

**A Descriptive Exploration of the Extensional Suffixes ‘Tá/Té’ in Igbo Syntax:
Focus on Aboh Mbaise Dialect**

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ABSTRACT

This research work examines the extensional suffixes- ‘ta/te’ in Igbo syntax, using Aboh Mbaise dialect of Igbo as a focus. It investigates such extensional suffixes in order to highlight other forms of extensional suffixes discovered in the dialect and also to identifying whether extensional affixes maintain constant meaning irrespective of the class of verbs with which they occur. The database derives from unstructured oral interview, a number of illustrative texts and internet sources. The method of analysis is descriptive, hence, no theoretical framework was adopted. Findings reveal that-‘ta/te’ has a much wider scope of meaning than has been suggested in the literature; it means other things than direction. Such other meanings it could have include benefactive, advantageous and a prepositional meaning. The study discovers also that the extensional suffixes can in principle be used in any and all constructions. It is also discovered that some of the extensional suffixes are inherently plural while some are inherently singular in the dialect. The study recommends that more studies in extensional suffixes in other dialects of Igbo be carried out to discovered their similarities and differences, and to keep the fire of research in Igbo grammar burning.

KEYWORDS: Affixes, suffixes, extensional suffixes, Igbo language and syntax.

Background to the Study

Suffixes are bound morphemes, which are affixed at the end of a root or stem to either inflect or form another word. That is, they are identified positionally after the root. For example, 1.), in the Igbo word ‘mara’ ‘know’, ‘ma’ is the root while ‘-ra’ is the suffix. Suffixes are of three types in Igbo morphology. They are: inflectional, derivational and extensional suffixes. Inflectional suffixes are those elements on the verb that mark tense, aspect, mood, polarity, etc in the language (Nweze, 2011). So, the suffix ‘-ra’ in the word ‘mara’ in example (1) above is inflectional because, it marks tense. They are not thought of as forming new words, but rather, as giving variant forms each with specific grammatical functions. Derivational suffixes change the form class of words, thereby giving rise to new words when suffixed to verbs, while extensional suffixes are those suffixes that extend the meaning of the verb root without changing its form class



(Ezebuilo, 2021). Whereas the presence or absence of an inflectional suffix makes no difference in meaning to some states of action, the absence of an extensional suffix where it should be present makes a difference of meaning (Ezebuilo, 2021).

Affixation in Igbo exist as a means of word derivation. It is the most important morphological process of word formation, and has been universally attested in human language. As a morphological process, it involves adding one or more bound morphemes to a base called stem. A stem is referred to as any form to which bound morphemes is added to form inflections of the word. (Ezebuilo, 2020). The other process of inflection and derivation of words in Igbo is reduplication of the verb roots, the verb being the head to which prefixes and suffixes are attached to derive words in Igbo. Affix is a collective term for prefixes, interfixes and suffixes which are types of affixes. The three types of affixes just mentioned are the only kinds of affixes that exist in Igbo morphology before. But recently, some scholars like Mbah (2006, 2012), Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010) include circumfixes to exist in Igbo morphology, but its inclusion in Igbo morphology is greatly unresolved.

Prefixes are affixes that occur before the (verb) root of words to derive different forms of nominal, as in the following examples:

	Prefix		Verb root	Nominals
	a	+	b̩a	ab̩a coming (participle).
2a)	à+b̩á	+	àb̩á	'coming' (participle)
	i		da	ida failing (infinitive).
b)	í+dà		ídà	'falling' (infinitive)
	O	+	ri	orl 'eater' (noun agent).
c)	ó+rí		òri	'eater (noun agent).

Prefix in Igbo language can be used to form nominal or verbal constituents. That is, prefixes in Igbo can be attached to root verbs to form new words and can as well alter the word class of the base as in:

3. ri 'eat'
- a. i +ri → 'ìrì' 'to eat'
- b. é + rímeri → érímeri 'edibles'
- c. ñ + ri → ñri 'food'

Interfixes are affixes, which are inserted in between two identical roots or forms or sometimes, non-identical roots to form new words. In other words, they interrupt the sequence of two roots. They are bound morphemes uniting two segments in derivational operations.



Examples:

- 4a.) anụ + m + anụ → ánụmànụ → ‘animals’
b) ede + m + ede → édemède ‘write up, essays’
c) ogo + l + ogo → ógològo ‘length’

Interfixation in Igbo is a very productive process.

