

Onicha-Mbaise Igbo: A Step in Unveiling Constructional Patterns of Morphology

ABSTRACT

Some varieties of the Igbo language stand out as they have richer linguistic features and the Onicha-Mbaise Igbo is a typical example of such. The variety is classified as East Central Group of Dialect under Nwaozuzu (2008) classification. This paper is on the derivational morphology of Onicha-Mbaise variety of the Igbo language looking at the strategies for identifying the prefixational, infinitival, participle, agentive, gerundive, noun instrument and qualifier markers. The study seeks to determine the various ways in which this variety derive new word. This present study has its roots from the works of scholars that have done their best in working on the different aspect of language as regards to Mbaise variety. Some of which are antonymy in Mbaise variety of Igbo by Onyeocha (2020), aspiration and nasalization in Mbaise variety of Igbo by Osuji (2021). Primary and secondary data were used for this research as some natives of the town were interviewed and some books were used too to gather the data needed for the research. It is discovered that the most prolific way peculiar to this dialect is the use of an obligative participle 'n' which is attached to verbs to show future obligation. The study concludes that to derive these new words through prefixation, Onicha-Mbaise variety makes use of infinitival marker 'i-/i-', participle marker 'e-/a-', obligative participle 'n-', agentive 'o-/o', noun Instrument 'n-/m-', qualifiers 'n-/o-/u-'

Keywords: Onicha-Mbaise, Morphology, Prefixation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language according to Crystal (2010) is a particular variety or level of speech or writing. It may refer to the concrete act of speaking, writing and signing. The use by humans, of a system of sounds and words to communicate. Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010:1) say language is a means which human beings have devised for communicating ideas, feelings, emotions, desires and so on through complex vocal or written symbols. There are so many theories of how language originated. For instance, Charles Darwin says "early humans had already developed musical ability prior to language and were using it to charm each other". Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010:5) posit we have the Bow-wow, Pooh-pooh, Ding-dong, Yo-he-ho, Musical, the Contact and Gesture as theories of the origin of language. On the other hand, Yule (2010) gives his own speculations of the sources of language as the divine source, natural sound source, social interaction source, physical source, tool making source and genetic source.

In all, these theories and sources are mere speculations; none is able to account for the mystery behind the origin of language. Humans in search of wisdom and knowledge venture into knowing the structures and components of language. This search led them into studying linguistics the scientific study of language.

Linguistics primarily attempts to describe language, its nature and its behaviour. It attempts to discover what characterizes language in general and strives at the same time to study the behaviour and structure of individual languages. Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010:22). Linguistics describes the structure of language, and branches of linguistics includes phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Amongst all the branches of linguistics, we are going to focus on morphology.

Morphology, etymologically speaking is the study of 'forms'. It studies the internal structure of words Agbedo (2000). Omachonu (2001:56) morphology may be described as the science of word formation in linguistics analysis. In other words it is the branch of grammar which preoccupies itself with studying the rules that govern the principles and processes of word formation in languages.

Furthermore, morphology is the process of word formation in a language. It covers some many areas such as reduplication, clipping, affixation, compounding. Atadoga (2011:97) defines affixation as a morphological process whereby affixes, bound morphemes are attached to the existing stems and roots in order to derive or form new words or change the meaning of the existing one. Affixation can be classified based on position and function. Positional classification of affixes yields prefix, suffix, interfix, circumfix and infix. Affixation is divided into two branches based on function: derivational affixation and inflectional affixation.

Derivational affixation occurs when affixes are added to morpheme to form new words from the existing words that may or may not be the same part of speech. According to Agbedo (2000:87), derivational morphology involves the process whereby the new words are formed from existing words. It consists of adding to a root or stem an affix or affixes. While in inflectional morphology, affixes are added to the end of an existing word for purely grammatical reasons. McGregor (2009) sees inflectional

affixes as 'Bound morphemes that give grammatical information relevant to the interpretation of a sentence. They don't give rise to new lexical items.

Although so many works have been done on affixation and compounding in Igbo and English and some of their dialects, little or no work has been done on Onicha-Mbaise variety of the Igbo language. Therefore, for the growth of the Igbo language, there is the need to investigate the morphemes used in realizing new words through affixation and compounding in Onicha-Mbaise variety of Igbo spoken in Ezinihitte Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State Nigeria.

