

Nominalization Processes in OGBA

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Abstract: This paper examined nominalization processes in in Ogbá, an Igboïd language spoken in about forty-one communities in Ogbá/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. This study employed unstructured oral interview method of data collection. The data were analyzed using the descriptive method of morpheme-to-morpheme glossing. The study revealed that verbs in the language can be turned into nominal through morphological operations such as affixation, reduplication and compounding. The affixes that are involved in the nominalization of verbs are prefixes which is schematized as Pref. + VR, the combination of prefixes and suffixes which was schematized as ó-/ò- + VR + DV where ò-/ò- is a high tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel, VR is the verb root and DV is the duplicated vowel. More so, this research affirms that total reduplication alone, the combination of prefixes and reduplication. The morphological rule for the representation of these types of structure is (Pref.) + RED + VR, the rule for the derivation of gerundives is ò-/ò + VR, where ò-/ò is a low tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel which functions as prefix while VR is verb root. The paper also found out that the morphological operations that are productive in terms of nominalization are ò-/ò + VR and Pref. + VR.

Keywords: Nominalization Processes and Ogbá

Introduction

The main function of every natural language is communication. This suggests that language is the prime means through which every normal human in a given speech community interacts with others. The interaction of language users is usually made possible through the use of words. In other words, it is difficult for a competent user of a language to interact with others or express himself without words. It is also observed that lexical items (words) in natural languages are not usually stagnant but they continue to increase from time to time.

One of the approaches usually adopted by natural languages for their development is derivational morphological operation also known as word formation processes. This is an active approach because every natural language has the capacity to improve its vocabulary (terminology) and become better equipped to handle the numerous uses that its proficient users may want to put it. This indicates that word formation is a universal principle of all natural languages. That is, every natural language increases or develops its terminology through word formation processes such as affixation, borrowing, compounding and reduplication. These new words or vocabularies (terminologies) are classified into various word classes (parts of speech) based on their functions. When they are used as nominal (noun), and are derived from other parts of speech, the process involved is commonly referred to in linguistic terms as nominalization. Therefore, this paper examines some of the morphological operations that results in the derivation of a nominal from other word classes.

Ogbá is an Igboïd (Igbo related) language which belongs to the Benue-Congo family of the Niger-Congo phylum. The nomenclature "Ogbá" is used to designate both the language and its native speakers. However, the native speakers of the language customarily use the lexeme "ñde" which denotes 'people' to differentiate the native speakers and the language. The language is closely related to Ekpeye, Igbo, Ikwere and Echie which are spoken in different parts of Rivers State, Nigeria. Also, there are several controversies with respect to the number of dialects in Ogbá. Whereas some Ogbá linguists claim that there are two dialects in the language, others ascertained that there are more than two dialects in the language. For example, Ojum (2016) asserts that there are about five dialects in Ogbá which include Egni, Usomini, Igburu, Idu and Omoku

while Isaac (2018) states that Ọgba has only two dialects which include Egni (spoken by Egni) and Igburu (spoken by Igburu and Usomini clans). Notwithstanding the differences in the number of dialects in Ọgba, this paper notes that all Ọgba dialects are mutually intelligible. The data for this paper is drawn from the Egni dialect.

Tone is extremely critical or vital in the grammar of Ọgba. It is as important as the phonemic sounds (consonants and vowels) in Ọgba because like the segmental phonemes (consonants and vowels), it can affect the meaning of morphemes, words, phrases, clauses and sentences which otherwise are the same in terms of their segmental features. Accordingly, Emenanjo (2015: 113) avers that "...to ignore tone is to ignore an important code which not only identifies the language but also makes it unique." As observed by Isaac (2018) and Ahiamadu (2000), Ọgba has high tone (´), low tone (`), high-low (ˆ), and mid-tone (˘). Following the recommendations of Ahiamadu (2000) and Isaac (2018), all the mid tones (˘) are left unmarked in this paper. So, any unmarked tone should be read as mid.

