,g,v,o etc.).*

Roberts has written this long before most of the other linguists saw the need to contribute to the study of English plural systems. He believes that, in spoken English, the plural morpheme which is marked with -s or -es orthographically, changes to either s, z or iz after voiceless consonants other than sibilants, after

voiced non-sibilants consonants and vowels, and after sibilants and affricates respectively.

Roberts (1964) also discusses the issue of the written and the spoken plural morpheme. He believes that there is a disagreement between the written and the spoken categories. In writing, we add -es to the following words, although the only sound added in speech is z: tomatoes, flies vetoes, ladies etc; but in the following, the spoken English adds -iz, though, we added only -s: edges, poses, ruses etc. His arguments and suggestions are quite valid. When the written forms of the regular system was considered, it was discovered that the morpheme takes -s or -es, which, of course, is realized in three allomorphs that are the member -morphs of the regular plural morpheme in English.

Leech and Svartvik (1986:252) also talk about the issue of the regular plural system. But in their contribution, they only mentioned the marks which signify the written forms of the plurality morpheme. They say, "the regular plural is formed by adding -s or -es to the singular". To these linguists, the morphophonemic realization is not important because there are some nouns which end in -s but which are singular. To them, therefore, the regular is simply the addition of -s or -es to a singular form in order to produce a plural one.

In discussing the regular plural, Stageberg (1981:30) attributes the occurrence of s, z and iz, after particular sounds, to the theory of voice assimilation. He writes, "voice assimilation plays a role in the formation of English s plurals. In spelling, the s plural consists of the addition of an 's' or 'es' to a singular form of the noun. But in the spoken language, there are three s plurals". He also defined the voice assimilation as, "the phonetic process by which one speech sound comes to resembles or become identical with a neighbouring sound between words or within a word". His contention is that, since in spelling, we have the s plural as either -s or -es, but in the spoken language, we have it as s, z or iz, the only reason that can account for it is the voice assimilation that makes one sound sounds like the surrounding sounds. This is why /s/ which is a voiceless fricative sound follows voiceless consonants which are non-sibilants; /z/, which is voiced, follows voiced consonants which are non-sibilants and vocalic sounds while /iz/, which are also voiced and involve some hissing elements, are also used to pluralize words that end with hissing (or sibilants) sounds.

Allerton (1970:217-218) also agrees with the three allomorphic realization of the plurality morpheme but argues that they are not simply cases of "phonologically conditioned allomorphs". He suggested that the English plurality morpheme is /-z/ instead of traditional /-s/ plural morpheme when he said that "the English regular noun plural ... which we should term /-z/". After this

suggestion, he discusses how the variants or allomorphs of his plurality morpheme of English can be realized. He suggested, like Quirt et al (1974) that:

(I) /-iz/ occurs after sibilants and affricates

(viz. /s, z , , t , d .) e.g. horses.

(II) /-s/ appears after other voiceless consonants e.g. cats

(iii) /-z/ in all other cases, e.g. after all other voiced sounds e.g. dogs.

He argues for the voice assimilation when he said that for each morpheme, one allomorph must occur whenever it gives a sequence that accords with English phonology. He also illustrated that /-z/ would be impossible in the contexts where /-iz/ and /-s/ occur. He therefore concludes by saying:

> ***That /-z/ is the preferred, basic or underlying form of the morpheme, and that the other allomorphs are quite automatic phonological variants, /-s/ occurring to ensure that consonant clusters are if not all voiced, then all voiceless, and /-iz/ occurring to prevent a sequence of two sibilant consonants. Everything is thus phonologically predictable... (Allerton (1979:217)).***

Allerton wholly agrees with the existence of the morphemic variants. Though, he suggests /-z/ as the preferred, the basic or the underlying form of the morpheme, his analogy is not quite different from those of the other linguists that we have considered so far. He speaks for the voice assimilation of the allomorphs and what we would call here as morphemic harmony. If his analysis is critically followed, the use of the allomorphs with various words, would actually become

phonologically predictable.

In the discussion of English regular plural system, Crew (1987:402-408) examines it from the angle of the written language. He explains that in the formation of plurals of most nouns in English, simply add -s or -es to the singular forms. He did not mention the oral realization of the morpheme at all in his discussions but the examples he cited afford us the opportunity to assume that the three English regular plural allomorphs also exist in his analysis. His examples include the following:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Class	Classes: /-s/
House	Houses: /-iz/
Shoe	Shoes: /-z/
Summons	Summonses: /-iz/
Watz	Watzes: /-iz/

He also explained that "to make a name plural, add -s or -es without an apostrophe:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Smith	The Smiths
Kennedy	The Kennedys

Helen	Both Helens
Goodman	The Goodmans
Carolina	Two Carolinas.

In addition, he says "when a name ends in -ch, -s, -sh, -x, -z etc add -es to make it plural". This goes to support the assertions of Allerton (1979:217-218) about the plurality allomorphs of singular noun forms that end in sibilants and affricates. Crew's (1987) examples are:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Burch	The Burches
Weiss	The Weisses
Cash	The Cashes
Fox	The Foxes
Perez	The Perezes
Judge	The Judges

Apart from the above, he also discusses the issue of words that end with -ful when he writes "form the plural of a noun ending in -ful by adding -s to the end". He supplies the following examples to back up his explanation:

SINGLUAR	**PLURAL**
Cupful	Cupfuls
Spoonful	Spoonfuls

Shovelful Shovelfuls

From the analysis and the examples cited above, it is obvious that, orthographically, the plurality morpheme of the English regular plural system is either -s or -es. But this is manifested and realized as /-s/, /-z/ or /iz/ phonetically.

Jespersen (1974:198-200) did not say anything different from what has been said earlier by other linguists when he says that, "The regular way of forming the plural is adding the -s ending with its three fold pronunciations:

/-iz/ after sibilants (hissing sounds); z,s ,z: noses, horses, foxes, bridges, dishes, churches etc.
/-z/ after voiced non-sibilant sounds: bees, boys ladies, flowers, cabs, Kings, lambs, doves etc.
/-s/ after voiceless non-sibilant sounds: caps, links, hats, lamps, cliffs etc.

From the above analysis, we can assume that he believes that the plurality morpheme is the s ending which is added to singular noun forms to produce plural noun forms. He also believes in the existence of the three allomorphs which make up the plurality morpheme in English regular plural system.

Jespersen (1974:198-200) also explaines how some regular plurals are formed in English. He said that a mute e is usually inserted between o and s in all 'familiar' singular words that end in o, in order to produce plural forms: heroes, potatoes, mosquitoes, tomatoes etc. But foreign (or borrowed and curtained words, have no mute e before the s - ending: albinos, ghettos, solos, photos, pianos etc. Also, if there is a vowel before the o - ending, there is no mute e

before the s-ending: folios, videos etc.

He also writes that after a consonant, - y changes to -i before -es is added to make the word plural: babies, ladies, flies etc. But after a written vowel, -y is retained: days, boys, bays etc. In proper noun, final -y is also retained: Dollys, Henrys, Pollys.

He also discussed some noun forms that end with -f, -fe and -s in the singular forms but change same to -ves and -z in their plural forms when Jespeson (1974:198-200) writes that, "some words have a voiceless consonant in the singular and the corresponding voiced sound in the plural". His examples are:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Thief	Thieves
Wife	Wives
Shelf	Shelves
-Self	-selves
Life	Lives
House/haus/	Houses/hauziz/

He also posits that there are lots of other words, however, that retain their

final -f before the plural morpheme is added. For example:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Cliff	Cliffs
Cuff	Cuffs
Roof	Roofs
Dwarf	Dwarfs
Sheriff	Sheriffs

Jespersen's (1974:198-200) arguments and explanations were proferred towards proving that the English regular plural system consists of the addition of -s or -es to a singular form orthographically. This plurality morpheme is then realized in its three fold morphophonemic variants. In other words, the English regular plural morpheme is -s (or -es) which is added to a singular noun form in order to produce a plural one. But the oral realization is not one like the graphic one. The phonetic actualization of the morpheme is either /-z/ after sibilant and affricative sounds, /-z/ after voiced non-sibilant consonants and vocalic sounds or /-s/ after voiceless non-sisbilants consonants.

We want to conclude this sub-section by saying that the regular plurality morpheme of English has a meaning, that is, more than one (person, thing or place) and it usually functions as the subject or object of a verb in a sentence. This morpheme is a morphological category, but because of its different

realizations, phonological elements creep into its manifestation. Hence the rule which governs the different articulation of the same morpheme is called a morphophonemic rule. This rule explains why we realize the plurality morpheme, -s, as either -s, -z or -iz orally.

In the graphic form, the regular plurality morpheme which is added to singular form in order to produce a plural quantity is either -s or -es. But this is not the case in the spoken English. The phonetic realizations of these morphemes are, /-s/ after voiceless non-sibilants, /-z/ after voiced non-sibilants, and vowel sounds and /-iz/ after sibilants and affricates.

These sounds are phonologically conditioned. Put in another way, there is voice harmony between the preceding sound and the following plurality allomorph. So linguists call it voice assimilation. It is also a clear case that the allomorphs are in complementary distribution, i.e. where one allomorph occurs, the other cannot. This is the only reason why Allerton (1979:217-218) concludes that the occurrence of the regular plurality allmorphs are phonologically predictable.

2.1.2 THE IRREGULAR PLURAL SYSTEMS IN ENGLISH

English language has two basic system of pluralisation: the regular and the irregular systems. In the last section, the regular system was, to a large extent, examined as the contributions of several linguists were reviewed. In this

section, therefore, we are going to look at the discussions of other linguists on the irregular plural system in English.

It is a known fact that the plural morpheme of English is the -s plural maker, but which is manifested in several other forms and sounds that are quite different from the -s sound. In the last section, we were able to find out that in writing the additive element -s or -es is added to a singular noun form to produce plural ones. This element is then realised as -s, -z or -iz in its spoken manifestation. But in English, not all nouns can be pluralised with the -s, -z or -iz allomorphs of the plural morpheme. Therefore, the other English or borrowed nouns which can be pluralised but not with the regular plural allomorphs are called the irregular nouns and their process of pluralisation is called the irregular plural system in English.

The plural morpheme takes different forms. Though these forms, including the irregular plural forms, have a common semantic distinctiveness, that is, meaning, their forms may differ from one to the other. It is not possible, therefore, to phonologically account for their distribution. However, the different forms are in complementary distribution, that is, where one form occurs, the other cannot. Tomori (1979:26-27) says that the irregular plural system takes different "forms which have a common semantic distinctiveness but differ in phonemic form in such a way that their distribution cannot be phonologically defined." In other words, irregular plural systems are, by definition, unpredictable. Whereas

the regular plural allomorphs are predictable with the final sound in the singular base, there is no indication in the written or spoken form of, for example, 'ox', 'sheep' and 'analysis' to suggest that their plurals are 'oxen'. sheep' and 'analyses' respectively. The plural of irregular nouns has to be learned as individual lexical units.

This researcher intends to break this plural system into four sub-sections for a more thorough examination of the processes involved in the irregular plural system. These sub-sections will be:

i. The -en plural from old and middle English.

ii. The vowel mutation or the overt structural difference in structural series.

iii. The zero structural difference and

iv. Nouns in English of Foreign origin.

2.1.2a THE -EN PLURAL FROM OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

"There are three noun forms that still retain -en plural: oxen, children and brethren. But the last two have in addition a replacive stem vowel, a suffixal -r". Stageberg (1981:134). He points out that apart from the regular -s plural, the English language still uses -en as an allomorph of the plurality morpheme. He, however, cautioned that the cases of 'children' and 'brethren' are more than just the additive -en suffixation. The stem vowel of the

singular nouns have also been changed from 'child' /tʃaild/ to child - / tʃild / +r, that is, /ai/ mutates to /i/ and 'brother' /brʌð/ to brethren/breðren/, that is, /ʌ/ changes to /e/, +r (the plural marker of old English for child) to form the first plural, before the addition of the -en (another plural marking). So, this is a case of double plural in English. But in Ox, it takes the -en directly without any other modification.

Roberts (1964:34-36) also says:

> ***In old and middle English, many nouns formed the plural by adding -n, ..., Today, however, only one simple -n plural remains: Ox, Oxen. But before -n became inactive, it affected two other nouns: children and brethern. These words were already plural (i.e. by the change of the stem vowel of the first syllable) before the -n was added. So, they now have two plurals.***

From his dicussion, it is clear that this allomorph of the plural morpheme was brought from old and middle English. But before its extinction, it had already affected two other nouns in English. He also says 'child' in old English has a plural in -r. He illustrated this when he states "one still hears the plural 'childer' in some dialects' of English", (Roberts 1964: 36). He concluded by saying that 'brethren' indicated the plural in its first vowel. The double plural is also recognised by Roberts here. This is a case of redundancy in the English plural systems; pluralising what has already been made plural.

Jespersen (1974:200) also discusses the issue of -en plural and concludes that 'the old form 'brethren' is preserved through the influence of the Bible, while the regular new formation, 'brothers', is the only one in ordinary use". This linguist tells us that if not for the religious use of the word, 'brethren', it has gone out of everyday English usage. In its place, we have the regular modern version, 'brothers'.

Leech and Svartvik (1986:267) also concluded their discussion on -en plural by saying that "In the special sense, 'brethren' means 'fellow members of a religious society'; otherwise regular: brothers". These linguists also believe in the existence of the -en plural marker and the extinction of 'brethren' if not for the religious usage and its replacement with 'brothers' in everyday usage.

