

Nominalisation in Igbo anthroponyms: The case of Agentive and Gerundive nominal derivatives

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Abstract

Igbo anthroponyms or Igbo personal names have been studied in line with numerous linguistic and cultural themes of the Igbo language observable in their structures and meanings. Thus, they have been studied along: sociocultural themes, morphosemantic themes, structural themes, phonosemantic themes, sociolinguistic themes, among others. With regards to structural themes, authors assert that Igbo anthroponyms are embodiments of the grammatical structure of the Igbo language. This assertion has provoked various studies aimed at analysing the grammatical structures of the Igbo language in situ in Igbo anthroponyms. To mention just a few, Ubahakwe (1981) and Agbo (2014) have studied Igbo anthroponyms with regards to structures and concluded that they are made up of the grammar of the language. The present study is therefore another shoot at proving with facts that Igbo names are embodiments of the grammar of the language. It focuses on analysing the structure and meaning of Igbo anthroponyms in line with agentive and gerundive patterns of Igbo nominalisation. In achieving this, data were collected through various literatures on Igbo names, unstructured interview of the bearers of such names as well as through introspection, because the researcher is a native speaker of the language. The data analysis is purely descriptive. The study among other things found out that nominals derived from Igbo verb stem serves as Igbo anthroponyms. The study concludes by reaffirming the assertion that the understanding of the structure of Igbo personal names, gives the individual clues to the grammatical structures of the Igbo language.

Keywords: Nominalisation, Igbo Anthroponyms, Grammatical Structure, Affixation, Causativity

Abbreviations and conventions employed

N₁ = First noun of a noun-noun phrase or associative construction
N₂ = Second noun of a noun-noun phrase or associative construction
AgenM = Agentive nominal forming morpheme
Ger.N = Gerundive nominal forming morpheme
PA.RED = Partial reduplication

FL.RED = Full reduplication
VS = verb stem
VB = verb base
Ń = Archi morpheme representing a high tone nasal prefix
Ò = Archi morpheme representing a low tone vowel prefix
Pat. = Patient
> = becomes
Pref. = Vowel Prefix

Introduction

Names are as important to the Igbo people as the birth of a child, as parents usually incorporate in the names they give to their children their life experiences, circumstances surrounding the birth of the child as well as their life expectations from the children (Onumajuru, 2016). The Igbo people make use of names as means of identification of individuals, places, thought and things. In addition to serving as a means of identification, Igbo names are regarded as good values or virtues of the Igbo society. Thus, Mmadike (2014: 11) citing (Obeng, 2001, and Agyekum, 2006) remarks that "... any human being that does not have a name is not regarded as a proper human being" in Igbo, Africa or any human society. Apart from being soaked with culture content and meanings, Igbo names are also embodiment of the grammar of Igbo language. For instance, Ubahakwe (1981) was among the pioneer works that drew the attention of authors to the study of the grammatical structures of Igbo personal names where he suggested that the "... analysis of the structure of Igbo personal names might be a more practical and simpler way of analysing the structure of the Igbo language" (ibid: 97). Since Ubahakwe's (1981) suggestion, Igbo authors have taken turns in looking at Igbo anthroponyms in relation to the different observable grammatical structures of the Igbo language found in these names.

Based on available literature, studies have followed Ubahakwe (1981) in shedding more light on the structure of the Igbo personal names in relation to Igbo language grammar. Such studies include Onukawa's (1998) anthropolinguistic study of Igbo market-day anthroponyms and (1999a) investigation of the significance of the verb "-kwe" (agree, consent) in the structure of some Igbo names. Also, Maduagwu (2010) carried out a morpho-semantic analysis of Igbo personal names. Agbo (2014) highlighted the different causativizing morphemes in the structure of Igbo names. Others include, Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015) who unravelled the grammatical process of clipping in the structure of Igbo names. And Onumajuru (2016) conducted a semantic and pragmatic analysis of Igbo names.

