



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: G
LINGUISTICS & EDUCATION
Volume 18 Issue 11 Version 1.0 Year 2018
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Affixation in Úwù language

By Charles Olanrewaju Boyede

Ekiti State University

Abstract- This paper examines affixation in Úwù language. Úwù is one of the Benue-Congo languages (Blench 2007). They speak Úwù in a small community known as Àyèré in Ijùmú Local Government Area of Kogi state in Nigeria. Many scholarly works have been published on Úwù language. However, there has been total neglect of the morphology of Úwù language. It is a widely held belief that languages are not static; they change from time to time, and new words are added to the vocabularies of the languages to name new ideas, concepts, objects and so on. New words are created into a language almost every day as the world advances. Languages enrich their vocabularies through the use of the word formation processes/rules. Affixation is a robust morphological process with which languages create new words from existing ones. This process, however, has not been investigated in Úwù. We observed that affixation is very productive among other word formation processes in Úwù language. This paper, therefore, seeks to fill this academic gap and also serves to document affixation in the language for posterity.

Keywords: *prefix, interfix, genitive morpheme, headedness theory, associative morpheme, Úwù.*

GJHSS-G Classification: *FOR Code: 200499*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



Affixation in Úwù language

Charles Olanrewaju Boyede

Abstract- This paper examines affixation in Úwù language. Úwù is one the Benue-Congo languages (Blench 2007). They speak Úwù in a small community known as Àyèré in Ijùmú Local Government Area of Kogi state in Nigeria. Many scholarly works have been published on Úwù language. However, there has been total neglect of the morphology of Úwù language. It is a widely held belief that languages are not static; they change from time to time, and new words are added to the vocabularies of the languages to name new ideas, concepts, objects and so on. New words are created into a language almost every day as the world advances. Languages enrich their vocabularies through the use of the word formation processes/rules. Affixation is a robust morphological process with which languages create new words from existing ones. This process, however, has not been investigated in Úwù. We observed that affixation is very productive among other word formation processes in Úwù language. This paper, therefore, seeks to fill this academic gap and also serves to document affixation in the language for posterity.

Keywords: *prefix, interfix, genitive morpheme, headedness theory, associative morpheme, Úwù.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Affixation is a morphological process which involves the attachment of affixes to root to create a new word. Crystal (2008:16) defines affixation as the morphological process whereby grammatical or lexical information is added to a stem. Affixes are of different types based on their position of occurrence. The affixes attached to the initial position of a root/stem are called prefixes. Interfixes are added to the middle of two morphemes, while those added at the final part of the root/stem are called suffixes. In Úwù, prefixes and interfixes are used extensively to derive new words. Suffixes are not attested in the language.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This paper contributes to the ongoing research on dialectology. Several works have been published on the dialects of languages to know the similarities and differences in the dialects of the language under study. It is not strange that languages have similarities and differences at all levels of grammar. Little publications exist in the area of phonology (see Allison 2017 on *Vowel Deletion in Úwù*, Boyede 2018 on *Assimilation in Úwù*). In the area of morphology, however, no work has been published on affixation in the language. This paper, therefore, intends to fill the academic gap and to

further document assimilation in the language for posterity.

a) *Theoretical Frameworks*

The principle of headedness in linguistics states that any phrase has a single head. In contemporary morphology, complex words (like derivation through affixation, reduplication, compounds) are assumed to have heads. Williams (1981:248) proposes the manifestation of Right Hand Head Rule (RHHR) which stipulates that Right Hand Head Rule in morphology is when the head of a complex word is the right-hand member of that word. According to this rule, we can infer that the head of a morphologically complex word can be defined regarding its position in the complex compound word (Taiwo, 2009).

Owolabi (1995) came up with the Left Hand Head Rule (LHHR) to account for the Yoruba structure of morphologically complex words. The rule says that the head of a morphologically complex word will always be at the left-hand position in the whole compound word (Taiwo, 2009). Thus, since Úwù language which our analysis based upon has the same word structure with the Yoruba language, hence, the principle of Left Hand Head Rule is adopted for the analysis of morphologically complex words in this research.