However, the phonemic shape of these Igbo affixes can be:

A consonant as in:

- 5a) amụ + m + amụ → ámụmámù ‘learning’
b) enyi + m + enyi → ényimènyi ‘elephant’

A vowel as in:

- 6a) i + je → ijē ‘to go’
b) i + si → ísī ‘to cook’

One syllable long as in:

- 7a) rọ + gọ → rógò ‘bent state’
b) gba + gọ → .gbágò ‘not straight’

It can also be two syllables long as in:

- 8a) bi + kè → bíkèè ‘live near’
b) nọ + tè → nótèè ‘Stay far’

Going through the available literature in relation to the topic of the study, it is observed that adequate attention has not been given in this area of grammar in Igbo-extensional suffixes, especially in Obi-Ngwa dialect of Igbo in Imo State. Through a lot of works are found to have been carried out in related areas like morphological processes such as compounding, prefixation, interfixation, adjectivisation, adverbialisation, and so forth in other dialects of Igbo. Also, some research works have been carried out on extensional suffixes in other dialects of Igbo, but none to the best knowledge of the researcher has been carried out on extensional suffixes in Oboh Mbaise, which is the focus of this study. Despite that, even the ones (ie research works) that are related to this topic of study, used different theories from descriptive survey, and their investigations are mostly based on the meaning, and the number of ways in which extensional suffix is interpreted in relation to its definition and not its full content and roles. That is, the previous research works on extensional suffixes, neglected the study of extensional suffixes in its entirety in favour of its meaning and the number of ways in which extensional suffix is interpreted in relation to its definition. So, the dearth of this research work is accounting for the full content of extensional suffixes in Igbo syntax, using Aboh Mbaise dialect of Igbo as a focus. The



problem of this study therefore, is accounting for the full content of extensional suffixes and their characteristics in Aboh Mbaise dialect of Igbo.

MORPHOLOGY

Each language is unique not only in its inventory of sounds, but also in the manner in which it employs them in meaningful combinations. The study of those combinations has been traditionally divided into morphology, the description of the meaningful forms, and syntax, the ordering of the sentence elements. However, in describing a language, all the four varying aspects: sounds, form, constructions, and meanings have to be given due attention. In modern linguistics, these aspects are studied under the terms; morphology, phonetics and phonology, syntax and semantics respectively.

The word morphology is Greek-based and was first used in Biology to depict the study of forms of living organisms. It was introduced into linguistics in the 19th century. Morphology is concerned with the study of forms of words in different uses and constructions and these forms of words are known as Morphemes (Lyons 1968: 170, 195). Lyons (op.cit:170) describes Morphemes as a “minimal units of grammatical analysis of which words may be composed”. They are minimal units in the sense that they cannot be analyzed further into distributionally classifiable units. For example, (9), the English word ‘unsuitability’ is made up of four smaller morphemes viz-un-suit-abili- and ty, each of which has a characteristic distribution.

In Igbo (10), ‘gara’ (went) and úchè (idea) are made up of ga-(go) and-ra (past tense morpheme and u-noun formation morpheme - ‘che’ (think) respectively.

In English we have the (-D) morpheme, which indicates past tense but in Igbo, we have rV past tense. All these morphs have the same function that is, the indication of the past tense. The identification task of morphology is therefore, to discover the morphemes and to give their allomorphs if any, listing the environment in which each allomorph occurs.

Affixes

Morphemes can be grouped into certain classes according to their distribution: and we have two major classes; roots and affixes. Gleason (1958) asserts that affixes are subsidiary to roots, while roots are the centres of morphological constructions. For example (11) in the words *suitability*, *gara* and *úchè*, - *suit*-, -‘ga’ and-*che* are roots while ‘un’-‘able’ ‘ra’ and ‘u’-are affixes. The Igbo affixes, just like affixes elsewhere, perform extensional functions. Affixes are classified into many categories, depending on their position with reference to the stem. But, their number types and functions are language dependent.

According to the Encyclopedia of Linguistics (1969: 189) “affixes may be classified in two ways: by position and by function.” If classified by position,



- b. Ha jèrè ahĩa (they went to the market)
Ha jere ahĩa
They go past market
- c. Nogzi ga eje (Ngozi will go)
Ngozi aux going
- d. Ngozi na Ada ga eje (Ngozi and Ada will go)
Ngozi and Ada aux going

Derivational formations by definition do not introduce syntactic restrictions that are not already carried by the root forms. Members of word classes that result from derivation have the same syntactic functions as do the underived or simple members of the class. For example (18), in English ‘writer’ can be substituted with ‘poet’; also, ‘empower’ can be substituted with ‘allow’ Nwachukwu (1983 :77) says that such a two-way distinction into derivational and inflectional affixes is not suitable for an adequate description of Igbo morphology. The different nature of Igbo language therefore, necessitates the use of inflectional and non-inflectional categories of affixes. The reason for this will become clear.

The non-inflectional suffixes can be subdivided according to functions into categories, one of which is derivational, others are extensional and enclitics. In Igbo each of the above (except derivational suffix) is a set of suffixes.

