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Establishing the Citation Form for Inherent Complement Verbs in Igbo Dictionaries

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Abstract

Inherent Complement Verbs (ICVs) in Igbo are verbs that consist of CV roots which obligatorily co-exist with their meaning-specifying nominals. They consist of two morphemes of the type CV + Nominal and the two parts form a semantic unit. These verbs exist as such in the lexicon. Using the dictionaries of Williamson (1972), Igwe (1999) and Echeruo (2001) for data collection, the paper highlighted the problems created by these verbs in Igbo lexicography. It specifically addresses the problem of establishing the citation-form for ICVs and their arrangement in Igbo dictionaries. Findings reveal some significant facts that would help improve the production and quality of Igbo dictionaries. The use of the imperative, infinitive and other inflectional forms as headwords in the extant dictionaries demonstrates the lack of uniformity of citation form and the absence of an established citation-form in Igbo dictionaries. Group arrangement of ICVs in the dictionaries based on certain morpho-semantic criteria constitutes a major challenge for the lexicographer and the dictionary user. The choice of citation and arrangement in extant Igbo dictionaries makes quick accessibility and retrieval of information tedious and often times fruitless, so defeats the very purpose of a reference work which a dictionary is expected to fulfil. The paper concludes with useful suggestions for future Igbo lexicographers.

Introduction

Inherent complement verbs have been identified in Igbo studies by Nwachukwu (1976, 1983, and 1987), Emenanjo (1983, 2005) and Oweleke (1996, 2007) verbs which always include a nominal element as their citation form. Nwachukwu (1987, p.40) observed that:

the citation form of the verb consists of a CV-root followed by a free noun (or in very few cases a prepositional phrase). The root and its nominal complement form a semantic unit, and any dictionary which excludes the complement lacks

meaning, because the complement is the meaning-specifying constituent of its verb (p. 40).

In addition, Nwachukwu (1983:110) stresses that “each complement is a nuclear constituent of its verb and that the verb does not exist without it.” This means that the CV root with its complement is regarded as a lexeme/lexical item, not one in exclusion of the other. The inherent complement verb begins with a semantically empty verb root and has an appropriate complement added to it to form a lexical unit. We agree with Nwachukwu (1983) that the verb does not exist without the meaning-specifying nominal. Emenanjo (2005, p. 479) also pointed out that the Igbo verb always co-exists with a nominal element and thus asserted that: “... the semantic content of every Igbo verb describes a certain action, state (processor other phenomenon) which by its very nature implies the co-existence of a certain nominal (phrase) concept”.

Thus, judging by the pervasive nature of the co-occurrence of verb roots and their nominals, Emenanjo classified Igbo verbs by their complement types rather than by transitivity. He identifies five groups as follows: General complements verbs, Inherent complement verbs, Bound complement verbs, Prepositional complement verbs and Ergative complement verbs.

In spite of the controversy surrounding this classification, the fact remains that there exists a group of verbs in Igbo referred to as inherent complement verbs, and that the majority of Igbo verbs co-exist with a nominal or complement of some sort.

The Lexicon

In its simplest and most general sense the term, *lexicon* means “dictionary”, that is, a list of a language’s total vocabulary. The lexicon or dictionary can be practical or theoretical. As practical, it is equivalent to the conventional dictionary compiled by lexicographers, the type found in living rooms and on book shelves. Leech (1974) refers to this type as “the flesh and blood dictionary”. The theoretical dictionary on the other hand, is a mental stock of words or an in-built dictionary that competent speakers possess. Radford (1981, 1988), Brown and Miller (1985), Riemsdijk and Williams (1986), Spencer (1991), Nwachukwu (1987), Ndimele (1992), Saeed (2003) and Crystal (2008) have described the lexicon as sub-component of generative grammar that contains appropriate information not only of their phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic, properties but also of the idiosyncratic facts about them. In the lexicon also are specifications on the subcategorization or strict subcategorization, selectional restriction facts of lexical items. Thus, Igbo ICVs exist as a “dual unit morphemes” in the Igbo lexicon. We illustrate this fact with Igbuzo-Igbo inherent complement verbs:

1) -gba cluster

- gba afā “practice divination”
- gba ọtọ “become naked”
- gba ezenè “marry many wives”
- gba òngba “wrestle”
- gba òkùnù “kick with the two legs”

2) -kpọ cluster

- kpọ òtù “leap, hop”
- kpọòkù “call”
- kpọakwà “buy clothes”

-kp̄oyĩ “abuse,curse”

3) **-tu cluster**

-t̄ ɪmē “become pregnant”

-t̄ ɔnū “burrow”

-t̄ ŋa “imprison”

-t̄ egwù “beafraid”

-t̄ anyā “expect”

From the examples, each unit is made up of two parts, and the two parts constitute one semantic unit. The verb roots -gba, -kp̄ and -t̄ are semantically opaque or incomplete without the meaning-specifying nominals. Nwachukwu (1987) has correctly noted that any dictionary entry of these verbs must include the two parts.

Inherent Complement Verbs and Homonyms

The behaviour of inherent complement verbs on the surface tends to blur the study of homonyms in the language. On the surface, ICVs can appear without their nominals and this gives the erroneous impression that the verbs have uniform phonological shape but different meanings. This behaviour of the verbs has led some Igbo linguists like Ogbonna and Iloene (2003) and Ndimiele (2003) among others to treat this group of verbs as homonyms in the language. They argue that the first part of the verbs, for example, -gba..., -t̄..., -kp̄... are verbs which can be disambiguated by context (that is, their nominal complements). This analysis stems from a misconception that the first part of the verb is complete on its own.

ICVs are comparable to English phrasal verbs in which the two or more parts of the verb exhibit a syntactic as well as semantic cohesion. The roots of the phrasal verb form a semantic unit with prepositions or adverbs or both. Most times, the meanings of the phrasal verbs are not derived from the separate meanings of their parts. Below are some examples:

- 4) put up with “accept something that is unpleasant or annoying”
 look up to “admire or respect somebody”
 look into “examine or investigate something”
 make up with “end a quarrel”

The verb therefore does not exist if any part of it is missing. The same is true of Igbo ICVs. We therefore stress that the first parts of ICVs in isolation are not cases of homonyms. One part in exclusion of the other does not constitute a lexical item in Igbo.

The Treatment of ICVs in some Igbo Dictionaries

ICVs constitute a major problem in Igbo lexicography and their treatment in Igbo dictionaries raises two major issues- the problem of choice of citation-form, and their arrangement of as headwords in the dictionaries.

Choice of Citation Forms for ICVs in Extant Igbo Dictionaries

The dictionaries of Williamson (1972), Igwe (1999), Echeruo (2001) and Akponye (2011), exhibit lack of uniformity of citation forms used for entries of ICVs. In lexicography, a citation form refers to the headword or lemma of the dictionary. The headword is a main entry word in a dictionary usually written in bold type-face and at the left margin. It is the form which a

dictionary user would readily look up. Most lexicographers use the canonical form of the verb as the citation form. The canonical forms of words are usually determined by conventions which vary from language to language, and culture to culture. For example, in the English language verbs are cited in plain present, German and French use full infinitive (for example, in French, *donner* to give, *parler* ‘to speak’, *fumier* ‘to smoke’). For Sanskrit verbs, the root is used as the entry form. It is the practice in many languages to use the least marked form of the verb.

