Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

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Abstract

The paper examined derivation as one of the word formation processes in the Ọnịcha variety of Igbo. Derivation is defined in the literature as one of the productive processes of word formation. It is achieved in Ọnịcha mainly through the process of affixation. This paper studied derivation in the dialect through the processes of affixation. Starting with preliminary statements on the dialect and its locality, the paper proceeded to discuss with examples the various processes of derivation in the dialect. The study revealed that prefixation is very productive in the derivation of words in the dialect. It also disclosed that tone plays a vital role in distinguishing grammatical constructions in the Igbo language.

Key words: derivation, prefixation, affixation, interfixation, Ọnịcha.

Introduction

The section provides basic background information on the dialect and the locality where it is spoken. It also gives a brief information on the sound system of the dialect.

The People and their Language

Ọnịcha Igbo is spoken at Onitsha in Anambra state in the southeast zone of Nigeria. Perched on the east bank of the Niger river, Onitsha is bounded on the north by Ogbunike in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra state, on the south by Odekpe, on the east by Ogidi, and on the west by the Niger river.

Ọnịcha dialect is composed of two varieties: the one spoken by the Ọnịcha indigenes, referred to as a highly specialized form or original Ọnịcha dialect and the widely understood and used dialect spoken by the traders and non-indigenes of Onitsha, referred to as the ''generalized form'' or Ọnịcha Igbo spoken by mixed populations in the major trading areas of Onitsha. Our study is based on the generalized form or Ọnịcha Igbo.

Statement of the Problem

Every native speaker has an intuitive knowledge of the language he/she speaks. He/she has the capacity to produce an infinite number of well-formed sentences in the language because he/she acquired the language without going through formal education. The native speaker is able to detect ungrammatical sentences in the language but may not be able to explain the origin of the ungrammaticality. This paper provides the rules that regulate each word-formation of which derivation is one.

Scope of the Study

The paper is limited only to word-formation processes that are achieved through affixation.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to study the processes of derivation in the Ọnịcha variety of Igbo and the specific objectives are as follows:

-to investigate the process of prefixation

-to investigate the process of interfixation

-to examine the process of circumfixation

- to examine the functions of tone

- to examine the process of deverbalization in the dialect

Brief Statement on Ọnịcha Sound System

The sound system of the Ọnịcha Igbo dialect presents similar features to that of the Central Igbo dialect, except for the predominant presence of the retracted vowel [ẹ] in the Ọnịcha vowel system. This sound does not exist in the Central Igbo variety. What exists in the Central Igbo dialect is the expanded vowel [e]. Both the expanded

vowel [e] and the non-expanded vowel [ẹ] exist in the Ọnịcha variety. The two sounds are allophones of the same phoneme represented as /e/ in the Central Igbo variety but as /ɛ/ in the Ọnịcha Igbo because of its wider distribution in the dialect.

The Review of Literature

Crystal (2008, p. 138) defines derivation as one of the two main categories or processes of word-formation. He defines affixation as morphological process whereby lexical or grammatical information is added to a root or stem. Word-formation is defined by Crystal (1997, p. 421) as a process of morphological variation in the construction of words.

Ejele (2005, p. 314) lists the following as modes of word formation in Esan: a). compounding, (b)reduplication (c) affixation. (d) nominalization/gerundivization, (e) paraphrasing

Greenberg (1954), as recorded in Bybee (1985, P. 81) defines derivational morphemes as one which when in construction with a root morpheme establish a sequence which may always be substituted for some particular class of single morpheme in all instances without producing a change in the construction.

Linguists, including Bybee (1985, p. 82), Katamba (1993, p. 47) and Ejele (1996, P. 89) recognize two types of derivational morphemes ― those that change the lexical category of the word to which they apply and those that do not. Bybee argues that derivational processes that do not change lexical category are characterized by large meaning changes while those that do change the lexical category of a word make varying amounts of semantic change depending on how much they contribute along with the category change. Emenanjo (1983, p. 45) describes affixation and reduplication as the major morphological processes employed in derivation in the Igbo language. He affirms that the verbal system in general and in particular the verbs are the only source in the Igbo language for deriving new words.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973, p.39) define infinitive as a non-finite verb form that has neither tense distinctions nor modals.

(Crystal 1997, p.325) describes reduplication as a term in morphology which describes a process of repetition whereby the form of a prefix/suffix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root.

Williamson (1972) refers to prefixation which can co-occur with reduplication to derive gerunds as verbal nouns. The reduplication can be total or partial.

Presentation and Analyses of Data

1. Prefixation

Prefixation is a morphological term which denotes the affixing of the appropriate derivational prefix to the given root. In the Ọnịcha Igbo variety, prefixation alone can bring about the derivation of the infinitive and the participle, but, when used with other word formation processes, can yield other forms. For instance, prefixation can co-occur with reduplication; it can also co-occur with suffixation to derive different words. We shall, in what follows, present with examples the derivation of infinitive and participle through the process of prefixation.

2. The Infinitive

The Igbo infinitive has both nominal and verbal qualities; hence it is classed as a nomino-verbal. It is formed by prefixing a high tone harmonizing close vowel í-/íⵔ- to the verb root. Examples include:

Table 1: Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Prefix	Verb root	Derived Infinitive	Gloss
a	i-	lí 'eat'	íⵣlí	to eat
b	i-	lò 'think'	Ílò	to think
c	ị-	zá 'respond/answer'	íⵔⵣzá	to respond/answer
d	ị-	pùⵔ 'go out/leave'	íⵔpùⵔ	to go out/to leave

3. The Participle

The participle in Ọnịcha Igbo is a verbal derivative which is always preceded by an auxiliary verb. It has the morpheme constituent CV radical (verb root) and a derivational harmonizing prefix a-/e-/ẹ- depending on the vowel of the verb root. It is formed by prefixing a harmonizing non-close front vowel to the verb root. Examples include:

Table - 2: Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Prefix	Verb root	Participle
A	ẹ-	vb: jéⵔ 'go'	ẹ-vb: èⵔjéⵔ 'going'
B	a-	vb: zà 'sweep'	a-vb: ázà 'sweeping'
C	e-	vb: sí 'cook'	e-vb: èsí 'cooking'

The participle, like the infinitive as a nomino-verbal, has attributes both of the noun and of the verb. It is normally used with its complement as in:

b.	ázà	úⵔnòⵔ
	sweeping	house
c.	èsí	ń⋌ní
	cooking	food
d.	èⵔjéⵔ	á⋌fíⵔá
	going	market

4. Prefixation and Total Reduplication

Reduplication is a term in morphology which describes a process of repetition whereby the form of a prefix/suffix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root. Prefixation can co-occur with reduplication to derive gerunds.

Prefixation and reduplication form gerunds when the verb root is reduplicated, and a low-tone harmonizing derivative morpheme o-/oⵔ- is prefixed to the reduplicated verb root. The following are examples of derivatives achieved through prefixation and total reduplication.

Table 3: Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Derivative Morpheme	Verb root	Derived Nominal	Gloss
A	Ò	bí 'live'	òbíbí	act of living
B	Ò	kwú 'talk/speak'	òkwúkwú	act of speaking
C	òⵔ	lúⵔ 'work'	òⵔlúⵔlúⵔ	act of working
D	òⵔ	pìⵔ	òⵔpìⵔpìⵔ	act of squeezing

5. Prefixation and Partial Reduplication

Partial reduplication occurs when the verb root is not totally reduplicated. In this case, it is the consonant that is reduplicated and the reduplicated consonant is prefixed to the infinitive form of the verb root to which is also prefixed the low tone harmonizing derivative morpheme o-/oⵔ-. The partial reduplication occurs when the verb root contains vowels other than those specified as [+ high] i.e. if the roots end in /a/, /ẹ/, /o/, /oⵔ/. The following are some of the examples:

Table 4: Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Derivative Morpheme	Verb root consonant	Verb root	Derivative	Gloss
a	ò○	-t-	-tá 'chew'	ò○tí○tá	act of chewing
b	ò○	-z-	-zà 'sweep'	ò○zì○zà	act of sweeping
c	ò	-g-	-gó 'buy'	ògígó	act of buying
d	ọ̀	-j-	-jé○ 'go'	ò○jí○jé○	act of going

5. Prefixation and Suffixation

Prefixation and suffixation as derivational processes in Ọnịcha Igbo are characterized by the affixation of both prefix and suffix to the same base to derive a new word. This section does not present a systematic process of derivation. For easy analysis, the derivatives from both prefixation and suffixation are grouped according to their morphological structures as in the examples which follow:

Group A

Table 5: Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Verb root	Prefix	Suffix	Derivative
A	-kà 'mark'	á	là	á-kà-là 'sign'
B	-sí○ 'say'	à	lì○	à-sì○-lì○ 'gossip'
C	-kpé○ 'pray'	è○	lé○	è○-kpé○-lé○ 'prayer'
D	-kwò 'be envious'	é	lò	é-kwò-lò 'envy'
E	-ghé○ 'yawn'	ú○	lé○	ú○-ghé○-✂lé○ 'a yawn'
F	-zé○ 'sneeze'	ú○	lé○	ú○-zé○-✂lé○ 'a sneeze'
G	-kwà 'cough'	ú○	là	ú○-kwá-là 'a cough'
H	-ghé○ 'open'	ó○	lé○	ó○-✂ghé○-lé○ 'an opening'
I	-lò 'think'	ì	lò	ì-lò-lò 'thought'

It is observed from the above examples that all the derivatives have the same consonants in the suffix which is 'L' and the vowel of the suffix is the same as the vowel of the verb root in each case.

Group B

Table 6: Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Verb root	Prefix	Suffix	Derivative
A	-chè❍ 'think'	é❍	chè❍	é❍-chì❍-chè❍ 'thought'
B	-jú❍ 'ask'	á	jú❍	á-jù❍-jú❍ 'question'
C	-zá 'respond/answer'	á	zá	á-zì❍-zá 'response/answer'
D	-bó 'accuse'	é	bó	é-bù-bó 'accusation'
E	-jè❍ 'imitate'	é❍	jé❍	é❍-jì❍-jé❍ 'imitation'

From the above examples, it is observed that the suffixes in all the derivatives are the same as the verb roots.

Group C

Table 7: Vowel suffixes and reduplication in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Verb root	Prefix	Suffix	Derivative
A	-gbó❍ 'vomit'	á	ō❍	á-gbó❍-✂ó❍ 'vomit'
B	-gú❍ 'hunger/be hungry'	á	ū	á-gú❍-✂ú❍ 'hunger'
C	-kpó❍ 'dry'	ó❍	ō❍	ó❍-kpó❍-✂ó❍ 'dryness'
D	-jó❍ 'be ugly'	ó❍	ō❍	ó❍-jó❍-✂ó❍ 'ugliness/badness'
E	-jí 'be black'	ó	ī	ó-jí-✂í 'blackness'

Evidence from the above examples shows that the suffixes are all vowels and are reduplications of the vowels of the verb roots. The general observation in the three groups is that the prefixes are all vowels but none of them is predictable, i.e. there is no rule for the choice of a particular prefix.

6. Interfixation

Interfixation is a process of derivation whereby an affix occurs between two identical roots. An interfix interrupts the sequence of two roots. Igbo interfixes are morphemes which perform distinct derivational functions such that nouns can be derived from nouns or from verbs. The interfixes are either consonants or monosyllabic CV forms.

There are two types of interfixation in the Ọnịcha variety of Igbo:

a. Noun-base form of interfixation

b. Verb-base form of interfixation

(A) The Noun-Base Form of Interfixation

In the noun-base form, the derivation is from noun to noun, with no verbal prefix. It has the structure N-I-N, where:

N = noun; I = interfix; N = noun.

The following examples are derivations from noun-bases.

Table 8: Noun-ase Interfix Derivation in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Base (noun)	Interfix	Derivative	Gloss
A	ánú❍ 'meat'	-m-	ánú❍mànù❍	beast/animal
B	ù❍wà 'world'	-tu❍-	ù❍wàtú❍ù❍wà	ages
C	ó⚒gó 'height'	-n-	ógónógó	tallness
D	m⋏pé❍ 'smallness'	-li-	m✎pé❍lí❍m✎pé❍	bits
E	ńgò❍ 'a bend'	-li-	ńgò❍lí❍ńgò❍	crookedness
F	m✎kpú 'anthill'	-ta-	mkputamkpu	elevation/uneven ground

(B) The Verb-Base Form of Interfixation

The verb-base derivatives have the verb as their base form for deriving nominals. They take verbal prefix and their structural pattern is vp-vr-I-vp-vr where:

VP = Verbal prefix, VR = Verb root and I = interfix

The consonants –m– and –l– are very productive as interfixes in the derivation of nouns from verbs.

Table 9: The –m– Interfix in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Base (verb)	Interfix	Derivative	Gloss
A	lí 'eat'	-m-	élímélí	banquet/feast/food
B	sí 'cook'	-m-	ésímésí	cookery
C	mù❍ 'learn'	-m-	ámù❍màmù❍	education
D	tù❍ 'point out'	-m-	átù❍màtù❍	example
E	gú❍ 'read/count'	-m-	ágú❍mágú❍	studies/countable
F	bà 'enter'	-m-	ábàmàbà	entry
G	kpú❍ 'mould'	-m-	ákpú❍mákpú❍	sculpture
H	kwú 'speak/talk'	-m-	ékwúmékwú	speech

It is observed from the above examples that the tone of the derivatives corresponds to that of the verb root. In other words, when the verb root has a high tone, the derivative also has a high tone and when the verb root has a low tone, the derivative also has a low tone.

Table 10: The –l– Interfix Derivations in Ọnịcha Igbo

The following are some examples of derivations formed with the –l– interfix:

	Base (verb)	**Interfix**	**Derivative**	**Gloss**
A	kwú 'speak'	-l-	èkwúlèkwú	talkativeness
B	gwù 'play'	-l-	égwùlé✂gwú	a play
C	fù 'to get lost'	-l-	éfùléfù	prodigality
D	kú❂ 'mix'	-l-	àkù❂làkú❂	an unholy mixture
E	ká 'to be worn'	-li❂-	ńkálí❂ńká	tattered
F	gò❂ 'be bent'	-li❂-	ńgò❂lí❂ńgò❂	tortuous
G	chó❂ 'be tiny'	-li❂-	ńchó❂lí❂ńchó❂	extremely tiny
H	pé❂ 'be small'	-li❂-	m✎pé❂lím✎pé❂	tiny

It is observed from the examples above that when the derivative has a vowel prefix, the interfix is the consonant –l– but when the derivative has a syllabic nasal prefix, the interfix is the morpheme constituent CV which is –li❂–.

In actual utterance, the derivatives with syllabic nasal prefixes are shortened so that the actual realization is as follows:

      a. ńkí❂líká for ńkálí❂ńká

      b. ńgò❂ńgò❂ for ńgò❂lí❂ńgò❂

      c. ńchó❂ńchó❂ for ńchó❂lí❂ńchó❂
      d. m✎pé❂m✎pé for m✎pé❂lí❂m✎pé❂

Both realizations are possible and acceptable in Ọnịcha but native speakers prefer the abridged form since it is economical and does not affect the meaning of the words.

7. Circumfixation

The circumfix is a discontinuous morpheme which surrounds the root of a word such that the first half occurs before the root and the second half occurs after the root.

In Ọnịcha Igbo, the circumfix is used to derive nominals from verbs. The derivation is formed by inserting the base-form or the verb root into the Igbo circumfixal framework (or paradigm) a/e…m. The following examples explicate the circumfixation in the Ọnịcha Igbo.

Table 11: Circumfix in Ọnịcha Igbo

Base form/Verb root	Circumfix	Derivatives	Gloss
- lí 'éat'	e…mu	èlímúńní/ èlím⟋ńní	act of eating
- súⅡ 'wash'	a…mu	àsúⅡm[úⅡ]ákwà	act of washing clothes
- zúⅡ 'trade'	a…mu	àzúⅡmáfíⅡá	act of trading
- béⅡ á'kwá 'cry'	eⅡ…mu	èⅡbéⅡmákwá	act of crying
- bú é'gó 'carry money'	e…mu	èbúmé'gó	act of carrying money
- kúⅡ á'ká 'clap'	a…mu	àkúⅡmáká	act of clapping
- gbá 'm⟋gbá 'wrestle'	a…mu	àgbám⟋gbá	act of wrestling

Circumfixation is a very productive process and can be used to derive many of the life's experiences in Ọnịcha. Ọnịcha circumfixes differ from those of other languages like Esan and Eleme in the sense that the circumfixes in Ọnịcha must co-occur with their verbal complements.

8. Tone as a Derivative Morpheme in Ọnịcha Igbo

A tone is a meaning-making element in languages. It is a systematic variation of the voice pitch used by languages to distinguish lexical and grammatical meanings. Igbo is a tonal language and all the dialects of Igbo including Ọnịcha Igbo are tonal. In the dialect, the tone carried by a word is an essential feature of the meaning of that word. As a derivative morpheme, the tone is a non-segmental affix (suprafix) which can be used to perform the following functions:

- Derivation of associative relationship from determinative constructions
- Derivation of interrogative statements from declarative constructions
- Derivation of nominals from sentences

The above three functions fall under the grammatical functions of tone. In what follows, we shall illustrate with examples the functioning of the suprasegmental affix – the tone.

9. Functions of tone (Suprafix) in Associative Constructions

In the associative constructions in Ọnịcha, the grammatical tones help to express possessive relationships (genitive case). The following examples are illustrative of the structures involving associative constructions:

1. áká   #   Íké   →   áká   'Íké
    HH   HH   HH   'HH
    hand   Ike(personal name)   Ike's hand
    lexical tone   grammatical tone

2. úOnòO   #   égō   →   úO'nóO   'Égó
    HL   HM   H'H   'HH
    house   Ego(personal name)   Ego's house
    lexical tone   grammatical tone

3. àrúO   #   Àdá   →   àrúO   'Ádá
    LH   LH   LH   'HH
    body   Ada(personal name)   Ada's body
    lexical tone   grammatical tone

4. ÉOzēO #   Úchè   →   ÉOzéO   Ùchè
    HM   HL   H'H   LL
    tooth   Uche (personal name)   Uche's tooth
    lexical tone   grammatical tone

5. ànìO   #   Àmàlà   →   àníO   Àmàlà
    LL   LLL   LH   LLL
    land   Amala(personal name)   Amala's land
    lexical tone   grammatical tone

Items from the five tonal combinations in Ọnịcha Igbo are combined above in associative constructions and the resultant tonal changes are summarized below as follows:

       lexical tone   grammatical tone

6. HH # HH   →   HH'HH {Ike's hand}
7. HL # HM   →   H'H'HH {Ego's house}
8. LH # LH   →   LH'HH {Ada's body}
9. HM # HL   →   H'HLL {Uche's tooth}
10. LL # LL   →   LHLL {Amala's land}

Evidence from the examples above shows that tonal modifications are witnessed in Ọnịcha Igbo constructions and it is these tone modifications that mark the associative constructions.

10. Functions of Tone (Suprafix) in Determinative Constructions

In determinative constructions, the grammatical tones help to limit the reference of the constituents since they distinguish the modifiers from the associative tones. In other words, the tone serves as a modifier. The first element in the following example will be referred to as the determined and the second will be referred to as the determinant.

Table 12: Determined and Determnnant Suprafix in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Determined	#	Determinant	→ Determinative Constructions
a.	Áká	#	íké	ákáí'ké
	HH		HH	HHH'H
	Hand		power	high-handedness
b.	úⵔnòⵔ	#	égō	úⵔnòⵔ é'gó
	HL		HM	HLH'H
	House		money	Bank
c.	Òtí	#	ìwú	òtí'íwú
	LH		LH	LH'HH
	Introducer		law	lawmaker
d.	Égō	#	éⵔgbèⵔ	égóéⵔgbèⵔ
	HM		HL	H'H HL
	Money		gun	money for gun
e.	Àkpà	#	àfèⵔ	àkpá àfèⵔ
	LL		LL	LHLL
	Bag		dress	dress pocket

The summary of the foregoing tonal modifications in determinative constructions is as follows:

11. HH # HH   →   HHH'H (high-handedness)

12. HL # HM   →   HLH'H (bank)

13. LH # LH   →   LH'HH (lawmaker)

14. HM # HL   →   H'HHL (payment for a gun)

15. LL # LL   →   LHLL (dress pocket)

It is observed from the above constructions that the tone (suprafix) plays an important role in determining and limiting the reference of the constituents with which it co-occurs. Considering the above tone combinations, associative (6-10), and determinative (11-15), it is observed that the tonal representations of associative constructions differ from those of determinative constructions, even when identical lexical tones are compared. The tone in the associative construction expresses possession (though not all associative constructions are possessive), while the tone in the determinative construction acts as a modifier. The behaviour of the tone in the two constructions are compared as shown in the table below:

Table 13: Comparison of the behaviours of the associative and determinative

	Tone in Associative Construction	Tone in Determinative Construction
A	HH # HH → HH'HH	HH # HH → HHH'H
B	HL # HM → H'H✂HH	HL # HM → HLH'H
C	LH # LH → LH'HH	LH # LH → LH'HH
D	HM # HL → H'HLL	HM # HL → H'HHL
E	LL # LL → LHLL	LL # LL → LHLL

11. Function of Tone as Suprafix in Deriving Interrogative Sentences from Declarative Sentences

Tone can be used in Ọnịcha Igbo to differentiate sentences or syntactic structures. Sentences which are structurally identical are differentiated semantically by their tonal manifestations. For instance, interrogation is formed in Igbo by merely replacing the high tone of the subject of the declarative sentence (or the resumptive pronoun) with a low tone, as in the following examples:

Declarative Sentences :

16.   Óⵔ   <u>sàlù</u>ⵔ áféⵔléⵔ
       He/she <u>vb-LV</u> plate
                     <u>wash</u>-FT
       He/she washed plates.

17.   Fá   <u>nò</u>ⵔ n'   úⵔnòⵔ
       They <u>vb</u> prep. house
              <u>be</u>   in
       They are in the house.

18.　　Àdá　　s̠ìlì　　ńní
　　　　Ada　　vb-LV　food
　　　　　　　　cook-FT
　　　　Ada cooked food.

19.　　Íbè　　t̠òlù　　ógónógó
　　　　Ibe　　vb-LV　tallness
　　　　　　　　be tall-ST
　　　　Ibe is tall.

The above declarative sentences will be rendered in the interrogative form so as to observe the position of the tone in the two constructions.

Interrogative Sentences :

20.　　Ò❍　　sàlù❍　áfé❍lé❍?
　　　　Did he/she wash plates?

21.　　Fà　　nò❍　　n'ú❍nò❍?
　　　　Are they in the house?

22.　　Àdá　　ò　　sìlì　　ńní?
　　　　Did Ada cook food?

23.　　Íbè　　ò　　tòlù　　ógónógó?
　　　　Is Ibe tall?

From the foregoing examples, it is observed that the high tones of subject pronouns in the declarative sentences are replaced by low tones in order to change them to interrogative sentences as in examples (20) and (21). But if a sentence contains a noun subject, a resumptive pronoun ọ or o is introduced immediately after the noun. It is this resumptive pronoun that carries the low tone of the interrogative construction, as in examples (22) and (23) above.

12. Function of Tone as Suprafix in the Derivation of Nominals from Sentences

In usage, it is very common to see syntactic structures or sentences that are nominalized and used as single words. These derivational tonal morphemes can be used to derive nouns from other structures, especially from sentences. It is observed that many of the Igbo names are contractions of sentences. Some of the names are sometimes so deformed that it becomes quite difficult, if not impossible, to relate the distorted forms to their original structures. The following are some of the examples:

	Sentences			Derived Nominals
24a.	Ó○ dì○ m∀'má H L H'H It is well/fine		24b.	Ò○dì○m∀'má LLH'H Welfare
25a.	Ó○ gà n'í'rú H L H'H He/she progressed		25b.	Ò○gàníí'rú LLHH'H Progress
26a.	Á nù○ m⋏ dí H L L H I got married		26b.	Ànú○m∀dí LHHH Marriage
27a.	Ó gbù éfí H L HH He killed a cow		27b.	Ògbúé⋉fí LHH⋉H Cow killer
28a.	Ó○ chí ò○rà H L LL He/she carries a multitude		28b.	Ò○chí○ò○rà LHLL Leader

From the foregoing examples, it is observed that the first or initial vowel which has a high tone in the sentence form has a low tone in the derived nominal. The low tone here is not performing an interrogative function as it did earlier on; it is rather performing a derivative (agentive) function as examples (27) and (28) show. Just as the above nominals are derived from sentences, personal names are also derived from sentences in the Ọnịcha Igbo.

13. Deverbalization

Deverbatives are nominals which are derived from the process of deverbalization. They have morphological and semantic relationships with the verb root from which they are derived. As nominals, deverbatives can serve as minimal NPs, objects or complements of verbs.

Deverbatives in Ọnịcha will be discussed in this paper under the following headings:

- Bound Cognate Noun (BCN)
- Gerund (simple & complex)
- Noun Agent (agentives)
- Noun Instrument (instrumentals)

- Noun of Result (qualificatives)
- Miscellaneous Deverbatives

The different deverbatives will be discussed individually.

(A) The Bound Cognate Noun (BCN)

The Bound Cognate Noun, henceforth BCN, is one of the nominal and complementary elements of the Igbo verb. It is a verbal derivative which is always used bound to the verb from which it is derived. The BCN is formed by affixing the harmonizing low tone verbal vowel prefix a=/e❍=/e= to the verb root. The following examples are illustrative:

29. Úchè *sù*❍*lù*❍   ákwà   àsú❍

      Uche *vb*-LV   NP compl   BCN

            wash

Uche actually washed the clothes.

30. Òbí   *wà*lù❍ ńkú❍   àwá

      Obi   *vb*-LV NP compl   BCN

            Break

Obi actually cut the firewood.

Evidence, such as from the above examples, shows that the BCN serves to emphasize the action of the agent of the sentences.

(B) The Gerunds

A gerund is a nominal element that is derived from a verb base like other deverbatives. Gerunds are of two distinct types – simple and complex gerunds. The simple gerunds are formed from simple verb roots while the complex gerunds are formed from complex verb roots. Simple gerunds have earlier been discussed under Prefixation and Reduplication (see examples on Tables 3 and 4).

The complex gerund has a homorganic syllabic nasal prefix attached to the base form of the compound or complex verb. The following are examples of complex gerunds formed from both disyllabic and trisyllabic verb roots.

Table 14: Complex Gerund

	Syllabic Nasal	Base Verb Root	Complex Verb	Infinitive	Derived Gerund	Gloss
A	M	bú 'carry'	búbà 'carry in'	íbūbà 'to carry in'	m⋎búbà	act of carrying in
B	N	dà 'fall'	dápù⬤ 'fall off'	í⬤dāpù⬤ 'to fall off'	ńdápù⬤	act of falling off
C	M	gbú 'kill'	gbúbè⬤pù ⬤ 'cut off'	í'gbúbè⬤pù ⬤ 'to cut off'	m✎gbúbè⬤pù ⬤	act of cutting off

From the foregoing, it is observed that the derivative morpheme for a complex gerund is a high tone homorganic syllabic nasal prefix m (bilabial) and n (dental and alveolar). This contrasts with the derivative morpheme of a simple gerund which is a low tone harmonizing back vowel prefix ò-/ò⬤ (Tables 3 and 4 above). Some consistency is observed in the tonal behaviour of the gerunds. For instance, the syllabic nasal prefix has a high tone in all the derivatives as opposed to the harmonizing back vowel prefix which is consistently low.

(C) The Noun Agent

The noun agent, also referred to as agentive, denotes the doer of something. In the Ọnịcha dialect of Igbo, the noun agent is formed by prefixing a harmonizing derivational low tone morpheme ò-/ò⬤- to the base form of the verb. The structural pattern of the agentive in Ọnịcha Igbo is Ò-VR, where:

Ò = a harmonizing open back vowel prefix
VR = the verb root.

The following are examples of noun agent in Ọnịcha.

Table 15: Noun Agent in Ọnịcha Igbo

	D.M	Verb Root	Derived Nominal	Complement of Noun	Derived Nominal + Complement	Gloss
A	Ò	-sí 'cook'	ò-sí 'cook'	ńní 'food'	òsí 'ńní	cook
B	ò⬤	-dé⬤ 'write'	ò⬤-dé⬤ 'writer'	ákwú⬤kwó⬤ 'book'	ò⬤dé⬤ ákwú⬤kwó⬤	secretary/author
C	ò⬤	-kò⬤ 'farm'	òⅡ-kó⬤ 'farmer'	úgbō 'farm'	ò⬤kó⬤ úgbó	farmer
D	ò⬤	-zà 'sweep'	ò⬤-zá 'sweeper'	ú⬤nò⬤ 'house'	ò⬤zá ù⬤nò⬤	house sweeper/cleaner

From the above examples, it is observed that the derivative morpheme ò-/òⵔ- has a low tone in all the examples, while the vowel of the root has a high tone.

Apart from expressing the doer of something, the agentive can be used pejoratively or derogatorily either to ridicule or humiliate someone, especially when it is used in isolation without the affected entity or complement. Examples of such *derisive agentives* in Ọnịcha are:

Table 16: *Derisive Agentives* in Ọnịcha

	D.M.	Verb Root		Suffix	
A	òⵔ	-jéⵔ	'go'	gòⵔ	òⵔjéⵔgòⵔ
B	ò	-sí	'cook'	gòⵔ	òsígòⵔ
C	òⵔ	-lúⵔ	'work'	gòⵔ	òⵔlúⵔgòⵔ
D	òⵔ	-zà	'sweep'	gòⵔ	òⵔzágòⵔ
E	òⵔ	-déⵔ	'write'	gòⵔ	òⵔdéⵔgòⵔ

In each of the examples, the agentive is used sarcastically and the sarcastic element attached is =gòⵔ which is constant in all the examples. From the vowel harmony point of view, it is invariable. The above derivatives cannot be adequately glossed in English − not even via transliteration − because it borders on modality. The implication is that the interlocutor does not believe in the capacity of the agent to perform the action expressed by the verb.

(D) The Noun Instrument

The noun instrument, henceforth NI, denotes the instrument with which something is done. It is formed by prefixing a low tone homorganic syllabic nasal to the verb root. In most cases, the instruments require their own complement in order to be structurally and semantically complete. The following are some examples of NI in Ọnịcha Igbo.

Table 17: Noun Instrument in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Verb Root	Derived NI	Noun Complement	Derived NI + Complement	
A	-gbú 'kill'	mⵍgbú	òⵔkéⵔ 'rat'	mⵍgbú 'óⵔkéⵔ	rat poison/rat killer
B	-gwú 'dig'	ŋⵍgwú	ànìⵔ 'ground'	ŋⵍgwúànìⵔ	digger
C	-kpóⵔ 'drive into ground'	ŋⵍkpóⵔ	ànìⵔ 'ground'	ŋⵍkpóⵔnànìⵔ	cannon
D	-yòⵔ 'sift'	nⵍyòⵔ	áⵌkpúⵔ 'cassava'	nⵍyòⵔáⵌkpúⵔ	cassava sieve

E	zà 'filter'	nᐱzà	óⵔgwùⵔ 'medicine'	nᐱzàóⵔgwùⵔ	drug sieve
F	rá 'comb'	nᐱrá	ísí 'head'	nᐱráⵝísí	comb
G	té 'scrub'	nᐱtéⵔ	úⵔnòⵔ 'house'	nᐱtíⵔtéⵔúⵔnòⵔ	local paintbrush
H	kòⵔ 'cultivate'	ŋᐱkòⵔ		ŋᐱkòⵔ	farm implement

From the foregoing, a sort of consistency is observed in the tonal behaviour of the derived NI and the derived NI plus the complement. For instance, all the homorganic nasal prefixes have low tones. The high tone verb roots maintain their inherent high tones in the derived NI and also in the derived NI plus complement.

The low tone verb roots also maintain their low tone in the derived noun instrument and in the derived noun instrument plus complement. The complements are inherent to some of the derived noun instruments.

For instance, **-kpóⵔ** 'drive into ground' has a fixed or narrow collocational range because it can only co-occur with 'ground' so that the derived noun instrument plus the complement is ŋᐱkpóⵔnànìⵔ.

-yòⵔ, on the other hand, has a wide collocational range because it co-occurs with all elements that are sievable. Such elements may be powdery, granular, or in solid form as in nᐱyòⵔáⵝkpúⵔ 'cassava sieve'; cassava here may be in solid, fermented, wet form; it can also be in powdered form as dry, ground, cassava flour. -yòⵔ can therefore also co-occur with the following complements:

nᐱyòⵔóⵔkà   'corn sieve'

nᐱyòⵔgàríⵔ   'garri sieve'

nᐱyòⵔáⵝkpúⵔ   'cassava sieve'

nᐱyòⵔàkàmùⵔ   'pap sieve' etc.

-gwú 'dig' can have narrow, but not fixed collocational restriction when in a derived form. It co-occurs with ànìⵔ 'ground' when it refers to a professional digger, but it can also co-occur with jí 'yam' when it refers to the digging implement specifically used in the harvesting of yam. –gwú can therefore be realized as derived noun instrument as in:

ŋᐱgwúànìⵔ   'digger'
ŋᐱgwújí   'yam digger'

-kò● 'plant' can only exist as ŋ∧kò● without complement. It is a farm implement used mostly for weeding.

-gbú 'kill' has a wide collocational range when it serves to derive a noun instrument m∧gbú as can be seen in:

m∧gbú✗ó●ké●   'rat killer/rat poison'

m∧gbú✗ágwó●   'snake killer/snake poison'

m∧gbú✗ánwú●   'mosquito killer' etc.

-zà 'filter' is similar to -yò● 'sift/sieve' in the sense that both elements suggest the separation of solids or coarse materials from liquids or finer particles. N∧zà or n∧yò● is constructed with perforated material. The difference between n∧yò● and n∧zà is that n∧yò● co-occurs mostly with solid substances which can be dry or wet. N∧zà co-occurs mostly with liquids as in:

n∧zàó●gwù● 'drug filter'

n∧zàm✎mí✗lí   'water filter'

n∧yò● and n∧zà can be differentiated thus:

n∧yò● = ± solid

n∧zà = − solid

The following are unacceptable in Ọnịcha Igbo:

* n∧yò●m✎mí✗lí

* n∧zàá✗kpú●

* n∧yò●jí

-rá 'comb' has a fixed collocational range in its derived form n∧rá 'a comb'. It can only co-occur with the complement ísí 'head' as in n∧rá ísí 'hair comb'.

(E) The Noun of Result

The noun of result indicates the action or state resulting from the verb. It is formed by prefixing a low tone homorganic syllabic nasal to the base form of the verb. The derivative can be formed with either activity or stative verbs. When the verb is stative, the noun of result functions as the 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. The following are some examples of nouns of result:

Table 17: Noun Result in Ọnịcha Igbo

	Verb Root	Syllabic Nasal	Derived Noun of Result
a	-mé❍ 'do'	m⋀	m⋀mé❍ 'the result of doing'
b	-tú❍ íᕽmé 'be pregnant'	n⋀	n⋀tú í'mé 'the result of being pregnant'
c	-jí 'be black'	n⋀	n⋀jí 'the result of being black'
d	-pé❍ 'be small'	m⋀	m⋀pé❍ 'the result of being small/smallness'
e	-jó❍ 'be ugly'	Ń	ńjó❍ 'the result of being ugly/ugliness'
f	-má 'be fine/be beautiful'	m✎	m✎ᕽmá 'the result of being beautiful/beauty'

It is observed that the nouns of result are few in the dialect and that many of them are formed from stative verbs. They can be found in NP subject as well as in NP object positions in sentences.

(F) Miscellaneous Deverbatives

The above term refers to deverbatives which manifest some unique peculiarities in their morpho-tonemic and morpho-phonemic behaviours, as we shall see in the analysis.