The present study, unlike the previous ones, seeks to carry out a descriptive analysis of Igbo anthroponyms in relation to three patterns of Igbo nominalization. This is important because the present study identifies with the position that Igbo names are carriers of the grammar of Igbo language. Although earlier related studies on the structure of Igbo personal names such as: Ubahakwe (1981), Onukawa (1998, 1999a), Maduagwu (2014) and Onumajuru (2016), have all highlighted various nominal structures as captured in Igbo anthroponyms from different points of view. However, available records show that this article is the first of such works to attempt the analysis of how the agentive and gerundive patterns of Igbo nominalization are captured in the Igbo personal names.

Igbo anthroponyms or personal names are Igbo names given to human beings or to individuals or persons. They include forenames, surnames and title names. It is important to note that some of these nominalized names are forenames, surnames (or family names), as well as title names. In Igbo, while title names are given to the bearers as a form of honor for extra ordinary accomplishments, forenames are names given to individuals at birth. For the present study, Igbo personal names and Igbo anthroponyms are used interchangeably.

In linguistics, the grammatical name used to refer to the morphological process of deriving nominal from verb and other classes of lexical items is termed nominalization (cf. Anagbogu 1990, Adéníyì 2010, Udemmadu 2012, etc.). Other word classes as mentioned include: verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunctions, interjection. On the other hand, nominals are referred to all the outcomes of

“verb derivational morphology” (Emenanjo 2015: 22). For Emenanjo (2015), nominalisation can be used to explain all the grammatical processes that results in the creation of nouns or nominal. Furthermore, Emenanjo identifies five different sources of nominalisation in Igbo (Emenanjo 2015: 290). However, with regards to derived nominal in Igbo, the verb remains the only word class in the language from where nominals are derived. Thus, Nwachukwu (1983:18) describes Igbo language as a “verb language”. Therefore, this study shows that some Igbo anthroponyms have the structure of agentive and gerundive nominalisation patterns of the grammar of Igbo language.

Igbo language is the name of the language of the Igbo people, who are the original inhabitants of the five states of the present South East Nigeria, namely: Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Apart from the South East states, Igbo speakers are also seen in some parts of Rivers, and Delta states. Igbo language is one of the Igboid groups of languages of the Niger-Congo language family of Africa. It is an agglutinating language as well as a tone language. It is agglutinating because in Igbo there are clear morpheme boundaries in Igbo morphology. That is, any extra morpheme introduces new meaning to the existing word in Igbo language. Igbo is a tone language with three basic distinctive tones namely: high tone, low tone and down step tone. For the analysis in the present work, there are no emphases on tone marking; rather they are used to distinguish identical lexical items. However, for the literature review, authors’ examples were represented exactly the way they are (with regards to tone marking) in the referenced material.

This study is significant because it lends credence to the assertions by Igbo scholars that IPNs are full grammatical structures of the Igbo language (Ubahakwe 1981). It is also significant because it will provoke further studies on other grammatical properties of the Igbo language found in Igbo personal names. This work will contribute to the cross linguistic grammatical study of nominalization as well as Igbo language studies at large. The researchers are confident that the study will inspire further studies on Igbo nominalization and anthroponmys.

The organization of the study is as follows: Section one (1) is the introduction and section two (2) is the literature review. While section three (3) houses the methodology, section four (4) presents the data for analysis. Finally, section five (5) is the summary of the findings and conclusion.

Literature review

Igbo anthroponyms have been discussed from different points of view. In the present study, Igbo personal names are seen as full grammatical structures of the Igbo language (Ubahakwe 1981, Ezenwa-Ohaeto 2015, etc.). Following Ubahakwe’s (1981) publication, the study of Igbo anthronyms in relation to the grammatical structure of Igbo language have been of great concern to scholars. Thus, the following works are very important to the present research: Ubahakwe (1981), Onukawa (1998) and (1999a), Maduagwu (2010) and Onumajuru (2016).

Ubahakwe (1981) investigated Igbo personal names, their structure and meaning. The objective of the work is to study the structures of the Igbo personal names and the meaning surrounding the studied names. The data for the study were collected from all parts of the Igbo speaking area of South Eastern Nigeria and were analyzed through a descriptive analysis. Ubahakwe (1981) among other things found out that Igbo personal names are in the form of sentences and phrases, such that the single word of Igbo personal names are the shortened forms of long expressions. Also, he discovered six different structures of Igbo language grammar in Igbo personal names namely: noun phrase, positive statements, negation, questions, requests and complex sentences. Ubahakwe concludes that:

The structure of Igbo personal names may be said to constitute a minimum grammar of the language. There is a close relationship between the structure of indigenous Igbo personal names and the grammar of the language because the former appears to be a practical and very interesting way of presenting the latter not only to the first language speaker but also to the foreign learner of the language. (1981:120).

Ubahakwe’s work is similar with the present study from the perspective of structural analysis of Igbo personal names in relation to the grammar of the language. What the present study intends to do

differently is to unravel the different patterns of Igbo nominalization in the structure of Igbo personal names. This, to the best of the researchers' knowledge is not captured in Ubahakwe's work.

Onukawa (1998) looked at the anthropolinguistics study of Igbo market day anthroponyms. The objective of the study is to undertake an in-depth linguistic and anthropological analysis of Igbo market-day names. With regards to linguistic analysis, Onukawa highlighted the structural composition of Igbo market-day names and as such states that this group of names are usually associative constructions made up of two nominal noun phrases (NPs). He further explains that the meaning behind the two nouns is that of "N₁ of the type associated with N₂" (Emenanjo 1978: 35) as cited in Onukawa (1998: 8). That is, the N₂ is the noun referring to the market-day in the names, where N₁ is the first noun and N₂ the second noun. Another grammatical phenomenon in the structure of Igbo market-day names highlighted in Onukawa (1998) is the case of bound nominals. He illustrates that sometimes the first nouns (henceforth, N₁) are made up nominals that cannot exist independently without being compounded to other nominals (ibid: 9). Thus, the case of 'Oko (human male), Mgbọ (human female) and Ànyị (human female animate) as N₁. Lastly, Onukawa's work also provides insights into morphophonemics interaction as one of the properties of Igbo language in his explanation on some phonological adjustments the vowels of the second noun (henceforth, N₂) undergoes during the compounding of N₁ and N₂ to form Igbo market-day names. Although, Igbo nominalisation involves associative construction of nominal (noun phrase structure) just like Onukawa (1998), but whereas Onukawa centers on associating two lexical nouns (underived nouns), the present study concentrates on cases where the N₁ in the noun-noun associative constructions are mostly derived from the verb.

Onukawa (1999) investigated the significance of the verb 'kwe' in Igbo personal names. The purpose of the study is to discuss the centrality of 'òkwùkwe' (agreement) in Igbo culture as seen in Igbo 'kwe' names. Although Onukawa's (1999a) study was not centred on the structure of these personal names, he however, highlights the grammatical process of desententialisation as eminent in the different structures of 'kwe' group of Igbo personal names. Onukawa explains that Igbo 'kwe' names are derived through desententialised conditional, factitive, negative, and interrogative sentences. For 'kwe' names from conditional and negative sentences, the negative and conditional markers in the source sentences are deleted leaving behind the subject and the 'kwe' verb root, while for factitive and interrogative sentences the entire sentence is usually nominalised. For instance, Onukawa explains that (1) below is the source of 'kwe' name in (2).

- (1) 'ọ bụrụ na chi ẹkwe' [ndù/ògàniihu/àkùnàùba]
 it be that chi agree [life.activator/prosperity/wealth]
 'Let the chi agree [to the life activator/prosperity/wealth]

- (2) 'Chikwe' (Let the chi agree)

But in the 'kwe' name below (3), the complete sentence is nominalized.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| (3) 'kwe' name | source sentence | |
| Onyekwere | ònye kwèrè | |
| | who agreed | 'Who agreed?' |
| (lit., 'who expected) | | (Onukawa 1999: 11) |

The present study is different with Onukawa (1999) because whereas he talked about sentence nominalization achieved through desentential operation, the present study is preoccupied with word nominalization achieved through affixation of nominal forming morphemes to the Igbo verb stem.