The Prepositional Suffix

The prepositional suffix has the least number in the set, compared with other suffixes. Precisely, suffixes, for example *ta/te*, which sometimes function as a prepositional suffix can translate a number of English prepositions such as (19), ‘for’, ‘from’, ‘towards’, ‘to’, etc and whatever prepositional meaning that emerges from any given sentence will depend partly on the semantic properties of the particular verb involved. This suffix assumes the prepositional function when it has its own object just like preposition do, either the vowel of the verb stem is doubled, for example,

20. Ọ kpáara ya nkụ ‘He fetched firewood for him’
He fetch past him firewood
21. Siere m ha nri ‘Cook for them on my behalf’
Cook for me them food

However, some verbs do not take any of the extra vowels for example,

- 22a) Gwara m ya okwu ‘Talk to him on my behalf’
Talk for me him talk
- b. Nyere m yam ma ahụ “Give him that knife for me.
Giver for me him knife that



The rV prepositional suffix assimilates to the tone of the preceding syllable except for the category of verbs in the last two sentences above.

Kparara is made up of

Kpara-past

ra-Preposition

Because Kparara is not possible in Igbo, the surface form becomes kpa-ara; that first rV indicating past loses its 'r' phoneme. (Nwachukwu, 1983).

Verb Root Classification

It is worthwhile to briefly mention the classes of the verb roots, since the classificatory terms are consistently employed in this study.

Every verb root in Igbo begins with a consonant. It could be made up of one syllable, 'CV' only or more than one syllable 'CVCV'. Those that have the CV structure are known as the simple verb roots. The complex one as used in this study comprises two simple roots, which are then collectively known as a stem. This is why stem and root are used interchangeably in this study. The tones of the complex verb roots varies. This means that it can be high high (HH), low low (LL), high low (HL) or low high (LH).

There are three tonal classes viz:-

i. HTVs (High tone vowels):

- 23a. rí 'eat'
- b. gbú 'cut'
- c. nú 'drink'

ii. LTVs (Low tone vowels)

- 24 a. zà 'train'
- b. zụ 'train'
- c. mù 'learn'

iii. Complex verb root/stem-

- 25a) rógò 'bend'
- b. kèlé 'greet'
- c. kúzi 'teach'

LEXICAL CLASSIFICATION

Verb roots may also be divided into semantic classes viz: Active (action verbs), stative (non-action verbs), metrological (weather verb, and so on).



STATIVE VERBS

Nwachukwu (1983) views stative verbs, which refer not to activity but to state or condition and which normally do not require the progressive form to express duration. Examples:

- 26 a. Ọ dị ọcha ‘It is white/clean’
 It be white/clean
- b. Ọ bu eebe a ‘He lives here’
 He live place here
- c. Ọ màrà mmá ‘He/she is handsome/ beautiful’
 He/she know past beauty

NON-STATIVE VERBS

There are the verbs which Emenanjo (1978) calls active verbs. A great number of Igbo verbs belong to this division. Example:

- 27a) Ọ zùrụ móto/ụgbọla He bought a car
- b. Ọ gbùru éghu He killed a goat
- c. Ọ dàrà áda He fell down

METROLOGICAL VERBS

Nwachukwu (1983) defines meteorological verbs are verbs which refer to weather condition. Examples:

- 28a) Mmiri na ezọ It is raining
- b. Anwụ na acha The sun is shining
- ch. Ụgùrụ na-áwù ‘There is hamattan’

OTHER EXTENSIONAL SUFFIX

- Wa/We = Initiative or continuative
- Cha/che = Completive
- Tù = Doing as directed or commendable
- Kwasa = Repetitive
- Je = as usual, normal
- Ri = about, around.

WA/WE INCHOATIVE/CONTINUATIVE SUFFIX

This is used to indicate that an action is going on and continuing. It is aspectually indicating that a state is about to be entered or is in the process of being entered. It can also add to the meaning of the verb for it to show initiation or inception of an action.



For examples:

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------|--|
| 29 a. | ri | ‘eat’ |
| b. | ríwe | ‘start/continue eating’ |
| 30 a. | Ò wú m riwe | ‘Do I start eating?’ |
| b. | Ó b́iara, ríwe nri | ‘He came and started eating’ |
| 31 a. | Épè acháwala | ‘Oranges have started to ripe’ |
| b. | Ọ gáwala | ‘He has started going’ |
| 32 a. | Zà | ‘swep’ |
| b. | Ọ wú m zàwá | ‘Do I start sweeping?’ |
| c. | Ò b́iara zawa ezi | ‘He came and started sweeping the compound’. |

CHA/CHE-COMPLETIVE

This extensional affix is used to indicate that action is completed or meant to be finished. For example:

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|---|
| 34a) | richaa | ‘Finish eating it’. |
| b. | Ọ wụ m richaa? | ‘Do I finish it?’ |
| 35a) | Si ya mechaale, ya ab́iá | ‘Tell him to come, if he finishes’. |
| b. | Mechaa ihe imewe | ‘Finish what you are doing first’ |
| c. | Gị sachaa akwa gi ab́iá | ‘If you finish washing clothes you come’. |
| 36a) | Kpechaa akpụ niile | ‘Finish peeling the cassava’. |
| b. | sị m sichaa akpụ niile? | ‘Do I finish cooking the whole cassava?’ |
| 37a) | Gbachichaa ụzọ niile | ‘Look all the doors completely’ |
| b. | Wefutachaa akwụkwọ m niile | ‘Finish bringing out all my books’ |
| 38a) | Gị gbachaa nkwa, anyị ala | ‘If you finish dancing, we go’. |
| b. | Gị gachaala gi abia rie nri | ‘If you finish going, you come and eat’ |

TU WITH VERBS OF ACTION

Tu usually combines with verbs of action to show ability to do something as directed. It also means to take something out of somewhere or somebody. For example:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---|
| 39a) | Métùó ụzọ | ‘open the door’ |
| b. | Métùó ya | ‘clean it’ |
| c. | Métùó nwa ahụ imi | ‘blow the child’s nose’. |
| 40a) | Gbatùó osisi nóchiri ụzọ | ‘cut down the tree that is blocking the road’ |
| b. | Vútùó akpaká osisi ahú | ‘uproot that oil bean tree’. |
| c. | Gbátùó ụzọ | ‘Unlock that door’. |
| d. | Gbótùó ube | ‘pluck down the pear’ |



- 41a) Fótùò ìte áhù 'bring down the pot from the fire'
b. Kótùò úwe gi ebe ahù 'bring down your dress from that place'.
c. O kwátùòle gí 'have you been pushed down?'
d. Rítùò n'elu 'climb down'
- 42a) Dotùò ye aka n'elu igwe 'pull off his hands from the bicycle'
b. Bátùò mkpekere jì 'remove the yam back'
c. Métùò alughulù udégìri 'remove the cobwebs'.
- 43a) Fútùò uwe gi 'undress yourself'
b. Kwútùò òla ntì gí 'remove your earrings'
c. Gbátùò òla aja gu 'remove your bangles'
- 44a.) Kpetùò mkpekere ápou 'remove the cassava back'
b. Kútùò mmiri kuchiri ụzọ 'clean the water from the road'
c. Zátùò aja wụru n'ala 'clean up the sand on the floor'
- 45a. Bétùò ebe na-adughị mma 'cut off the bad part'
b. Khétùò eriri igwe 'untie the string'

In the above examples, the extensional *suffix-tù* means ability to do or act as directed. The meaning of 'tù' changes as it combines with different classes of verbs. For instance, in example 40 (e) 'tù' is combined with 'gbo' and the meaning becomes 'to pluck down'. But in example (41), (44), (45), (46), (47), (48), et cetera, 'tù' combines with many verbs to give the meaning to 'remove'. In example 29 (a-c), above, *tù* merged with the verb 'me' to give the same meaning to 'open'. Hence, one peculiar thing with this suffix is that it selects its verb of co-occurrence and restricts itself with the collocational range. Consider the following verbs:

- 46a) Bétùò 'cut off'
b. Gbátùò 'remove or cut down'
c. Zátùò 'clean up'

The following examples will be classified in a way that is not obtainable in the dialect as in:

- 47a) Hítùò akwa 'pull off cloth/ clean off cloth'
b. Zátùò efere 'clean up plates' or 'wash plates'
c. Kútùò osisi 'remove the tree' or 'knock down the tree'

If these examples are arranged in the way it is supposed to be, the following examples will be gotten as in:

- 48a) Híótùò mmiri 'clean off water'
b. Zátùò aja 'clean up sand'
c. Kútùò nwa 'knock down the child'



If you introduce a third person and re/or the prepositional suffix, the meaning will be for example:

- 49a) Kùtùóró m ya nwa ahu n'uzo 'carry that child away from the road'
b. Híótùóró m ya mmiri n'ala 'clean up the water on the floor for me'

From above the examples, it will be seen that *-tù* is a real extensional suffix. It functions in place of some English verb + preposition construction or English phrasal idioma such as;

- 50a) Put away- 'wétùó'
b. carry away- patùó'
c. clean off- hítùó'

With certain other verbs, it has the meaning of the English prefix '*un*' as in:

- 51a) unlock- gbátùó'
b. open – 'métùó'
c. push open- kwátùó'

With other verbs, the meaning of '*down*' is what emerges as in:

- 52a) rítùó- 'climb down'
b. kútùó- 'knock down'

Also, the extensional suffix '*tu*' co-occurs with the vowel '*o*', which bear a high tone. This implies that the action verbs with the suffixes denote command tone.