However, in Igbo no form has been established as the canonical. This is evident in the different forms employed by Igbo lexicographers. Echeruo (2001) uses the imperative form, e.g. *gbaa*, ‘drain/discharge’, *bie* ‘live’, *büö* ‘dig’ and Igwe (1999) uses both the basic and the infinitive - the basic to indicate the verbs in isolation and the infinitive for all other verbs in the group. Note also that CV roots of ICVs in this dictionary entered in isolation are not cited with an initial hyphen as is the practice in Igbo studies. Williamson cited the verbs in the infinitive form but omitted the prefix (i-/i) and explains that the verbs should be read off by adding the infinitive prefix, followed in the case of a high tone verb by a step tone, thus the verb *me* ‘do’ should be read as *imē* ‘to do’. Examples of the different citation forms of simple verbs and ICVs from Williamson, Igwe, Echeruo and Akponye are given below for illustration:

- bu1. carry, bear (something)
- gbaosọ run
- gbambo strive

Extract from: Williamson 1972:

- bu** v. t. lift, carry
- dọ1.** v. t pull, drag tug, draw
- ịdọ àkpịrị** to cause to desire or long for
- ịdọ mvo** to scratch or claw with force
- igba ọsọ** to run, to flee, to run away, to escape
- igba mgba** to wrestle, tussle, to struggle with another
- igba asụ** to spit (spittle)

Fig 1: Extract from: Igwe 1999

- buo** v [LH] carry, lift. var. **vuó.**
- döö** v [HH] pull; draw
- dee** v [LH] write; inscribe
- gbaa ösö** v [HHHL] run a race
- kpaa amü** v [HHHH] be humorous
- gbaa mbö** v strive [HLLL]

Fig 2: Extract from: Echeruo 2001

- Budà** v To carry down
- Budàghi** v Not carried down, off-loading
- Bugara** v To carry to
- Budàkwa** v To carry down, off-load too
- Meghi mmemme** v adv Not performing an activity or a ceremony
- Katee aka** v To keep far an appointment
- Etokwala eto** v To assume, elevate, raise

Gwepiakwa v To crush, destroy too

Fig 3: Extract from: Akponye (2011:23-24)

The forms **bu, -buibu, buo, buda, budaghi, bugara, budakwa; gba ɔsɔ, igba ɔsɔ, do, dḡḡ** cited as headwords in these dictionaries show that Igbo lexicographers do not agree or are not aware of the fact that headwords have a specific form generally accepted by the language users which is reflected in the dictionary as the headword. Entries from Akponye seem to suggest that monosyllabic simple verbs are non-existent in Igbo. In this dictionary inflected forms- negative, imperative, phrases, and even sentences are entered as lexemes. This is contrary to lexicographic practice and principles. The forms adopted by these lexicographers will not allow a language learner to identify the basic/simple form of a lexeme.

The Problem of Citation-Forms in Igbo Dictionaries

The major problem associated with using the imperative form of the verb for citation in the dictionary is that not all verbs have the imperative form. Stative verbs have been identified in Igbo studies by Williamson (1972), Emenanjo (2015) among others as verbs that cannot be used in the imperative. The imperative in Igbo is formed by affixing a harmonizing open vowel suffix to the verb root. The tone of the suffix is high for all verbs.

The imperative form is also highly dialectal; the suffixes vary across dialects. While Igbuzo-Igbo uses only the suffixes ɛ= and =a; Onitsha Igbo makes use of five, =e, =o, =ɔ, =o, =ɛ; Central Igbo uses =e, =a, o and ɔ. For the reason also the imperative is not a good form for citation in Igbo dictionaries. Furthermore, the imperative is also not a natural form of the verb that speakers of Igbo can easily identify words with, and as such, not the form that users would readily look up in the dictionaries.

The infinitive form is equally unsuitable citation form for entry of Igbo verbs. Infinitives are formed by prefixing a harmonizing high tone vowel (**i-ĩ**) to the verb root. We take a few examples below:

	Verb Root	Infinitive	Gloss
5a.	-me	imē	to do
b.	-li	ilī	to eat
c.	-zà	izà	to sweep
d.	-gba mgbà	igbā mgbā	to wrestle
e.	-kpḡ mkpū	ikpḡ mkpū	to scream
f.	-tù ɔnū	itù ɔnū	to burrow

Using the infinitive as citation form for dictionary entries means that alphabetizing verbs in the dictionary will be problematic as all verbs will be entered under the letters i and ĩ. This will create an imbalance in the macrostructure of the dictionary. Secondly, the infinitive is not good for citation purposes, as tones of the basic forms of the verbs are distorted when used with the infinitive. The result is that all high tone verbs in the basic form will become down step tones, when preceded by the high tone infinitive prefix.

Considering the problems associated with the imperative and the infinitive forms of the Igbo verb as citation form in Igbo dictionaries, we suggest that the basic form, with a prefix hyphen be used as the citation form for verbs in Igbo dictionaries. This form is the natural form in which

native speakers can easily identify verbs. The form also does not obscure the tonal facts about the verb root as does the infinitive.

Arrangement of ICVs as Headwords in the Dictionaries

In this section, we critically examine the arrangement of this group of inherent complement verbs in the dictionaries of Williamson (1972), Igwe (1999) and Echeruo (2001). We take some extracts from the **-gba** entries from the dictionaries:

- gbaa** v [HH] be in active session
- gbaa** v [HH] de-husk (e.g. corn)
- gbaa** v [HH] dance
- gbaa** v [HH] engage in; participate
- gbaa** v [HH] explode; burst
- gbaa** v [HH]sting
- gbaa** v [HH]germinate
- gbaa** v [HH]run, flee
- gbaa** v [HH] make divination

Figure 4: Extract from Echeruo (2001:55-56): entry for gbaa

- gba 1.** vt/intr. eject forcibly; shoot; spout out, spray; sprinkle; spit; burst; explode; jet; kick; slap vigorously
- gba 3.** vt/intr. make energetic movement in some manner (e.g. run, move, go, dance, wrestle, etc.)
- gba 5.** v.t. do, make, construct, perform
- gba 10.** v.t. extract, take from; make visible, cause to appear, expose, appear

Figure 5: Extract from Igwe (1999:190-191): entry for gba

- gba 1.** move
(i) run
- gba 2.** shine (of moon only); burn..
- gba 3.** crack, split; break; snap.
- gba 4.** bend.
- gba 5.** speak (in certain special ways).
- gba 7.** remain in a state.
- gba 9.** take meal.

Figure 6: Extract from Williamson (1972:132ff)

These arrangements, going by standard lexicographic practice and principles, suggest that **-gba**, a lexical item on the left-hand side, is equivalent in meaning to the list of things on the right. But we know as speakers of the Igbo language, that **-gba** obligatorily co-exists with a meaning-

specifying element which gives the unit its complete meaning. The entries for *-gba* in isolation in these dictionaries do not correspond to the meaning of the ICVs. In Williamson's dictionary, **-gba** is wrongly glossed as 'crack', 'bend', 'bear witness', 'keep silence', 'be naked', among others. The appropriate equivalents are **-gbabè**, **-gbangò**, **-gbaakaebè**, **-gbaduu** and **-gba òtò** respectively. In Igwe's dictionary, also the same anomaly is noticed; *gba1.* is equivalent to 'eject forcibly'; 'shoot'; 'spout out', 'spray', 'sprinkle' etc. (cf. Figure 5). From the arrangement of entries, we observe that all compilers treat the first part of the ICVS as complete lexical item

We also observe in the dictionaries of Williamson and Igwe, that the first part of the ICV is treated as a lemma/headword. The first part, for example, **-gba** is wrongly accorded, in all the entries a headword status. We note that **-gba** in isolation is not an independent lexical item. This entry arrangement gives the wrong indication that **-gba** alone is the headword, while the full lexeme (i.e. *-gba* + its complement), usually indented to the right is the derivative. In standard bilingual lexicographic practice, the dictionary has a two-pole structure, made up of the headword on the left and the equivalent on the right. Headwords are written in bold-type and derivatives equally in bold-type, but indented or nested in a paragraph under the headword. From the analysis it is clear that the *-gba* entries in the dictionaries are misleading. The approach used by the lexicographers gives the wrong impression that all the *-gba* entries are homonymous verbs. This structural arrangement gives a wrong notion of **-gba** 1 (cited in the dictionaries) as full-fledged lexical items, and the indented items as derivatives. This arrangement is misleading.