From the above citations and discussions, it is very clear to us that right from the time of old English through the middle English to the present-day-English, the additive -en as an allomorph of the -s plural morpheme has been recognised and used. This is why we have noun forms like

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Ox	Oxen
Child	Children
Brother	Brethern,

in today's English usage.

2.1.2b THE VOWEL MUTATION OR THE OVERT STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE INSTRUCTURAL SERIES

This process of pluralisation involves a change of a vowel or vowels in the singular form of the noun to get the plural form. Quirk et al (1974:86) says that "mutation involves a change of vowels". But in Language Files (1979 number 52) the process was called "Internal Modification". It reads "... although the usual pattern of plural formation is to add an inflectional morpheme, some English plurals make an internal modification; man but men". This morphological process was called the 'overt formal difference in a structural series' by Tomori (1979:27) when he writes that, "An overt formal difference means linguistic difference that can be easily perceived between two or more speech units. For instance, there is an overt difference between the linguistic forms:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Foot	Feet
Man	Men

From the foregoing, it is clear that mutation, internal modification and overt structural difference in structural series, mean exactly the same process of change of vowels or a vowel in a singular noun form to get a plural one.

In English, there are only seven of such nouns as identified by Quirk et al (1974:306). They say "the plural is formed by mutation (a change of vowel) in the following seven nouns:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Man	Men
Foot	Feet
Goose	Geese
Mouse	Mice
Woman	Women
Tooth	Teeth
Louse	Lice

Stageberg (1981:135) also agrees with Quirk et al (1974) when he writes that "Seven common nouns form their plurals by a replacive allomorph; for instance, goose /gu:s/ geese /gi:s/, that is, /u:→i:/. These nouns are, man, woman, goose, tooth, foot, louse and mouse". Stageberg is completely in consonance with not only the number of words, but also the words themselves as submitted by Quirk et al (1974).

Leech and Svartvik (1989:266) also talk of the vowel change but produce a list of six of them instead of the seven, when they wrote that "The following nouns

form the plural by a vowel change instead of an ending:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Foot /fut/	Feet /fi:t/
Tooth /tu:θ/	Teeth /ti:θ/
Goose /gu:s/	Geese /gi:s/
Man /mæn/	Men /men/
Woman /wuman/	women /wimin/
Mouse /maus/	Mice /mais/

From the above analyses and discussions, it is very clear that the English language also produces plural forms by a change of the vowel or vowels in seven singular noun forms. Though, the various forms cannot be phonologically defined, they are in completementary distribution. This process of internal (replacive) modification, is another allomorph of the plurality morpheme in English.

2.1.2c THE ZERO STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE (THE PLURAL ALLOMORPH)

The zero plural morphological process is a very common feature that is associated with the plural formation systems of the English language. It is the realization of the singular and the plural forms as the same orthographic manifestation. There is usually no structural difference between the singular and the plural forms. Tomori

(1979:28) has this to say about the zero plural morphological process, "A zero structural difference is the technical way of saying that there is no perceptible difference in a structural series" as manifested in the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Counsel	Counsel
Aircraft	Aircraft
Salmon	Salmon
Deer	Deer
Sheep	Sheep
Cattle	Cattle
Furniture	Furniture

However, in spite of the zero structural difference, the context, the use of numerals and the use of determiners can clarify if one or more than one, for example:

A sheep is grazing in the field (one)
Two sheep are grazing in the field (two)
Those sheep were grazing in the field (more than one)

Quirk et al (1974:307-309) discuss the zero structural difference too when they say that "Some nouns have the same spoken and written form in both singular and plural forms e.g. one bison - three bison; similarly: grouse, quail, salmon, swine, sheep, deer, cod etc (animal names); one chinese - five chinese; similarly:

Japanese, Lebanese, Portuguese, Sinhalese, Vitnamese, etc (nationality names)". They also say that quantitative nouns, like dozen, hundred, thousand and million, have zero plurals when they are premodified by another quantitative word, e.g.

Three dozen glasses

Many thousand thanks

Two hundred people

Several million Nigerians

Leech and Svartvik (1986:627); Roberts (1964:36); Jespersen (1974:201-202) and Stageberg (1981:134) generally agree that in the zero structural difference type of plural, there is a zero affixal plural. Put in another way, it is a convenient way of saying that the plural is the same as the singular structurally.

Since the context, use of numerals and determiners can clarify the number, it is believed that the zero plural morphological process is one of the allomorphs of the plurality morpheme in English.

2.1.2d NOUNS IN ENGLISH OF FOREIGN ORIGIN

When a noun is borrowed into English from another language, it may take a plural in -s morpheme or it may retain the plural form it had in the original language.

Most of the foreign plurals retained in English today are from Greek and Latin. Roberts (1964:37) gives us a reason for this trend when he writes:

> *A hundred years ago nearly every educated man knew one or both of these languages, and consequently, retention of Greek and Latin forms was easy among the literate. Now, when the classical languages are almost unknown, at least in America, some of these plurals have become so deeply embedded in the language that they continue to resist the -s plural.*

Roberts is telling us here that the foreign nouns are common in English because the classical languages were symbols of the educated elites in the years past. They were the language of the literate. But now that the languages are extinct, their effects continue to reign in the English language.

Quirk et al (1974:311) also tell us that "foreign plurals often occur along with regular plurals. They are more common in technical usuage, whereas the -s plural is the more natural in everday language. Thus:

Formulas (General usage)

Formulae (Mathematics and Linguistics usage)

Antennas (General and Electronic usage)

Antennae (Biological usage)"

Quirk et al's his team's contributions are simply that the borrowed nouns usually adopt the English -s plural in some nouns, and others continue to use the mother

language plural system. Others use both, but the foreign ones are more in technical usage. This is also the stand of Leech and Svartvik (1986:267) when they write that "In some words borrowed from foreign languages, foreign plurals occur instead of the regular plurals. With other foreign words, both a regular plural and a foreign plural can occur. Foreign plurals tend to be commoner in technical usage, whereas the -s plural is more natural in everyday language."

Stageberg (1981:136-137) postulates that when foreign words are borrowed into English, their pronunciation becomes assimilated, more or less, to the phonemic system of English. Some of the adopted nouns are made to conform to the allomorphic pattern of the English plural morpheme. However, not all the borrowed words are affected, hence he writes that:

> *Many borrowed nouns have both plurals - the foreign ones, often modified, and the English plural, like concerti and concertos, Curricula and curriculums, syllabi and syllabuses. The tendency is for such words to adopt the English -s plural, but some have proved resistant to change, like agenda and alumni.*

In his discussion, Stageberg (1981) believes that though the tendency is to assimilate the foreign pronunciation of borrowed words to that of English, many of these foreign words still retain the foreign plural along side the English -s plural, while many others have resisted the change.

Jespersen (1974:201) also has this to contribute to the study of borrowed words into English and their plurals:

> ***There is, however, a strong natural tendency to inflect such words as are in everyday use in the English way: No one thinks of using a learned ending instead of saying; ideas, circuses, gymnasiums etc. Formulas, dogmas and funguses are more English than formulae, dogmata and fungi. `Indexes' is used in ordinary language, but 'indices' in Mathematics; `Geniuses' means men of `genius', but `genii' means 'spirit'. 'Stamina' in Latin is the plural of 'stamen', but in English, it is apprehended as an independent singular. Similarly, 'errata' (the Latin plural of erratum) is used as a singular with the meaning 'list of printer's errors'.***

In the above discussion, Jespersen is explaining how the users of English try to modify the foreign words to suit their own pronunciation and meaning. The tendency is to inflect such words to match the English phonemic patterns. Not only this, additional meanings are also coined for the borrowed words in English.

It is a general knowledge that foreign words in the English language are not only borrowed from Greek and Latin. But also from the Italian, Spanish, French and Hebrew languages. In view of this, this researcher wishes to produce a tabular chart showing the names of languages, the lists of some words from the individual languages, their foreign plurals and the regular English -s plural for the same words, if any and remark on the usage of the words if necessary. For

example:

Names of original language	Singular words	Foreign plural	Regular English -s plural (if any)	Remark on usage (if any)
LATIN	Sumulus	Stimuli		
	Locus	Loci		
	Bonus	Bonuses		
GREEK	Basis	Bases		
	Crisis	Crises		
	Oasis	Oases		
ITALIAN	Tempo	Tempi		
	Solo	-		
	Soprano	-	Sporanos	

The discussions in this section helped us to see that the English plurality morpheme is much wider than just the regular *s*- plural morpheme. The three phonetic realization could not adequately account for the English plural system, hence we took a look at the irregular plural system. From the citations, discussions and analysis, it has been made clear that apart from the regular

member morphs, the irregular plural system also revealed some other interesting allomorphs of the plurality morpheme.

The study of related literature on irregular plural system of English revealed that, we have the -en or -n plural allomorph, the vowel mutation allomorph, the zero plural allomorph and the various realizations of the plural forms of nouns in English of foreign origin (which we shall call `Foreign plurals'). All these allomorphs constitute the irregular plural system.

The regular additive allomorphs, -s, -z and -iz, the irregular system of additive -en or -n, the vowel mutation, the zero structural difference and the foreign plurals, constitute the pluralisation systems in English. Put in another way, the plurality morpheme of English has the above allomorphs, regular and irregular, as member morphs.

2.2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON PLURALISATION IN URHOBO

2.2.0 INTRODUCTION

As earlier mentioned, the Urhobo language has not been widely studied, as is the English language, hence the literature on pluralisation in Urhobo may not be elaborate. However, the topic is mentioned and discussed in a few texts, including Umukoro (1986); this researcher's former work on comparative study of some Edoid languages. But, in spite of the scarce texts, we intend to use

the few available literature extensively with lots of illustrations to explain what pluralisation is in the Urhobo language.

2.2.1 PLURALISATION IN URHOBO

Pluralisation in Urhobo is like pluralisation in any other language. The traditional definition of plural is that it is a mark that indicates 'more than one'. A mark that differentiates 'one' (singular) from 'more than one' (plural) in an utterance is the system of number in every language. In Urhobo, it is a system of number, like in English, which is manifested in the subject or object noun phrase of an Urhobo utterance. In other words, pluralisation is a system of changing one item to more than one item in a given statement. It is a grammatical category which means more than one (person, place or thing) in a sentence.

Okumagba (1979:147-158) in an attempt to make us know what pluralisation is in Urhobo, lists "Some Urhobo words and their English meaning showing the plural where applicable". The following is an extract from the long list:

OVUOVO (SINGULAR)	EBUO (PLURAL)	MEANING
Usio	Isio	Star
Ohwo	Ihwo	Person
Oshare	Eshare	Man

Ọsẹ	Esẹ	Father
Oni	Ini	Mother
Obọ	Abọ	Hand
Egodo	Igodo	Compound

Ege (1985:23) defines singular and plural in the following Urhobo words,

"Odẹ rẹ Orọvwọn Ọvo, Ọye e se ode
(name of thing one it is general call name

Ọvuọvo; Ọ da be vrẹ ọvo, kẹ ebuo
Single His/she/it if more than larger one it's plenty (more)

(Meaning; a name of 'one' thing is called singular but if 'more than one' then it is plural). What Ege (1985) was saying is that when an item is one, it is a singular number, but when it is more than one, than it is a a plural one in the Urhobo language.

Omamode (1991:83) also supports the above definition when he supplied the following as examples:

OVUOVO (SINGULAR)	**EBUO (PLURAL)**
Oshare (man)	Eshare (Men)
Aye (Woman)	Eya (Women)
Ọmọtẹ (Girl)	Emẹtẹ (Girls)
Ọmọshare (Boy)	Emeshare (Boys)

In his own contribution, even without an explicit definition of what pluralization is, Omamode (1991) has passed on the message that one item (Oshare) means a single number while more than one item (eshare) means a plural number in the Urhobo language.

From the above categorization, we can safely say that in the Urhobo language, when the quantity of items is one, it means singular number, but when it is increased to more than one, then it is a plural one. Put in another way, pluralisation in Urhobo means a grammatical process whereby a singular quantity (one) is changed to a plural one (more than one) in a grammatical utterance. In the Urhobo language, pluralisation is only manifested in nouns and pronouns. It is not marked in the following verb, no matter the tense involved. This assertion is illustrated in the following examples:

(i) Ijọni cha Kẹdikẹdẹ (John comes everyday)
John come everyday

(ii) Ijọni v' Okẹ cha Kẹdikẹdẹ (John and Oke come everyday)
John and Oke come everyday.

(iii) Ọ cha kẹdikẹdẹ (He/She/it comes everyday)
He/she/it come everyday.

(iv) E cha kẹdikẹdẹ (They come everyday)
They come everyday

In the above Urhobo sentences, number agreement is not inflected in any of the verbs. It is not inflected in the verb of sentence (i), in spite of the fact that the subject is a third person singular. The verb, 'cha' still remains the same in sentence (ii) even when the subject has been increased from one to two persons, `Ijọni and Okẹ'. In Urhobo, the verb is not inflected in terms of singular and plural number, that is, there is no subject/verb agreement.

However, the Urhobo language has 'ọ' for all third person singular pronoun and 'e' for the third person plural pronoun. In other words, pluralisation, apart from being marked in the nouns of the language, is also marked in the pronouns.