KWASA (REPETITIVE)

This extensional suffix marks repetition as well as to indicate actions that is meant to keep something on something.

For example:

- 53a) A na-ekwu ke ì mere, gị a na-emekwasa ọzọ 'We are talking of a crime you committed and you are committing another one.'
b. Ina-erikewasa nri ọzọ? 'Are you going to eat again?'
c. Si ya akọkwasala ọka n'elu ji 'tell him not to plant maize on top of yam'
- 54a.) Shikwasa akpu n'ọkụ 'place the cassava on fire'
b. Chikwasa uwe n'elu akwa 'Keep my clothes on the chair'.
c. Wukwasa ya mmiri n'ahụ 'Pour water on his body'
d. Dokwasa nri n'elu tebulu 'Keep the food on the table'.



Here, some of the verbs in combination with '*kwasa*' extensional affix are inherently plural while some are inherently singular in the dialect. For example (55), '*chikwasa*' and '*wukwasa*' denotes singularity as in the following examples:

- 56a) *Chikwasa nku n'elu igwe ahụ* 'Keep the firewood on top of the iron'
b. *Wukwasa ya n'elu oche* 'Keep it on top of the chair'

Also, some of the verbal combinations can serve multiple purposes. For example, (57), if you say '*chikwasa uwe m n' elu akwa*'. Here, it can mean one dress or more than one dress. '*Dokwasa*' shows that the content is something heavy and lifeless as in:

- 58a) *Dokwasa mmiri n'elu igwe* 'Keep the water on the bicycle'
b. *Dokwasa akpụ n'elu tebulu* 'Keep the cassava on the table'

JE-(AS USUAL, NORMAL)

This extensional suffix denotes usually or normality as in the following examples:

- 59a) *O ji agaje agaje* 'He is used to going'
b. *O jie eshije eshije* 'She is used to cooking'
c. *O wú mmeje mmeje* 'It is a normal thing'

RI (ABOUT, AROUND)

This extensional suffix denotes turning or repeating. For examples:

- 60a) *Mmeghari ahụ dị mma* 'To be up and doing is good'
b. *Ọ naghị atugharifu n'elu akwa* 'He cannot turn around on the bed'
c. *Kwagharianụ ya ka anyị mara ma ọ dị ndụ* 'Push him around for us to know he is alive'
61a) *Reghariā ose n'ahia* 'Resell the pepper in the market'
b. *Onye nkuzi si m deghariā ya* 'The teacher told me to re-write it'
c. *Emechaa, gị ekwugharia ihe ikwuru* 'Afterwards, you repeat what you said'
d. *Osisi ewughariala akwukwo* 'Tress have now produced fresh leaves'

EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Some scholars have contributed to the scope of the interaction of the components of linguistic description in cross-linguistic studies, which include extensional suffixes. Nwachukwu (1983) admits that the term extensional suffixes were borrowed from Emenanjo (1978), where it is used to denote those suffixes, which have a wide scope of occurrence. This is because, for they can be found with the infinitive form of the verb as well as with the simple and compound verb forms.

Green (1963) observes that in Igbo there are suffixes, which are lexically or compounding elements, but neither derivational nor inflectional. They are frequently a used feature of the language and have a rich variety of meaning, especially when a number more than two, but not very many of them are



combined. The fact that they are compounding or lexical elements makes it difficult to find a clear formal distinction between compound verbs and verbs plus suffixes. This difficulty also suggests that the suffixes may originally have been verbs. This study is quite different from Green's work, though they are both related in the sense that both are study on suffixes, but they are different because, they do not share the same geographical location.

Emenanjo (1978:97) writes: "The term extensional is used in African Linguistics for referring to elements, usually affixes, which function principally as meaning modifiers, i.e extending the meaning of the word with which they are used". He observes that the distinction between verbs and extensional suffixes is difficult to make because of their close relationship. The extensional suffixes could be diachronically or semantically related to or derived from known verbs; so he suggests criteria for the distinction. Any element, which is clearly and fully cognate with a known verb, is not entered as suffix since it is a verb. An element is viewed as fully as fully cognate with a verb when its morphological structure and inherent tone pattern and meaning are identical with those of the basic form of a known verb. Where, however one of these aspects, especially the tonal pattern is absent, we regard it as partially cognate.

Such partially cognate forms are treated as suffixes even where they are known to be diachronically or semantically related to or derived from known verbs. Then, because all suffixes are modifiers of any verb root/stem to which they are affixed, in an effort to extract and clarify the function of extensional suffixes, we suppose, Emenanjo contrasts their semantic and distributional properties with those inflectional suffixes. He observes that unlike the inflectional suffixes, whose absence or presence does not change the meaning of a construction, the absence or presence of extensional suffixes changes the meaning.