Nominalization

The term "nominalization" refers to the process of turning a word that is not a noun into a noun. Crystal (1997) notes that nominalization has to do with the derivation of noun phrase from an underlying clause. He (Crystal) further distinguished the term "nominalization" from derivation. According to him, derivational operations or processes customarily result in the realization of new words which may belong to other word classes such as verb, adjective and adverb. On the contrary, nominalization process usually results in the realization of nominal (noun or noun phrase). This simply proves that the major distinction between nominalization and derivation is that whereas the former is synonymous with nominal derivation, the latter is larger than the derivation of a nominal. In the same vein, Ahaotu (2011) affirms that nominalization involves turning another word class into a noun. In his view, the term "nominalization" is derived from the word nominal (relating to nouns). He also insists that to nominalize a word means to turn another word class into a nominal. He further notices that the process of turning other word classes into a noun usually includes the attachment of the correct affixes to the root of a verb, adjective and adverb. He uses examples 1a-c and 2a-c to illustrate nominalization in English:

1.	Adjective	+	suffix	Noun formed
a.	Happy		-ness	happiness
b.	Wise		-dom	wisdom
c.	Honest		-ty	honesty
2.	Verbs			
a.	Amend		-ment	amendment
b.	Govern		-or	governor
c.	Sing		-er	singer

The examples in 1a-c demonstrate that the nouns happiness, wisdom and honesty are derived from the adjectives happy, wise and honest respectively. Similarly, examples 2a-c demonstrates that the nouns amendment, governor and singer are derived from the verbs amend, govern and sing respectively. This supports the description of the term "nominalization" as the process of changing or turning another word class from into a noun. More so, Emenanjo (2015, p. 290) states that nominalization is "a term used for the multiplicity of processes which result in the creation of nouns and numerals." He asserts that the nouns and nominals created have wide variety of morphological and structural shapes with elements from other primary and functional categories. From the foregoing, it is construed that nominalization has to do with deriving a nominal from other word classes. The morphological operations that result in nominalization may not be language universal but language specific. Thus, this paper identifies the morphological processes or operations that result in nominalization in Ọgba.

Empirical Review

Kari (2004) examines the grammar of Degema (a language spoken in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria). He discovers that a verb in the language can be nominalized through morphological operation such as affixation which comprises prefixation, suffixation and circumfixation. He also affirms that regular deverbal nouns in the language are customarily derived through circumfixation. Kari (2004) further

states that such nouns include the gerund, agent nouns and state nouns, which are derived from stative verbs. Also, Emenanjo (2015) and Onumajuru (2015) study nominalization in Igbo. Emenanjo (2015: 290) noticed that “affixation, reduplication and tones alone, or in combination are the most common and most productive or prolific processes for nominalization in Igbo. Similarly, Onumajuru (2015: 81) observes that the “Noun of Result” in Igbo is formed by prefixing a low tone homorganic syllabic nasal to the base form of the verb. She also notes that the derivative can be formed with either activity or stative verbs. She further insists that when it is stative verb, the Noun of Result functions as nominal complement of its verb. But, when the verb is an activity verb, the derivative may be used to qualify the complement of the verb. In nutshell, different languages employ different morphological operations to derive a nominal from other word classes and these operations or processes are generally referred to as nominalization processes. Therefore, this paper studies the nominalization processes in Ogbá.

Methodology

The data used in this study are elicited using the unstructured oral interview. Unstructured oral interview is used to obtain in-depth information through face to face verbal communication. The use of oral interview in particular yielded a lot of information, which enriched our study. The data were collect from two sources which include the primary data and secondary data. The primary data were drawn from two native speakers of Egni dialect of Ogbá, while the secondary data were drawn from related literatures, especially Isaac (2018). The method of data analysis adopted in this study is the descriptive method. The data were presented using morpheme-to-morpheme glossing.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected for this study indicate that the morphological operations that result in nominalization in Ogbá are affixation, reduplication and compounding. In what follows the data are presented accordingly.

Affixation as a Nominalization Process in Ogbá

The term “affixation” refers to the morphological process of attaching an affix to the root or base of a word. An affix is a morpheme that is usually attached to the root or base of a word. Affixes cannot stand on their own as independent words. This suggests that affixes are obligatorily attached to a host (the root or base word). In other words, they (affixes) are bound morphemes. On the basis of their position in relation to the root words, affixes in Ogbá are prefixes, suffixes and superafix. The available data reveal that a prefix alone or the combination of prefixation and suffixation can change a verb into a nominal (noun). Accordingly, the data on affixation in Ogbá are presented based on the types of affixes identified in the language.