A Background Information

This project work covers derivational morphology in Onicha-Mbaise variety of the Igbo language. Mbaise is one of the communities located in Imo state in the southeastern Nigeria. It is under the inland East Igbo cluster according to Ikekeonwu(1987) and East Central Group of Dialects by Nwaozuzu (2008). The name Mbaise was derived from the fact that the community comprises of five clans: Àgbájá, Áhíàrà, Èkwéréàzú, Èzínihítté and Òké Ùvúú. Mbaise is a vast area covering three Local Government Areas namely Àbóh Mbaise, Áhíàzú Mbaise and Èzínihítté Mbaise.

Mbaise people are rich in cultural and traditional ceremonies. Àhìànjókù is the acclaimed god of farm crops especially yam. During the írí jí òhúo celebration(New yam celebration), prayers and libation would flow in praise and thanksgiving to Àhìànjókù and to God Almighty whom the Mbaise people called chùkwú Ábíàmà or Éké kéré ùwà.. Another celebration done by Mbaise people is called ójí Ezinihitte which is been done every 1st January before the farming season. Mbaise people are known for their own dish Ùgbá 'African oil bean' it is being served with raffia wine. Mbaise is also rich in music and dance, usually played on the wood xylophone. Subsistence farming is still the main occupation of Mbaise people where yams, cassava, palmfruits, vegetables and fruits are the primary agricultural products.

Onicha nwè-ńkwó is one of the autonomous communities under the Ezinihitte Mbaise Local Government Area, which consists of 10 villages (Ézíámà, Òmùkwú, Ùbólùkám, Úmúàgbálá, Úmúékèkwénè, Úmúèlégwúá, Úmúèvú, Úmúhú, Úmúòmà, Úwúàwádá) of which they are called Onicha amairi autonomous community on which this research work centers on.

2.0 Review of Relevant Literature

Affixation is a morphological process whereby grammatical or Lexical information is added to a stem (A dictionary of Linguistics and phonetics). Routledge dictionary defines affixation as the process of word formation in which the stem is expanded by the addition of an affix with regard to placement of the word-formation elements on the stem.

In addition, affixation is the process of adding a morpheme or affix to a word to create either a different form of that word or a new word with a different meaning. Affixation is the morphological processes where a bound morpheme, an affix is attached to a morphological base (oxford bibliographies).

Agbedo (2000:89) defines affixation as a word building or word formation process, that involves the addition of phoneme or group of phonemes to a root or stem to modify, extend or change the meaning and or function of the word.

To Umera and Nwankwo (2009:50), affixation is the addition of prefixes and suffixes to the root or base with or without change of the word class. Their definition can be illustrated with the addition of 'dis' to advantage to realize 'disadvantage' and the addition of 'er' to drive to realize 'driver'.

Affixation falls under the scope of morphology, where morphemes are affixes and it is employed for derivation of new words, new forms and the change of meaning. Whatsoever we are talking about in affixation centres on 'morphemes.' Morphemes are the basic or smallest, indivisible units of language with their own separate forms, separate existence, separate meaning and distribution (Emenajo: 148). Whereas the definition of a morpheme is universal, its realization is language specific, for what is a morpheme in a language may be a word, phrase or sentence in another language.

Affixation is a morphological process whereby affixes (bound) morpheme are attached to the existing stems or roots in order to derive or form new words or change the meaning of the existing one Atadoga (2011:97). Affixation is the process of addition of affixes to the existing stem, root, or base morpheme in order to form new words or change the meaning of the existing one. It is one of the ways of word building in both English and Igbo (Babarinde: 58).

Emenanjo (1983:45) describes affixation as the major morphological processes employed in derivations 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.