Each of the derivatives is unique and should be considered separately from the others. There is no generalization as regards their method of derivation from their bases just as we have observed all along with earlier deverbatives that are regular and systematic in their formation. In Ọnịcha Igbo, such deverbatives are characterized by the following:

- incoherent and heterogeneous derivative morpheme
- tonal modification
- diverse semantic interpretation

We shall, in what follows, group the miscellaneous derivatives together using their derivative morpheme as the criterion for their grouping.

Table 18: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix a)

	Verb Base		Derived Nominal	
A	-bùO	'sing'	ábùO	'song'
B	-dà	'fall'	ádá	'a fall'

Table 19: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix e)

	Verb Root		Derived Nominal	
A	-fù	'get lost'	èfù	'lost'
B	-wù	'be famous'	èwù	'fame'
C	-zù	'be complete'	èzù	'complete'

Table 20: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix i)

	Verb Root		Derived Nominal	
A	-bú	'carry'	íbú	'load'
B	-kpéO	'judge'	íʼkpé	'case/judgment' *[vowel change]*
C	-jeO	'go'	íjè	'a walk' *[vowel change]*

Table 21: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix o)

	Verb Root		Derived Nominal	
A	-bí	'live'	òbí	'habitation'
B	-jí	'be black'	òjí	'blackness'
C	-kwú	'speak/talk'	ókwú	'speech/word'

Table 22: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix oO)

	Verb Root		Derived Nominal	
A	-chá	'be white'	òOchá	'white'
B	-fúO	'see'	óOfùO	'vision'

Table 23: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix u⭕)

	Verb Root	Derived Nominal
A	-bá 'be rich'	ù⭕bá 'wealth'
B	-kó⭕ 'be scarce'	ù⭕kó⭕ 'scarcity'

Table 24: Derivative morpheme (vowel prefix u)

	Verb Root	Derived Nominal
A	-chè⭕ 'think'	úchè 'thought' *[vowel change]*

Table 25: Derivative morpheme (syllabic nasal prefix m)

	Verb Root	Derived Nominal
A	-gbá 'wrestle'	m⌃gbá 'wrestling'
B	-gbú 'ache'	m⌃gbú 'ache/pain'

Table 26: Derivative morpheme (syllabic nasal n)

	Verb Root	Derived Nominal
A	-ché⭕ 'guard'	n⌃ché⭕ 'watch'
B	-ká 'be old'	ńká 'old age'

From the above examples of miscellaneous deverbatives, it is observed that the derivative morphemes in all are prefixes, whether they are vowels or syllabic nasal prefixes.

Summary of derivational affixes in the Ọnịcha dialect of Igbo

1a.   Prefixation

		Pref.	VR	Suff.	Derivative
i.	Infinitive:	í=/ị✎=	CV	-	í=/ị✎= (CV)
ii.	Participle:	a=/e=/ɛ=	CV	-	a=/e=/ɛ= (CV)

1b.   Prefixation and Reduplication (Simple gerund/verbal noun of action)

Pref.   **vr**   **rdvr**   **Derivative**

ò=/ò⬤=   CV CV_1-CV_2 òCV_1CV_2

1c. *Prefixation and suffixation.*

         Pref.   VR   Suff.   Derivative.

	Pref.	VR	Suff.	Derivative.
Group A	V	CV	-LV	V(CV)LV
Group B	V	CV	C of VR V of VR	V(CV)CV
Group C	V	CV	ext of V of VR	V(CV)V

2.   **Interfixation**

2a.   **Noun-Based Form**   N-I-N

2b.   **Verb-Based Form**   VP   VR   I   VP   VR

                      i.   V   CV   M   V   CV

                      ii.   V   CV   L   V   CV

3.   **Circumfixation**

                Circumfix   **Derivative**

                a/e…mu   a/e <u>base</u> mu + compl

4   **Deverbative**

4a.   **BCN**

             Pref.   **VR**   **Derivative**

            à=/è=/è⬤=   CV   à=/è=/è⬤= (CV)

4b.   **Gerund** (Complex Gerunds)

             Pref.   **Complex Vb.**   **Derivative**

             HHSN CV_1CV_2 HHSN(CV_1CV_2)

4c.   **Agentive**

             Pref.   **VR**   **Derivative**

            ò=/ò⬤=   CV   ò=/ò⬤=(CV)   +   Noun complement

4d.   **Noun Instrument**

             Pref.   **VR**   **Derivative**

            LHSN   CV   LHSN(CV)   +   Noun complement

4e   Noun of Result

Pref.	VR	Derivative
LHSN	CV	LHSN (CV)

4f.   Miscellaneous Deverbatives

	Pref.	VR	Derivative
i.	a=	CV	a(CV)
ii.	e=	CV	e(CV)
iii.	i=	CV	i(CV)
iv.	o=	CV	o(CV)
v.	ọ=	CV	ọ(CV)
vi.	ụ=	CV	ụ(CV)
vii.	u=	CV	u(CV)
viii.	m=	CV	m(CV)
ix.	n=	CV	n(CV)

Conclusion

This work has been able to organize and systematize the derivation of words in the Onicha dialect of Igbo. Evidence from the examples shows that affixation is the most productive process in the derivation. The data on the dialect show that prefixation is the most predominant process employed in the derivation of words. There are instances of interfixation and circumfixation. Tones have also been shown to be used as derivative agents in the dialect where they function as suprasegmentals. Prefixation and suffixation are no longer productive. They belong to old formations that are probably lost in history.

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