For examples:

- 62a) Ó gwụ 'it is finished'
b. Ó gwúlà 'It is finished'

Though the perfective suffix 'la' is absent in (62a) there is meaning difference between 62 (a and b) On the other hand.

- 63a) ó gwụwala 'it is beginning to finish' while,
b. ó gwụchaala means 'it is completely finished'

Have meaning differences that are traceable to the difference in meanings of the extensional suffix;

Extensional suffixes have a wider range of occurrence than inflectional suffixes. While the inflectional suffixes are each limited in usage to one set of syntactically related constructions, the extensional suffixes can in principle be used in any and all constructions. For example, constructions in 63 (a and b) above belong to one construction only by the perfective affirmative marked by 'la'



yet, in these constructions, we found out two different extensional suffixes -‘*wa*’ and-‘*eha*’(a).

These two suffixes like other extensional suffixes, can also be used in other constructions such as the indicative affirmative. For examples:

- 64a) *ó jè áhĩa* ‘He is going to the market’
b. *ó jèwe ùlògwù* ‘He has been going to the hospital’
c. *ó jèwere orụ* ‘He started to go the work’

The above suffixes can equally occur with dissyllable compound verb stem. For examples:

‘*siwe*’

- 65a) *Ada chọrọ ka ọ siwe nri* ‘Ada wants to start cooking’
b. *Ada chọrọ ka ọ sichaa ya* ‘Ada wants to finish cooking completely’
‘*kuzi*’
c. *Emeka chọrọ ka ọ kuziwe ihe* ‘Emeka wants to start teaching something’

Having examined Emenanjo’s work properly, the study is related to this current study in the sense that both studies are on suffixes, and differ on the type of suffixes that is being considered.

Onukawa (1994) observes closely the –rV-applicative suffix, which has traditionally been described as an extensional suffix. Based on his identification of some morphophonemic, syntactic and semantic peculiarities, he concludes that the –rV- applicative suffix should no longer be regarded as an extensional suffix. He argues that it should be recognised as a class of its own in addition to the inflectional, derivational and extensional suffixes. The evidence for the argument is the different in the co-occurrence order of the inflectional suffixes and the rV applicative suffix. The inflectional suffixes co-occur frequently with these other suffixes because, they (inflectional suffixes) are markers of regular constructions in Igbo.

To strengthen the evidence, Onukawa presents ten extensional suffixes: *Wa* (inceptive), *Ta*(directional), *nye*(illative), *nwu* (ability to do), *tu*(slight contact), *kpo* (completeness), *kata* (persisetyly), *ghari* (repetitive), *chi*(in place of), *gwo* (into pieces). They are used regularly in the language and selected from the classes of extensional suffixes recognised by Emenanjo (1978, 1982), ad Onukawa (1999).

The sentences below show the order of co-occurrence of the extensional suffix.

- 66a) *Ọ sịwere jị (si-wA-rV)*
‘He cook-INCEPTIVE SFFX-ASSERTIVE SFFX-YAM
‘He began to cook some yams’



b. Ọ sịtere jị [si- tA-rV]

He cook-DIRECTIONAL SFFX-ASSERTIVE. SFFX-YAM
'He cooked some yams and brought for someone'

c. Ọ sịnyere jị [si-nye-rV]

He cook-ILLATIVE SFFX-ASSERTIVE SFFX-YAM
'He put in some yams (on fire) for cooking'
He put some yams in a pot and placed on fire.

d. Ọ sịnwurụ jị [si-nwụ-rV]

He cooks ABILITY SFFX-ASSERTIVE SFFX-YAM
'He was able to cook yam'

Having observed the findings of Onukawa, (1994) the study is related to this present research work in the sense that both studies are on suffixes, and differ from each other in their geographical locations and also, on the type of suffixes that is being considered. Therefore, the conclusion is that the rV applicative suffix in Igbo is not an extensional suffix. This suffix should be classified separately.

Nweze (2011) compares the extensional suffixes with clitics and distinguishes their different morphosyntactic environment. Although, the study identifies a morphological resemblance between the two, she did not see that resemblance as sufficient enough to subsume the two under one uniform class. Nweze presented some differences and similarities in an attempt to show the distinction between extensional suffixes and clitics. For instance, an extensional suffix occurs only in the verbal slot while clitics can occur in the verbal, pre-verbal and object positions as in:

67a) Chike, wetatugodu anụ ahụ

'Chike, bring first a little of that meat'

b. Chike, wetatụ anụ ahụ godu

'Chike, bring a little of that meat, first'

In sentences 67 (a) and (b) above, tatụ is an extensional suffix while godu is a clitic. *Tatụ* cannot occur in another slot in the construction, but godu appears in both verbal and final positions. It implies therefore, that clitics have the freedom of attaching themselves to almost all categorical classes.