Pluralisation is a morphophonemic process which involves not only the morphology but also the phonology of the Urhobo language. The language exhibits two basic morphological processes which result in its plural formation. These processes are:

(i) The vowel mutation or the overt structural difference in structural series (Which we shall call `The initial vowel mutation' to show the place where the change takes place).

(ii) The zero structural difference (The zero plural morphological process).

However, pluralisation in Urhobo cannot be fully explained without an indept

study of the vocalic system of the language. Therefore, the next sub-section shall be dedicated to the study of vowels of the Urhobo language.

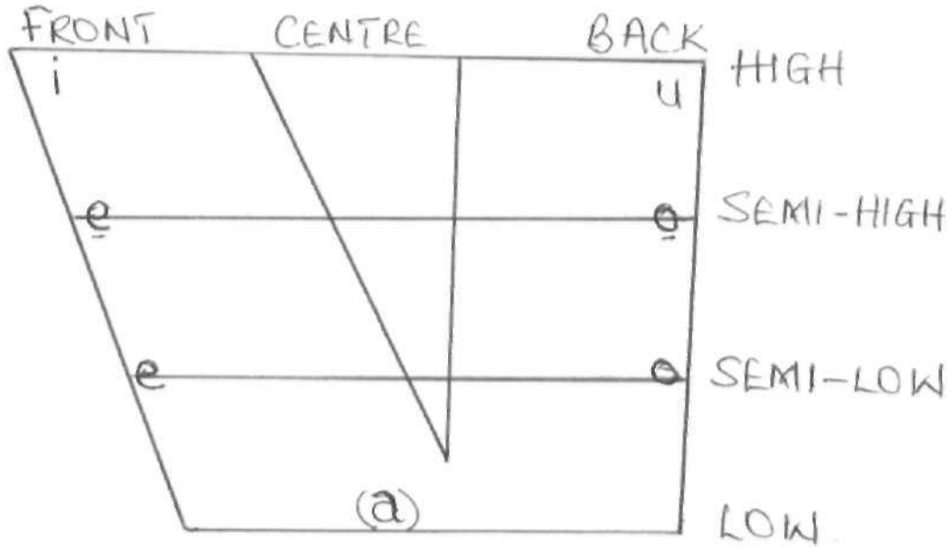
2.2.2 URHOBO ORAL VOWELS

All nouns in the Urhobo language begin with vowel sounds. Nouns in the language do not ever begin with consonant sounds. Umukoro (1986:94-95) reveals that it is the initial vowel sounds of nouns that determine whether a word is singular or plural. The Urhobos form most of their plural forms by simply changing the initial vowel of the noun that is under consideration. This vowel is always an oral vowel. This is why it is very important to highlight the vowel system of the Urhobo language.

The Urhobo language, like most other languages of the Edoid group of languages, operates with seven oral vowels. In other words, it has seven oral vowel phonemes. These seven oral vowel phonemes are:

a e ẹ i o ọ and u

The vowels can be arranged in the cardinal vowel chart to show their places of articulation or production in the mouth and their contrastive behaviour to each other as distinctive phonemes. The following chart gives us the details of the oral vowels of the Urhobo languages.



The Cardinal Vowel Chart Showing Urhobo Oral Vowels

This vocalic chart helps us to differentiate between the back vowels and the front ones, and the high vowels from the low ones. The /a/ sound has no fixed place in frontness or backness. It can occur as a back vowel at one time and as a front one at another, but it is always a low sound. However, Urhobo has neither central nor long vowels.

2.3 THE PLURAL SYSTEMS IN URHOBO

In view of the fact that the Urhobo language has seven oral vowels which are used to begins the names of people, places and things, we have decided to arrange the data of Urhobo into seven lists of words. Each list with a group of words that begin with a particular vowel, in alphabetical order. Since all nouns in Urhobo begin with vowels and never consonants, it is very necessary to break

down the data this way for a more thorough evaluation or clarification where necessary, and a more detailed analysis of the data.

The lists of words will be treated one after the other, beginning with the /a/ list. After the /a/ list, then the /e/, ẹ/Ɛ/, /i/, /o/, ọ/ɔ / and finally the /u/ list. They will be treated in order to match the seven oral vowels which are the markers of singular and plural in the language.

In order to make the distinction between singular morphemes and plural ones consistently, we have decided to enclose singular morphs in two vertical lines; /-/ while plural morphs will be placed in (x-) bracket (x being the vowel that is used to mark plurality and the dash (-) after the plurality marker shows where the stem of the noun that is being made plural will appear). Finally, the glosses of the data used are in the singular form throughout this thesis.

2.3.1 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH /a/ IN URHOBO

The /a/ sound in the Urhobo language can stand as a singular and as a plural morph when it appears in the word-initial position. When this form, /a/, appears in initial of some noun stems, it indicates singular, but if the words are made plural, the vowel of the initial position will automatically change to either (e-) or (i-). However, it does not always change when the word is made plural. There are some words in which the /a/ initial is maintained even when talking in terms of

plural.

In this word list, therefore, under the Urhobo language, there are two morphological processes in operation; the zero plural morphological process and the initial vowel mutation or substitution. In the former process, the singular and the plural representations remain structurally unchanged. They have exactly the same form, while in the initial vowel mutation, the initial sound changes from /a/ to either (e-) or (i-) when the word is made plural. So, from this word list, we can conclude that (a-), (e-) and (i-) are allomorphs of the plurality morpheme in the

Urhobo language. This is clearly illustrated in the following word-list:

TABLE 2.3.1

SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Amẹn	Amẹn	Water
Agho	Agho	Cloud
Akọn	Akọn	Tooth
Agbara	Egbara	Chair
Aghan	Eghan	Broom
Amaphia	Emaphia	Knife
Amwa	Emwa	Cloth
Aye	Eya	Women
Adjan	Edjan	Bat
Afiọtọ	Efiọtọ	Rabbit
Agbada	Egbada	Bridge
Avien	Evien	Arm-pit
Agogo	Igogo	Bell
Adjudju	Idjudju	Hand-fan

2.3.2 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH /e/ IN URHOBO

This word list is very regular when compared with the /a/ word-list above as shown in the available data. In this corpus, all the forms in their singular state start with an /e/ sound but when these words are made plural, the initial sound automatically changes or it is substituted with an (i-) sound. In other words, in the Urhobo language, singular noun forms with an /e/ sound as their initial sound, have (i-) as their plural morph.

So, unlike the /a/ list which has three member morphs in the Urhobo language as its plural allomorphs, the /e/ list has only one, that is, (i-), as its plural morph. Hence every word in the data that has an /e/ initial in its singular state, by the system of initial vowel mutation or substitution, has an (i-) in its plural state. This

system is clearly illustrated in the following table:

TABLE 2.3.2

SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Ekpu	Ikpu	Bag
Enl	Ini	Elephant
Erue	Irue	Bull
Ewerin	Iwerin	Monkey
Erhi	Irhi	Butterfly
Erin	Irin	Fish
Egodo	Igodo	Compound
Evie	Ivie	Breast
Emu	Imu	Food
Evwro	Ivwro	Hoe
Eki	Iki	Market
Esio	Isio	Star
Emalu	Imalu	Cow
Esi	Isi	Pig

2.3.3 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH e /Ɛ/ IN URHOBO

The list of words that begin with e /Ɛ/ in their singular state has two plural morphs when the words are made plural. These two plural morphs exhibit two morphophonemic processes which are the zero morphological process and the initial vowel mutation or substitution.

When the words are in their singular state, their initial sound is e /Ɛ/ but when these words are made plural, the form either remains unchanged, that is, the singular and the plural forms having the same representation or the initial sound is modified or substituted through the initial vowel mutation process and the e /Ɛ/ becomes (e-). So, for this list, the Urhobo language exhibits two plural

allomorphs which are (e-) and (ẹ-). This is clearly illustrated in the following list of words:

TABLE 2.3.3

SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Ẹkpa	Ekpa	Fool
Ẹtchẹ	Etche	Door
Ẹberugbunu	Eberugbunu	Lip
Ẹvwe	Evwe	Goat
Ẹvwere	Evwere	Pot (cooking)
Ẹwhere	Ewhere	Mat
Ẹrẹvwẹn	Erevwen	Tongue
Ẹtọn	Etọn	Hair
Ẹdẹ	Edẹ	Day
Ẹvwẹ	Evwẹ	Kola-nut

2.3.4 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH /Ị/ IN URHOBO

All the available words in the data which start with the /i/ sound do not exhibit any complicated morphological processes as do /a/, /e/ and ẹ /Ɛ/ word-lists above. In the Urhobo language, all the words that start with the /i/ sound in their singular state do not alter their forms even when they are made plural.

In other words, this word-list exhibits the zero plural morphological process. Singular words and their plural forms or representations are one and the same. There are no visible or perceptible differences in the representation of the singular and the plural words. We will, therefore, though tentatively, assert here that (i-) is the basic plural morph in the Urhobo language. The zero plural morphological process is illustrated in the following table:

TABLE 2.3.4

SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Idjighere	Idjighere	Bicycle
Igogolo	Igogolo	Bucket
Iherin	Iherin	Horn (of animals)
Imedje	Imedje	Table
Iribo	Iribo	Pepper
Igho	Igho	Money
Idjede	Idjede	Road
Ikolosha	Ikolosha	Mattress

2.3.5 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH /o/ IN URHOBO

The Urhobo language under this word-list, is as complicated as it was in the /a/ word-list. The plural formation system under the /o/ word-list is not regular. The

plural allomorphs are three, just as it was the case in /a/ word-list above, but the morphological processes involved are not the same.

In this list, only the initial vowel mutation or substitution exists as the morphological process but there are three allomorphs which act as the plurality morph. There are two particular noun forms which are names of parts of the body that, when in the singular form, start with the /o/ initial sound but when these words are made plural, the initial sound is substituted and it mutates to (a-). So, from the available data, (a-) act as a plurality morph to some nouns. Apart from the (a-) plural form, there are still other plurality allomorphs in this list. These are (e-) and (i). The list of words that begin with the /o/ sound in their singular state, therefore, changes the initial sound to (a-), otherwise (e-) or (i) when the words are made plural. For this word-list, therefore, (a-), (e-) and (i-) are the allomorphs which act as the plurality morph in the Urhobo language.

This claim is substantiated in the following word-list:

TABLE 2.3.5

SINGLUAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Obọ	Abọ	Hand
Owọ	Awọ	Leg
Ophiawọ	Ephiawọ	Shoe
Omamọ	Emamọ	Fruit
Orua	Erua	Family
Ogba	Egba	Fence
Orho	Erho	Ear
Opharo	Epharo	Face
Oka	Eka	Corn
Okpan	Ekpan	Calabash
Orhare	Erhare	Well
Owẹ	Ewẹ	Fish-pond
Ogherighẹ	Igherighẹ	Lizard
Ohwo	Ihwo	Person
Ohori	Ihori	Worm

This claim is substantiated in the following word-list:

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SINGLUAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Obọ	Abọ	Hand
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Orho	Erho	Ear
Opharo	Epharo	Face
Oka	Eka	Corn
Okpan	Ekpan	Calabash
Orhare	Erhare	Well
Owẹ	Ewẹ	Fish-pond
Oghẹrighẹ	Ighẹrighẹ	Lizard
Ohwo	Ihwo	Person
Ohori	Ihori	Worm

2.3.6 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH o /ɔ/ IN URHOBO

The system of plural formation in this word-list is a very simple and straight forward one. There are no complicated morphophonemic processes involved. There are no morphemic alternants, that is,. there is just one morph which acts as the plural marker throughout the list of words that begin with o /ɔ / sound in their singular state.

In the Urhobo language, words in their singular state and start with an o /ɔ/ sound, are usually made plural by simply changing the o /ɔ/ initial sound to (e-); whenever the (e-) occupies the place of the o /ɔ/ initial sound of any singular word, that word automatically becomes a pluralised word.

The morphophonemic process involved here is the same one that has been operating in the language, that is, the initial vowel mutation or substitution. By mutation or substitution, therefore, the o /ɔ/ of singular word changes to (e-) for the word to become plural. This non-complicated plural system is illustrated in

the following examples:

TABLE 2.3.6

SSINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Qpian	Epian	Cutlass
Omote	Emete	Girl
Qmoshare	Emeshare	Boy
Ogodo	Egodo	Pit
Oriedan	Eriedan	Witch
Ogo	Ego	Bottle
Oneki	Eneki	Customer
Oho	Eho	Fowl
Ole	Ele	Yam
Ode	Ede	Plantain
Omo	Emo	Child (baby)
Oshare	Eshare	Man
Ose	Ese	Father
Obo	Ebo	Doctor
Owhere	Ewhere	Farmer

2.3.7 THE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH /u/ IN URHOBO

This is the last of the seven vowel lists of words, but it is as important as every other one else that we have considered as it helps us to buttress the argument that (i-) form is the basic plurality morph of the Urhobo language.

The /u/ word-list, like some of the lists that we have been considering above, is characterised by a very simple and straight forward morphophonemic process. The process that is involved is simply that of 'vowel change', which is technically called vowel mutation or substitution. In this word-list, as in every other list so far considered, the mutation or substitution occur at the position of the initial vowel of the word, which is /u/ in this case.

The morphophonemic process involved is just one and the realization or morph involved is also one. In this list, every word in the singular state begins with an /u/ sound and in making the word plural, the /u/ initial sound is simply changed to (i-) initial sound. This systematic change of the initial vowel is what operates throughout this list of /u/ singular words in the Urhobo language.