b) *Prefixation in Úwù*

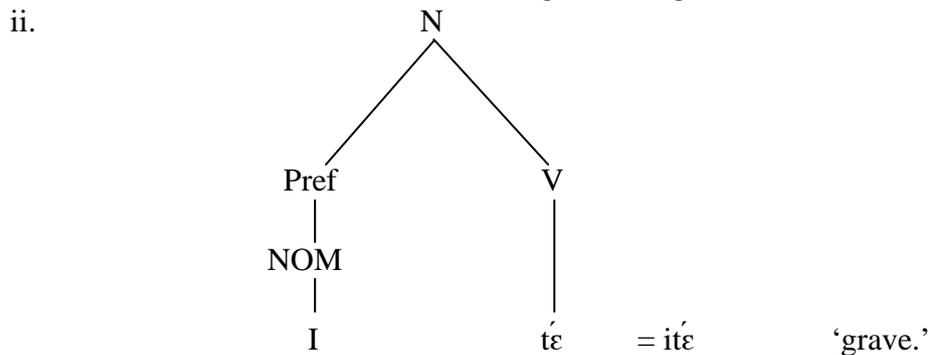
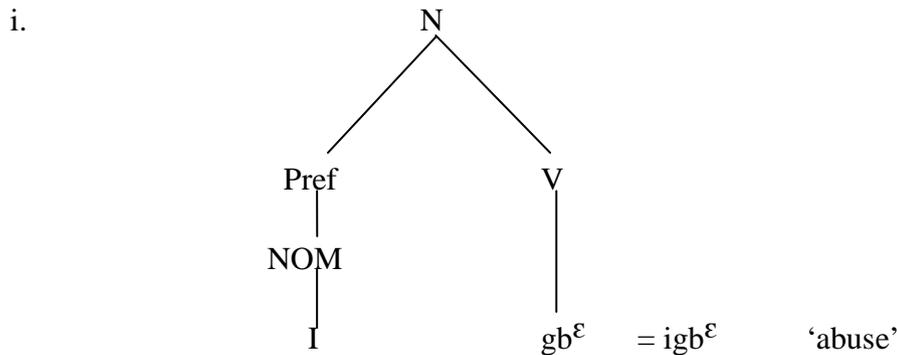
Prefixation is a morphological process which involves the addition of morpheme(s) to the initial position of a root or stem. Prefixes as bound elements (i.e., they never occur in isolation) which precede the root. From this definition, one can infer that prefixation is the morphology of adding a bound element (morpheme to a root stem). A root is the basic core of a word that takes the addition of other elements while a stem is a root (with or without other affixes) which is capable of receiving other bound element to derive new words. Prefixation is a derivational process in Úwù language. The data below show the derivation of deverbal nouns by prefixation in Úwù language:

Author: Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. e-mail: lanreboyede@yahoo.com

	Prefix +	Verb	→	Noun	
i.	i	+ gbε	→	igbε	‘abuse.’
				to abuse	
ii.	ó	+ lá	→	ólá	‘dream.’
				to dream	
iii.	n	+ fá	→	ṅfá	‘rope.’
				to stretch	
iv.	à	+ jí	→	àjí	‘birth.’
				to give birth	
v.	í	+ rǔ	→	írú	‘fart.’
				to fart	

As earlier stated in the theoretical framework of this paper, that the headedness theory would be used to present the analysis of the morphological part of the research, it is therefore pertinent we analyze the above

data using the headedness theoretical approach. The above examples are anatomized on tree diagrams below:



Genitive Nouns Construction in Úwù

The genitive marker can be prefixed to a noun to derive the owner of the item named by the noun. Apart from connoting the owner of the item named, the

marker can also be added to a noun to derive the agentive noun. In Úwù, the genitive morpheme is **ólí-**. Consider the following examples in Úwù:

	Gen marker		Noun	→	Output	
i.	Ólí	+	agbado	→	ólágbado	‘maize seller/owner’
ii.	Ólí	+	aroro	→	ólároro	‘a stingy person’
iii.	ólí	+	ìṣòwò	→	ólíṣòwò	‘trader’
iv.	ólí	+	atajò	→	ólátajò	‘pepper seller’
v.	ólí	+	ájá	→	ólájá	‘owner/seller of dog’

vi.	ólí	+	èfó	→	óléfó	‘vegetable seller’
vii.	ólí	+	emḵ	→	ólémḵ	‘palm wine owner/seller’
viii.	ólí	+	wéwé	→	ólíwéwé	‘leave seller’

In the above data, we observed that when we add ‘ólí-’ to a noun, its form changes. When it is added to a vowel-initial noun, the high front vowel [i] of the genitive morpheme gets deleted to disallow two non-identical vowels from co-occurring. Such deletion is observed in examples (i) to (vii) above. However, the vowel is retained when the morpheme is added to a consonant-initial noun as seen in example (viii).

