Derivational suffixes in Jukun

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Abstract

Since creating new words for new concepts is the main function of derivational morphology, languages adopt different ways in order to achieve this. These derivational patterns commonly change the word-class of the base lexeme, (Hasphelmath 2002). In Jukun, four ways have been identified as some of the ways in which new words can be derived from existing ones:

i. Nouns derived from Verbs
ii. Compound word formation
iii. Multiplication of syllable
iv. Cognate verb-noun collocation.

According to Shimizu (1980), the Jukun language belongs to the Negritic or Niger Congo family of African languages, which are spoken widely from Senegal to Kenya. Languages such as Yoruba and Swahili belong to the same family. More information on the language and some aspects of its grammar are contained in Meek (1931), Welmer (1968), Shimizu (1980), Butari (1995), (2006) and (2010).

1.0 Nouns derived from verbs

In Jukun language, there are many nouns which are clearly related to some verbs both in form and meaning. Based on this fact, we can therefore say that these nouns have been formed from the same verb bases as their corresponding verbs are formed from. This process which is known as deverbal noun formation could be either with or without vowel and / or tone changes. These deverbal nouns can be classified under four categories:

(i) Derivation without any formal changes
(ii) Derivation with vowel changes only
(iii)Derivation with tone changes only
(iv)Derivation with both vowel and tone changes.

Below are the instances of de-verbal nouns so far recognized with the corresponding verbs under the headings of the above four classes.

(i) Derivation without any formal changes

fyin	*-fyin*	*pretend*	*pretence*
tsè	*- tsè*	*bind*	*bundle*
mbà	*- mbà*	*give birth*	*child*
vyá	*- vyá*	*be pleased*	*pleasure*
hwè	*- hwè*	*be big*	*size*
zin	*- zin*	*be afraid*	*fear*
yi	*-yi*	*know*	*knowledge*
ma	*- ma*	*create*	*God of creation*
ya	*-ya*	*be wide*	*width*

(ii) Derivation with vowel change only

ɪ > ú	*jɪ*	*- jú*	*eat*	*eating*
é > ò	*kyén*	*- kyòn*	*walk*	*journey*
	vyen	*vyon*	*laugh*	*laughter*
à > ò	*mbà*	*- mbò*	*try*	*divination*
	gban	*gbon*	*shatter*	*broken pieces*
	da	*do*	*be sick*	*sickness*
à > è	*nà*	*- nè*	*farming*	*hoe*
	gban	*gbèn*	*be strong*	*strength*
	fan	*fen*	*be stingy*	*stinginess*
à > ù	*ngyo*	*- ngyu*	*forge*	*smiting*

(iii) Derivation with tone change only

è > é	*gè*	*gé*	*cut*	*section*
	nè	*né*	*mount*	*saddle*
ò > ó	*jò*	*jó*	*play*	*dance*
à > á	*vyà*	*vyá*	*rob*	*enjoyment*
	na	*na*	*sleep*	*sleeping*
	fa	*fa*	*go for a walk*	*walk*

(iv) Derivation with both tone and vowel changes

ɪ > u	*vyɪ*	*vyu*	*steal*	*theft*
	ci	*cu*	*sit*	*seat*
é > i	*bé*	*bi*	*cover*	*lit*

à > é	*bàn*	*bén*	*marry*	*marriage*
	ya	*ye*	*tear*	*rags*
a > o	*na*	*no*	*rest*	*resting*
	gba	*gbo*	*eat*	*eating*
o > u	*no*	*nu*	*be crippled*	*being crippled*

From the data above, the vowel changes observable in the derivation are of the following six types:

GROUP A	GROUP B
(1) ɪ > u	(4) e > i
(2) e > a	(5) a > e
(3) a > o	(6) a > u

From the above, it can be stated that these six changes are caused by two rules:

(i) the change of tone position from front to back as in group A and
(ii) the raising of the tongue-height by a degree as in group B.

It should however be noted that these rules are applied without exception and once they are understood, the vowel changes in the de-verbal noun formation, in the cases where vowel changes do take place, become to a large extent predictable.

The tone changes observable in the derivation are of two types:

(i) a change from the low tone to the mid tone and
(ii) a change from the mid tone to the high tone.

2.0 Compound word formation

This can take any of the following forms:

(i) Noun plus verb

Here, a verb may be combined with a noun which indicates possession. The verb stem in most cases is known from the other uses while in some few cases, it indicates tone change. This tone change would make it a noun by itself. The noun in question is (bu) indicating possession with (bi) as an alternative form as:

Búdyi	*bidyi*	*food*	*eat*
Búna	*bína*	*bed*	*lie down*
Busùm	*bákindó*	*fetish*	*down the grave*

(ii) Noun plus noun, in which at least one stem is bound

Here, one stem (usually the first noun) closes any further addition thereby rendering it a bound morpheme as:

Wúwà	*wuwa*	*wife*	*woman*
Wúnù	*wunu*	*husband*	*man*
Sóbárà	*sobara*	*upper leg*	*foot*
Djikuru	*djikuru*	*lion*	*king*

(iii)Noun plus noun, in which both stems are free.

Under this category, the second word under goes some form of morphological change before been combined to the first word. The first noun is usually the unmarked.

Kúnú + bara	*= kúnúbe*	*joint + leg*	*= knee*
Kúnú + ávò	*= kunvo*	*elbow+hand*	*= arm*
Syínà + tánà	*= syitan*	*head + house*	*= roof*
Kyànà + kùnà	*= kyenkuna*	*egg + chicken*	*= egg*

3.0 Syllable multiplication

In many instances where there is no formal difference, the morphological process depends rather on syntax (sentence). In this instance, multiplication of a syllable is freely used. There are three possibilities:

(i) Reduplication

Tá	*tátá*	*throw*	*throwing*
Nà	*nànà*	*greet*	*pleasantry*
Fè	*fefe*	*night*	*nightfall*
Gà	*gàgà*	*divide*	*division*
Sá	*sásá*	*do*	*dee*

(ii) Triplication

This can be used to derive preposition from verb:

Sè	*sèsèsè*	*tie*	*tying round*
Tá	*tátátá*	*be*	*be about*
Pùkàn	*pukanpukanpukan*	*turn*	*turning around*
Bà	*bà bà bà*	*follow*	*continuous following*

(iv)Multiplication

This is another way of deriving preposition from verbs.

Kà	*kàkàkàkà*	*enter*	*through*
Ké	*kékékéké*	*go*	*on and on*
Shí	*shíshíshíshí*	*be*	*near*
Té	*tététété*	*pass*	*close to*

4.0 Cognate verb-noun collocation

Here, there is the combination of cognitive verbs and nouns which are both derived from the same verb base such as:

Jukun	**English**	
Verb + noun	*verb + noun*	
Bàn + bén = banben	marry+ someone	= marriage
Fàn + fèn = fanfen	be + stingy	= miser
Bàn + vyón = banvyon	bind + relationship	= reconciliation

5.0 Summary and conclusion

Jukun words can be grouped into two morphological classes: the base and derived words. The derived words can be further divided into: one root + bound morpheme or two or more roots+ bound morpheme.

As a tonal language, a change in the tone of a word results in both phonological as well as semantic change. Any word stem in the language which is not monosyllabic is compound, affixed or reduplicated in nature.

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