A major inconsistency is noticed in the dictionary of Echeruo in the entry of these verbs. While some of the verbs are entered as *-gba* in isolation, others are entered with their nominal. This gives the impression that those cited without the nominal are complete verbs and different from the ones cited without complements. Some entries from the dictionary will illustrate this fact:

- 6) **-gbaa** v [HH] shoot, fire at
 - gbaa** v [HH] dance
 - gbaa** v [HH] drain, flush clean, discharge
 - gbaa** v [HH] explode; burst
 - gbaa** v [HH] make divination, tell fortune
 - gbaa** v [HH] run, flee
- 7) **-gbaaegbe** v [HHHL] shoot, fire (a gun)
 - gbaaegwu** v [HHHH] dance
 - gbaaabü** v [HHHH] discharge pus
 - gbaaafö** v [HHHH] bust open, e.g. tubes, balloon, etc
 - gbaaafa** v [HHHH] prophesy; tell fortune
 - gbaa ösö** v [HHHH] run, run away, abscond

An Igbo language learner, using this dictionary is therefore not certain of the difference between **gbaa** and **gba aegwu** or **gbaa** and **gba aqşo** etc.

Group Arrangement of ICVs in Williamson's Dictionary

Williamson and Igwe in an attempt to tackle this problem associated with the inherent complement verb phenomenon decided to put the verbs into groups. This method only compounds the already complex problem as the groupings are neither consistent with strict alphabetization nor with the morpho-semantics of the language. We use some entries from the dictionaries for illustration.

- gba 1.** move –
 - A. independent movement
 - (i) run
 - (ii) move in a vehicle; ride
 - B. move (as liquid)
 - (i) flow, run (liquid as object)
 - (ii) pour, run, exude, (liquid as object) shed tears; bleed; perspire etc.
 - C. project
 - (i) spit; inject
 - (ii) sting; irritate the throat sometimes painful
 - (iii) shoot; fire
 - (iv) snap
 - (v) kick
 - (vi) abort
 - D. spread; scatter
 - E. wrestle; fight
- gba 2.** shine (of moon only); burn
- gba 3.** crack; split; break; snap
- gba 7.** remain in a state
- gba + 8.** cut
- gba 10.** spring out; grow out
- gba 12.** buy; pawn (person); buy (land/tree)
- gba 18.** cultivate (cassava and other plants)

Figure 7: Extract from Williamson (1972:131-144)

Let us examine the data presented here more closely. The classes or groups of entries are open-ended; they allow the inclusion of a lot of possible words with similar semantic interpretations. Such inclusions cause overlapping and confusion. The lexical item, *-gba1* is equivalent to the general meaning, ‘*movement*’. Under this heading, there are other sub headings: A. ‘independent movement’, B. movement as in ‘*liquid*’; C. ‘*project*’; D. ‘*spread*’, and E. ‘*wrestle*’, (c/f Fig:7). This implies that ‘*run*’, ‘*flow*’, ‘*scatter*’, ‘*spread*’ and ‘*wrestle*’, *shoot*, *bleed*, *flow*, *abort*, *kick*, are all forms of movement. Under these broad headings are specific entries such as **-gba ɔsɔ̄** ‘run’, **-gbadebe** ‘stop running’, **-gba asɔ̄** ‘spit’ **-gba egbè** ‘shoot’ **-gba afa** ‘practise divination’, **-gba ajilija** ‘perspire’, **-gba ñgbā** ‘wrestle’ and others. We observe

that this kind of open-ended classification allows for a wide range of lexical items to be interpreted as ‘move’.

One can also, by extension analyse ‘close the eyes’ or ‘shake the head, body, or anything’ as forms of movement; just as we can interpret ‘*sleep*’ or ‘*die*’ as ‘remain in a state’ (-gba 7: Williamson 1972:141). In this group, we observe that the following items are grouped under ‘remain in a state’: -**gba ọtọ** ‘be naked’ -**gba duu**, ‘keep silence’ -**gba nlò** ‘become soft’ among others. With this loose and general sense of ‘movement’, a lot of words can be added to the group, thereby making a search for lexical items very difficult or even impossible.

Further breakdown shows that ‘independent movement’ as in A (i) ‘run’ has the following entries among others:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 8a .- gbabìdò | enclose | e) - gba mbò | strive |
| b.- gba egwu | dance | f) - gba òdìbò | work as servant |
| c.- gba ekwòlò | compete | g) - gbafu obi | startle, shock |
| d.- gbambìbì | borrow | | |

All these are grouped as ‘movement’, or ‘run’. It is clear that there is little or no semantic similarity among these lexical items. No dictionary user would readily look up ‘*enclose*’, ‘*burrow*’ or ‘*compete*’ under ‘*run*’. In many of the groups a good number of unrelated items are nested in one paragraph.

Group Arrangement of ICVs in Igwe’s Dictionary

Similarly, Igwe (1999) following in the tradition of headword grouping of lexical items as Williamson, the entries for the -gba cluster in Igwe’s dictionary show the same irregular semantic grouping. The glosses for -**gba1** entries are given as follows: ‘*spout out*’, ‘*shoot*’, ‘*eject forcibly*’, ‘*spray*’, ‘*kick*’, ‘*sprinkle*’, ‘*burst*’, and ‘*slap vigorously*’, (Fig 5). These glosses, from points of view of both the source and target languages do not share any common meaning. They are neither synonymous nor polysemous. Besides, **igbā ajuju** ‘to question’, **igbā ikù** ‘to pull the eye brow’, **igbā anya tomtom** ‘to blink rapidly’ and **igbā isimvùkwum** ‘to shrug shoulders’ do not belong to the same semantic fields. One wonders therefore, why they are grouped together. Below is the extract for -gba1. entries in Igwe’s dictionary:

gba1. v.t.intr. eject forcibly; shoot; spout out; spray; sprinkle; spit; burst; explode; jet; kick; slap vigorously (inf. Simple **igbā**; ger.inf. **Ìgbùgba**)

igbā aka to hit hard with the hand

igbā akan’anya to slap vigorously in the face

igbā àku to shoot an arrow; to shoot with an arrow

igbā ajuju to question closely; to interrogate; to shoot questions at

igbā anya tomtom to blink rapidly; to feel no shame

igbā ašū to spit (spittle)

igbā egbè to shoot a gun; to shoot with a gun

Egbè igwē nà-àgba. It is thundering

- igbā ìkù** to pull the eyebrow briskly up and down
igbā isimvùkwum to shrug the shoulders
igbā mirī to spray water on; to squirt water on; to sprinkle water on; to spout out water
igbā ogw'ù to spray medicine on
igbāṁkwū to kick; **igbāukwut'im** to stretch the leg by kicking
igbāùwa to explode; to echo; to be splitable (of wood)
igbā sīkposīkpo to shoot with a pea-shooter
igbābì to snap, break (of string, rope, thread, etc.)
igbābì anya to wink at
igbāgbu to shoot dead; to kill by over-spraying
igbāryè to shatter into very minute bits; to pulverize
Ugba āgbaala The oil bean pod has exploded
igbā nkètānkè to scatter in different directions (by flying, running, exploding);
igbāji to break by shooting

Figure 8: Extract From Igwe (1999:190): entry for -gba 1.

The Implications of Group Arrangement for the Igbo Dictionary User

The approach used by the lexicographers gives the wrong impression that all the *-gba* entries in isolation are homonymous verbs. This structural arrangement gives a wrong notion of **-gba 1** (cited in both entries) as full-fledged lexical items, and the indented items as derivatives. This arrangement is misleading.

We observe that this method of group arrangement of lexical items as done in the dictionaries of Williamson and Igwe makes search for words tedious and most times fruitless. Taking the *-gba* entries for instance, a user, looking for these verbs **-gba afa** 'prophesy', **-gba ūka** 'become sour', **-gba àzì** 'take meal' or **-gbabe** 'lean against', will definitely not locate them with ease as the words are all scattered in different groups and the criteria or principles for delimiting their groups are not stated anywhere in the dictionary, not even in the preface or introduction. The implication here is that the user has to go through all the entries for *-gba* each time he wants to find the same word. The inclusion of unrelated words within the groups also compounds the problem of the search.