Allison (2015) has suggested that the form of the genitive morpheme in Úwù is “óní.” A cursory look at his claim revealed that the form “óní” is not the basic form of the genitive morpheme. Allison (2015) cited the following examples to support his point:

i.	Óní# àkírin	→	ónǎkírin	‘person who/that sings’
ii.	Óní# àlulo	→	ónǎlulo	‘person who/that drums’
iii.	Óní# àpojina	→	ónǎpojina	‘person who/that tell lies’
iv.	Óní# àtaja	→	ónǎtaja	‘person who/that sells’

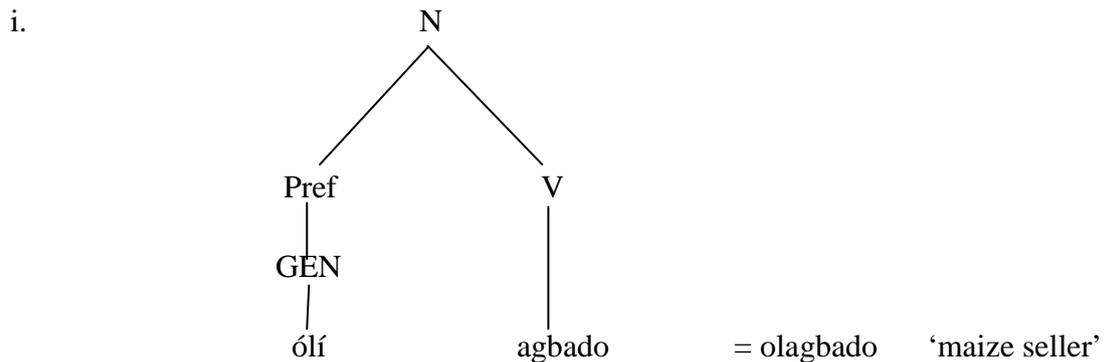
The form “óní”, when added to a noun, depicts the dealership or vocation of X. our findings further revealed that the nouns which the form “óní” is added to

are nouns which are derived through prefixation of “a-”. the form that is derived after the prefixation

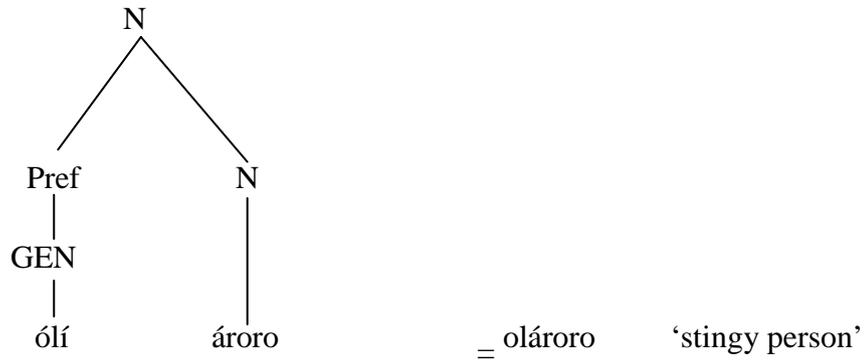
a	+	kĩ	irin	→	akĩrin	‘who/that sings’
a	+	pa	ojino	→	apojina	‘who/that tell lies’
a	+	lu	ùlò	→	alùlò	‘who/that beat drum’
a	+	ta	ojà	→	atajà	‘who/that sells’

The forms above do not reflect the person who does the action i.e., it does not point to a particular person who acts. The forms only reflect the person that performs an action after the form “óní” is prefixed to them. It should be well said to refer to such form (óní) as agentive morpheme rather than genitive morpheme in Úwù since it depicts the person who specializes in a particular act or vocation. Whereas, the ólí form is added

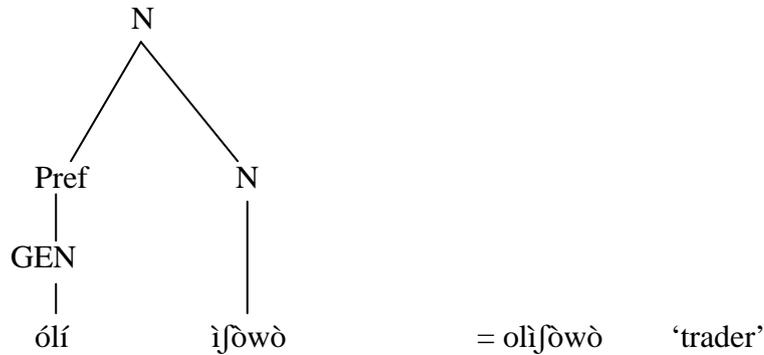
to basic nouns to show dealership, ownership of X. The findings in this research work agreed with Abiodun et al. (unpublished) that the form of the genitive morpheme is ólí and not óní. Abiodun et al. (ibid) further suggest that the form identified by Allison (2015) is an agentive morpheme rather than genitive morpheme. Consider the headedness analysis of some of the data below:



ii.



iii.



Another instance of prefixation in Úwù is seen in the derivation of continuous verbs. The morpheme 'a-' is attached to the verb root to derive the continuous form.

The examples below show this derivation in Úwù language.

