Abstract

Names are important in the Yorùbá culture. It is like a lens that clearly reflects the people’s social background and their cultural ideologies. Names are means by which a person is identified. It is considered among Yorùbá to be of life longer, even than the bearer of the names, hence the need for a name to be protected from being destroyed. All these are what scholars have said about names in the standard dialect of Yorùbá. This essay explains the form and structure of personal names in the Ondó dialect. By this we mean an attempt is made to explain the morpho-syntactic analysis of personal names in Ondó. Ondó dialect spoken in communities such as Ile- Oluji, Ondo, Ìdànrè, Ajue, Òdígbó, igbutoro, etc. The data collected were from the native speakers through interviews on the personal names. The analyses reflect that Ondó’s personal names are morphologically derived through the de-sententialisation process. In terms of syntactic structure, most of the names are generated from simple basic sentences, compound sentences and negative sentence

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Awolaoye (2016:20) corroborates this view by categorizing Yorùbá personal name into different sets thus:

YPSSs exist pragmatically in sets. In the traditional setting, there are sets of names for the royal family, the nobility, the king-in-council, the warriors, specific professional practitioners, religious groups, etc. Another set of names are pet and alias which have metamorphosed into real names such that not every contemporary language user could distinguish them.

A cursory look at the above attests to the fact that the name is culturally grounded and reflects people’s lives and languages. In the actual sense, some names are manifestations of regional dialects. Thus, a morpho-syntactic analysis together with other structural linguistic analyses is of great value to the understanding of Yorùbá personal names.

This paper therefore aims to give an analysis of personal names in Ondo dialect with particular reference to their morphological and syntactic dispensation. The term morpho-syntactic is used in linguistics to refer to the grammatical category or property whose defining criteria of morphology and syntax are both applied in analyzing an aspect of a language like personal names in the Ondo dialect of Yorùbá. Hence, the paper looks into the morphological and syntactic derivation, of personal names in dialect within the general framework of linguistic analysis. Data collected were Interviews with native language experts on personal names in Ondo-speaking communities. The analysis shows that personal names in Ondo morphologically derived through de-sententialization process while the syntactic structure reveals that most of the personal names in Ondo generated from simple sentences, compound sentences, and negative sentences.

Data Collection

The data for this study centers on the personal names collected in five communities that spread across the five Local Government Areas of the Ondo state where the dialect is spoken. The personal names were randomly selected from five randomly selected native speakers. Each of the language consultants was made to explain the lexical meaning of each personal name offered aside from their own personal names. To further validate the data collected from the respondents, insight offered by various scholars in the Yorùbá Dictionaries and other books on names were also consulted.

Basic Linguistic Background of Ondo

Ondo is grouped under the South-East Yorùbá (Awóbulúyì 1992), Akinólá (2014). This is a dialect spoken in communities such as Ondo, Ilé-Oluji,
The towns and villages are found in five Local Government Area of the State. The Local Government are: Ondo West, Ondo East, Ilé-Oluji/Okè-Igbó, Ìdànrè and Òdígò Local Government Areas. The Ondo dialect is well known in the Yoruba language and linguistics as there have been various scholars such as Awóbùlúyì, Bámgbóṣé, Adétúgbọ́, Adésuyan, Akinọlá who have carried out varying analyses on the structure and classification of the dialect.

The Concept of Yoruba Personal Names

A large number of works available on Yoruba personal names shows that scholars have done much on this particular aspect of Yoruba culture. Among the scholars, we have Adéoyè (1972), Òduyọyè (2001), Abíọdún (1999), Ogúnwálé (2016). Names are of great significance in Yoruba culture. It is the means through which a person is identified. Indeed, it is regarded as a very strong entity in the Yoruba society. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Vol 12, p. 814) in Abíọdún (1999) says “name is...used to refer to an individual entity, the name singles out this entity by directly pointing to it”. Personal names, therefore, mean the name by which an individual is known. It is the first name of an individual, different from the family name. For as important as personal names among Yoruba, there is virtually no individual without a name. This means that to be nameless in the society is to be without identity. Examples of such personal names are given in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akinọlá (Akin inú ọ́lá)</td>
<td>Valor of high-status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Şótǔndé (Oṣó tún dé)</td>
<td>The seer comes again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abíọdún (Abí ninú ọ́dún)</td>
<td>Child born during a festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awoyẹfá (Awo yẹ iřá)</td>
<td>A cult is suitable for Ifá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olúwakáyọdẹ</td>
<td>God brought joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akinkünmi</td>
<td>The valiant man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal names are ‘Orúkọ Àbísọ in the Yoruba context. Names are often based on social concepts like belief in God, family position, wealth, occupation, heroism, and joy (Abíọdún, 1999). According to Yoruba, these names directly influence the activities and attitudes of individuals living on the earth. Scholars like Ajibóyè (2011) in Fálójú and Fadairo (2017) noted that these categories of names are determined by the following factors:
there are names that have reference to the child in particular. The names given to a child here is basically on the values attached to some social concepts like joy or happiness which the arrival of a new-born baby has in the home. Notable among these names are:

Ọmọ tó ayọ → Ọmọ tó ayọ → Child is enough joy for me
Ayọdéle → Ayọ dé ilé mi → Joy enters the house
Akintáyọ → Akin tó ayọ fún mi → Valor is enough joy for me

The names that reflects the current events at birth in the child’s family. This includes the unique or overbearing family incident or situation as at the time of child’s birth. Among these we have:
Abídún → Abi nínú ọdún → Child born during a festival
Ọdúnayọ → Ọdún ayọ mi → My year of joy
Ọmọlajá → Ọmọ la ịga → Child resolves the quarrel
Abéjide → Ò bá eji dé → One who arrives during the raining season.

The names that shows that the child’s parents are wealthy and equally entitled to certain chieftaincy titles. The examples are:
Bólánlélé → Ọmọ bá ola ni ilé → A child that met wealth in the family
Kóláwọlẹ → Ọmọ kó ola wọ ilé → A child that brought wealth to the family
Oyèkànmí → Oyè kan èmi → It is my turn to be coronate.

Names that depicts the religion of the family. These are the personal names showing the divinity or deity worshipped in the family. This name usually reflects the actions performed by the deity as at the time of the childbirth. Examples of such deities are: Ifá, Ṣùn Sàngó, Ògún, Òya etc. in names like:
Ifáfùnmikè → Ifá fún èmi kẹ → Ifá gave me this to pet
Omíyalé → Omi ya ilé mi → God of streams visit the house
Sàngóbùnmí → Sàngó bun èmi → Sàngó (the god of thunder) gave me this

The personal names that are reflections of the family’s occupation. Occupation such as hunting, drumming, blacksmithing, barbing, etc in the following examples:
Àyángbayì → Àyàn gba iyi → A drummer received fame
Ọdẹyẹmí → Ọdẹ yẹ èmi → Hunting befits me
Alábédè → Òní abe tí dé → A barber has come
Personal Names and Phonological Variation Across Dialects

The variations observed in most Nigerian personal names could be traced to dialectal differences which may be because of variations in syntactic structure, word usage, word forms, tone pattern, aspiration, nasalization, as well as morphemic and phonemic transpositions (Odúyọyè (2001), Osuala, (2010)). In the actual sense, some names-words are manifestations of regional dialects. For example, Elú-, Omi- names majorly belong to the people of Ife in name like:

1  a  Omisoore → Omi ṣe oore → ‘Water did a good deed’
   b  Omíṣadé → Omi ṣe adé → ‘Water made a crown’
   c  Omitólá → Omi tó ọlá → ‘Water is enough for a thing of honor’

Names like Odù-, Oṣó- are almost all from Ìjèbú and Ègbá people in examples such as:

2  a  Odùyọyè → Odù yọ oyè → ‘The oracle rejoices at a title’
   b  Odúsanyà → Odu san iyà → ‘Oracle avenges an injury’
   c  Odùbẹlà → Odù bẹ ẹlà → ‘The oracle plead with the Lord of being’

3  a  Ṣówándé → Oṣó wá mi dé → ‘A seer came to look for me’
   b  Ṣóyínká → Oṣó yí mi ká → ‘Seer surround me’
   c  Kóleọsọ → Kó ilé oṣó → ‘Build the house of a seer’

Ifá personal names among Ìjèṣà and Ondó people in names like:

4  a  Fásehùn → Ifá éè ohùn → ‘Ifa does not refuse an utterance’
   b  Fábùlújé → Ifá éè ba ùlú jé → ‘Ifa does not ruin a city’
   c  Fágbùlú → Ifá gba ùlú → ‘Ifa take possession of the town’

Ọya personal names among Òfà speaking communities like Òfà are noted in names like:

5  a  Abóyarìn → A bà Ọya rin → ‘One who walk with Niger’
   b  Abóyadè → A bà Ọya dé → ‘One who arrives with the Niger’
   c  Oyáwoyè → Ọya wọ oyè → ‘The Niger assumes a title’
The impacts of language variations are noticeable in the personal names given above. This further attests that names are like the one lens that clearly reflects all the people’s live and language being basic to human identities (Ogúnwálé (2016)).

**Morpho-Syntactic Analysis of Ondo Personal Names**

Many of the Ondo personal names derived through de-sententialization process. Among the sentences are simple sentences, compound sentences, and negative sentences. Ondo speaking communities, like other speakers of Yoruba dialects, are mindful of the names they give to their children. The joy connected with the arrival of a newly born child and the family fortunes at the time of childbirth, alongside the family religion and occupation, are some of the social factors that depict child names in Ondo communities. Hence, they carefully construct the names from the sentences that are favorable in meaning. Such names constructed from sentences that denote joy, pleasantness, fortunes, successes, etc. It is thereafter that certain grammatical process(s) like deletion of some lexical categories involved in the derivation take place to reduce the length of the derived names.

Simple Sentence: A simple sentence has just one main thought expressed in one independent clause. It is a sentence that consists of single verb. We have examples of the following personal names in Ondo dialect.

6 a  Akẹn ó kún mi → Akinkúnmi → ‘A valiant supports me’
Valiant HTS support me
b Ọlọ́run ó fẹ́ràn mi → Ọlọ́hunfẹ́rànmi → ‘God loves me’
God HTS love me
c Adé ó  ghí ulí → Adéghúlí → ‘Crown is at home’
Adé HTS be home

In example (6a & b), the HTS is deleted before the contraction for the derivation of the personal names. A little additional process occurred in example (6c); the HTS ‘ó’ alongside with the vowel of the verb ‘ghí’ ‘be’ deleted. The tone of the deleted vowel is, however, borne by the initial vowel of the following noun ‘ulí’ ‘house’ after which contraction follows to derive Adéghúlí ‘personal name’.

It is important to note here again some personal names in the Ondo dialect allow for the clipping of the initial vowel while maintaining their meaning. See the examples given below.
A Morpho-Syntactic Analysis of Personal Names in Ondo

7 a  Fá  è è sé ohùn → Fásehùn → ‘Ifá does not refuse utterance’
   Ifá TNS NEG refuse utterance
b  Fá  gba ùlú → Fágbùlú → ‘Ifá saves a city’
   Ifá saves city
c  Ọlọ̀on gbọ̀ ti emi → Ọlọ̀ongbọ̀tèmi → Lọ̀ng bọ̀tèmi → God answered me
   God answer PREP me

Another form of clipping in Ondo personal names is the clipping of the subject NPs. It is possible in the Ondo dialect to have NPs clipping in example (7c) above. We will have the name ‘Gbọ̀tèmi’ → ‘Answered me’

The name ‘Gótèmi’ (answered me) is an acceptable derived personal name in Ondo communities. This is possible because the names are long enough to give room for the clipping process. See the example (7d & e) below.

d  Adé wá ilé → Adewálé → Walé
   ₋NP(s) Wale

e Ọláwùmi → Ọláwùmí → ₋NP(s) