INTERFIXATION IN IGBO GRAMMAR: AN EVIDENCE OF DUALITY IN IGBO TRADITIONAL THOUGHT

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Abstract.
An aspect of the Igbo traditional world view is that the world operates with a system of dualities. This perception of reality, which pervades the thought of the Igbo, is illustrated exclusively with pool of complementary dual concepts, verb complexes and regular expressions in the language. In Igbo also, the morphological process of interfixation occurs and regularly derives nouns that have dual constituents of equal morphological standing; for example: Erimeeri (eri-me-eri) "Edible".The argument in this paper is that products of the process of interfixation in Igbo morpho-syntax constitute another evidence of the fact that duality is basic in the Igbo traditional thought.

1. Introduction

Elliot Jacques, in his study of time, distinguishes between Dualism and Duality with regard to the epistemological problem of the relationship between reality and experience of reality. He defines Duality as follows:

> Duality and duals refer to pairs of interconnected and interactive concepts, which may or may not be opposites, such as figures and ground, or the positive and native poles of a magnet or the alteration of this truth value in the and/or conjunctions in truth-table logic. (Culled from Nwoga, 1984,p.22).

As far as we are aware, Nwoga (1984) initiated the use of the term duality to explain the tendency for the Igbo to combine two

elements. In his discussions on the Igbo complementary state of being, Nwoga (1984, pp.22-23) states as follows:

> One thing that is easily decipherable in Igbo speech is the tendency to combine two elements. One reaction to this tendency would be to dismiss it as a purely rhetorical device. I think however that it goes straight into the nature of Igbo thought about the manifestation of reality.

He further points out that the Igbo see things in complimentary dualities. This extends to the perception of each person as having the ordinary personal existence and also the accompanying *Chi* the same way that all beings with agency have their physical existence and their deistic counterpart. The implication of this duality at the cosmological level is that good and bad are seen as co-existing in the same realities, creativity and destructiveness may be achieved by the same agencies. He also points out that even deity is dualistic in the execution of its functions. With these explanations Nwoga ushered in the discussion of duality as an aspect of Igbo traditional thought amongst Igbo scholars.

For instance, while justifying his assertion that 'God that creates'"is a re-coding of the meaning of *Chinekè,* Echeruo (1982, p. 232) points out that Igbo has a pattern of compounds which links related but un-identical institutions to form a third composite name.

Maduka-Durunze (1992. pp. 50-55) discusses duality in Igbo traditional thought from a linguistic perspective and refers to his examples as irreversible binomials (a term he owes to Malkiel, 1950). He observes that binomials in Igbo have complex, yet clear relations with various kinds of hierarchical organizations in the language and in the life of speakers. The normal order of

presentation, coupled with the relevant factor axis, determine the hierarchy in the socio-psychic perception of the people.

From an onomastic perspective, Ọnukawa (1998) identifies the involvement of the complementary dual concepts in the derivation of *kwe*-names (personal names derived from the verb, *kwe* 'agree', 'consent', 'accept'). In addition, Onukawa (1999) observes that the obligatory nominal complementation in the Igbo verbal system is also an evidence of duality in Igbo traditional thought.

Finally, in the introductory part of his Ahiajoku lecture, Emenanjo (2001, pp. 4-5) informs his audience that his language of discourse in the lecture would be Igbo and English in complementary distribution and in line with the principle of complementary dualism which pervade Igbo thinking, Igbo mode of thought and the grammar of structures in the Igbo language.

The rest of the paper goes fully into the topic by first reviewing the data from previous studies in section 2, while section 3 presents additional data on interfixation as a demonstration of the fact that interfixation is an undeniable feature of the Igbo language. Section 4 builds on this to argue for the recognition of interfixation as a form of duality in Igbo traditional thought. Section 5 summarizes and concludes the work.

2. Review of Data from Previous Studies of Duality in Igbo

The previous works discussed above have exemplified duality variously as follows: conjoined nominals referred to by Nwoga (1984) and Maduka-Durunze (1992) as "complementary dualities" and "irreversible binomials" respectively. These nominals are used more often in the illustration of duality in Igbo. (Echeruo, 1982; Nwoga, 1984; Maduka-Durunze, 1992); personal names

(Onukawa, 1998); verb complexes (Onukawa, 1999); regular expressions (Emenanjo, 2001).

2.1 Complementary Dualities:

Àhụ nà mmụo[1]	"Body and spirit"[2]
Àko nà uchè	"Smartness and common sense" (Wisdom)[3]
Àkù nà ùba	"Acquisitions and wealth" (Wealth).
Eke nà egwùrùgwù	"python and a type of reptile" (Rainbow)
Èzi nà ụlò	"Outside and house" (Family).
Ihu nà àzu	"Front an back"
Isi na ọdù	"Head and tail
Ikwu nà ibè	"Kins and peers' (Relatives)
Ọfọ nà ogù	"Symbol of innocence and innocence" (Innocence).
Okwu nà ụkà	"Speech and utterance" (A quarrel)

2.2 Personal Names

Chikwe
Ekèkwe < Chi nà ekè "Destiny and agency of destiny" (Supreme God).

Mmụọkwe
Mmadùkwe < Mmụọ nà Mmadù "Spirit and Human"

Nzèkwe
Ọzọkwe < Nzè nà ozo titles (Revered person)

Ọhàkwe
Ezèkwe < Ọhà nà ezè "Public and king" (The public)

Ọnwukwe
Ndùkwe < Ọnwu nà ndù. "Death and life"

2.3 Verbal Complex

-ri ERIMEERI(ERIMEERI: ji, edè, utàrà, etc)
"eat EDIBLES (EDIBLES: yam, cocoyam, pounded food etc)
-be akwa "cry a cry" (cry)
-gba òtọ "be naked nakedness" (be naked)
-kpa àgwà "behave bevaviour" (behave)

-le anya	"look eye" (look)
-tụ oyi	"be cold coldness" (be cold)
-ju èju	"be full fullness" (be full)
-hụ n'anya	"see in eye" (like/love)
-ghe ugherē	"yawn a yawn" (yawn)
-kwa ụkwarà	"cough a cough" (cough)

2.4 Regular Expressions.

Ihe kwuru ihe ākwudèbe yā[4]	"When something stands another thing stands close to it"
Òfu akā adī èke ngwùgwù	"One hand does not tie a parcel"
Òfu onyē adī èbu ozu enyī	"One person does not carry the carcass of an Elephant"
Òfu onyē adīghi mma n'ijè	"It is not good for someone to travel alone"
Onye naāni ya kwū òdùdù atàgbuo yā	"If someone walks/travels alone the tsetse fly would bite him to death"

3. The Evidence of Interfixation in the Igbo Language

More pieces of evidence can be found in the Igbo language, particularly in the grammatical structures, to show that duality is part of the framework of the people's thought. This is plausible because, as Echeruo (1982, p. 231) rightly states, "a proper understanding of Igbo philosophy is ultimately dependent on a proper understanding of the Igbo language. The present evidence is justifiable because interfixation is one of the morphological processes of deriving nouns in Igbo grammar.

Generally, interfixation is a morphological process which functions in conjunction with prefixation and reduplication to derive (complex) nouns from verbs and simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) nouns. The peculiarity of interfixation is that the interfix[5] divides the derived noun into two morphologically equal parts. This fact, in particular, differentiates it (interfixation) from infixation[6], which occurs in many other languages. The next sub-sections are on the different categories of interfixation in Igbo. Each section is The following are some of the interfix-derived nouns:

3.1 -dV[7]-

Egedeege	(ege-de-ege)(H)[8]	'focal point'"
Igbidiigbi	(igbi-di-igbi)	'stoutness'
Mbadamba	(mba-da-mba)(C)	'girth'"
Obodoobo	(obo-do-obo)	'width'"

3.2 -ghV-

Irighiiri	(iri-ghi-iri) "	'pieces'"
Ureghuure	(ure-ghu-ure)(C)	'rottenness'"
Urughuuru	(uru-ghu-uru)	'pieces'
Uzughuuzu	(uzu-ghu-uzu)(C)	'arrant stupidity'

3.3 -lV_

Akalaaka	(ak-la-aka)(H)	'length'
Ebeleebe	(ebe-le-ebe)	
"'wonders"(unappreciated)'		
Egeleege	(ege-le-ege)	"'straightness'
Ogoloogo	(ogo-lo-ogo)	"'length'"

3.4 -mV[9]

Abàmàabà (abà-mà-abà)	'something to be entered into (Cult)'
Agumaagu (agu-ma-agu)	'something to be read" (literature)'
Atùmààtù (atù-mà-àtù)	'something to be pointed out" (Proclamation)'
Amùmààmù (amù-mà-àmù)	'something to be learnt" (knowledge)'
Anumaànù (anu-ma-ànù)	Animal kingdom'
Edemeede (edu-me-ede)	'something to be written" (Text)'
Erimeeri (eri-me-eri)	'something to be eaten "(Edible)'
Èzùmeèzù (èzù-me-èzù)	'grand meeting'
Òdùmoòdù (òdù-mo-òdù)	'a type of Igbo traditional music''
Okomooko (oko-mo-ko)	,arrogant"'

3.**5 -rA-**

Àhùrààhu	(àhù-rà-àhu) "	'roasted type'
Àfòrààfo	(àfò-rà-àfo)	'squeezed up type'
Àsùrààsu	(àsù-rà-àsu)	'pounded type'
Èbìrèèbi	(èbi-rè-èbi)	'sliced up type'
Èghèrèèghe	(èghè-rè-èghe)	'fried type'

3.6 -rV-

Akàràakā	(akà-rà-akā)	'destiny'
Egwùreegwū	(egwù-re-egwū)	'a play'
Èkwurèèkwu	(èkwu-rè-èkwu)	'talkative'
Nchorincho	(ncho-ri-ncho)	'petiteness'
Ìbèriìbè	(ìbè-ri-ìbè)	'simpleton'

3.7 -tV-

Akataaka	(aka-ta-aka)	'normous'
Ekèteekē	(ekè-te-ekē) (H)	'a grade of palm oil'
Mkputemkpu	(mkpu-te-mkpu) (C) "	'elevation'"
Nhàtanhà	(nhà-ta-nhà)	"'sameness'"
Ùwàtuùwà	(ùwà-tu-ùwà)	"'eternity'"

(Culled from Onukawa 1997)

4. The Justification for Interfixation as Evidence of Duality in Igbo Traditional Thought

The argument of this paper, that the morphological process of interfixation in Igbo is a piece of evidence that duality is part of the people's traditional thought, is justified by the following arguments.

4.1 Interfixation is Igbo-specific

Interfixation occurs only in Igbo among the languages of the Niger Congo family. In fact, as far as we know, the only other language of the world in which interfixation has been attested (by Frick, 1978) is Dghwede, a Chadic language spoken in the north-east of Nigeria. (cf. Emenanjo, 198, p. 279).

What has been found in a few other language is infixation – attested in the following languages: Bontoc, Cambodian, Latin, Taglog, Tzeltal, and Yurok (cf. Emenanjo 1982, p. 78; Archangeli & Langendoen, 2003, pp. 119-120; Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2003, p. 79). Analysts who are familiar with infixation in these languages may be tempted to confuse it (infixation) with interfixation in Igbo.

4.2 The Interfixed Noun is a Form of Complementary Duality.

The morphological structure of the interfixed noun is similar to that of the complementary duality which has been used extensively to exemplify duality in Igbo. Both nouns consist of pairs of linguistic elements that are bound together. The binding element in the complementary duality is the conjunction while that in the interfixed noun is the interfix.

It seems to us that the interfix is a grammaticalized conjuction that is, it originated from the conjunction. Hopper and

Traugott (2003, p. 4), in their detailed work on grammaticalization", state that "when a content word assumes the grammatical characteristics of a function word, the form is said to be grammaticalized." Though the conjunction is not included in Hopper and Traugott's content words, the fact that the interfix "assumes the grammatical character of' the conjunction seems to justify our suspicion.

For example the –lV- and –mV- interfixes seem to originate from the conjunctions, *là/nà* "and", and *mà* "both…and" as in the following:

ogo	là/nà	ogo	=>	ogoloogo
'height'	'and'	'height'	=>	'lengthwise'
anu	mà	anu	=>	anumaànu
'animal'	'and'	'animal'	=>	'animal kingdom'

4.3 The Diachronic Aspects of Igbo Interfixation

The examples above seem to support Emenanjo's (1982, p. 87) observation that the use of interfixes for deriving new words in Igbo appears to belong more to the diachronic than to the synchronics of Igbo. In fact, other than 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6, the lexical sources of for the derivation of the rest of the examples seem to be extinct in Igbo. It appears also that it is only in the given examples that the interfix is productive and maintains a predictable tone pattern.

5. Summary.

In Igbo, the process of interfixation derives words which are divided into two equal parts in such a way that the part before the

interfix is repeated after it, with or without any tonal changes. Interfixation occurs only in Igbo among languages in her class, and it is part of the diachrony of the language.

We therefore conclude that interfixation is an evidence of duality, which is part of the Igbo belief and opinion as to the truth of the nature of things in the world.

Notes.

1. In this paper, low tones (‘) and down step tone (-) are overtly represented while high tones are not represented.
2. Some of the glosses are ours.
3. Some of the complementary dualities have greater underlying relationship, and now refer to one concept.
4. These expressions are presented just as they appear in Emenanjo (2000). The glosses and tones are, however, ours.
5. The interfix is the affix type that occurs in the middle of an interfixed word. Emenanjo (1982, p.78) has pointed out that the term interfix”was invented by Professor Kay Williamson in her teaching of Igbo grammar at the University of Ibadan.
6. Interfixation has been proved to differ from infixation many ways (see Emenanjo, 1982).
7. The ‘V’ of the (-CV-) is a copy of the following vowel, and where the following syllable is a syllabic nasal, the vowel of the interfix indicates the original vowel. Some of such interfixed words have extant variants with the original vowels, as in *nhàtanhà (nha-ta-nha),* and *àhàtaàhà (àhà-ta-àhà)* “equality”. It is known in phonological studies that syllabic nasals develop from vowels.
8. Some of the interfixed words are dialect-specific, and we have used some conventions to show this: (H) = Ohuhu dialect (Umuahia), (C= Central, dialects spoken in the former Owerri province.
9. This appears to be the most productive interfix in synchronic Igbo.
10. In most cases the tone of the interfix corresponds to that of the following syllable, and this gives room for the erroneous

deletion of the vowel of the interfix and the writing of the interfixed word as: *ogologo, erimeri, èkwurèkwu,* etc. The said erroneous deletion is also extended to cases where the interfix and the following syllable have opposing tones, and the affected words are written as: *èzùmezù. Ìbèribè, ùwàtuwà.* This has misguided some analysts (eg Emenanjo 1982:83) into posting the single consonants, -l-, -r-, -m-, as interfixes.

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