According to Udechukwu et al (2015:29):

mgbakwunye bu aha jikoro udi umu irighiri okwu niile a na_agbakwunyere ngwaa. O bu irighiri okwu maobu mkpuruasusu (mofim) a na_agbakwunye n'isingwa maobu na irighiri okwu ozo iji meputa Mkpuruokwu maobu iji gbanwee maobu gbatia nghota Mkpuruokwu. Mgbakwunye nwere ngalaba ndi a: Nganihu (prefix) Nsonazu (Suffix) Nnonime (Infix) Nnonetiti (Interfix).(Affixation is a term use to refer to morphemes that are being attached to a verb or other morphemes in order to derive new words, change or extend the meaning of the existing words).

Mgbakwunye dika Ofomata n'ndezu utoasusu Igbo si kowaa, bu:

umu irighiri Mkpuruasusu ndi ana agbakwunye n'ufodu okwu Igbo eji were nweta okwu ohuru na asusu Igbo. Ha gunyere nganihu, nnonetiti na nsonazu. (Affixation is the process of adding morpheme to some words in Igbo language, in order to derive new words. They include prefixation, interfixation and suffixation respectively)

According to Omachonu (2001) this process which requires the joining together of different lexical terms to form new words, does not necessarily require the change of class of the words so combined is called compounding.

Some studies on Morphology of Igbo and other languages.

According to Emenanjo (1983:45) in reading on the Igbo verb, the process of derivation in the Igbo language includes the following: The use of infinitival prefix *i/i*, while 'I' is used before verbs which have advanced vowels in their roots, 'i' is used before verbs that have retracted vowels in their roots

1a) *í* + *sī* *nrí*

INF.PRE cook food

'to cook food.'

1b) *í* + *zā* *úlò* *úká*

INF.PRE sweep house church

'to sweep the church.'

Using the vowel prefix to derive agentive noun. The vowels *o/o* are used to indicate agentive noun, which is conditioned by VH(vowel harmony)

2a) *ò* + *jé* *áhiá*

AGT.PRE go market

'a market goer.'

2b) *ò* + *gú* *ákwúkwó*

AGT. PRF read book

'a reader.'

The present participle prefix in Igbo has two forms e/a. Which is also conditioned by the VH (vowel harmony). It is formed by prefixing a harmonizing non-close front vowels to the verb root.

3a) Àmàkà nà - é + sò ónyeísí

Amaka AUX PART.PRE follow leader

'Àmàkà is following the leader'

3b) Òbí nà è + bú óché

Òbí AUX PART.PRE carry chair

'Obi is carrying the chair'

3c) Òbí nà à + kúzi íhé

Obi is PART.PRE teach something

'Obi is teaching'

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:39) goes further to give another instance of using prefix to form words in Igbo. Prefixation can occur with reduplication to derive gerund in Igbo language which Williams (1972) refers to verbal noun.

4a) ò + bíbí — 'òbíbí'

3PSG act of living 'the act of living'.

4b) ò + zùzù — 'òzùzù'

3PSG act of training 'the act of training.'

2.2.5 Partial reduplication can be formed using prefixation process.

5a) ò + tíá — 'òtítá'.

3PSG + act of chewing 'The act of chewing'.

Different types of nouns can be derived from verbs by prefixing certain bound morpheme (n/m). Which is affixing the syllabic nasal to the verb root.

6a) \acute{m} + $m\bar{a}$ — ' $\acute{m}m\bar{a}$ '

SYLL.nasal beauty 'beauty.'

6b) $m̀$ + $b\acute{o}$ ' $m̀b\acute{o}$ '

SYLL.nasal comb 'a comb.'

There are other instances where nominals can be formed through the process of prefixing simple verbs and complex verbs as seen in Onwudiwe journal.

7a) $Nw\acute{o}k\bar{e}$ \acute{a} $b\grave{u}$. \acute{O} + $bi\bar{a}$

man DEM. is PRE. come

'this man is a guest.'

7b) $\acute{N}n\acute{e}$ m $z\grave{u}t\grave{a}$ - $r\grave{a}$ \grave{e} + $ny\grave{o}$.

Mother 1PSG buy PST. PRE. Peep

'my mother bought a mirrow.'