Nweze's findings are that extensional suffixes and clitics differ in the following aspects:

Position of occurrence, grammatical dependence or independence, capability or incapability of being focused, obligatoriness or optionality in their domain of occurrence. Her work differs from this present study, because the presented research is centered solely on extensional suffixes, while hers involves extensional suffixes and clitics.



Oweleke (2007) examines the treatment of specific extensional suffixes in some Igbo dictionaries. As a result of a lack of definite systematic approach to the Igbo extensional suffixes, the author advocates a new lexicographic approach that should make transparent the morphosemantic relationships between the verb roots and their derivatives, but without necessarily breaking up the alphabetical order of the dictionary macrostructure. Oweleke (2007) examines the extensional suffixes in Echeruo's dictionary, Williamson's dictionary, Igwe's dictionary, extensional suffixes as headwords to mention but a few. The present study is different from Oweleke's work because, it has nothing to do with extensional suffixes in Igbo lexicography.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Drawing upon the investigations carried out, we conclude that-'*ta/te*' has a much wider scope meaning than has been suggested in the literature. That is, it means other things than direction. Such other meanings it could have include benefactive, advantageous and a prepositional meaning.

Tu' has other meaning than ability to do or act as directed. The meaning changes as it combines with different classes of verbs. '*Tu'*' can combine with '*gbo*' to give the meaning, 'pluck down'. It can also mean to remove if it combines with other verbs like *tucha* (peel off).

On the basis of evidence from synchronic linguistics, it has been observed that extensional suffixes are erstwhile verbs (verbs that have been re-analysed or changed their word class membership). If this is so, then extensional suffixes such as *ta/te* must have originated from various verbs and not just from one verb. Only this assumption can justify the hypothesis about *ta/te* verbs original of Igbo extensional suffixes.

Tonally, they share the same two way classification of tone. The two tonal classes are:

HTS – *ta/te* and LTS-*ta/te*

The low tone suffix- '*ta/te*' goes with the rV when used in a sentence.

Example:

68a) $\text{\textcircled{0}}$ *zutarala m akwa* 'he has bought material for me'

While the high tone suffix- '*ta/te*' goes with progressive tenses. For example:

69) *Wete okpu m* bring my hat.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The suffix –'*ta/te*' is the focus of investigation in this study. It is one of the pan-Igbo extensional suffixes, definitely, the most widely used in Igbo. As pointed



out in the literature review, one single meaning has been assigned to this vasatile suffix. On findings, we suggest that this is not the case. Therefore, we examine- 'ta/te' combining with various semantic classes of verbs resulting in different meanings, not just one meaning-a directional meaning.

TA/TE WITH VERBS OF MOVEMENT

This suffix covers a very wide semantic field, but the sense of motion towards a literal and metamorphical sense, seems a convenient gloss. If this suffix co-occurs with the verbs of movement, the meaning is directional or movement towards. For example:

- 70a) Wèté òkpú m. 'Bring my hat'.
b. Jèè lèté onye orĩa 'Go and visit the sick'.
c. Esila n'azụ amafete aka 'Do not force in your hand through the back'

We observed that in the constructions above, the extensional suffix- 'te/ta' and the verbs of movement obey the vowel harmony rule when both co-occur in the dialect.

TA/TE COMBINES WITH MOVEMENT VERBS

Here, ta/te expresses both directional and benefactive meaning. Each item selects its own verb of buying. Much like the associated verbs in English meaning 'to cause to die' each of the Igbo verbs with the meaning 'to buy' has a different collocational range 'zụ' for instance, can govern nearly all objects of buying while (wụ) collocates with names of few objects. Examples;

- 71) zụta ncha 'buy soap'
b. zụta ose 'buy pepper'
c. mata agwa 'buy beans'

Ta/Te Frequently co-occurs with-rv prepositional suffix to express prepositional meaning

Examples:

- 72a) zụtara m ọla aka 'buy bangles for me'
b. zụtaram m moto 'buy a car for me'

Ambiguity

If a third person is introduced into the construction, an ambiguous sentence is derived. (The ambiguity is resolved in the context) for example;

- 73a) Betere m ya akwa 'buy cloth for him on my behalf'

The prepositional function of 'ta/te' suffix could translate into English as 'from, in, to, for, over to, towards; et cetera.



***Ta/Te* suffix with action verbs showing ability to do something commendable**

When the *-te/ta* suffix is combined with action verbs, it shows the ability to do something commendable. For example:

- 74a) Ọ ji akwatā akwa 'She sows very well'
b. Ọ jì àkúā ókpọ 'He is a good boxer'
c. Ọ ji akútā nkwa 'He is a good drummer'

Here the meaning of *'ta/te'* is directional. This is because, it combines with movement verbs.