This (i-) plurality morph in this word-list, helped us to buttress the argument of the Urhobo language basic plurality marker. This claim is substantiated in the

following list of Urhobo words:

TABLE 2.3.7

SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
Ule	Ile	Song
Uk̲en	Ik̲en	Egg
Uruvwu	Iruvwu	Tail
Uy̲en	Iy̲en	Fly
Uyovwi	Iyovwi	Head
Ubiaro	Ibiaro	Eye
Uwen	Iwen	Nose
Ugbunu	Igbunu	Mouth
Urie	Irie	River
Usi	Isi	Line
Usiaphr̲e	Isiaphr̲e	Key
Ubiudu	Ibiudu	Heart
Uhoho	Ihoho	Shadow/picture
Ushu	Ishu	Louse
Ubi	Ibi	Seed
Uphoron	Iphoron	Feather
Ukugben	Ikugben	Snake

2.3.8a SOME OTHER ASPECTS OF PLURALISATION IN URHOBO

It has been mentioned earlier that, there is no subject/verb agreement in the Urhobo plural system. However, the use of context in plural formation is very common among the Urhobo native speakers. A word could, on the surface, mean a single entity but to a competent native speaker, it might mean 'more than one'. This is done without the use of any of the plural formation systems illustrated above, yet the message is interpreted correctly by the native speakers.

Numerals could also be used to specify the quantity of the already made plural noun-stem. The use of numerals to quantify the items represented by the words which exhibit the zero plural morphological process is also a common practice in the Urhobo language.

Mass-quantifiers are also present in Urhobo. These are words which mean plenty, many, much etc in the language and native speakers use them effectively in talking in terms of 'more than one' to one another.

These traditional ways of learning the plural systems of the Urhobo language could pose a problem to the language learners. They, therefore, have to be mindful of them when learning the language because they cannot be learned along with the vocabulary of the language. They are learned intuitively and mastered with advancement in knowledge of Urhobo language in general.

2.3.8b **SUMMARY OF PLURALISATION IN URHOBO**

a. **THE /a/ WORD-LIST**: Under the data of the /a/ word-list, we discovered that the Urhobo language plural formation system is determined by two morphophonemic processes which are the zero plural morphological process and the initial vowel mutation or substitution. Under this list, the plurality allomorphs are (a-), (e-) and (i-) in the Urhobo language.

b. **THE /e/ WORD-LIST**: From the analysis of this word-list, we discovered that the language exhibits only one morphological process which is the initial vowel mutation.

The /e/ initial of singular noun-forms mutates to (i-) in their plural forms. So, (i-) is the only available plural morph in this list.

c. **THE ọ/ɛ/ WORD-LIST**: There are two morphological processes in operation in this list. They are the zero plural morphological process and the initial vowel mutation. The plurality allomorphs for this list are (e-) and (ẹ-) in the Urhobo language.

d. **THE /I/ WORD-LIST**: The /i/ initial sound list of singular noun-forms is very regular in the language. There is only one morphophonemic process - the zero plural morphological process. Therefore, there is no noticeable

change in the singular and the plural forms. /I/ initial of singular forms remains (I-) in the plural also.

e. **THE /o/ WORD-LIST**: This list is also very regular according to the available data, there is only one morphophonemic process, that is, the initial vowel substitution and the plurality makers are (a-), (e-) and (I-). In other words, the /o/ initial sound mutates to either (a-), (e-) or (i-) in their plural forms.

f. **THE o /ɔ/ WORD-LIST**: The only morphophonemic process involved is the initial vowel mutation or substitution. In this process, and in this word-list, the /ọ/ initial sound of the singular forms changes to (e-). Therefore, (e-) is the only plurality morph in this list.

g. **THE /u/ WORD-LIST**: The final list is the /u/ initial sound list of singular words. The morphophonemic process involved is the initial vowel mutation or substitution, and the plurality morph is (I-) in the language.

2.3.8c MORPHOPHONEMIC PROCESSES INVOLVED IN URHOBO PLURALISATION

From the discussions of the various lists of words in their singular and plural forms, it has been discovered that the Urhobo language forms its plural by the morphophonemic processes known as the initial vowel mutation or substitution and the zero plural morphological processes.

It was also discovered that the language used only front oral vowels; namely, (a-), (e-), (ẹ-) and (i-), to mark plurality, even in words that exhibit the zero plural morphological process, the back vowels are not used to mark plurals.

2.3.9 IDENTIFIED THE BASIC PLURALITY MORPH OF THE URHOBO LANGUAGE

A careful investigation into pluralisation in Urhobo has revealed that the (i-) as a plurality morph dominates every other plurality morphs in the above data. It has been found out that the (i-) acts as the only plurality marker in three of the seven word-lists discussed above. It dominates others and occurs alone as the plurality marker in /e/, /i-/ and /u/ lists, while it also co-occurs with other morphs in two other word-lists, that is, the /a/ and /o/ lists.

From the above observation, it has become obvious that (I-) allomorph is the basic plurality morph of the Urhobo language and that the other plurality morphs - (a-), (e-), and (ẹ-), are variants of the basic plurality morph - (i-) - of the Urhobo language.

Based on the above observations, we wish to assert that the (I-) allomorph is the basic plurality morph of the Urhobo language and that the other plurality morphs- (a-), (e-) and (e-) , are variants of the basic plurality morph - (i-) - of the Urhobo language.

Moreover, due to the domineering behaviour of the (i-) basic plurality morph over other variants, we have tried to establish rules or conventions that permit the occurrence of a variant morph instead of the basic plurality morph but to no avail. We discovered that we could not estalish a single rule or discover a single convention in the language because of the random behaviour of the basic plurality morph and those of the variant plurality morphs of the Urhobo Language.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The Methodology of research procedure is the most vital stage of the entire research exercise. According to Osuala (1982: 32), "the procedure section is perhaps the crux of the research report; it is the backgournd against which the reader evaluates the findings and conclusion". This section determines the reliability of the result and recommendations for further research. This chapter seeks not only to establish but also to explain some methods used in the gathering of data in an attempt to answer the research questions stated as follow:

1. What is pluralisation?
2. How is it manifested in the Urhobo language?
3. What are the possible similarities and differences of pluralisation in the Urhobo and in the English languages?

In order to elicit the desired information, the procedure involved under methodology for this research work are categorised under the following sub-headings:-

1. Methods of data gathering
2. Research population

3. Source of data and

4. Analytical procedure

3.1 METHODS OF DATA GATHERING

This research work is a comparative study of pluralisation in Urhobo and English, and the research questions as stated in 3.0 above, cannot be explicitly answered without resorting to the two basic methods - The primary and the secondary methods - of data collection. This became necessary because of the abundance of related Literature to the topic in the English Language and the non - availability of sufficient literature on the same topic in the Urhobo Language.

The method of data gathering for the English language was basically the secondary method. All the information was gathered from documented materials. The topic, pluralisation, as has been mentioned ealier, is well studied and documented in almost all the standard texts written on the Language. So, care was taken to pick up a few of these documents from which the required information for this thesis were extracted.

On the other hand, the data on the Urhobo language were gathered through both the primary and secondary methods. As it has been noted earlier too, pluralisation is not yet adequately studied and documented in the language. In order words, the available literature is inadequate for a comparative work of this

magnitude. However, some of the data used for this research work were got from the few available texts while the rest of them were sampled from oral and written discussions with active speakers of the Urhobo lanaguage.

On a general note, therefore, we used the two basic methods to gather the data for the Urhobo language while those of English were gathered from only one source, written documents.

3.2 THE RESEARCH POPULATION

One of the cardinal indices of linguistic research is the sampling of the research population. This step, for any research, enables researchers to make samples out of the entire research population at their disposal thereby handling the population figure with precision. All the variations, characteristics and knowledge possessed by the large population of native speakers are expected to be present in the smaller group under sampling.

In collecting the primary data for this research work, we worked with twenty four (24) competent native speakers who acted as informants and proof-readers (control group) in the Urhobo language. This became necessary because we sampled our data from the two chosen dialects of the Urhobo language the Olomu and the Agbarho dialects. Ten of the informants were used to supply list of words from each of the dialects, and two elderly monolinguals were used to

cross-check the data from each of the two dialect groups for any necessary correction.

All the informants were chosen from the centre of the region, that is, the Urhobo community region, where the language is the commonest means of communication. All of them were matured competent native speakers whose ages range from forty-five years and above. Moreso, these informants have dwelled in the language location for the better part of their lives.

3.3 SOURCES OF DATA

The empirical data that have been collected for this research work were aimed at determining what pluralisation is in the Urhobo and in the English languages, how pluralisation is manifested in the Urhobo language vis-a-vis in the English language, and to point out the possible areas of similarity and dissimilarity of pluralisation in both languages.

In order to elicit sufficient data for this type of comparative study, the researcher used two basic sources of information to gather data for this research work. These sources are the primary and the secondary sources, and they helped in no small way in eliciting adequate data for this study.

3.3.1 THE PRIMARY SOURCES

The data gathered from this source were elicited from various sosurces, some of which are:

a. **The Native Speakers**:

As a result of unavailability of sufficient textbooks in the Urhobo language, we resorted to using informants and proof-readers (the control group) to source information on pluralisation in the Urhobo language. The team of informants supplied different list of words on pluralisation in Urhobo. All the informants individually supplied list of singular noun forms and their plural counterparts (with the gloss attached) in Urhobo.

From these lists, the researcher collected some data on pluralisation in the Urhobo language.

b. **The News Media**:

Another valuable source of information for this study was through recording of news translactions and broadcast of other feature articles in Urhobo on Radio Nigeria, Ibadan, and Radio Delta, Warri. When news were translated and other feature articles broadcast in the Urhobo language, the researcher recorded some of them in audio-cassettes which were later played-back for selection of relevant

data. In this way, some valuable data were sourced for this research work.

c. **The Urhobo Community Monthly Meetings:**

The monthly congress meetings of the "Urhobo Community Union, Gusau, Zamfara State Chapter' also helped to a large extent. The meetings were held on the first Sundays of every month. The monthly meetings were conducted in the Urhobo language, and the researcher being a member of the Union, always attended such meetings and with the assistance of the Secretary general, transcribed some of the proceedings from which some data on pluralisation were extracted.

3.3.2 THE SECONDARY SOURCE

All the information needed for the analysis of pluralisation in English were gathered from the secondary source. Documentary materials on pluralisation in English were collected from different sources such as academic journals and textbooks. These sources supplied indispensable data for the analysis of pluralisation in the English language.

On the other hand, the few available texts at our disposal were also used as a source of data for the Urhobo language.

3.4 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

An analytical procedure is one of the vital elements of a research report. To be valid, research must be interpreted in light of the conditions under which it was conducted. This research work is a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English. Therefore, our data analysis and interpretation sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is pluralisation?
2. How is it manifested in the Urhobo language?
3. What are the possible similarities and dissimilarities of this grammatical category in Urhobo and the English language?

In order to answer the research questions adequately and to achieve the comparative aims of this thesis, this researcher examined pluralisation in English under the two basic plural systems, namely, the regular and the irregular plural systems.

1. **The Regular Plural System**:
   - **a.** The additive plurality morpheme, /-s/, and
   - **b.** it phonologically conditioned realisations, /-s/, /-z/ and /-iz/ would be analysed.

2. **The Irregular Plural systems**:

a. The -en or -n plural ending,

b. The vowel mutation or substitution,

c. The zero plural allomorph, and

d. The various plural forms of foreign words

3. This would be followed by the analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo to determine if the above English systems also exist in the Urhobo language.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This research work is a comprative study of pluralisation in Urhobo and English. It is aimed at determining pluralisation in both languages in order to ascertain the possible similarities and dissimilarities in them. In order to arrive at the bottom-line of this research, we analysed the data on pluralisation in English under the regular and the irregular plural manisfestaions of the plurality morpheme, and also analysed what pluralisation is in the Urhobo language. This analytical procedure, therefore, helped us to answer the research questions which are:-

1. What is pluralisation?
2. How is it manifested in the Urhobo language?
3. What are the possible similarities and dissimilarities of pluralisation in the Urhobo and the English languages?

4.1 DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS OF PLURALISATION IN ENGLISH

The concept, pluralisation, is normally a grammatical category in English structures, and it is manifested within the nominal phrase used as subject or object of the structure. It is a morphophonemic process which manifests itself in the noun phrases. In other words, pluralisation is a system of number inflection which

is realised in nouns and pronouns in the structure of English. It makes the difference between `one' (singular) and `more than one' (plural) in English utterances.

Pluralisation is a morphophonemic process which is realised in the number system of English grammar. The number system constitutes a two term contrast: singular, which denotes `one' and plural, which denotes `more than one'. The number system of English grammar affects the verbal system of the clause or sentence. This is so because a singular subject takes a singular verb while a plural subject takes a plural verb. This is shown vividly in the following examples.

1. John is fond of climbing mango trees
2. John and James are fond of climbing mango trees
3. The girl walks to school everyday
4. Jane and Joy walk to school everyday
5. Jane does her assignments well
6. The girls do their assignment well
7. Frank has finished his academic assignment
8. Frank and his supervisor have finished their academic assignments

The above sentences showed that pluralisation is usually manifested in the nominal phrases that act as the subjects or objects of the sentences.

