ENGLISH INFLECTION IN PLURAL NOUNS
WITH –O, -OO, -OE, -OU -OW, AND –EAU ENDING

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this study were 1) to analyze the occurrences of English inflection in plural nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea ending and 2) to find out how many types of variations there were and what these variations were in nouns -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea ending. This study was a document research. There was a collection of the data from a number of different dictionaries. Variations in nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea ending were analyzed and summarized for each unique environment in order to find how many types of variations in English inflection of nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea ending, there were and what these variations were. The instrumentation includes the inflectional checklists on English inflectional plural nouns -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea ending. The results showed that nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea ending have four types: they are formed by adding 1) -s, 2) adding -es, or 3) adding both -s and -es and adding -x. For suffix -s, it occurs with the nouns ending with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, ending while suffix -es occurs only in nouns with -o ending. Either suffix -s or -es occurs with only -ea ending. In addition, suffix -x occurs with only -ea ending.

Key words: English Inflection, Plural Nouns, -o, -oo, -oe, -ou -ow, and -ea Ending

INTRODUCTION

Language is a systematic form of communication however, it can take a variety of forms. Thai language is normally used in general. English is used as a lingual franca in Thailand. The grammar of the Thai language is also very different to that of English because Thai is an uninflected language. Thus, nouns and verbs do not change their forms for number, gender, case or person. The use of inflections is therefore somewhat confusing for Thai learners of English.

The term ‘inflection’ is defined by researchers in a number of different ways. Loos (2004) defines it as ‘variation in the form of a word, typically by means of an affix, that expresses a grammatical contrast which is obligatory for the stem’s word class in some given grammatical context’. Furthermore, he adds that inflection ‘does not result in a change of word class, and usually produces a predictable, non-idiosyncratic change of meaning’.

Blevins (2008) reviews the general properties of inflection as follows:

1) Inflection is monotonic, adding but not changing morphosyntactic features.
2) Inflection is paradigmatic, defining new inflected forms of existing lexemes.
3) Inflection is relevant for syntagmatic dependencies (Anderson 1982)
4) Inflection tends to be fully productive and semantically transparent.
5) Inflectional exponents tend to occur on the periphery of a complex word.

English inflection occurring in nouns, verbs and adjectives has eight types, they are 1) noun plural, 2) noun possessive with 2 forms of ‘s and ’s’, 3) verb present participle, 4) verb present simple, 5) verb past tense, 6) verb past participle, 7) adjective comparative and 8) adjective superlative. Regular and irregular forms occur with noun plural, verb present simple, verb past tense, and verb past participle, adjective comparative and adjective superlative (Yordchim, 2017).
This study focused on the occurrences of English inflection in plural nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending.

OBJECTIVE

The aims of this study were 1) to analyze the occurrences of English inflection in plural nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending and 2) to find out how many types of variations there were and what these variations were in nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending.

METHODOLOGY

This study was a document research started with a content analysis of English inflection in nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending including both regular forms and irregular variations. Then, there was a collection of the data from a number of different dictionaries. Variations in nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending were analyzed and summarized for each unique environment in order to find how many types of variations in English inflection of nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending, there were and what these variations were. The instrumentation includes the inflectional checklists on English inflectional plural nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending. The data were analyzed by recording into the checklists provided according to each variation. There was a collection of the data from a number of different dictionaries such as Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and Collins Cobuild Dictionary.

RESULTS

Nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending have four affix types: 1) adding suffix -s, 2) adding suffix -es, 3) adding either suffix -s or -es and 4) adding suffix -x. For suffix -s, it occurs with the nouns ending with 1) -o pronounced /əʊ/, 2) -o pronounced /uː/, 3) -oo pronounced /uː/, 4) -oe pronounced /əʊ/ and 5) -oe pronounced /uː/. For suffix -es, it only occurs with -o pronounced /əʊ/. For suffix -x, it only occurs with -oo pronounced /uː/. For suffix -s or -es, it only occurs with -o pronounced /əʊ/. For suffix -x, it only occurs with -eau pronounced /uː/ as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Inflection in nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou-ow, and -eau ending and their opportunities of plural occurrences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Noun ending environments</th>
<th>Opportunities of Plural Morpheme Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>suffix -s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nouns with -o ending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) -o pronounced /əʊ/</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) -o pronounced /uː/</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) -oo pronounced /uː/</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) -o with silent final sound</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nouns with -oe ending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) -oe pronounced /əʊ/</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opportunities of Plural Morpheme Occurrences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Noun ending environments</th>
<th>Opportunities of Plural Morpheme Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>suffix -s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-oe pronounced /uː/</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nouns with -ow ending</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) -ow pronounced /oʊ/</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) -ow pronounced /ao/</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nouns with -ou ending</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) -ou pronounced /u:/</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nouns with -eau ending</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- = occurred  x = not occurred

Noun ending environments -o, -oo, -oe, -ou, -ow, and -eau ending can be shown in Picture 1.

![Picture 1](image)

**Picture 1** Opportunities of plural morphemes and noun ending environments occurring with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou, -ow, and -eau ending

These are the details of words in each group.