Another major implication of this arrangement is that the Igbo dictionary user (whether native speaker or language learner) must first decide which group a word belongs before he can find its meaning. A non-native speaker/learner of Igbo who comes across such words as **-gba m̀gba** 'wrestle', **-gba àfù ọ̀nụ** 'grow beards', **-kpọ ụkwū** 'stub the toes', **-tu imē** 'become pregnant' or **-tu anya** 'expect' may not locate them since he has to first, guess their meanings then, decide which group the word belongs before locating it in the dictionaries. He therefore has to go through all the entries for *-gba* in the dictionaries every time even for words he had searched earlier.

A dictionary user usually consults the dictionary, primarily to look up the meaning of a lexical item. It has been noted that meaning is the central and most important concern of lexicography. We recall that Haas (1967), as quoted in Al-kasimi (1977), observes that ‘a good dictionary is one in which you can find what you are looking for, preferably on the first try’. If we take for example, the entry for **-gba ọtọ** ‘be naked’ from Williamson’s dictionary, it will be difficult for any person, even a competent native speaker linguist to imagine that it would be found in the group of **-gba 7** glossed as ‘*remain in a state*’ (cf. Williamson 1972:141). Other entries in this group are

9. **-gba enū** ‘be shallow’ **-gba nkịtị** ‘keep silence’;
-gba gholoholo ‘be watery’ **-gbamfe** ‘lessen’ or ‘be light’
-gba nlò ‘be soft’

An Igbo native speaker cannot readily find these words from these dictionaries because he would not guess that they have the same semantic content as ‘*remain in a state*’. Furthermore, no Igbo speaker will guess that **-gba afa** ‘practice divination’ will be found in the group glossed as *spread*’ in Williamson (1972). From Igwe’s dictionary too, it will be difficult for the user to locate the verb **ịtụimē** ‘to become pregnant’ in **-tụ** group 5. glossed as ‘*bore*’, ‘*burrow*’, ‘*dig*’, or **igbā àkwùkwunà** ‘to practice prostitution’ in *gba* group 3. glossed as ‘*do*’, ‘*make*’ or ‘*construct*’.

The method of grouping ICVs adopted in these dictionaries does not correspond to the standard lexicographic practice of semantic grouping or word family nesting arrangement. The method thus adopted by both lexicographers hinders quick accessibility of entries and so defeats the very purpose of a reference work, which a dictionary is expected to fulfil. Although Williamson and Igwe need be highly commended for their innovative and fairly comprehensive work in advancing Igbo lexicography, a lot still remains to be done, particularly, in the retrieval of information stored in these dictionaries. We appreciate the huge efforts in reflecting accurately, the morphological as well as phonological facts of the language in their dictionaries, especially in the areas of word division and spelling. It is our conviction that a lot of work still needs to be done by Igbo linguists and lexicographers especially, in the area of arrangement of entries in a bid to achieving a definitive and standard dictionary for the Igbo language.

Suggestions for Future Lexicographers

Considering the difficulty of retrieving valuable morpho-semantic and phonological information already stored in these dictionaries based on the observations made on the treatment of ICVs, we make the following suggestions:

- 1) The adoption of strict alphabetical ordering for Igbo ICVs. Of all the methods of arrangement of dictionary entries, the alphabetical ordering is dominant because it is the most convenient for locating words. We therefore recommend that inherent complement verbs be entered with their complements in an alphabetical order, not thematically or according to some semantic groupings. The verb root and its complement should be regarded as the citation form as in the examples below:
10. **-tụ afĩa** request somebody to help buy something
àtụmafĩa commission to buy something; order
-tụ ajā build up a wall (by throwing mud).

- tɔ akanya** build thatch roof or thatch roofed house.
- tɔtɔnɔakanya**
- tɔ àkpàni** be bellicose; pugnacious (in speech)
- tɔ alò** deliberate; consider; counsel
- tɔ anya** expect
- tɔ atɔ** be bumpy; be bounced about
- tɔ atɔ** order; indent for
- tɔba imē** impregnate
- tɔcha** scrape out
- tɔda** throw down
- tɔdàtà** throw down to
- tɔ èbilì** be agitated; swell (as river or sea)
- tɔ egwù** fear; respect; be afraid of

ICVs entered in this way are therefore treated as separate and full-fledged lexemes.

- 2) Any derivatives or idioms or phrases from the items may be nested under the base forms or main entries to show their morphological relationship with their bases. There are two options here: the lexicographer may decide to list the derivatives immediately with the main entries without giving their glosses and then cross-referencing them to their appropriate alphabetical location; or list the derivatives and give their glosses immediately with them. The recurring morpheme can then be repeated each time or represented by a swung or em dash. Our sample arrangement is given below:

11.-**gba ɔsɔrun**

- gbaba** (incept), begin to run; -**gbabà**, run into; -**gbabàta**, run inside towards speaker; -**gbabè**, stop running;
- gbadà**, run down, descend; **mgbadà**, act of running down, descending; -**gbadebe**, stop running; -**gbafù**, escape;
- gbaghali**, run past; -**gbaghèli**, run about; -**gbago**, run up, climb;
- gbagote**, run up, climb towards speaker; -**gbahuka**, run a bit further; -**gbana**, run home; -**gbanari**, run away from, escape; -**gbapu**, run away; -**gbanata**, run home; -**gbaso**, run after.

Nesting of this sort helps to save space and makes the dictionary more compact. Alternatively, the lexicographer may decide to use swung dashes to replace the recurring -gba morpheme as shown here:

12. **-gba ọsọ** run

~ba; ~bà; ~bàta; ~bè; ~dà; m~dà; ~fu; m~fu,
 ~ghali; ~gheli; ~go; m~go; ~gote; ~huka; ~kọ;
 ~pù; ~lù ọsọ; ~na; ~nari; ~nata; ~sò.

This method saves more space. The meanings of the derivatives are then cross-referenced to their proper alphabetic position. This arrangement helps the user to see the derivational as well as the semantic relations among the lexical units.

Apart from nesting the derivatives in a paragraph form as above, the lexicographer may decide to arrange them slightly indented to the right, vertically below the verbal base forms. Where the meanings are given in their right alphabetic position, it may be necessary to add some etymological information in parenthesis beside the items. Alternatively, the word can be treated as a polysemous entry, for example:

-gbapù run away; pour out;
 shoot out; redeem or save.

It can also be treated as a homonymous entry as:

- (a) **-gbapù (ọsọ)** run away
- (b) **-gbapù (mmili)** pour out
- (c) **-gbapù (egbe)** shoot out, fire
- (d) **-gbapù (n'ohu)** redeem, save

We argue for a strict alphabetical ordering of the inherent complement verbs, and the inclusion of all the possible derivatives as sub-entries following each headword. Examples 10, 11, 12 above show the arrangement of lexical items and their derivatives in strict alphabetical order. Notice that the method allows the user to see the morphological relationship between the root word and the derivatives while maintaining the meaning and position of a lexeme. Furthermore, it is our conviction that the basic form of the verb be used as the citation form. The use, as headwords, of the inflectional forms such as the imperative, negative and others that are highly predictable should be discouraged.

Conclusion

The inherent complement verb phenomenon actually poses a great difficulty for Igbo lexicographers. Williamson (1972) has rightly observed that in addition to the many dialects of Igbo, the problem of arrangement and presentation of verbal elements (such as the complex structure of ICVs in the language) also adds to why lexicography has been neglected in Igbo. We believe that, for Igbo dictionary to fulfil its purpose as a reference material and be relevant in the 21st century, and for Igbo lexicography to advance beyond the present state, the problem of choice of citation-form and arrangement of ICVs as headwords must be seriously tackled by both Igbo lexicographers, linguists and other stakeholders

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