Table 1: Nominals Derived through Prefixation in Ogbá language

S/N	Prefixes	Roots	New words
3a.	á- 'answer'	zá 'an answer'	ázá
b.	é-	zà 'sweep'	èzà 'broom'
c.	è-	kwá 'cry (v)'	ékwá 'cry (n)'
d.	í-	kpé 'judge'	íkpé 'judgment'
e.	í-	shí 'smell'	íshí 'a smell'
f.	ó-	rnú 'work (v)'	órnú 'work (n)'
g.	ò-	hnù	òhnù

		'see'	'vision'
h.	ú-	gbó 'boil'	úgbó 'act of boiling'
i.	ú-	hú 'grow'	úhú 'growth'
j.	m-	gbá 'wrestle'	mgbá 'wrestling'
k.	n-	vná 'scold (v)'	nvná 'scolding'

From the data in table 1, it can be deduced that all the vowels and syllabic nasals in Ogba morphologically function as prefixes. The table also shows that the syllabic structure of prefixes in the language is V while /n/ and /m/ are syllabic nasals or semi-vowels. In examples 3a-k in the table, it is observed that all the roots are verbs. This implies that verbs are the only grammatical category or word class that host prefixes in Ogba. More so, the data reveal that prefixes in the language do not have any semantic quality in isolation. They are at most segmental phonemes unless they are attached to their hosts. It is also noticed that the host of prefixes in the language is verb. Thus, this paper posits that Pref. + V (where pref. is a prefix which is either a vowel or a syllabic nasal and V a verb root) results in the nominalization of a verb. This is the most productive nominalization process in the language.

Furthermore, it is observed that with the exception of the harmonizing high front unrounded vowel i- /i- which can be attached to any verb in the language to result in infinitives, the attachment of prefixes to verb roots in the language is not haphazard. That is, the attachment of the prefixes to their hosts adapts the sound system of the language. For instance, whereas the prefixes e-/ẹ- in 3b and 3c can be attached to the verb root rná 'suck' that is ẹ- + rná = ẹrná 'breast', it cannot be attached to the verb root in 3k vná 'scold' that is *e-/ẹ- + vná = evná/ẹvná to yield a possible realization in the language. Similarly, whereas the syllabic nasal n- in 3k can merge with the verb root vná 'scold', it cannot merge with the verb root gbá 'wrestle' in 3j that is, *n- + gbá = ngbá is not a possible realization in the language. The syllabic nasal m- in 3j cannot also merge with the verb root in 3k. This implies that *m- + vná = mvná is not an acceptable realization in the language.

It is also observed that prefixation which is a productive nominalization operation in Ogba strictly obeys the vowel harmony principle in the language. According to Onumajuru (2015), the term "vowel harmony" refers to a system whereby the vowels in a language are divided into different sets, in such a way that vowels from the same sets naturally go together in the same simple word. The data in examples 3a-k show that with the exclusion of the natural vowel /a/ and the syllabic nasals /n/ and /m/ in 3a, 3j and 3k, all the prefixes in Ogba are attached to verb roots or hosts with the same vowel sound. This suggests that the violation of the vowel harmony principle in the language results in unacceptable structures as in 4a-f:

- 4a. *í- + kpé = íkpé
 b. *ó- + kwú = ókwú
 c. *ú- + gbó = úgbó
 d. *í- + shí = íshí
 e. *ò- + hnù = òhnù
 f. *ú- + hú = úhú

The examples in 4a-f clearly corroborates that vowel harmony principle is strictly followed in the nominalization of a verb through prefixation in Ogba. Therefore, its violation in 4a-f results in unacceptability.

In 4a-c, it is noticed that whereas the prefixes are non-expanded (narrow) vowels, the vowels of their hosts or verb roots are expanded (wide) vowels. In the same way, whereas the prefixes in examples 4d-f are expanded (wide) vowels, the vowels of their hosts are non-expanded vowels. This accounts for their unacceptability.

Table 2: Nominals Derived through Prefixation and Suffixation in Ogbá language

S/N	Prefixes	Root	Suffixes	New Words
5a.	ò-	rá 'drink'	-a	ò-rá-á 'one who drinks' Pref. + VR + Suf.
b.	ó-	shí 'cook'	-í	ó-shí-í 'one who cooks' Pref. + VR + Suf.
c.	ó-	kpù 'mold'	-ù	Ó-kpù-ù 'one who molds' Pref. + VR + Suf.
d.	ó-	ré 'sell'	-e	ó-ré-é 'seller' Pref. + VR + Suf.
e.	ò-	gbò 'vomit'	-ò	ò-gbò-ò 'one who vomits' Pref. + VR + Suf.

Examples 5a-e in table 2 reveal that a verb can be nominalized through the attachment of a prefix and suffix to its root. This suggests that a nominal can be derived through the combination of prefixation and suffixation. It is also noticed that the structure for this type of combination is Pref. + VR + Suf. where Pref. is prefix, VR is verb root and Suf. is a suffix. The examples further show that the suffixes are realized through the duplication of the final vowel of the verb root. Accordingly, this paper hypothesizes that the structure of nominals derived through prefixation and suffixation can be schematized as ó-/ò- + VR + DV where ò-/ò- is a high tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel, VR is the verb root and DV is the duplicated vowel. This paper observes that all the nouns are derived through ó-/ò- + VR + DV are agentive nouns. However, the nouns m- gbá + shí = mgbáshí 'poison' which is derived from the inherent complement verb 'gbá' 'wrestle' is an exception to the rule that the prefix and the suffix involved in this type of nominalization process are the harmonizing form of the vowel o-/ò and the duplicated final vowel of the root.

Reduplication as a Nominalization Process in Ogbá

Reduplication is one of the morphological operations which results in the derivation of nominal from other word classes. It involves the duplication of complete or part of the root to create a nominal. This implies that reduplication can either be total (complete) or partial (part).

Table 3: Nominals Derived through Reduplication in Ogbá

S/N	Root	Derived Nominal
6a.	brè (V) 'perch'	brè-brè (N) 'dragonfly'
b.	á- jù- Pref. + VR	jù = ájújú 'question' (N) RED
c.	ò- rí- Pref. + VR	rí = òrírí 'feast' RED
d.	é- chí- Pref. + RED VR	chè (N) = échíchè 'thought'

The examples in table 3 reveal that reduplication in Ogbá can be grouped or classified into three forms. The example in 6a clearly prove that a verb can be nominalized through the total reduplication of the verb root while examples 6b-c indicates that a verb can be nominalized through the combination of prefixation and total reduplication of the verb root. More so, the example in 6d reveals that the combination of prefixation and partial reduplication of the verb root can result in the nominalization of a verb root. Even though, this paper agrees with Isaac (2018) that most nominals in Ogbá including those derived through reduplication alone or prefixation + reduplication as in examples 6a-d are vocalic, that is, they begin with vowels, it is noticed that nominals such as brè-brè ‘dragonfly’ which is a derived through total reduplication is not vocalic.

Compounding

Compounding is one of the morphological operations that results in the derivation of a nominal in Ogbá. It is a morphological process of forming a new lexical item (single word) by linking two or more independent roots (morphemes). Any word formed in this way is called a compound. The words that are linked together to form a compound must not necessarily belong to the same word-class (parts of speech). Compounding increases the lexicon of Ogbá and most times, the meanings of the compounds are not equal to the meanings of the individual words that make up a particular compound. It is noticed that most of the words that are derived through compounding in Ogbá are nominal. Thus, it is classified as a nominalization process in the language. For instance:

Table 4: Nominals Derived through Compounding in Ogbá

S/N	Root 1	Root 2	new word
7a.	ùlọ́ ‘house’	í-kpé Pref.+judge	ùlíkpe ‘court’
b.	í-kpó, Pref.+call	ọkwù ‘word’	íkọkwù ‘calling’
c.	í-hù ‘Pref.+grow’	ùhù ‘growth’	ìhùhù ‘growing’
d.	ọ-ríà Pref.+sick	ọchná ‘white’	ọríọchná ‘leprosy’
e.	í-wè ‘Pref.+angry’	óknú ‘fire’	íwóknú ‘fury’

Examples 7a-e in table 4 reveal that in Ogbá, nominals can be derived through compounding. The examples also show that the final vowel of the first root may be deleted if the next root begins with an oral vowel. The verb plus noun compound has the structure INF. + VR + N, where INF. is a harmonizing infinitive morpheme (i-/ì-), VR is the verb root and N represents a noun.

Deriving gerundives

A gerund is a verbal derivative which functions as a nominal (noun). Gerundive nominals in Ogbá are realized through the prefixation of a low tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel – ò-/ò- to a verb root. For example:

Table 5: Gerundive Nominals in Ogbá language

S/N	Prefixes	Roots	New words
8a.	ò-	zá ‘answer’	òzá ‘answering’
b.	ò-	zà ‘sweep’	òzà ‘sweeping’

c.	ò-	kwná 'cry (v)'	òkwná 'crying'
d.	ò-	kpé 'judge'	òkpé 'judging'
e.	ò-	shí 'smell'	òshí 'smelling'
f.	ò-	gbó 'boil'	ògbó 'boiling'
h.	ò-	hú 'grow'	òhú 'growing'
i.	ò-	vná 'scold (v)'	òvná 'act of scolding'

Examples 8a-i show that the prefixation of ò-/ò- which is a low tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel to a verb root results in the realization of a gerundive nominals in Ọgba. Therefore, the morphological rules for the realization of gerundive nominal in the language is ò-/ò + VR, where ò-/ò is a low tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel which functions as prefix while VR is verb root. This is a very productive morphological process of realizing a nominal in Ọgba.