Instances of where syllabic nasals as prefixes are being added to complex verb to form a noun

8a) \acute{n} + $d\acute{o}li$

SYLL.nasal struggle

'a struggle'

8b) \acute{m} + $gb\acute{a}l\bar{i}$

SYLL.nasal strive

'effort'

3.0 Research Methodology

The data gathered for this project work were collected from reliable and competent native speakers of Onicha- Mbaïse variety of the Igbo language from the natural setting which is the Onicha-Mbaïse autonomous community. The researchers interviewed two aged men between the ages of 60-80 years, one male and one female adults between the ages of 35-50 years and 2 young girls and a boy between the ages of 10-30 years. The primary data for the study were collected through oral interview and recording the respondents with their consent. The researchers collected secondary data from different sources including text books, articles, journals and internet. The method of data analysis used is purely descriptive method. The researcher sought to find out the different morphemes Onicha-Mbaïse variety of Igbo uses to derive words, the researcher went through the written down data and attentively listened to the recorded audio. This way, the researcher was able to sieve out the needed information which was descriptively analysed.

PREFIXATION IN ONICHA-MBAÏSE VARIETY OF THE IGBO LANGUAGE

4.0 Prefixation in Onicha-Mbaïse Variety

In Onicha-Mbaïse variety, it is discovered that derivational prefixes are few.

They include:

The Infinitival Marker

The Simple Infinitive

The structure of any word containing the simple infinitive marker in Onicha-Mbaïse variety is (i- / i -+v).

The close front long i vowel is being used in the following examples

9a ́́ hàd̀zì ùlò bù ihe òmúmé ntúr̀ndù ya
 INFL.PRE arrange house is hobby his
 ‘To arrange the house is his hobby’

9b Óbinnà nà- àchò ́́ kpòrù àlà
 Obinna AUX want INFL.PRE sit down
 ‘Obinna wants to sit down’

9c ́́ b̀nyè n’imé ùlò

INFL.PRE. enter inside house
 ‘To enter inside the house’

9d Í sù àjà bù njìrìmárá ndí Igbo
 INFL.PRE sacrifice is attribute NUM. Igbo
 ‘To sacrifice is an attribute of Igbo people’

The close front short vowel i is being used in the following examples

10a Àmáká nà- àchó í shī nírí
 Amaka AUX wants INFL.PRE cook food
 ‘Amaka wants to cook food’

10b Í zù óshí bù àgwà ójòò
 INFL. PRE steal is character bad
 ‘To steal is a bad character’

10c Í kwú úkà nà- ènyé yà óñù
 INFL.PRE. talk AUX-give him joy
 ‘To talk gives him joy’

10d Í jìjè ónyé óshí dì mímá
 INFL.PRE catch PRO thief is good
 ‘To catch a thief is good’

In the example given above, observe that Onicha-Mbaise variety, form their simple infinitive with the same form ì and i as seen in examples 1a-c, their only difference lies on their verbs as seen in example 1a the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ is been realized as voiceless palato alveolar fricative /shí/ in example 10a. It is also observed in the examples above that the verbs in Onicha-Mbaise variety uses mostly palato alveolar sounds as seen in examples 9a, 10a and d.

The Participle Marker

The Simple Participle

To derive new words using simple participle in Onicha-Mbaise variety, the *e/a* simple participle marker is used. The prefix *e* is attached to the harmonizing verb root

11a Òbí nà è + hú m̀m̀ánú n'̀àhú

Obi is PART. rub cream body

‘Obi is applying skin cream on his body’

11b Àmádí nà è + dé h^wé

Amadi AUX PART. write something

‘Amadi is writing’

11c Òbí nà è+ vù óché

Obi AUX- PART.carry chair

‘Obi is carrying a chair’

12a Àmáká nà à + hú jí n'̀òkú

Amaka AUX-PART. roast yam on fire

‘Amaka is roasting the yam’

12b Ñnékà nà à + kúdjí h^wé

Nneka AUX PART.teach thing

‘Nneka is teaching’

12c Chíkē nà à + zú àgbà

Chike AUX PART. buy bag

‘Chike is buying a bag’

The Onicha-Mbaise variety form their simple particle marker using e/a morpheme seen in examples 11a—c and 12a—c. Observe that some of the consonants seen in their verb root is different. For example in 3b we have ‘e + bu’ ‘to carry’ in example 11C we have ‘e + vu’ ‘to carry’ another difference in 3c ‘a + kuzi’ – ‘to teach’ is been realized in Mbaise variety as ‘a + kudzi’ the voiced palato alveolar affricate /dʒ/ is used instead of voiced alveolar fricative /z/.