On her part, Maduagwu (2010) focuses on the morphology and semantic implication of personal names in Igbo language. The article which is the first of its kind in the study of Igbo personal names in relation to the interpenetration of morphology, phonology, lexicon, syntax and semantics, thus, asserts that Igbo personal names consist mostly of compounded derived and underived lexical items, especially noun compounds. Maduagwu explains that the compounds are endocentric and left headed such that the

Onumajuru (2016) investigated the semantic and pragmatic contents of personal names and naming in the Igbo language and culture. The work analyses the semantic and pragmatic meanings of Igbo personal names through examining their structure. To achieve this, her data consisted of personal names given to both young and old Igbo male and female. Onumajuru who found out that Igbo personal names are divided into three broad categories (that is, lexical, phrasal and sentential), however, identifies the following structural descriptions of Igbo personal names: lexical names, noun-noun phrase, noun-verb phrase, noun-verb-complement or sentential, interrogative, and imperative/injunction/exclamation (see Onumajuru 2016 for details). According to her, the noun-noun Igbo personal names represent those names formed through the compounding of two lexical (underived) Igbo nouns. Thus, the following are examples of noun- noun names according to her:

- Onumajuru's work is similar to the present study because it also highlights the noun- noun structure of the Igbo personal names. However, it differs from the present study because while her work was limited to underived noun- noun structures, in the present research, the first nouns (N₁) are mainly derived.

Nominalisation in the Igbo language

In Igbo, although authors hold different positions on whether or not certain nominals are derived from sentences (Emenanjo (1978), Onukawa (1995)), or the availability of nominal compounds (Oluikpe and Nwaozuzu (1995)), but, there is a general consensus, however, that most nominals in the Igbo language have their sources from different verbs in the language (Eze 2015). That is, from verbs, nominal bases like gerund, adjectival noun, agentive nominal, instrumental nominal, etc. can be derived. Before going into the review of the different patterns of nominalisation in Igbo as recorded by authors whose works were reviewed, it is also worthy of note that the process of nominalisation has been tagged with different terms or names. Some of these terms include: nominalisation (Anagbogu 1990, Udemmadu 2012, Emenanjo 2015), nominal derivation (Maduagwu 2010), noun formation (Eze 2015), among others.

Anagbogu (1990) defines nominalisation in Igbo as the process of deriving verbal compounds from the verb “base” through the affixation of morphemes. He explains that the exact nature of the affixes (morphemes) is always dependent on the phonology of the “base”. According to Anagbogu, there are seven different patterns of nominalisation in Oka dialect of Igbo based on morphological structures. The nominalisation patterns include: agentive nominalisation (OVS- form), instrumental nominalisation (NVS- form), non- agentive nominalisation (EVS- form), gerundive nominalisation (ORED-form), the N-prefix form, the –mU circumfix form and the –ghu circumfix form. Anagbogu’s agentive, instrumental and gerundive nominalisation patterns are similar with Emenanjo’s (1978) nominalisation patterns in standard Igbo. However, the following extra nominalisation patterns can be observed in Oka dialect of Igbo:

- (5) i. e -kwu okwu = Agentive negative/Pat.
 non-speak word
 ‘non-talker’
- ii. n-lī ibhe = N-infinitive /Pat to eat thing ‘to eat food’
- iii. eli-mu ibhe = -mu circumfix/Pat.
 eating thing ‘eating food’
- iv. elī-ghu ibhe = -ghu circumfix/ Pat. not eating thing
 ‘non-eating of food’

(Anagbogu 1990: 49-50)

As seen in the examples (5i-iv), Anagbogu distinguishes between N₁ and N₂ where the N₁ houses the derived nominal and the N₂ is usually the patient or argument of the N₁ (see Anagbogu 1990). In the examples only the high tones were marked by Anagbogu.

Maduagwu (2010) likens nominalisation in Igbo to nominal derivation in Igbo. She explains that in Igbo, nominal derivation involves the formation of nominal from verbs, noun – noun compounding and through contraction of sentences. Although Maduagwu’s work centers on nominal derivation in Igbo through lexical noun compounding and sentence contraction which is at variance with the perspective of the present study (i.e., nominal derivation from the verb stem), she however notes that majority of Igbo nominal are derived from the verb.

In Udemmadu (2012) work on Igbo nominalisation, she opines that nominalisation is the morphological process of forming nominal from other word classes. For her, nominal(s) is:

any word that can function as the subject of the verb, the object of the transitive verb, the complement of the subject, the complement of the object, the object of the preposition, and the apposition (Udemmadu 2012:6 citing Chukwu 2009:1).