Discussion

The data presented and analyzed in this study reveal that affixation which is the attachment of a bound morpheme to a root word is one of the productive nominalization processes in Ọgba. Also, this paper proves that the attachment of a prefix to a verb root changes the verb to a nominal. For that reason, it is hypothesized that Pref. + VR (where Pref. is prefix and VR is verb root) is one of the productive nominalization processes in Ọgba. It is further noticed that the harmonizing high front unrounded vowel i-/i- which commonly results in infinitives in the language can be attached to almost all the verbs in the language. More so, this paper observes that whereas the criteria adapted by other prefixes in selecting their host are not clear, it noticed that prefixation in the language is not haphazard. For instance, whereas the prefixes e-/ẹ- in 3b and 3c can be attached to the verb root kwná 'cry (v)' that is e- + kwná = ékwná 'cry (n)', it cannot be attached to the verb root in 3h gbó 'boil' that is *e-/ẹ + gbó = egbó/ẹgbó is not a possible realization in the language. Once more, the selectional rule that cut across affixation in Ọgba is the vowel harmony rule. This means that the vowel(s) of the root mandatorily have the phonological properties with the prefix. This paper also noticed that the morphological operation that results in agentive nominals in Ọgba is Pref. + VR + DV. where Pref. is the prefix, VR is the verb root and DV is the duplicated final vowel of the verb root.

Furthermore, this paper reveals that a verb can be nominalized in Ọgba through the attachment of a prefix and suffix to its root. This denotes that a nominal can be derived through the combination of prefixation and suffixation. It is also observed that the structure for this type of combination is Pref. + VR + Suf. where Pref. is prefix, VR is verb root and Suf. is a suffix. The available data indicate that the suffixes are realized through the duplication of the final vowel of the verb root. For that reason, this study theorizes that the structure of nominals derived through the combination of prefixation and suffixation can be schematized as ó-/ò- + VR + DV where ò-/ò- is a high tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel, VR is the verb root and DV is the duplicated vowel. This paper observes that all the nouns that are derived through ó-/ò- + VR + DV are agentive nouns. Again, this paper notes that a verb can be nominalized through the total reduplication of the verb root and through the combination of prefixation and total reduplication of the verb root. Even though, this paper agrees with Isaac (2018) that most nominals in Ọgba including those derived through reduplication alone or prefixation + reduplication as in examples 6a-d are vocalic, that is, they begin with vowels, it is noticed that

nominals such as brè-brè ‘dragonfly’ which is derived through total reduplication is not vocalic. Therefore, this paper disagrees with Isaac’s (2018: 31) claim that “...in Ogba, with exception of personal names, nouns begin with a vowel or a syllabic nasal.” Reduplication is not a productive nominalization process.

Additionally, this paper notes that in Ọgba, a verb can be turned into a nominal through compounding. The available data show that the final vowel of the first root may be deleted if the next root begins with an oral vowel. The verb plus noun compound in Ọgba has the structure INF. + VR + N, where INF. is a harmonizing infinitive morpheme (i-/i-), VR is the verb root and N represents a noun. This paper disagrees with the earlier assertion of Isaac (2018) that the nominals that are derived through INF+VR+N are usually the gerundive nominals. It observes that the morphological rules for the realization of gerundive nominal in the language is ò-/ò + VR, where ò-/ò is a low tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel which functions as prefix while VR is verb root. It also noticed that ò-/ò + VR is a very productive morphological process of realizing a nominal in Ọgba.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to examine the nominalization processes in Ọgba. It is observed that verbs in the language can be turned into nominal through morphological operations such as affixation, reduplication and compounding. The affixes that are involved in the nominalization of verbs are prefixes alone which is schematized as Pref. + VR, the combination of prefixes and suffixes which is schematized as ó-/ò- + VR + DV where ò-/ò- is a high tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel, VR is the verb root and DV is the duplicated vowel. More so, this research affirms that total reduplication alone, the combination of prefixes and reduplication. The morphological rule for the representation of these types of structure is (Pref.) + RED + VR, the rule for the derivation of gerundives is ò-/ò + VR, where ò-/ò is a low tone harmonizing open back rounded vowel which functions as prefix while VR is verb root. This paper finds out that the morphological operations that are productive in terms of nominalization are ò-/ò + VR and Pref. + VR.

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