4.1.3 The Obligative Participle

13a Ágà m̀ yá ńrì

FUT. 1PS 2PS eat

‘I will certainly eat it’

13b Ágà m̀ yá ńshí

FUT. 1PS 2PS cook

‘I will certainly cook it’

13c Ágà m̀ yá n̄mē

FUT. 1PS 2PS do

‘I will certainly do it’

13d Ágà m̀ yá n̄zùtá

FUT. 1PS 2PS buy

‘I will certainly buy it’

13e Ágà m̀ yá n̄jijé

FUT. 1PS 2PS catch

‘I will certainly catch him/her’

13f Ágà m̀ yá ñvú

FUT. 1PS 2PS carry

‘I will certainly carry it’

13g Ágà m̀ yá ñkúǵí

FUT. 1PS 2PS teach

‘I will certainly teach it’

This obligative participle is prolific in Onicha-Mbaise variety, in which the nasal ‘n’ is attached to the verb root to derive new words that is more than one syllable. This derivative does not seem to be universally known in all Igbo dialects. The ‘n’ morpheme attached to the verb root as a prefix has an ‘obligative’ future implication, hence the name or term ‘obligative’. It goes with auxiliary verb ‘ga’, first person pronoun ‘m’ and ‘ya’ second person pronoun as seen in the above examples 13a-g to fully indicate the future tense. The first person pronoun ‘m’ there, shows that the doer is indicating his action in the future. In the examples above, observe that the morphemes ‘m’ and ‘ya’ retains their tone of low and high tone respectively, irrespective of the verb root that precedes them.

4.1.4 The obligative participle can also go with auxiliary verb ‘ga’, third person singular pronoun and second person singular pronoun ‘o, ya’ respectively. In that in the former examples of 13a-g the doer of the action in the future is the first person, in this later examples 14a–n, the doer of the action in the future is another person other than the first person, here the future tense changes from ‘A - ga - m’ that corresponds with the first person, to ‘O- ga - ya’ to indicate the presence of another person performing the action. Examples are seen below:

14a Ó gá yá ñdé

3PS FUT. 2PS write

‘He/she will certainly write it’

14b Ó gá yá ñhishí

3PS FUT. 2PS clean

‘He/she will certainly clean it’

14c Ọ́ gà yá ńkà
 3PS FUT. 2PS say

‘He/she will certainly say it’

14d Ọ́ gà yá ńgá
 3PS FUT. 2PS go

‘He/she will certainly go’

14e Ọ́ gà yá ńmévó
 3PS FUT. 2PS expose

‘He/she will certainly expose him’

14f Ọ́ gà yá ńrú
 3PS FUT. 2PS work

‘He/she will certainly work’

14g Ọ́ gà yá ńzà
 3PS FUT. 2PS sweep

‘He/she will certainly sweep it’

14h Ọ́ gà yá ńtá
 3PS fut-tense 2PS chew

‘He/she will certainly chew it’

14i Ọ́ gà yá ńvúvù

3PS FUT. 2PS carry out

‘He/she will certainly carry it out’

14j Ó gà yá ñkè

3PS FUT. 2PS share

‘He/she will certainly share it’

14l Ó gà yá ñsá

3PS FUT. 2PS wash

‘He/she will certainly wash it’

14m Ó gà yá ñhà

3PS FUT. 2PS leave

‘He/she will certainly leave him’

14n Ó gà yá ññú

3PS FUT. 2PS drink

‘He/she will certainly drink it’

In the obligative participle both the first person singular and the third person singular 'm, o' respectively are been used in different context with the alveolar nasal 'n' attached to the verb root to indicate an obligative action to be done in the future.

The Agentive

Agentive, is another derivative seen in Onicha-Mbaise variety. Using the prefix 'o, ọ', the 'o' prefix is used with the harmonizing vowel, likewise the 'ọ' is used with its own harmonizing vowel. New words are being derived. Observe that in the verb root we have only one syllable but in the derived formed the vowel is duplicated to derive the name for the doer of the actions hence these names Òrìí, Ọtáà, Ọshíí etc.