The study highlights the different classes of Igbo words that can comfortably fit in as nominal and thus perform the above functions of nominal by Chukwu (2009). In respect to this, she unravels nineteen (19) different nominal in Igbo language both derived and lexical. However, in line with the objective of the present study, the researcher concentrated on the derived nominal of Udemmadu (2012). Thus, she identifies four different verbal nominal derivatives in Igbo. They include: infinitive, gerund, noun agent and noun instrument. For noun agent and gerund nominal derivatives, Udemmadu explains that a noun agent is derived through the affixation of low tone harmonizing vowel prefix o-/ ɔ- to the verb stem. On the other hand, she illustrates that gerund nominal derivatives have two forms, which includes those formed through the affixation of a low tone vowel prefix o-/ ɔ- to a reduplicated root and those formed through the affixation of high tone harmonizing nasal prefix m-/ n- to more than one syllable verb base (complex verb). The above explanations on the nature of the Igbo noun agent and gerund verbal nominal derivatives are illustrated below:

- (6) i. o+de akwūkwo = ode akwūkwo (secretary)

- ii. o+gu+egwu = ogu egwu (*singer*)
 - iii. Oriri dī ya mma (Eating is good for him/her)
 - iv. Okwukwu abughī omume (Talking is not
actualization)
 - v. m + malite = mmalite (beginning)
 - vi. n + jedewe = njedewe (ending)
 - vii. m + bido = mbido (starting)
 - viii. n+gwu+ala = ngwu ala (digger)
 - ix. m+kpa+okū = mkpa okū (matches),
- (Udemmadu 2012: 11-12)

Examples 6i-ii above are instances of noun agent nominal derivatives. The examples 6iii-iv and 6v-ix represent the two types of gerund nominal derivatives in Igbo respectively.

As already stated above, Emenanjo (2015) explains that the term nominalisation refers to “multiplicity of processes which results in the creation of nouns and nominals” (:290). According to Emenanjo, the created nouns and nominals vary in morphological and structural shapes with regards to their primary and functional categories. Emenanjo who explains that the main patterns of nominalisation in Igbo include affixation, reduplication and tones, stresses that apart from other sources of nominalisation, that nominals can also be created through verb derivational morphology, otherwise known as nominal derivatives. He highlights five sub-classes of nominal derivatives in the language, namely: agentives, gerunds, instruments, qualifiers and factatives (Emenanjo 2015: 222). For the present study, the researcher concentrated on the structure of the agentives and gerunds sub-classes of nominal derivatives. Emenanjo’s explanations on the agentives and gerunds sub-classes are in line with Udemmadu’s (2012) views above. The examples below are cases of agentive and gerund nominal derivatives by Emenanjo:

(7)

- i. ò + ri > òri ‘eat’ ‘eater’
- ii. -ri > òriri ‘eat’ ‘eating’
- iii. -richa > n-richa ‘eat up’ ‘eating up’

(Emenanjo 2015: 224)

In the above illustrations according to Emenanjo, 7i is an example of agentive nominal, while 7ii and 7iii are instances of simple and complex gerund nominal respectively. In Emenanjo’s examples, only the low tones are marked, both the high and down step tones are unmarked. This study therefore to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, is the first attempt to investigate Igbo names in line with the nominalization patterns in Igbo.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive approach to data analysis. This method helped the researchers to gather information needed for the study. The study was undertaken as follows: The first was the compilation of a database of Igbo anthroponyms across different dialects of Igbo, through primary and secondary sources such as informants, literatures on Igbo personal names, introspection among others. The researchers used their linguistic knowledge to concentrate on only the Igbo names that embody some structures that look like patterns of nominalisation in Igbo. Nevertheless, the researcher analysed the Igbo names in line with the gerund and noun agent verbal nominal derivatives of Udemmadu (2012), followed by concluding remarks. It is important to note here that the area of study is the entire Igbo land in the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, and the population encompasses every Igbo language speaker. The data for this study were drawn from various parts of Igbo land, namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The names were collected from Igbo names from unstructured interviews of Igbo native speakers. For the data presentation and analysis, names that conform to the already mentioned nominalisation patterns in Igbo were clearly written the way they are used by the bearers. The researcher first presented

the names, followed by the morphological operations and morpheme-to-morpheme glossing and finally the English compositional meaning of the names.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This part of the study presents the data for analysis based on the nominalization patterns in Igbo. In line with the already stated objectives of the study, the data presentation and analysis is divided into agentive and gerundive nominal structures.