***Ta/Te* With Verbs of Ripening/Maturity of Seed/Crops**

For examples:

- 75a) Ókà nàhú àká, 'maize will soon ripen'
b. Ya kata, mụ enye gi 'when it matures, I will give you'
c. Chere ya rụte gi abia kpara 'wait for it to produce more, you will have some'

***Ta/te* with verbs to show benefactive**

- 76a) Kete nke mụ na gi 'Get our own share'
b. Bete akwa nke mụ na gi 'Cut our material'
c. Nọchite anya anyị 'Represent us'
- 77a) Shite ntakiri ofe 'prepare small soup'
b. Shitetu anụ 'cook small meat'
c. Mete nri onye ọ bụla 'prepare food for everybody'
- 63a) Wata nkụ e ji e shi nri 'get some firewood for cooking'
b. Gbata egwusi ana ere ere 'get some melon for sell'
c. Gbajiite nkụ n'azụ ụlọ 'get some firewood at the back of the house'

***Ta/te* with verbs of knowledge**

Here, the meaning is not directional but advantageous. For example:

- 79a) Kọta onye m bụ 'Guess who I am'
b. Jisie ike mata onye i na-agwa okwu 'Try and know whom you are addressing'
c. Mata na aruruala adighi mma 'Know that mischievousness is not good'



***Ta/te* with verbs of borrowing**

This has directional meaning. Examples:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 81a.) Bité ya ego | ‘Borrow some money from him’ |
| b. Gbazite ya naira ise | ‘Borrow five naira from him’ |
| c. Gbazite akwụkwọ ì ga-agụ | ‘Borrow the book you will read’ |

This verb also behaves like the verb of buying where each item selects its own verb of occurrence. In which case the item decides whether it should be ‘bité’ or ‘gbazite’.

***Ta/te* with verbs to show contact or togetherness**

For examples:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 82a) Nyekọta ha nri | ‘Give them food together’ |
| b. Nọkọta nụ ọnụ | ‘Stay together’ |
| c. Mekọta nụ nri ọnụ | ‘Prepare the food together’ |

Summary of Findings

From the investigation, we discovered that -‘*ta/te*’ has a much wider scope of meaning than has been suggested in the literature, it means other things than direction. Such other meaning it could have included benefactive, advantageous and a prepositional meaning.

Tu’ also, has other meaning than ability to do or act as directed. The meaning changes as it combines with different classes of verbs. ‘*Tu’* can combine with ‘*gba*’ to give the meaning, ‘pluck down’. It can also mean to remove if it combines with other verbs like *tucha* (peel off).

On the basis of evidence from synchronic linguistics, it has been observed that extensional suffixes are erstwhile verbs (verbs that have been re-analysed or changed their word class membership). If this is so, then extensional suffixes such as *ta/te* must be originated from various verbs and not just from one verb. Only this assumption can justify the hypothesis about *ta/te* verbal original of Igbo extensional suffixes.

Conclusion

The study has explored the extensional suffixes in Aboh Mbaise dialect of Igbo and draws the following conclusion: From the foregoing examples with verbs of knowledge, we observed that ‘*ta/te*’ does not always have the directional meaning. With these verbs, a variety of meanings is suggested as shown below:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 86a) Kwa = ‘akwaà | ‘sew’ |
| b. Kwama = akwama’ | ‘to know how to sew well’ |



With the verbs of maturity, a different meaning is portrayed: for example

87) Ọka kata, anyị aghọtara gị ‘when maize ripens, we shall cut for you’.

Thus, we have a variation in meaning as follows;

88) Ká ‘to ripen’
b. Káta ‘to become ripen’

Here ‘ta’ has the meaning ‘come to’ or ‘become’

With verbs of knowledge, a similar meaning is suggested as in:

89a) Má ‘know’
b. màtá ‘come to know or recognize’

The verbs of eating suggest yet a different shade of meaning. For example:

90) rie ya ‘eat it’
b. rie nke anyị ‘eat our own share to your advantage’

With verbs of borrowing, a different meaning is equally suggested for example;

91) bite ‘get from somebody’
b) bité ya ego ‘borrow some money from him to your advantage’

Having examined the extensional suffixes in Aboh Mbaise dialect with copious examples, it is discovered that while some extensional suffixes do not change meaning irrespective of the verb it co-occurs with, some extensional suffixes vary in meaning, especially the –‘te/ta’ suffix. The difference in meaning is caused by its co-occurrence with different verbs. Again, in the use of extensional affixes, one need to be very careful as most extensional suffixes have collocational range as aforementioned.



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