1 **Nouns with -o ending**

   1.1 -o pronounced /oʊ/ + suffix -s: radio - radios

   1. albino  7. bimbo  13. bongo  19. calypso
   2. alto    8. biro    14. casino  20. cameo
   3. archipelago  9. bistro  15. chicano  21. cappuccino
   4. auto    10. bolero  16. combo  22. demo
   5. banjo   11. bozo   17. concerto  23. dodo
   6. barrio  12. bronco  18. credo  24. duo
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>dynamo</td>
<td>42.</td>
<td>inferno</td>
<td>59.</td>
<td>proviso</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>embryo</td>
<td>43.</td>
<td>kiddo</td>
<td>60.</td>
<td>psycho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>espresso</td>
<td>44.</td>
<td>kilo</td>
<td>61.</td>
<td>physio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>euro</td>
<td>45.</td>
<td>kimono</td>
<td>62.</td>
<td>piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>falsetto</td>
<td>46.</td>
<td>libido</td>
<td>63.</td>
<td>piccolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>fandango</td>
<td>47.</td>
<td>lido</td>
<td>64.</td>
<td>pistachio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>fiasco</td>
<td>48.</td>
<td>lingo</td>
<td>65.</td>
<td>placbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>flamenco</td>
<td>49.</td>
<td>metro</td>
<td>66.</td>
<td>quango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>folio</td>
<td>50.</td>
<td>nuncio</td>
<td>67.</td>
<td>risotto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>gaucho</td>
<td>51.</td>
<td>ouzo</td>
<td>68.</td>
<td>sando</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>gazebo</td>
<td>52.</td>
<td>palomino</td>
<td>69.</td>
<td>scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>gigolo</td>
<td>53.</td>
<td>panto</td>
<td>70.</td>
<td>silo</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>gizmo</td>
<td>54.</td>
<td>patio</td>
<td>71.</td>
<td>sombrero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>gringo</td>
<td>55.</td>
<td>politico</td>
<td>72.</td>
<td>soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>gumbo</td>
<td>56.</td>
<td>poncho</td>
<td>73.</td>
<td>stereo</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
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<td>57.</td>
<td>portfolio</td>
<td>74.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>imbroglio</td>
<td>58.</td>
<td>pro</td>
<td>75.</td>
<td>studio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 -o pronounced /əʊ/ + suffix -es: potato - potatoes

1. calico 5. echo 9. lasso 13. volcano
2. cargo 6. embargo 10. portico
3. dingo 7. halo 11. tomato
4. domino 8. hero 12. salvo

1.3 -o pronounced /əʊ/ + either suffix -e or -es: commando - commandos or commandoes

1. buffalo 4. fresco 8. libretto 11. mosquito
2. flamingo 5. ghetto 6. grotto 9. mango 12. motto
3. farrago 7. hobo 10. manifesto

1.4 -o pronounced /uː/ + suffix -s: do - does (also do's)

1. argot 2. borough 3. furlough

2. Nouns ending with -oo

2.1 -oo pronounced /uː/ + suffix -s: bamboo - bamboos

1. cuckoo 3. kangaroo 6. tattoo
2. didgeridoo 4. kazoo
5. taboo 7. yahoo 8. zoo

3. Nouns ending with -oe

3.1 -oe pronounced /əʊ/ + suffix -s: doe - does

1. hoe 2. foe 3. floe 4. oboe
5. toe 6. woe

3.2 -oe pronounced /uː/ + suffix -s: shoe - shoes
4. Nouns ending with -ow

4.1 ow pronounced /əʊ/ + suffix -s : show - shows

1. arrow 8. crossbow 15. inflow 22. scarecrow
2. barrow 9. crow 16. marrow 23. shadow
3. bedfellow 10. elbow 17. meadow 24. wheelbarrow
4. bellow 11. eyebrow 18. minnow 25. widow
5. bow 12. fellow 19. pillow 26. window
6. bungalow 13. glow 20. rainbow
7. burrow 14. harrow 21. row

4.2 ow pronounced /aʊ/ + suffix -s : bow - bows

1. brow 4. eyebrow 7. prow 10. scow
2. cow 5. mow 8. row 11. vow
3. dhow 6. plow 9. sow

5. Nouns ending with -ou

5.1 -ou pronounced /uː/ + suffix -s : bayou - bayous

6. Nouns ending with -eau + suffix -s

6.1-eau pronounced /əʊ/ + either suffix -x or -s: bureau - bureaux or bureaus

1. château 2. plateau 3. tableau

Note: A notice of the word in this group is /əʊ:/

CONCLUSION

The main findings showed that inflectional variation in the English language is significant, especially for plural noun inflection with nouns with -o, -oo, -oe, -ou, and -eau ending have four affix types: 1) adding suffix -s, 2) adding suffix -es, 3) adding either suffix -s or -es and 4) adding suffix -x. For suffix -s, it occurs with the nouns ending with 1) -o pronounced /əʊ/, 2) -o pronounced /uː/, 3) -oo pronounced /uː/, 4) -oe pronounced /əʊ/ , 5) -oe pronounced /uː/, 6) -ow pronounced /əʊ/, 7) -ow pronounced /uː/, 8) -ou pronounced /uː/, 9) -o - silent final sound and 10) -eau pronounced /əʊ/.

For suffix -es, it only occurs with -o pronounced /əʊ/. For suffix either -s or -es, it only occurs with -o pronounced /əʊ/. For suffix -x, it only occurs with -eau pronounced /əʊ/.

The study of English inflectional variation especially in L2 learners is useful for language classroom to help them better understanding the language diversity, avoiding in making inflectional errors and also collections of vocabulary in each environment group. It is according to the study of Darus & Subramaniam (2009) found that the most common errors for Malaysian second language learners include plural forms, verb tense, word choice, prepositions, subject-verb agreement and sentence construction. Out of these common errors, three of them involve inflection: plural forms, verb tense and subject-verb agreement.
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REFERENCES