Igbo anthroponyms with agentive nominal structure

This is when an Igbo personal name has the structure of the agentive nominalisation pattern in the Igbo language. According to Anagbogu (1990), this group of Igbo names are usually formed through the affixation of the harmonizing low tone vowel prefix 'ò-/ọ-', to the verb stem. The prefix carries the 'doer' meaning and the verb stem (-VS) represents the action been carried out by the doer. The N₂ is the patient or the argument of the N₁. These names come in the form of two nouns (noun phrase) in an associative construction with compositional meaning. Examples of Igbo anthroponyms that follow this pattern include;

(8)

Igbo anthroponyms	Morphological processes	Compositional meaning
i. Ògbuagu N ₁ N ₂	ò + -gbu + agu AgenM + -kill.VS + lion killer + lion	Killer of lion
ii. Òjemba N ₁ N ₂	ò + -je + mba AgenM + -go.VS + place(s) traveler + place(s)	A traveler
iii. Òmeaku N ₁ N ₂	ò + -me + aku AgenM + -do.VS + wealth maker + wealth	Maker of wealth
iv. Òtigi N ₁ N ₂	ò + -tí + igba AgenM + -beat.VS + drum drummer + drum	A drummer
v. Òjeluìgbo N ₁ N ₂	ò + -jelu + ìgbo AgenM + -go for.VS + Igbo people defender + Igbo people	Defender of his people
vi. Òchendo N ₁ N ₂	ò + -che + ndo AgenM + -protect.VS + shade protector + shade	A protector
vii. Ọchịagha N ₁ N ₂	ọ + -chị + agha AgenM + -lead.VS + war leader + war	A leader of war
viii. Òkwuokwu N ₁ N ₂	ò + -kwu + okwu AgenM + -talk.VS + speech talker + speech	A talkative

The example 8i-viii represents Igbo anthroponyms derived through the Igbo agentive nominalisation pattern. Most of the names under the Igbo agentive nominalisation pattern are used as surnames and title names in deferent parts of Igbo land. As already stated, the archi-morpheme /ò-/ has an

inherent low tone that can harmonise to o-/ ɔ- depending on the harmony group of the vowel of the verb stem.

Igbo anthroponyms with gerundive nominal structure

There are two ways of deriving gerundive nominalisation structure in Igbo language. They include: the affixation of harmonizing low tone vowel prefix ò-/ ɔ- to the reduplicated verb stem, and the affixation of m-/n- prefixes to the verb stem (Udemmadu 2012, Emenanjo 2015). Therefore, this part of the study presents Igbo anthroponyms with the gerundive nominalisation structure of the language.

Igbo anthroponyms with the reduplicated verb stem structure

As already above, this group of Igbo anthroponyms is derived through the prefixation of the harmonizing low tone vowel prefix ò-/ ɔ- to the reduplicated Igbo verb stem. The verb stem may be partially or fully reduplicated in these Igbo names. Examples of such names include:

(9)

Igbo anthroponyms	Morphological processes	compositional meaning
i. Ònyinye	-nyi + -nye.VS PA.RED + -give.VS ò + nyi nye Pref. PA.RED	Gift from God
ii. Òlileanya	-li + -le anya.VS PA.RED + -hope for.VS ò + li le anya Pref. PA.RED	Hoping onto God
iii. Òtùto	-ti + -to.VS PA.RED + -praise.VS ò + tì to Pref. PA.RED	Praising God
iv. Òkwukwe	-kwu + -kwe.VS PA.RED + -believe.VS ò + kwu kwe Pref. PA.RED	Believing in God
v. Ọgụgụọ	-gụ + -gụọ.VS FL.RED + -comfort.VS ọ + gụ gụọ Pref. FL.RED	Comfort from God
vi. Òkike	-ki + -ke.VS PA.RED + -create.VS o + ki ke Pref. PA.RED	God of creation