Pluralisation is marked in sentences 2,4,6 and 8, and their corresponding verbs were also affected, hence we had `are' instead of `is' in sentence 2; `walk' instead of `walks' in sentence 4; `do' instead of `does' in sentence 6 and `have' instead of `has' in sentence

8. This showed us that in English utterances, in the present tense, there is usually subject - verb agreement or concord as the case may be.

Pluralisation is also manifested in pronouns. Since pronouns are traditionally defined as `words used in the places of nouns to avoid repetition', wherever there is a plural noun, it could be replaced with a plural pronoun, as depicted in the following illustrastions.

9. The girl (she) eats rice every day
10. The boy (he) goes to school
11. The dog (it) barks at night
12. The girls (they) eat rice every day
13. The boys (they) go to school
14. The dogs (they) bark at night

The sentences above showed us that singular nouns can only be replaced with singular pronouns and plural nouns with plural pronouns in English utterances. So pluralisation is also manifested in the pronominal system of English.

Apart from nouns, verbs and pronouns in which the manifestation of pluralisation in English is reaslised, it is also manifested in the determiners of English utterances. Some determiners of English unequivocally signal a singular noun phrase. In other words, they can only precede singular noun phrases. These determiners are:. `a' `one', `this', `that' `each' and `another'. Other qualifiers, like: `the', `some', `my', `your', `other', `any' etc, are ambiguous; while `these' and `those' signal unequivocally plurality. These could be illustrated in the following examples:

15. This (a, one, that, each, another) boy ....

16. These (those) boys....

Any of the determiners in the parenthesis could be used to precede the noun-boy- in sentence 15, and the subject nounphrase would still be singular. So, also, is the determiner in the parenthesis of sentence 16. This discussion explained to us that pluralisation as a grammatical category in English utterances, realised as a system of number, is not only manifested in nouns, verbs and pronouns but also in preceding determiners of noun phrases.

There is a general concensus that pluralisation is a morphophonemic process which is manifested on the noun phrase which acts either as the subject or the object of an English utterance. It is a grammatical category which is manifested in the system of number, that is, singular (one) and plural (more than one) in the English

language. Pluralisation, therefore, is the process of changing a singular noun to a plural one in the English language, as shown in the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Woman	Women
Man	Men
Visitor	Visitors
Wife	Wives
Child	Children
Summons	Summonses
Watz	Watzes
Analysis	Analyses
Oasis	Oases
Piano	Pianos
Radio	Radios
Hero	Heros

4.2.0 THE ENGLISH PLURAL SYSTEMS

In the English Language, there are only two basic plural systems. They are the regular and the irregular plurality systems. We would discusss the two systems separately in this section.

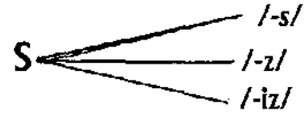
4.2.1 THE ENGLISH REGULAR PLURAL SYSTEM

It has been identified earlier in this work that the plurality morpheme has a meaning, ability to change a singular noun form (one) to a plural one (more than one), and function; since it is a bound morpheme, it combines with the noun-form to act as either the subject or the object of a verb. Most English noun forms are variable nouns since they can absorb the -s plural morpheme and change the quantity of the items from one to more than one. In other words, it is the addition of the plurality morpheme, -s, to singular noun form in order to form a plural one that is called 'the regular plural system' of the English language. This is clearly illustrated in the following word-list.

SINGULAR		PLURAL
Book	-- 474786	Books
Pen		Pens
Table		Tables
Chair		Chairs
House		Houses
Tank		Tanks
Cup		Cups

Orthographically, the plurality morpheme, that is, the suffix -s, looks like the letter s, but phonologically, it is realised differently in different environments. The morphological and the phonological interplay here makes different realisation of the plurality morpheme a reality. It, therefore, follows that the systems of pluralisation in English are basically under the morphophonemic processes and that the plurality morpheme which has been identified as the suffix - s, a bound-morpheme, is not only actualised as -s, but also in some other forms and sounds. These other realisations of the plurality morpheme are called allomorphs according to Herdon, (1976) and Wardhaugh, (1977).

The regular plural system of English, therefore, has only the plurality morpheme -s, which is realised, and added in its various allomorphic alternants to singular noun forms to produce plural ones phonologically. This system has three morphemic alternants, which are in complimentary distribution. These allomorphs are:



In the written form, the plurality morpheme which is added to singular noun forms in order to produce plural quantities, is either -s or -es. This is not the case in the spoken English. The phonetic realisations of this morpheme are either /-s/ after voiceless consonants and sibilants, for example, /p, t, k, f, s/; /-z/ after

vowels and voiced consonants, for example, /b, d, g, v, z, o, e/; and /-iz/ after sibilants and affricates, for example, /tʃ , dʒ, ʃ , x, s, z/ . These sounds are phonologically conditioned. In other words, there is voice - hormony between the preceding sound and the following plurality morpheme. Hence it is called voice - assimilation in the study of Language. These allomorphs are also in complimentary distribution because wherever an allmorph occurs, another cannot take its place. In view of this, the regular plural allomorphs are said to be predictable. These explanations are buttressed further with the following examples of the additive -s plurality morpheme in its various allomorphic alternants:

(i) /-s/

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Cat	Cats /-s/
Tap	Taps /-s/
Pick	Picks /-s/
Cliff	Cliffs /-s/
Book	Books /-s/

(ii) /-z/

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Load	Loads /-z/
Cab	Cabs /-z/
Pig	Pigs /-z/
Life	Lives /-z/
Tomato	Tomatoes /-z/

(iii) /-iz/

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Judge	Judges /-iz/
Box	Boxes /-iz/
Edge	Edges /-iz/
Match	Matches /-iz/
Hiss	Hisses /-iz/

4.2.2 THE ENGLISH IRREGULAR PLURAL SYSTEM

It is a generally accepted fact that the plurality morpheme of English is the additive -s, but it is also a known fact that not all English nouns can be pluralised

with this plurality morpheme in its various realisations - / -s/, /-z/ and /-iz/. There are numerous other English nouns or borrowed noun forms into the English language which can be pluralised but not with the regular plural allomorphs. This class of nouns are called the irregular nouns and their processes of pluralisation are called the irregular plural systems of the English language.

In spite of the phonological dissimilarity of the irregular forms of pluralisation, the semantic distinctiveness of the concept and its various articulations are still unquestionable. In other words, the orthographic and spoken realisations may differ from one to the other, but the meaning of the concept, still remains the same. Though the irregular plural allomorphs are in complimentary distribution, that is, where one occurs the other cannot, the allomorphs are unpredictable in occurrence. There is no available linguistic rule which permits one to use one of the allomorphs instead of the other in a particular environment or context as it is with the regular plural allomorphs. There is no linguistic rule in the written or spoken form of, for example, 'child'; 'furniture', 'oasis', and 'syllabus' to suggest that their plural forms are: 'children', 'furniture', 'oases', and 'syllabi' respectively. In other words, pluralisation of the irregular nouns have to be learned based on individual lexical item.

1. There are four allomorphs of the plurality morpheme under the irregular plural system. These are:

   a. The -en plural form from old and middle English.

   b. The vowel mutation

   c. The zero structural difference

   d. Nouns in English but of foreign origin.

4.2.2a. THE -EN PLURAL SYSTEM

There are only three noun forms in the English language which still retain the -en plural system. There are:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Ox	Oxen
Child	Children
Brother	Brethren

But the last two have, in addition, a replacive stem vowel and a suffixal -r, according to Stageberg, (1981). In other words, the cases of 'children' and 'brethren' are more than just the additive -en suffixation. The stem vowels of the singular forms - 'child' and 'brother' - have also been changed from 'child'/tʃaild/ to child /tʃild/ +r, that is, the diphthong /ai/mutates to a front high vowel /i/+r,

and 'brother' /brʌðə/ to `brethren'/breðrən/+r; /ʌ/ changes to /e/+r (The -r is the plural marker of old English for child - 'childer') to form the first plural, before the addition of the -en (another plural marker). These two English noun forms exhibit double plural marking in English. But the case of 'ox' is quite different because it takes the -en directly without any additional modification, Stageberg (1981).

We are, however, cautioned by Jespersen (1974) that the old form 'brethren' is preserved through the influence of the Bible, while the regular new formation, 'brothers' is the only one in ordinary use. It is of interest to note that through ages, the additive -en, as an allomorph of the plurality morpheme, has been recognised and effectively used. This is why we still retain forms like oxen, children and brethren (in the religious circles) in today's English usuage.

4.2.2b **THE VOWEL MUTATION**

This is another irregular process of plural formation. Different linguists refer to the system with different names. Some call it 'internal modification', 'the overt formal difference in a structural series' while others simply call it 'mutation'. But we prefer to call it 'vowel mutation' in this work.

It is a system of pluralisation in English that involves the change of a vowel or vowels in the singular noun form in order to produce a plural one. In the English

TABLE 4.2.2d

S/NO.	NAMES OF ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	SINGULAR WORDS	FOREIGN PLURAL	REGULAR ENGLISH -S PLURAL	REMARK ON USAGE (IF ANY)
1.	LATIN	Stimulus	Stimuli		
		corpus	corpora		
		bonus		bonuses	
		campus		campuses	
		fungus	fungi	funguses	
		nucleus	nuclei	nucleuses	
2.	GREEK	basis	bases		
		analysis	analyses		
		thesis	thesis		
		criterion	criteria		
		phenomenon	phenomena		
		electron		electrons	
		stigma	stigmata		
		neuroma	neutromata		
3.	ITALIAN	Macarono	macaroni		
		spaghetto	spaghetti		
		solo		solos	
		libreto	libreti	libretos	
4.	HEBREW	kibbutz	kibbutzim	kibbutzes	
5.	SPANISH	cherub	cherubim	cherubs	
6.	FRENCH	plateau	plateaux		The x and s are usually pronounced /-z/ in the plural.
		chassis	chassis		

4.3 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF PLURALISATION IN URHOBO

The Urhobo language is a local language in the Southern part of Nigeria, and it has developed its number system fully. The number system of the Urhobo language is divided into 'singular' which denotes 'more than one'. In other words,pluralisation in Urhobo is a way of increasing the quantity of items or entities from 'one' to more than one'. In the Urhobo language, the plural system is manifested in the noun phrase which acts as either the subject or the object of the verb. These noun phrases could be a noun or a pronoun. It is a grammatical category which deals with the number system of the language, traditionally called singular and plural system or Urhobo.

From the data available to us, it was observed that the urhobo language marks one number quantity as singular, and more than one number quantity as plural. This grammatical catagory is manifested only on the subject or object of the verb. The following sentences showed us where pluralisation occurs in Urhobo utterances:

27a. Oshare na kpẹ awha roye
man the go farm his

27b. The man goes (is going) to his farm.

28a. Eshare na kpẹ ewha raye
men the go farm their

28b. The men go (are going) to their farms.

29a. O rie irosu ve ewa kedikede
He/she/it eat rice and beans everyday

29b. He(She or It) eats rice and beans everyday.

30a. E rie irosu ve ewa kedikede

30b. They eat rice and beans everyday.

It is clear from the above sentences that pluralisation is marked on either the subject or the object of the verb, and the subject or object must be either a noun or a pronoun. So, the system of pluralisation in Urhobo agrees with the traditional definition of 'singular' and 'plural', 'one' and 'more than one' respectively. The following is a list of singular and plural noun forms in Urhobo with their English gloss.

TABLE 4.3

OVUOVO (SINGULAR)	EBOU (PLURAL)	GLOSS
Agbara	Egbara	Chair
Aghan	Eghan	Broom
Amaphia	Emaphia	Knife
Ekpu	Ikpu	Bag
Eni	Ini	Elephant
Esi	Isi	Pig
Ekpa	Ekpa	Fool
Etche	Etche	Door
Evwe	Evwe	Goat
Igogolo	Igogolo	Bucket
Imedje	Imedje	Table
Idjede	Idjede	Road

From the above examples, it is evident that in the Urhobo language, when the quantity is 'one', it means singular number, but when the quantity increases to 'more than one', then it is a plural number. Pluralisation in Urhobo, therefore, means a grammatical process whereby a singular quantity (one) is increased to a plural one (more than one) in an utterance. It is also obvious to note that pluralisation is not marked in the verb. In other words, there is no subject - verb

agreement in Urhobo utterance, no matter the tense under consideration. The following sentences help us to illustrate the absence of subject - verb agreement in Urhobo further:-

31a. Omo yena yere ire oke neje
Child that climb trees time always

31b. That boy climb trees always

32a. Emo e 'yena yere ire koke - koke
Children those climb trees everyday

32b. Those children climb trees all the time.

The above sentences are in the present tense. When the subject is singular, 'omo', and when it is plural, 'emo', the verb, 'yere', remains uninflected. These examples suggest that there is no concord in the Urhobo language.