Table 1: List of prefix used in the study

	Prefix	Verb root	Derived from
15a	Ò	rí - 'eat'	òrî - 'eater'
B	Ò	tá - 'chew'	òtáà - 'chewer'
C	Ò	shí - 'cook'	òshî - 'cook'
D	Ò	gá - 'go'	ògáà - 'tourist'
E	Ò	zú - 'buy'	òzúù - 'buyer'
F	Ò	gù - 'read'	ògùù - 'reader'
G	Ò	ré - 'sell'	òréè - 'trader'
H	Ò	gbá - 'dance'	ògbáà - 'dancer'
I	Ò	Vú - 'carry'	òvúù - 'porter'
J	Ò	Ká - 'talk'	òkàà - 'orator'
K	Ò	rú - 'work'	òrúù - 'worker'
L	Ò	zú - 'steal'	òzúù - 'thief'
M	Ò	zá - 'sweep'	Òzáà - 'sweeper'

4.1.6 Gerund

Onicha-Mbaise variety, derives new words using a prefix which is the open vowel harmonizing prefixes 'o, ɔ' used with their corresponding harmonizing vowel. Here the verb root is reduplicated which could be complete reduplication or partial reduplication.

table 2 : Partial Reduplication

	Prefix	Reduplicated verb root	Derived words
16a	Ò	bì + bà	òbibà — 'entering'
B	Ò	Kpú + kpé	òkpúkpé – 'worshipping'
C	Ò	Pí + pí ^h a	òpípiá – 'squeezing'
D	Ò	gí + gá	ògígá – 'going'
E	Ò	dí + dé	òdídé – 'writing'
F	Ò	sí + sé	òsísé – 'drawing'
G	Ò	Kpù + kpó	òkpùkpó – 'calling'
H	Ò	bì + b ^h e	òbíbhé – 'peeling'
I	Ò	kì + kà	òkíkà – 'talking'
J	Ò	tí + tá	òtítá – 'chewing'
K	Ò	chí + chọ	òchíchọ – 'seeking'
L	Ò	Nyí + nyé	ònyínyé – 'giving'

In the partial reduplication, the verb root that is reduplicated is in a partial form, the difference occurs in the vowel that comprises the verb root. The first verb root vowel changes as the verb is being reduplicated as seen in examples 16a – l.

table 3

Complete Reduplication

	Prefix	Reduplicated verb root	Derived words
17a	Ò	hú + hú	òhúhú – 'rubbing'
B	Ò	Vú + vú	òvúvú – 'carrying'
C	Ò	Shí + shí	òshíshí – 'cooking'
D	Ò	fù + fù	òfùfù – 'going out'
E	Ò	wù + wù	òwùwù – 'bathing'

F	Ọ	zù + zù	òzùzù – ‘buying’
G	Ọ	zù + zù	òzùzù – ‘training’
H	Ọ	lù + lù	òlùlù – ‘swallowing’
I	Ọ	rù + rù	òrùrù – ‘working’
J	Ọ	mù + mù	òmùmù – ‘learning’
K	Ọ	bí + bí	òbíbí – ‘living’
L	Ọ	ñù + ñù	òñùñù – ‘drinking’
M	Ọ	chí + chí	òchíchí – ‘leading’
N	Ọ	rí + rí	òrírí – ‘eating/feasting’
O	Ọ	lù + lù	òlùlù – ‘marrying’
P	Ọ	gbù + gbù	ògbùgbù – ‘killing’

The complete reduplication, as the name implies, the reduplication is complete, in that the verb root reduplicated is the same both in the consonants and vowels sounds with no changes or differences.

4.1.8 Noun Instrument

Noun Instrument in Onicha-Mbaise variety, is derived by prefixing a low tone harmonizing alveolar nasal ‘n’ and bilabial nasal ‘m’ to verbs.

