

Affixation Processes in Izon

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ABSTRACT

Languages exhibit different morphological processes, one of which is affixation, a process by which bound morphemes are attached to root words. In the present study, attempt is made to examine the process of affixation in Izon. It seeks to identify the different affixation types attested in the language and their functions; and draws on evidence from data collected from secondary corpus and cross-checked with a native speaker. The study showed that only suffix and interfix are the affixation types found in the language.

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to examine one of the lexical patterns found in Izon. Languages exhibit a number of characteristics and patterns at different levels of their grammar. One of such patterns attested at the morphological level, the concern of this study, is affixation. Morphology itself deals with the study of the structures of words. Anagbogu (2001:99) defines morphology as “the level of grammar that studies the ways morphemes organize themselves to form words”.

Affixation is a process in which a bound element is attached to a root. Typological classification of Affixation processes is often based on two criteria, namely the position which an affix occupies relative to the root word, and the function an affix performs when it is attached to the root of a word (Ndimele, 1999). In the first criterion, affix types include prefix, suffix, infix, interfix, circumfix, suprafix, etc. Affixes function either as inflection or as derivation. On the differences between Inflectional and Derivational morpheme, Yule (1996) states that "Some morphemes derive (create) new words by either changing the meaning or the part of speech (syntactic category)...other morphemes neither change the part of speech nor meaning but only refine and give extra grammatical information about the already existing word".

The Izon language is a Proto-Ijoid language (Greenberg, 1963; Bendor-Samuel, 1989, 2006; Williamson and Blench, 2000) spoken in Nigeria. The language is multi-dialectal, with about thirty-one

identified varieties (Ayunku, 2017), and a speaker population of approximately 1,500,000. Data for the study were extracted from secondary corpus. These sources include Odisi (1997) and Ayunku (2017).

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Two processes of affixation are attested in Izon, namely suffixation and interfixation. Two others often referred to as attested affixation processes in the language in some Izon language classes (Cf. Odisi, 1997; Egberipou, 2013; Dio, 2016; Tungbo, nd). These are prefixation and suprafixation. The assumption held in this study is that prefix and suprafix are not found in Izon as evident in the discussion below. Further evidence for the occurrence of suffixation and interfixation are also discussed.

Is there Prefixation and Suprafixation in Izon?

In this sub-section, some data which are often treated as cases of prefixation and suprafixation in Izon are re-examined. In examples (1) and (2) respectively, the acclaimed cases of prefixes and suprafixes are presented.

- | | | |
|-----|---------|-------------|
| (1) | a. famó | 'beat' |
| | ifamó | 'beat me' |
| | b. báin | 'run' |
| | ubáin | 'let's run' |

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|
| c. bó | | 'come' | |
| | òbó | | 'let's come' |
| d. mú | | 'go' | |
| | òmú | | 'let's go' |
| e. wèné | | 'walk' | |
| | òwèné | | 'let's walk' |
| f. fíní | | 'open' | |
| | òfíní | | 'open it' |
| g. kéré | | 'hold' | |
| | òkéré | | 'hold it' |
| h. nàná | | 'marry' | ánáná |
| | | 'marry her' | |
| i. dá | | 'imitate' | |
| | èdá | | 'imitate me' |
| j. bóù | | drink | |
| | òbóù | | 'let's drink' |
| k. mènè | swallow | | òmènè |
| | 'let's swallow' | | |

| | | | |
|-----|----------|-----|-----------------|
| (2) | a. tòró | | 'eye' |
| | tóró | | 'river' |
| | b. áru | | 'boat (canoe)' |
| | àrù | | 'robe/gown' |
| | c. tún | | 'song' |
| | | tùn | 'hat/cap' |
| | d. fí | | 'eat' |
| | | fí | 'die' |
| | e. gbèìn | | 'throw' |
| | gbèín | | 'sew' |
| | f. àrè | | 'name' |
| | àré | | 'see' |
| | g. bòò | | 'bush' |
| | bóú | | 'drink' |
| | h. tìn | | 'tree' |
| | tín | | 'call' |
| | i. dì | | 'thread' |
| | dí | | 'see' |
| | j. órù | | 'fetish (juju)' |
| | òrù | | 'old' |

In example (1), the onsetless elements attached to the roots are free morphemes. This is because they can occur in isolation, given that they are pronouns, and not prefixes. Thus, they cannot be treated as cases of affixes but as free forms. Affixes are bounds (they cannot occur in isolation but must be attached to a grammatical unit to be meaningful). The confusion herein is not unconnected with the fact that in rapid speech, these forms tend to slur into neighbouring elements, and are often confused as being part of the neighbouring element. Although these elements may slur into its following element in rapid speech, they do not form part of the following. They stand alone and function as full fledged words.