From the data available, it was also discovered that the Urhobo language does not separate the feminine from the masculine gender, neither does it separate these from the neuter when they are used as pronouns. When nouns are changed to pronouns, 'o' usually stands for all singular pronouns; he, she and it, while 'e' stands for the plural pronoun - they - in the subject position. In other words, the Urhobo language has 'o' for singular pronouns, no matter the sex of the subject,

language, there are only seven noun forms that exhibit this plural system, Quirk et al (1974). These words change the vowels in the singular form to other vowels, in order to produce the plural ones. The seven identified nouns are:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Foot /fut/	Feet /fi;t)
Tooth /tu:θ/	Teeth /ti:θ/
Goose /gu:s/	Geese /gi:s/
Man /man/	Men / men/
Woman /wuman/	Women /wimin/
Mouse /maus/	Mice /mais/
Louse /laus/	Lice /lais/

The change of vowels, as can be seen from the above examples, are always internal in the English language. This is the reason why the Language File (1979) calls it 'internal modification'. Though the various changes cannot be phonologically explained, they are in complementary distribution. This is, therefore, another allomorph of the plurality morpheme.

4.2.2c THE ZERO STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE (THE ZERO PLURAL ALLOMORPH)

This is a very common feature in the plural formation systems of English. It is the

realisation of the singular and the plural noun forms as the same. There is usually no structural difference between the singular and the plural noun forms. The semantic difference between the singular and the plural noun form are not manifested in the structural series as shown in the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Counsel	Counsel
Aircraft	Aircraft
Salmon	Salmon
Cattle	Cattle
Furniture	Furniture
Deer	Deer
Sheep	Sheep

Names of nationality whose forms end in-ese/-iz/ cannot also be made plural as earlier mentioned, hence we have structures like:

17.	One Chinese	Five Chinese
18.	One Togolese	Ten Togolese
19.	One Vietnamese	Six Vietnamese.

Names of quantitatives that have been premodified cannot also be made plural, as in the following examples:

20.	Dozen	Two dozen - - -
21.	Hundred	Four Hundred - - -
22.	Thousand	Six Thousand - - -
23.	Million	Three million.

However, in spite of the structural difference, the context, the use of numerals and the use of determiners can clarify whether the quantity is 'one' or 'more than one'. For example:

24. A sheep is grazing in the field (one)
25. Ten sheep are grazing in the field (Numbered, ten)
26. Those sheep were grazing in the field (context: plural).

Since the context, use of numberals and determiners can clarify the number, it is believed that the zero plural morphological process is also one of the allomorphs of the plurality morpheme in the English Language.

4.2.2d NOUNS IN ENGLISH BUT OF FOREIGN ORIGIN.

The English Language is not basically made up of English lexical items. It is a conglomeration of words of different languages. There are several noun forms in

the English language which are not of English origin. These are words which are said to be borrowed from other languages. The modern English language borrowed several of its lexemes, specially noun forms, from the classical languages, that is, Latin and Greek. Apart from the classical languages, some noun forms are also borrowed from the Italian, the Spanish, the French and the Hebrew languages. The noun forms which are borrowed from these sources are what this researcher refers to as 'nouns in English but of foreign origin'.

Such nouns which are borrowed into the English Language, either absorb the English additive plural morpheme, -s, or they retain their original plural system or they maitain both the English and the native plural systems. This is the situation because in the time past, knowledge and competent usage of the classical languages, were labels of the educated or literate in the society. Now that the classical languages are extinct, the English language still continues to use some of the old plural systems of the foreign languages. However, our investigation also revealed that the foreign plurals are more common in technical usage than in the day- to - day language, hence in every day conversations, it is more common to hear plurals like 'formulas', 'antennas', 'concertos', 'curriculums', 'syllabuses', etc, than 'formulae', 'antennae', 'concerti', 'curricula', 'syllabi', etc. Others are 'circuses', 'gymnasiums', 'dogmas', 'funguses', 'geniuses' etc which sound more like English words than 'circi', 'gymnasia', 'dogmata; 'fungi', 'genii', etc (see

Quirk et al (1974) and Jespersen (1974).

Some of these borrowed words into English are assigned meanings which are different from their original meanings. For instance, the word, 'stamina', in Latin is the plural of 'stamen', but in English, it is assigned an independent singular meaning. Similarly, 'errata' is the plural of 'erratum' in Latin, but it is used as a singular to mean' a list of a printer's errors', Jespersen (1974).

From the above discussion, it is very clear to us that the English Language borrowed some of its noun forms from other languages. These borrowed forms either retain their native plural systems, assimilate the regular English plural morpheme -s, or use both. The following is a list of some nouns in English but of foreign origin, as extracted from Stageberg (1981); Roberts (1964); Jespersen (1974) and Quirk et al (1974). See more of these noun forms in Appendix B.

and 'e' for the plural ones. The following sentences serve as illustration:

33a. Ifranki ka dẹ ewhu kpokpọ odẹ
Frank will buy shirt new tomorrow.

33b. Frank will buy a new shirt tomorrow

34a. Ọ ka dẹ ewhu kpokpọ odẹ
He/she/it will buy shirt new tomorrow

35a. Ifranki vẹ ọga rọye cha
Frank and master his come

35b. Frank and his boss are coming (come)

36a. E cha
They come

36b. They are coming (come)

The 'ọ' of sentence 34a of the Urhobo language does not indicate the sex of the third person pronoun. It could mean a male, a female or an inanimate object. The 'e' of sentence 36a is always indicative of more than one entity. Both of them can only be used in the subject position of a sentence.

The analysis and discussions of the available data on pluralisation in Urhobo also revealed that the language is a tonal language and that the spelling of its noun forms must start with vowels. In other words, nouns in the language are spelled as they are pronounced and the names of people, places and things (noun forms) always begin with vowels. It was discovered from the available data that Urhobo noun forms do not start their spellings with consonantal sounds; they start with

only vocalic sounds. This is shown clearly in the following list of singular and plural forms in the Urhobo language:

TABLE 4.3a

OVUOVO (SINGULAR)	EBUO (PLURAL)	GLOSS
Agbara	Egbara	Chair
Amaphia	Emaphia	Knife
Ewerin	Iwerin	Monkey
Erhi	Irhi	Fish
Ekpa	Ekpa	Fool
Ede	Ede	Day
Idjighere	Idjighere	Bicycle
Idjede	Idijede	Road
Obo	Abo	Hand
Owo	Awo	Leg
Opian	Epian	Cutlass
Omote	Emete	Girl
Ule	Ile	Song
Uken	Iken	Egg

The above word - list also revealed that the Urhobo language has only seven oral vowels; /I, e, e, a, o o and u/. There are three regular front and three regular

back vowels; /i, e, & e/ and /o, o & u/ respectively. The /a/ sound, as a result of its neutral appearance in context, its position is usually considered according to the environment in which it appears. Therefore it could be a front or a back vowel, as the case may be.

We also infer from the data that the Urhobo language begins the spelling of singular noun forms with both the front and the back vowels. But only the front vowels are used to pluralise words. The back vowels were never used in any environment or any word to form a plural. Put in another way, the initial sound of a plural form must predictably be a front vowel, as shown in the word list above (table 4.3a).

4.3.1 THE PLURAL SYSTEMS IN URHOBO

Pluralisation in Urhobo is a morphophonemic process which involves not only the morphology but also the phonology of the language. The available data revealed that the Urhobo language exhibits two basic morphophonemic processes which result in pluralisation in the language. These processes are:

a. The initial vowel mutation

b. The zero structural difference or the zero plural morphological process.

These pluralisation processes of the Urhobo language would be analysed and discussed separately for a clearer picture of the morphophonemic processes.

4.3.1a THE INITIAL VOWEL MUTATION

This is a process in which there is a change of, at least, a vowel in a structural series. This concept was called 'mutation' by Quirk et al (1974), 'internal modification' in Language File (1979, number 52) and 'the overt formal difference in a structural series' by Tomori (1979). In spite of the variety in the names, the semantic connotation of the concept remains the same: a change of a vowel or vowels in the singular noun form in order to produce a plural one. The Urhobo language plural system is built around this morphophonemic process. It is the most popular system as far as the language is concerned. In the analysis and discussions held on the available data, it was revealed that out of the seven word-lists, a -to u - (cf 2.3.1 - 2.3.7), used for the analysis, six exhibit the initial vowel mutation process. It was only in the /i-/ word-list that this morphological process did not occur. It occurred in the /a-/, /e-/. /o-/ and /u-/ word-lists. Every name of a person, place or thing in the language must begin with a vowel. In view of this, in the exhibition of this process of pluralisation, the initial vowel mutation, it is the initial vowel or the first vocalic sound of the structural series that would change from the singular initial vowel sound to a plural vowel marker.

These revealations are evident in the following examples:

TABLE 4.3.1a

QVUQVO	EBUO	GLOSS
Adjan	Edjan	Bat
Agogo	Igogo	Bell
Amwa	Emwa	Cloth
Erue	Irue	Bull
Egodo	Igodo	Compound
Evie	Ivie	Breast
Ewhere	Ewhere	Cooking-pot
Evwe	Evwe	Kola-nut
Etche	Etche	Door
Ophiawo	Ephiawo	Shoe
Omamo	Emamo	Fruit
Orua	Erua	Family
Omoshare	Emeshare	Boy
Oriedan	Eriedan	Witch/wizard
Ohovwore	Ehovwore	Chief
Uyen	Iyen	Fly
Uyovwi	Iyovwi	Head
Usekpe	Isekpe	snail

From the above list of Urhobo noun forms, it is obvious that all nouns forms in the Urhobo language must begin their spellings with a vowel. Six out of the seven vowels of the language (cf 2.3.1 - 2.3.7) were used in the initial positions of singular noun forms in the data - table but only four of them were used in the initial positions of the plural forms. In other words, in the column for the singular noun forms, both front and back vowels were used to begin the orthographic forms but on the column of the plural noun forms, only four front vowels were used. It, therefore, became evident that the Urhobo language pluralises with only the front vowels.

The basic plurality morpheme of the Urhobo language has been identified earlier as the /i-/ bound prefix (cf 2.3.9) above. This is the plurality morpheme because it dominates the other front vowels in plurality marking. It appeared more frequently than the other ones. It appeared singly as the plural marker in three of the seven lists of words, and co-occurred in two others. So, it is used to mark five out of the seven lists (cf 2.3.1 - 2.3.7). In view of this frequency of occurrence, it has been identified as the basic plurality morpheme of the Urhobo language, and the other front vowels could be regarded as its allomorphs. The above table or word-list (Table 4.3.1a) also helped us to substantiate the claim that the (i-) plurlality marker is more frequent than any other marker in the series (cf 2.3.9).

4.3.1b THE ZERO STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE

Both the singular and the plural forms are structurally realised with the same orthographic form. There is no change in their structures. In other words, there is no perceptable difference in the spelling of the singular and the plural forms. In the Urhobo language, this morphophonemic process of pluralisation also manifests itself in some noun forms. It has been noted above that the regular plural system of the Urhobo language is the initial vowel mutation and that the /i-/ plurality morpheme is the basic plural morpheme. But, in spite of this observation, it was also discovered that some noun forms in the language do not change their structure when their number is increased from 'one' to 'more than one'. In other words, they exhibit the zero plural system.

The available data on Urhobo plural systems showed that the word-lists of /a-/, /e-/ and / i-/ exhibit this morphophonemic process. All noun forms in the /i-/ list remain unchanged ortghographically, even when they were made plural, and some words in word-lists /a-/ and /e-/ also behaved the same way. The orthographic forms of the words in their singular and plural states were the same. This assertion

could be seen clearly in the following examples:

TABLE 4.3.1b.

OVUOVO	EBUO	GLOSS
Amen	Amen	Water
Agho	Agho	Cloud
Akọn	Akọn	Tooth
Etọn	Etọn	Hair
Ẹde	Ẹde	Day
Ẹvwe	Ẹvwe	Kola-nut
Imẹdjẹ	Imẹdjẹ	Table
Idjede	Idjede	Road
Iherin	Iherin	Horn (of animal)
Idjighere	Idjighere	Bicycle

It should be noted, however, that in spite of similar structures for both the singular and the plural forms, the pluralisation process does not, in any way, pose problems to the native speakers of the Urhobo language. They use context, numberal and determiners to clarify the quantity of the item. Put in another way, the semantic hurdle is usually overcome by the context in which the word appeared, the use of numerals to show the quantity and the use of number

quantifiers as determiners. For example, when an Urhobo native speaker says:

37a Oshare na dẹ idjighere kẹ eya roye,
Man the buy bicycle for wives his

37b. The man bought bicycles for his wives;

the 'Idjighere' (bicycle) here is plural because the context informed us that the wives are 'more than one'. Therefore, the gift item could not have been 'one'. Furthermore, when a native speaker says:

38a. O whẹ iherin na koko
He/she/it pack horn the gather

38b He/she/it is packing the horns together.

The listener would have no problem in deciding the number of the 'iherin' (horn) in utterances like this one. This is so because the Urhobo speakers use 'toro' (pick) for 'one item' and 'whẹ' (pack) for 'more than one item'. The use of numerals and determiners also simplify this pluralisation process even further as shown in the following sentences:

39a. Ayin rui iruo na vwẹ ẹdẹ erha
They do work the in day three

39b They completed the work in three days

40a Imẹdjẹ eyena e re ose me
Table those marker for faher my

40b Those tables are my father's

The zero plural system is a common feature in the Urhobo language and native speakers do not have any problem in decoding it. Non-native speakers who are learning the Urhobo language may not encounter any problem too, especially if such learners can speak the English language. This is so because the English zero plural morphophonemic process is similar to that of the Urhobo language.

Considering the above analysis, we can comfortably assert that the language has a developed plural system which is manifested in the initial vowel mutation, with the /i-/, plurality morpheme as the basic plural morpheme, and /e-/, /e-/ and /a-/ as allomorphs of /i-/. We also found out that the language also operates the zero plural morphology. This system poses no problem to the native speakers because of their competent use of context, numerals and determiners to overcome the semantic undertone.