17a ò + chú òmírí - ‘òchú òmírí’
 PRE. + fetch water ‘umbrella’

17b ò + gwú àlà - ‘ògwú àlà’
 PRE. + dig land ‘digger’

17c ò + shí òrí - ‘òshí òrí’
 PRE. + cook food ‘cooker’

17d	̀n	+ t́	óyī	–	‘̀nt́ óyī’
	PRE.		cold		‘fan’
17e	̀n	+ tí	ígwè	–	‘̀nt́ ígwè’
	PRE.		hit iron		‘tripod pot’
18a	̀m	+ v́	úvó íshí	–	‘̀m̀v́ úvó íshí’
	PRE.		+ comb head		‘comb’
18b	̀m	+ kpá	ókú	–	‘̀m̀kpá ókú’
	PRE +		light fight		‘matches’
18c	̀m	+ phà	n’áká	-	‘̀m̀kpàn’áká’
	PRE.		carry hand		‘Traditional lamp’
18d	̀m	+ gbà	íshí	–	‘̀m̀gbá íshí’
	PRE.		+ tie head		‘hair tie’
18e	̀m	+ yò	h ^w e	–	‘̀m̀yó hwé’
	PRE.		+ sieve thing		‘sieve’

4.1.9 Qualifier

This is another way new words are being derived in Onicha-Mbaise variety, morphemes are added to verbs to derive adjectives.

19a jí – ‘be black’, n + jí ‘hjí’ ‘dark’

Nwátà ákwúkwó á dì ñjí

Child book DEM is dark

‘This pupil/student is dark in complexion’

19b chá – ‘be white’, u + cha ‘ùchá’ ‘clean’

Ñnékà nwèrè itè dì ùchá

Nneka has pot is clean

‘Nneka has a clean pot’

19c má ‘beauty’ o + ma ‘ómá’ ‘good’

Òkáfòr. lù- rù nwúnyé. ómá

Okafor marry- PST wife good

‘Okafor married a good wife’

19d Jọ ‘be bad’ o+jọọ ‘ójọō’ ‘bad’

Ñné m zù - rù àkwá ójọō

Mother 1PS buy- PST egg bad

‘My mother bought a bad egg’

From the examples above 19c - d observe that the predominant morpheme used in deriving adjective in Onicha-Mbaise variety is the morpheme ‘O’ as seen in example 19c – d, though other morphemes like ‘n’ and ‘u’ are used in examples 19a and b respectively but they are not predominant as the morpheme ‘O’.

4.1.10 Another instance of deriving qualifiers in Onicha-Mbaise variety is where adjective takes interfixation and reduplication form.

20a kpòshìkpòshì – ‘stupid’

Úkà yá bù ùkà kpòshìkpòshì

Word 3PS is word stupid

‘His/her words are stupid words’

20b Ghàghághá – ‘careless’

Èméká dì ghàghághá

Emeka is careless

‘Emeka is careless’

20c Ìkétiké – ‘big/large’

Ñné yà nyèrè yá Ìkétiké ánú

Mother 3PS give 3PS big/large meat

‘Her mother gave her a big/large meat’

20d ívùrìvù – ‘fat’

Ónyé ñkúdzí m̀ bù ívùrìvù

PRO teach 1PS is fat

‘My teacher is fat’

20e m̀kpù̀m̀kpù̀ – ‘short’

Ñnà Òbí dì m̀kpù̀m̀kpù̀

Father Obi is short

‘Obi’s father is short’

20f ógólógó – long

Àmáká nwèrè ógólógóó òtùtù ìshī

Amaka has long hair head

‘Amaka has a long hair’

The interfixes (l,r,t) as seen in examples 20c,d and f where they are being inserted into the reduplicated words to form an adjective and the examples without an interfix to derive an adjective are seen in examples 20a,b and e.

conclusion

This research work centers on the derivational morphology of Onicha Mbaise variety of the Igbo language spoken in Imo State. With proper investigation, the researchers discover various ways in which Onicha-Mbaise variety derives new words through prefixation like the infinitive marker, participle marker, the obligative particle, gerunds. To derive these new words through prefixation, Onicha-Mbaise variety makes use of infinitival marker 'i-ì-', participle marker 'e-/a-' , obligative participle 'n-' , agentive 'o-/ò' ,noun Instrument 'n-/m-' , qualifiers 'n-/ò-/ù-'

Recommendation

Onicha-Mbaise variety of the Igbo language has few linguistics studies. So this input serves as a prompt to other students and linguists to venture into the study of the other aspects of the variety such as pluralization, syllable structure etc for the purpose of enriching the linguistics nature of the variety which also doubles to serve as a way of preserving the language to avoid death of Igbo language in general.