As seen above, this group of Igbo personal names can take overt or covert noun complement. For instance, the Igbo names 9i-iii can also appear as follows: onyinyechukwu, olileanyachukwu and otitochukwu respectively. In the example 9i above, the verb stem ‘-nye’ is the source of the Igbo anthroponym ‘Ònyinye’. Firstly, the verb stem undergoes partial reduplication to derive ‘nyi nye’ before the prefixation of the low tone vowel ‘ò-’ to derive the name ‘ò+nyi+nye’ (Gift of God). The same processes occur to derive the Igbo personal names in 9ii to vi respectively. The name in 9vi is an Igbo

anthroponym given to individuals in reference to ‘God’ as the creator of everything (Williamson, 1972). It is very important to note that these sets of Igbo anthroponyms are different from the following examples of Igbo names with supposedly the same structure: okeke, ọkaka, Nwochichi, etc. For instance, okeke is derived from the compounding of ‘oke’ (male) and ‘eke’ (one of the four Igbo market days), where the ‘e’ vowel of the N₁ completely assimilates the ‘e’ of the N₂ (Onukawa 1998). Also, the Igbo name ‘ọkaka’ meaning ‘mightiest’ or ‘greatest’ is derived from the Igbo expression ‘ọka aka’- mightiest, greatest (Williamson, 1972). Similarly, ‘nwochichi’ as an Igbo personal name in Enugwu-Ukwu dialect of Igbo, is derived from compounding ‘nwa (child)’ and ‘ochichi’ (a water goddess in Enugwu-Ukwu). During the compounding process, the ‘o’ of the N₂ completely assimilates the ‘a’ at the syllable boundary position of the N₁.

Igbo anthroponyms with the gerundive nasal prefixation structure

Igbo anthroponyms under this heading are derived through the affixation of nasal prefix ‘ń-’ to complex Igbo verb bases in accordance with homorganicity rule (Emenanjo 2015). That is, the affixed nasal must assimilate with the place of articulation of the preceding consonant. The following are examples of such Igbo names:

(10)

Igbo anthroponyms	Morphological Operation	Compositional meaning
i. Նzube	n + zube Ger.N + plan.VB Planning	God’s planning is the best’
ii. Նchedo	n + chedo Ger.N + protect.VB Protecting	God’s protection
iii. Նdibe	n + dibe Ger.N + endure.VB Enduring	Endurance/ Enduring
iv. Նzọputa	n + zọputa Ger.N + deliver.VB Delivering	God’s salvation
v. Նjide	n + jide Ger.N + hold onto. VB Holding	Holding on to God
vi. Նgozi	n + gozie Ger.N + bless.VB Blessing	God’s blessing
vii. Նcheta	n + cheta Ger.N + remember.VB Remembering	God’s remembrance
viii. Նchekwube	n + chekwube	Hoping on God

A

Ger.N + hope on.VB
Hoping on

All the above Igbo anthroponyms are made up of complex vAerb bases (Udemmadu 2012, Emenanjo 2015) just like the gerundive verbal nominal derivatives in Igbo grammar. These names are all examples of Igbo forenames in Igbo. It is also worthy of note that these names (with complex verb bases) can occur with overt or covert noun complement 'chukwu' (God). As seen in examples 10i-viii above, the second noun (or, N2) are implied.

Concluding remarks

This study on nominalisation in Igbo anthroponyms: a case for agentive and gerundive nominal has succeeded in giving credence to the assertion that Igbo names are repertoires of the different grammatical structures of the Igbo language. Thus, its' showcasing of how agentive and gerundive nominal derivatives of the Igbo language are used as Igbo anthroponyms. This study has also shown that nominalisation in Igbo anthroponyms is regarded as instances where Igbo names display in their structures the different forms of Igbo nominalisation. The work therefore concludes that the assertion that Igbo names are not mere labels for the identification of individuals but repertoires of different grammatical structures of the language (Ubahakwe 1982) is true with regards to the grammar of nominal derivatives in the language. However, the present study or the ones before are not exhaustive of the different grammatical processes or structures of the Igbo language found in Igbo names, but can only serve as stepping stones for further studies in the area of study.

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