4.4 A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In the above unit, we analysed pluralisation in all its ramifications in the English and the Urhobo languages. In this section, we intend to compare the concept, pluralisation, in both languages in order to find out if the semantic distinctiveness of the concept is the same or different. We would also compare some characteristic features of pluralisation, like areas of manifestation, concord and the plural systems of both languages. This section, therefore,

prepares the basis for the selection of similar and dissimilar features of pluralisation in English and Urhobo. Let us characterise these features one after the other.

4.4.1 STRUCTURAL AREAS OF MANIFESTATION

Pluralisation is a system of number which is realised in the nominal phrases that are used as subjects and objects of verbs in English and Urhobo structures. In the English language, pluralisation manifests itself in nouns, pronouns, verbs and determiners, while in the Urhobo language, the concept manifests itself in nouns, pronouns and determiners. It does not affect the verb in the Urhobo language, no matter the tense involved. The structural areas of manifestation of pluralisation can be further shown in the following examples:

1. **THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

41. Nouns: John and James come to Zaria weekly

42. Pronouns: They come to Zaria always

43. Verbs: The Students go on excursion every year

44. They are students of A.B.U, Zaria

45. Determiners: These (those) houses are my father's

2. **THE URHOBO LANGUAGE**

46a. Nouns: Ufuoma ve aye roye de ephiawo ve iwu kpokpo

46b. Ufuoma and his wife bought new shoes and cloths

47a Pronouns: E̲ de̲ Ughọjọ̲ ve̲ ughegbe

47b. They bought a clock and a mirror

48a. Determiners: Iwu yena e̲ re Ufuoma ve aye roye

48b. Those cloths are for (belong to) Ufuoma and his wife

The above sentences show the structural areas where pluralisation is manifested in both the English and the Urhobo language sentences. From the above discussion, we can infer that the areas of manifestation, like the concept itself, is similar in both languages.

4.4.2 CONCORD (SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT)

Another notable characteristic feature of pluralisation in English is how this concept affects the verb of the sentence in the present tense. The number of the subject determines the number of the verb to be used. In other words, if the sentence is in the present tense, the number of the subject - singular or plural determines the type of the verb to be used. If the subject is plural, the verb would also be plural and if singular, the verb would also be singular. This system of concord of subject and the following verb, happens only in the English language.

The Urhobo language does not exhibit concord. No matter the number of the subject, the following verb does into change in the Urhobo language. This means

that there is no subject - verb agreement in the language structures. The following examples to further explain concord in English and its absence in the Urhobo language.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

49. They come to Zaria every weekend

50. He comes to Zaria every weekend.

THE URHOBO LANGUAGE:

51a. E cha eki rẹ Ikaura kẹdeki-kẹdeki
They come market of Kaura every-market-day

51b. They come to Kaura market on every market day.

52a. O cha ekl rẹ ikaura kẹdeki-kẹdeki
He/she/it comes market of Kaura every-market-day

52b. He (she or it) come to Kaura market on every-market-day.

These show that there is subject - verb agreement in English. The number of the subjects, 'they' and 'he', determines the type of the verb to be used, 'come' and 'comes' respectively, if the utterance is in the present tense. But in the Urhobo language, the number of the subject does not affect the verb at all. When the subject was 'e' (they) and 'o' (he, she or it), the state of the verb remains the same, 'cha' (come).

4.4.3 DISCUSSIONS ON AREAS OF SIMILARITY AND DISSIMILARITY

Pluralisation has been extensively discussed and its characteristic features exhaustively analysed in both the English and the Urhobo languages with the aid of the available data. At this juncture, in order to specifically attempt the last research question - What are the possible similarities and dissimilarities of pluralisation in the English and the Urhobo languages? - of this investigative work more adequately, this researcher wants to out-lay the areas of similarity and differences in pluralisation processes of the languages under comparison.

4.4.3a. AREAS OF SIMILARITY

1. THE CONCEPT OF PLURALISATION

Pluralisation is a universal linguistic concept. The English language is a global language, while the Urhobo language is a local one that is only spoken in a part of Delta State of Nigeria. Pluralisation has been well studied and documented in English while in Urhobo, the study has hardly started. In spite of this disparity in the level of study in the two languages, the semantic implication of the concept is still similar, if not the same. The semantic distinctiveness of pluralisation is a mark of plurality in a nominal phrase. Pluralisation is a morphophonemic process, a grammatical category that has both a function and a meaning. In English and Urhobo, it functions as a mark of plurality which is affixed to the subject or object

of a verb in a grammatical structure while it means a morphophonemic process which changes 'one' numbered quantity (singular) to 'more than one' (plural). Pluralisation, therefore, means a mark of a process which changes a singular number to a plural one in both the English and the Urhobo languages.

2. THE STRUCTURAL AREAS OF MANIFESTATION

Pluralisation as a universal linguistic concept, is actualised in nouns, pronouns (subjects and objects) and determiners of grammatical structures of both English and Urhobo. Pluralisation, as a morphophonemic process is manifested in nominal phrases (nouns and pronouns) which are used either as subjects or objects of verbs in grammatical utterances in both languages. This concept is similar in the structural areas of manifestation in both the English and the Urhobo languages. It is commonly realised in nouns, pronouns and preceding determiners used as modifiers of nouns in the languages under comparison. So, this is another area of similarity of pluralisation in English and Urhobo.

3. THE PLURAL FORMATION SYSTEMS

The English and the Urhobo languages are two distinct languages that are culturally bound. Language cannot be discussed successfully divorced of cultural heritages, hence the manifestation of the concept of pluralisation varies from one language to another. This concept is expanded by various processes in the English

language. But since English and Urhobo are two different languages, the medium of expression, items used to express concepts, the variants and distribution of these items can hardly be the same across languages. This is why there is a gap between the plural systems of English and Urhobo. In spite of the marked disparity in the medium of expression of this concept in these languages, there are still some similar systems which both languages use to pluralise their noun - forms. These are the vowel mutation and the zero plural morphological process.

a. **THE VOWEL MUTATION**

This plural system has a limited number of noun-forms in the English language. It affects only seven noun forms in the language (cf 4.2.2). The structures of the singular noun forms change by substituting the internal vowels or vowel with front ones or one. In other words, the singular noun forms are made up of both front and back vowels, but when the words are made plural, the vowels automatically become front ones only. This is shown in the following examples:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Foot	Feet /fi:t/
Woman	Women /wimin/
Louse	Lice /lais/

While the English language changes the internal voewl(s) to make a word plural, the Urhobo language changes the initial vowels to perform the same. Since all noun forms start their spellings with vowels, it is the initial vowels of singular noun - forms that change to front ones in order to make a word plural. This assumption is further buttressed in the following example:

OVUOVO (SINGULAR)	EBUO (PLURAL)	GLOSS
Agogo	Igogo	Bell
Erue	Irue	Bull
Evwe	Evwe	Goat
Obo	Abo	Hand
Orua	Erua	Family
Oriedan	Eriedan	Witch (Wizard)
Uyovwi	Iyovwi	Head

In the above examples, the English language changes the internal vowels of singular noun - forms to form plural ones while the Urhobo language changes the initial vowel sounds of noun stems in order to make them plurals. The singular structures of nouns, that is, the bound singular affix could be either a front or a back vowel. But when these words are made plural, the singular affix, automatically changes to a front one in both languages. From the data analysis and the above illustrations, it is obvious that the vowel mutation as a plural

process, though realised differently in the two languages due to cultural limitations, is a common plural morphophonemic process in both the English and the Urhobo languages.

b. THE ZERO STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE

This is another similar plural system in both the English and the Urhobo languages. It is the manifestation of pluralisation without any formal structural difference between the singular and plural forms. The semantic difference between the singular and the plural forms is not obvious from just the orthographic forms of the two nouns. The structures of the singular and the plural forms are usually the same. In other words, there is a zero structural difference between the singular noun and plural one.

The English language has several noun forms which are culturally bound to maintain their spellings in both singular and the plural usages of such noun-forms. This class of words comprises of common nouns, nationality names and pre-

modified quantitative. The following are some examples:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Furniture	Furniture
Equipment	Equipment
Information	Information
Aircraft	Aircraft
Deer	Deer
Staff	Staff
Senegalese	Senegalese
Japanese	Japanese
Dozen	Six dozen
Thousand	Ten thousand

In the above examples there is no structural difference between the singular and the plural forms. In this case, the semantic difference cannot be determined until such noun forms are used in sentences. When they are used in sentences, the context, use of pre-modifiers like numerals and determiners help to determine the semantic difference between the singular and the plural usage as in the following examples:

53. The hunter shot and killed that deer (one)

54. The hunter shot and killed those deer (more than one)

55. The Senegalese came to our house yesterday (one)

56. Five Senegalese came to our house yesterday (more than one)

In sentence 53, the use of the determiner 'that' quantifies the number to be 'one' (singular) deer, while the use of 'those' sentence 54, quantifies the number to be 'more than one' (plural). The use of a numeral, 'five' in sentence 56 also quantifies the number of Senegalese to be 'more than one' while the definite article 'the' qualifies the number to be, 'one' in sentence 55. This system, common as it is in the English language, is even more common in the Urhobo language.

In the Urhobo language, the /i-/ plurality morpheme has been identified as the basic plurality morpheme. The plural processes of the language revolve round the /i-/ plurality morpheme, the initial vowel mutation and the zero plural morphological process. The zero plural morphological process, like the English one, is the manifestation of the singular and the plural noun forms as the same. There is no noticeable structural difference between the singular and the plural forms. All noun - forms that have /i-/ as their initial sound in the singular number, also retain the /i-/ plurality morpheme in the plural number. Therefore, in the word-list of /i/ which was used for the data analysis above, the structures of

the singular and the plural forms are the same. This is shown vividly in the following examples:

OVUOVO	EBUO	GLOSS
Amẹn	Amẹn	Water
Agho	Agho	loud
Akọn	Akọn	Tooth
Etọn	Eton	Hair
Ẹde	Ẹde	Day
Ẹvwe	Ẹvwe	Kola-nut
Imẹdjẹ	Imedje	Table
Idjede	Idjẹdẹ	Road
Iherin	Iherin	Horn (of animal)
Idjighere	Idjighere	Bicycle

Like the English zero plural morphological process, it is alsos realised in the Urhobo language in the same manner. The native speakers do not usually encounter any proplem with the interpretation of the number of the noun-forms. The number - being singular or plural - is usually decoded by the context under which the word was used, some particular determiners which were used to qualify the noun - forms and the use of numerals to determine the number. The use of the above grammatical elements help the native speakers of the Urhobo language

to over-come the semantic problem posed by the zero plural morphological process.

In view of the above facts, it is obvious that the zero plural morphological process is common to both English and Urhobo, its manifestations are similar and its mode of interpretation under the zero plural system depends on the same structural elements - context, number and determiners.

c. FOREIGN WORDS IN ENGLISH AND URHOBO

Every language is known to have a certain number of borrowed words, and the two languages under comparison are not exceptions. The English language loaned several of its noun-forms from Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French etc (see appendix B), and to some of them the English language assigned new meanings and new plural system. The Urhobo language is also known to borrow some noun forms from the Yoruba and the Bini languages, and also assigned new meanings which

are different from the original meanings. Examples of such words in Urhobo but from Yoruba and Bini languages are:

GLOSS	YORUBA - MEANING	NEW MEANING IN URHOBO
Ẹkpa	Ground-nuts	Fool (or an unripe fruit)
Ọdẹ	Fool (idiot)	Plantain
Ọlẹ	A lazy fellow	Yam
Ọka	Maize (corn)	All green snakes (or maize)

The last one 'ọka', was borrowed from the Bini language. It is also present in the Yoruba language.

The Urhobo language also assigned the loaned words new plural system. They are assigned the initial vowel mutation plural system and become:

OVUOVO	EBUO	GLOSS
Ekpa	Ekpa	An unripe fruit (A fool)
Ode	Ede	Plantain
Ole	ele	Yam
Oka	Eka	All green snakes (maize)

The act of borrowing words, usually noun-forms, from other languages and changing their plural systems to suit the new users of the loaned words is a

common feature in both the English and the Urhobo languages.

This researcher wants to generalise here that in both the English and the Urhobo languages, the oncept of pluralisation is similar in meaning and function. Its structural areas of manifestation are also similar in both languages, except in its effects on the verb of the sentence in the present tense. The common areas of manifestation of pluralisation in English and Urhobo are the nouns, the pronouns, and the preceding determiners of nouns. All the plural systems of Urhobo are also present in the English language, but not all the processes of English plural are exhibited in the Urhobo language. However, pluralisation is as complete in the Urhobo language, as linguistic concept, as it is complete in the English language.

4.4.3b. AREAS OF DISSIMILARITY

From the above analysis, it is obvious to observe that pluralisation, as a linguistic concept, is closely manifested in both the English and the Urhobo languages. However, since English and Urhobo are two distinct languages which are culturally bound, the medium of expression, items used to express the concept, the variants and distribution of these items can hardly be the same. This is the assumption of as we discuss the dissimilarity of pluralisation in English and Urhobo.

The discussion of the similar features of pluralisation above has tremendously exposed us to the possible areas of dissimilarity also. These areas are the

structural areas of manifestation and the plural morphophonemic processes.