The examples in (2) do not also represent cases of suprafixation. This is because there is no some relationship between the root word prior to the attachment of the affix and the inflected/derived forms. Basically, a suprafix is a type of affix that adds a suprasegmental pattern (such as tone or stress) to a neutral base in order to convey a derivational or inflectional meaning. The assumption underlying this concept is that in many cases, it is more appropriate to assume that the base has a tone or stress pattern which is replaced by another in inflection or derivation (Nida, 1946; Trager, 1948; Matthew, 1974). However, there is a relationship between the root and the inflected or derived forms. Basically, terms which are derived through affixation still have some semantic relationship with the root word from which they are derived. This is however not the case in example (2), in which there is no semantic relation between the roots and their derived counterparts. Example (2) may be seen as cases of tonal contrast.

3.2 The Case of Suffixation in Izon

Suffixation is the most productive process in the Izon language. It serves both as inflection and derivation in the language. As inflection, it is used to indicate past tense, plurality, and continuous tense. Suffixation also serves as a process of nominalization (See Kekai, 2017 for detailed discussion). In what follows, data are shown and examined.

| | | | | |
|-----|---------|-----------|--------|--------|
| (3) | a. bó | | come | |
| | bódé | | came | |
| | b. mú | | go | |
| | | múné | | gone |
| | c. báin | | run | |
| | | báinné | | ran |
| | d. mènè | swallow | mènènè | |
| | | swallowed | | |
| | e. kùn | | take | |
| | | kùnné | | taken |
| | f. kéré | hold | | kérédé |
| | | held | | |
| | g. bí | | ask | |
| | | bidè | | asked |
| | h. bà | | kill | |
| | | bàdè | | killed |
| | i. gò | | read | |
| | | gòdè | | read |
| | (pst) | | | |
| | j. dù | | chew | |
| | | dùdè | | chewed |
| | k. fí | | eat | |
| | | fidé | | eaten |
| | l. fí | | die | |
| | | fidè | | dead |

| | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------|----------|
| | m. búnú | sleep | búnúné |
| | n. fá | finish | fádé |
| | o. wèné | walk | wèné |
| | p. finí | open | finíné |
| | q. fèin | roast | fèinné |
| | r. pòu | wash | pòudé |
| | s. déi | change | déidé |
| (4) | a. áru | shirt | árúámá |
| | b. ángé | egg | ángéámá |
| | c. bùwò | leg | bùwòámá |
| | d. fùn | book | fùnámá |
| | e. óbírí | dog | óbíríámá |
| (5) | a. fí | eat | fíméné |
| | b. dù | chew | dùméné |
| | c. báin | run | báinméné |
| | d. bí | ask | bíméné |
| | e. gó | read | góméné |
| (6) | a. fúru | steal | fúrúbó |
| | b. báre | help | bárèbó |
| | c. tómúnò | teach | tómúnòbó |
| | d. désí | jump | désíbó |
| | e. wènè | walk | wènèbó |
| | f. yóu | drive | yóubó |
| | g. fé | buy | fébó |
| | h. séi | dance | séibo |
| | i. báin | run | báibó |

In example 3, the suffix –de are shown to be the past tense marker in the Izon language. This is realized as –ne where the final sound of the root word is a nasal. In examples 4 and 5 respectively, the number marker –ama and the continuous tense –mene are exemplified. These suffixes function as inflectional morphemes. This is because these suffixes only produced grammatical variants of the same word. However, in example 6, a case of derivation is presented, namely the derivation of agentive nouns from verbs.

2.3 The Case of Interfixation in Izon

In the Izon language, interfixation is used for intensification. The interfix –ke – is inserted in between a reduplicated root. This is shown in example (7) below.

| | | | |
|-----|---------|---------|------------|
| (7) | a. mènè | swallow | mènèkémènè |
| | b. fúru | steal | fúrukéfúru |
| | c. àndá | fight | àndákándá |
| | d. kùn | take | kùnkékùn |
| | e. àrè | talk | àrèkèrè |
| | f. bí | ask | bíkèbí |
| | g. dù | chew | dùkèdù |
| | h. báin | run | báinkèbáin |

This section is a comparative or descriptive analysis of the study based on the study results, previously literature, etc. The results should be offered in a logical sequence, given the most important findings first and addressing the stated objectives. The author should deal only with new or important aspects of the results obtained. The relevance of the findings in the context of existing literature or contemporary practice should be addressed.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to present a descriptive analysis of the process of affixation in Izon, an Ijoid

language spoken in Nigeria. It sought to show the affixation types attested in the language and their functions. It was shown that only suffixation and interfixation are the affixation types found in the language. Evidence was presented to show that contrary to previous analysis, prefixation and suprafixation are not attested in the language. It was further shown, based on data drawn from the Mein dialect, that suffixation process is employed in past tense marking, number marking, and continuous tense marking as well as in deriving agentive nominal from verb; while interfixation serves as intensifier in the language.

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