	Root		Prefix		Verb	Output	
i.	je	'eat'	a	+	je	a je	'eating'.
ii.	pé	'cut'	a	+	pé	apé	'cutting'.
iii.	kpá	'climb'	a	+	kpá	akpá	'climbing'.
iv.	mí	'breath'	a	+	mí	amí	'breathing'.
v.	dá	'go'	a	+	dá	adá	'going'.

From the data above, one can deduce that 'a-' is prefixed to a verb to derive the continuous form of the verb.

Interfixation involves inserting an affix between two identical or non-identical roots. The affix functions as a linkage between the two roots that are attached. Consider the examples below in Úwù language:

III. INTERFIXATION

According to Modesta and Yusuf (2007), the affixation that builds words by interfixing morphemes is

i.	àdʒá	+	ni	+	àdʒò	àdʒánàdʒò	'office'.
ii.	oŋgu	+	ni	+	úná	oŋgunúná	'firewood'.
iii.	àdʒá	+	ni	+	iwe	àdʒániwe	'school'.
iv.	ɔmã	+	ni	+	ówó	ɔmãńówó	'finger'.
v.	àkpótí	+	ni	+	àkì	àkpótínàkì	'box (of cloth)'.

In the data above, the morpheme (Associative morpheme) that mediates between the two nouns is inserted as an interfix to block the nouns from occurring sequentially. A morpheme always mediates noun-noun constructions in Úwù. The form of the morpheme is “ni” contrary to Allison (2017) who posited that the form is nì. He referred to the morpheme as an Associative

Morpheme (AM). The vowel of the associative morpheme is always deleted when it precedes vowel-initial noun. However, the vowel is retained when the noun that occurs after it is consonant-initial. Consider the following examples:

(a)

i.	omã ni	égú	→	omãnégú	‘pestle’
ii.	àdžá ni	aṅṅku	→	àdžánaṅṅku	‘toilet’
iii.	údì ni	Úwù	→	Údínúwù	‘Uwu’s hill’
iv.	εηkɔ ni	édžé	→	εηkɔnédžé	‘eyeball’
v.	èta ni	èta	→	ètanéta	‘grandfather’

(b)

i.	ɔla ni	jadé	→	ɔlanifadé	‘Sade’s skin’
ii.	àkì ni	Tolú	→	àkìnitólú	‘Tolu’s cloth’
iii.	omã ni	kókóró	→	omãnikókóró	‘key’

From the data above, we observed that the vowel of the associative morpheme which functions as an interfix is deleted when it is followed by a vowel initial noun as seen in data (a). However, the vowel of the form is not deleted (no phonological change) when it is followed by a consonant-initial noun as seen in data (b).

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has carefully and adequately dealt with the concept of affixation as a morphological process in Úwù language. It has been established that Úwù language affixation processed is premised in prefixation and interfixation. The language does not make use of suffixation in its word formation processes. The paper identified that the genitive marker in Úwù is attached as a prefixation to nouns to derive ownership, dealership of an item. We have also asserted in the study that **a-** is attached as a prefix to verbs to derive the continuous form of the verbs.

REFERENCES RÉFÉRENCES REFERENCIAS

1. Abiodun, M.A., Adeoye J.A & Allison I.O. (Unpublished). Genitive Construction in Àhàn and Àyèré. Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.
2. Allison, I. O. (2015). Phonology of Úwù: M.A Thesis. Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti.
3. Allison, I. O. (2017). Vowel Deletion and Insertion in Úwù. Journal of Languages and Education, Vol 3, Issue 2, 19-29.

4. Blench, R. (2007). Ayere and Ahan Languages of Central Nigeria and their Affinities. Wordlist Circulated for Comment. Cambridge University Press.
5. Boyede, C.O. (2018) Assimilation in Úwù Language: International Journal of Innovative Language, Literature & Art Studies 6 (2):1621, April-June, 2018
6. Crystal, D. (2008): A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, (6th Ed): Blackwell Publishers.
7. Iloene Modesta and Yusuf Ore (2007). Morphology in Yusuf Ore (ed.) Basic Linguistics. Ilorin: Unilorin Press.
8. Nida, E.A. (1965). Introduction to Morphology and Morphological Analysis. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
9. Owolabi, K. (1995). More on Yoruba Prefixing Morphology. Language in Nigeria: essays in honour of Ayo Bamgbose, (ed.) Owolabi, K. 92-122. Ibadan: Group Publishers.
10. Taiwo, O. (2009). Headedness and the Structure of Yoruba Compound Words. Taiwan Journal of Linguistics, 7 (1): 27-52.
11. Williams, E.S. (1981). On the Notions ‘Lexically Related’ and ‘Head of a Word’. Linguistic Inquiry 12:245-74.