1. THE STRUCTURAL AREA OF MANIFESTATION

It has been observed in section 4.4.1 above that pluralisation is structurally manifested in nouns, pronouns, determiners and verbs. It was also proved beyond doubt that the structural areas of manifestation is similar with regards to nouns, pronouns and determiners, but different in verbs as a result of lack of concord or subject/verb agreement in the Urhobo language.

In English, the number of the subject determines the type of verb to follow the subject in the present tense. In other words, if the subject is singular, the verb must also be singular, and if it is plural, the verb must also be plural as shown in the following examples:

57. The boy goes to school on bike; but
58. The boys go to school on bike
59. He (she or it) is a beautiful creation of God; but
60. They are beautiful creation of God.

In these examples, sentences 57 and 59 have singular subjects (noun and pronoun) 'the boy' and 'He' (she or it) respectively - and these subjects determined the following verb, hence we had 'goes' and 'is' respectively in both

utterances, but in sentences 58 and 60, we had plural subjects - 'the boys' and 'they' - and, therefore, plural verbs - 'go' and 'are' respectively.

But in the Urhobo language, it is not possible to exhibit the English type of subject verb agreement. The following verb does not change, no matter the number of the subject and the tense involved. This was also comfirmed in the Urhobo data as illustrated in the following utterance:

61a. Omoshare na kpe isukuru kedi-kede
Boy the go school every-day

61b. The boy goes to school everyday

62a. Emeshare na kpe isukuru kedi-kede
Boys the go school every-day

62b. The boys go to school everyday.

In these examples, when the subject was singular in sentence 61a and when it was plural in sentence 62a - 'Omoshare na' and 'Emeshare na' respectively - the verb was still 'kpe' (go). So, in the Urhobo language, time of the verb and number of the subject do not affect the verb of the sentence. This is the only structural area of manifestation where there is a notable difference in the realisation of pluralisation in both English and Urhobo.

2. THE PLURALITY MORPHEMES

Another area of dissimilarity is the morpheme that is traditionally used as the

plurality morpheme. The English language uses the additive -s as its basic plurality morpheme with /-s/, /-z/, /-iz/, the -en, the mutation, the zero and the various foreign plurals as allomorphs of the English plurality morpheme, -s. But the Urhobo language uses the /i-/ initial vowel sound as its basic plurality morpheme with the /i-/, /e-/, /ẹ-/, /a-/ and the zero plural as the allomorphs of /i-/ plurality morpheme. From the above discussion, it is quite clear that there is a noticeable difference in the basic plurality morphemes of both the English and the Urhobo languages.

3. THE PLURAL MORPHOPHONEMIC PROCESSESS

a. THE REGULAR PLURAL SYSTEM:

It was noted above that the English language has two systems of pluralisation: the regular and the irregular plural systems. The regular system of plural formation is unique to the English language, in fact, it is culturally English. This system of plural formation is not present in the Urhobo language at all. Traditionally, native speakers, start the pronunciation of all Urhobo noun forms with vowels and also end them with vowels. Since the language is a tonal language, it is usually orthographically symbolised as it is pronounced. The additive -s plurality morpheme of English is a variant of the letter s, which of course, is a consonant. It cannot, therefore, end the pronunciation of any Urhobo noun-forms. This

system of pluralisation of the English language is, therefore, not accommodated in the Urhobo language. So, it is another area of dissimilarity in pluralisation between the English and the Urhobo languages.

b. **THE -EN PLURAL SYSTEM**:

This irregular system of pluralisation in English, though not very common in the English language itself, is completely not present in the Urhobo language. The English language identified only three noun-forms with this system. These are:

SINGULAR	**PLURAL**
Ox	Oxen
Child	Children
Brother	Brethren

It should be noted that the last one, 'brethren' is gradually being replaced with the modern version, 'brothers'. This, not withstanding, the -en plural system has no trace in the available data of the Urhobo language.

From the above analysis, we can safely generalise here that in spite of the fact that the English and the Urhobo languages are similar in some observable ways, it is

also a known fact that there are some dissimilarities. The concept of pluralisation is different in the two languages in the areas of how it affects the verb, that is, subject/verb agreement (concord), the plurality morpheme of both languages, the English regular and the -en plural systems.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY:

The study of language is one of the most interesting and dynamic endeavours in the humanities. The dynamism in language is gradually building up a linguistic theory called 'universal grammar' - a unified grammar for all languages. This theory can only be substantiated if languages are compared. This is the basic reason behind this study. But, because no text can account for a complete knowledge of a language, no one can also claim a complete knowledge of a language. In view of the above revelation, this researcher looked at the structures, forms and functions of pluralisation in Urhobo and English. This study, therefore, is a comparative analysis of pluralisation in Urhobo and English.

The study commenced with a brief historical background of the Urhobo people and language. This was followed by the introductory sub-sections of a thesis. Related literature on pluralisation in English and Urhobo were reviewed. Thereafter, the sources of our data were highlighted, and this was closely followed by the analysis of data and other detailed discussions which culminated in this summary, conclusion and some recommendations for further researches.

The study examined pluralisation in all its ramifications in both Urhobo and English. The researcher established and justified the need for a comparative work of this magnititude. A study, such as this, is considered in the study of language to be of immense importance both for practical and theoretical purposes. The present study revealed the fact that there abound similarities and dissimilarities in the plural systems of Urhobo and English. The similarities were established in the following areas:

1. Pluralisation as a universal linguistic concept: The concept, pluralisation, and its meaning, "more than one", are common to both languages.
2. The structural areas of manifestation: Pluralisation is manifested in English and Urhobo sentence structures in the areas of nouns and pronouns which are used as either subjects or objects of such structures. It is also realised in the determiners of both languages.
3. The plural formation systems: The vowel mutation plural system is common to both languages. The zero plural system and the presence of foreign words with modified plural systems were also discovered in both languages.

In spite of the above similarities, dissimilarities were also discovered in the following areas:

1. The structural areas of manifestation: in the English language, pluralisation

is marked in the verbal system but the Urhobo language does not exhibit this characteristic. There is no subject/object agreement, which is a characteristic of the English plural system, in the Urhobo language.

2. The plural morphemes of both languages also differ. English plurality morpheme is the additive /-s/ suffix, while that of the Urhobo language is the initial /-i/ sound.

3. It was also discovered that the regular plural and the -en plural morphophonemic processes of English are also absent in Urhobo.

5.2 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This study is aimed at establishing the structural, formal and functional similarities and dissimilarities that exist in the plural systems of Urhobo and English. The research questions which this study sought answers to were as follow:

1. What is pluralisation?
2. How is it manifested in Urhobo?
3. What are the possible similarities and dissimilarities of pluralisation between Urhobo and English?

Pluralisation as a linguistic concept, is an incremental mark of a morphophonemic process which increases a singular quantity to a plural one. This study has

discovered that the concept is functionally the same in the two languages. In the areas of manifestation, it was discovered that, in spite of the inherent dissimilarities (cf 4.4.3b) in the structures and forms of Urhobo and English, for example, the different forms of the plurality morpheme -/s/ for English and /i-/ for Urhobo - similar characteristic features also abound (cf 4.4.3a), for example, pluralisation is marked in nouns, pronouns and determiners of both languages.

Based on the above findings, it may be concluded that structural and formal dissimilarities exist in the plural morphophonemic processes of both the Urhobo and the English languages, and there are also notable functional similarities in them. The area of similar characteristic features constitute area of positive transfer in the English language learning efforts of the Urhobo learners of English. For example:

	SINGULAR	**PLURAL**	**GLOSS**
English	Man	Men	
Urhobo	Oshare	Eshare	Man

This is an example of a positive transfer of the knowledge of vowel mutation from Urhobo to English. The internal vowel changes in English but in Urhobo the initial vowel changes. In short, there is always a change of a vowel or vowels in vowel mutation, both in Urhobo and in English. In other words, the areas of similarities consitute the in-put competence of the English learning efforts of Urhobo

speakers. On the other hand, the areas of dissimilarities constitute the actual set of learning problems in an Urhobo - English bilingual, that is, these areas constitute the major difficulties for the Urhobo learners of English.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Translators, writers, linguistic researchers and any general reader of this research work will find it very useful and should derive inspiration from the present study in planning, eradicating or harmonising some of the linguistic difficulties which exist in the global and the Nigerian languages. The validity of any language (research should be based on sound linguistic principles and some knowledge of the comparative linguistics, like this particular one, at least, that involves a main Nigerian language and English, a global language.

In the course of this research work, it was discovered that sufficient and current textbooks on Urhobo language were not available. We, therefore, recommend that the Delta State Goverment should make funds available to linguistic scholars to enable them produce texbooks, readers and other literary materials in this language for researches and other academic purposes.

In view of the encouragement of mother-tongue education in the language policy on education, we, also, recommend that mother-tongue education (MTE) be adequately funded among the main Nigerian languages, with particular reference

to the Urhobo language and other Nigerian languages in general.

Teachers and competent language counsellors on the Urhobo language were obviously not available during the course of this research. We, therefore, plead with the Delta State Government to train teaching personnel and linguistic scholars in the Urhobo language. These personnel and the documented materials shall soon become assets to the Delta State Government's Programme on Language Development.

The Urhobo language has no orthographic system that is native to it. This is why it is adapting the Yoruba orthography. This researcher hereby appleals to the authorities concerned to evolve a befitting writing system for the Urhobo language users and researchers.

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A POLITICAL MAP OF DELTA STATE SHOWING THE LOCATION OF URHOBO LANGUAGE SPEAKERS.



Culled from A Political Map of Nigeria (The New Edition 1997)

APPENDIX 'B'

SOME NOUN-FORMS IN ENGLISH OF FOREIGN ORIGIN

S/No	Name of Original Language	List of Singular Words	Foreign Plural	Regular English - s Plural	Remark on Usage (If Any)
1A	LATIN	Stimulus	Stimuli		
		Alumus	Alumni		
		Bacillus	Bacili		
		Locus	Loci		
		Corpus	Corpora		
		Apparatus		Apparatuses	
		Bonue		Bonuses	
		Campus		Campuses	
		Chorus		Choruses	
		Virus		Viruses	
		Focus	Foci	Focuses	
		Fungus	Fungi	Funguses	
		Nucleus	Nuclei	Nucleuses	
		Syllabus	Syllabi	Syllabuses	
		Terminus	Termini	Terminuses	

S/No	Name of Original Language	List of Singular Words	Foreign Plural	Regular English - s Plural	Remark on Usage (If Any)
1B	LATIN	Alumna	Alumnae		
		Alga	Algae		
		Larva	Larvae		
		Area		Areas	
		Arena		Arenas	
		Dilema		Dilemas	
		Diploma		Diplomas	
		Drama		Dramas	
		Era		Aras	
		Antenna	Antennae	Antennas	
		Formular	Formulae	Formulas	
		Nebula	Nebulae	Nebulas	
		Vertebra	Vertebrae	Verebras	
1C	LATIN	Curriculum	Curricula		
		Addendum	Addenda		
		Bacterium	Bacteria		
		Erratum	Errata		
		Ovum	Ova		

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S/No	Name of Original Language	List of Singular Words	Foreign Plural	Regular English - s Plural	Remark on Usage (If Any)
1D	LATIN	Album		Albums	
		Museum		Museums	
		Premium		Premiums	
		Stadium	Stadia	Stadiums	
		Forum	Fora	Forums	
		Memorandum	Memoranda	Memorandums	
		Stratum	Strata	Stratums	
1E	LATIN	Medium	Media	Medias	
		Index	Indices	Indixes	
		Apex	Apices	Apexes	
		Vortex	Vortices	Vortexes	
		Matrix	Matrices	Matrixes	
		Cordex	Cordices	Cordixes	
2A	GREEK	Basis	Bases		
		Analysis	Analyses		
		Crisis	Crises		
		Thesis	Theses		
		Oasis	Oases		

S/No	Name of Original Language	List of Singular Words	Foreign Plural	Regular English - s Plural	Remark on Usage (If Any)
		Ax	Axes		
		Eclipse	Eclipses		
2B	GREEK	Criterion	Creteria		
		Electron		Electrons	
		Neutron		Neutrons	
		Proton		Protons	
		Ganglion		Ganglions	
		Automaton	Automata	Automatons	
2C	GREEK	Stigma	Stigmata		
		Neuroma	Neuromata		
		Stamma	Stammata		
3	SPANISH	Patio	Patios		
		Mosquito	Mosquitoes		
		Cafeteria	Cafeterias		
		Guiter	Guiters		
		Cigar	Cigas		
		Lariat	Lariats		
		Canyon	Canyons		
		Alligator	Alligators		
		Tornado	Tornadoes		

S/No	Name of Original Language	List of Singular Words	Foreign Plural	Regular English - s Plural	Remark on Usage (If Any)
4	FRENCH	Bureau	Bureaux		The -x plural is always pronounced as /-z/ in English. Some French nouns ending in -s or -x are pronounced without the final sound.
		Adieu	Adieux		
		Tableau	Tableaux		
		Plateau	Plateaux		
		Trouseau	Trouseaux		
		Corps		Add the / -z/ Sound to the pronunciation but not the spelling	
		Chamois			
		Chasis			
		Patois			
5	HEBREW	Rendevous			
		Cherub	Cherubim	Cherubs	
		Seraph	Seraphim	Seraphs	