REFERENCES

- Agbedo Christopher Uchenna. 2000, *General linguistics: An introductory reader*. University of Nigeria Nsukka: ACE Resource consult.
- Allerton. 1979, *Essentials of Grammatical theory: A consensus view of syntax and morphology*
- Anagbogu P. N, Mbah and C.A Eme. 2010, *Introduction to linguistics*. Akwa: Amaka dreams: Amaka dreams limited.
- Anayochukwu Leonard okoli, Henri Usonwanne Aniugbo. *Ntṓala asusu na Agumagu ederede Igbo*. Atadoga F.T 2011. *Igala morphology in G.S Omachonu (ed) Igala language studies*: Germany LAMBERT Academic publishing.
- Okafor A.Y, Ejiofor E.U. *Awka Journal of linguistics and languages*. 2016-69
- Babarinde, Sammi. 2009, *morphology: its Basics and Application*. Nsukka: Paschal communication.
- Crystal D. 2010 *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. vol. 4 : Backmell university.
- Emenajo E.N. 2015 *A grammar of contemporary Igbo*
- Emeribe Mary Joy, Mbagwu Ugochi R. *Morphological processes in the Igbo language: Towards Enriching L2 learners Vocabulary Department of English language and literature: Alvan Ikeokwu federal college of Education Owerri, interdisciplinary journal of African & Asian studies vol 1 No. 4, 2018.*
- Francis Katamba. 1993, *Modern Linguistics morphology*: St Martians press New York
- George Yule. 2010, *The study of language*. United kingdom: by clays, St Ives PLC
- Gideon S. Omachonu & David A. Abraham. *compounding in Igala*. Defining criteria forms and functions.
- Ifeanyi Aaron Ugwu. 2011, *The morphological process in Eziani Dialect: The focus on Affixation*.
- Iheanetu Q.U, Q. Oha. *some salient issues in the unsupervised learning of Igbo morphology proceedings of the world congress on Engineering and Computer science 2017 vol 1 WCES 2017, October 25, 2017, San Francisco USA.*
- Ikekweonwu Clara I. 1987, *Igbo Dialect cluster: A classification*.
- McGregor W.B. 2009, *linguistics: An introduction* New York: continuum international publishing.
- Nwachukwu P.A. 1983, *Towards an Igbo literary standard* London: keyan Paul
- Nwachukwu P.A. 1983, *Towards classification of Igbo verbs*, in Nwachukwu P.A (ed) *Reading on Igbo verbs*, p20 Onitsha: African. FEP publishers

Nwaozuzu G.I. 2008, *Dialect of the Igbo language*. Nsukka :university of Nigeria press Ltd.

Ojukwu Chika Kate. 2011, *A constrastive study of Igbo and English affixation*. A.M.A Thesis submitted to the department of English and literature studies.

Onyeocha Ifeka Juliet. *Antonym in Mbaise Dialect of Igbo*. I.J Onyeocha journal of religion and human relations 12(1)34-47,2020

Qnumajuru V.C 2016, *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)* Bahir Dar- Ethiopia Department of lingusitics & communication studies university of Port Harcourt A constrastive study of two varieties of onicha and the central Igbo language.

Onwudiwe,George E. 2016, *international journal of language literature and gender headedness in Igbo derivational morphology*. Department of Igbo, African and Asia studies NAU Akwa: vol.5

Qsonagwa Naomi John Paul. *Contemporary issues in linguistics and language studies: A festschrift for professor Clara ikekweonwu* at 65

Quirk R, & Greenbaum S. 1973, *A university of Grammar of English* London: Longman

Syal P & Jindal DV. 2007, *An Introduction to linguistics language, grammar and semantics* Delhi: PHI

Umera Okeke, P. Nneka and U.C Nwankwo. 2009, *studies in morphology and syntax of English* Awka: mount camel printing.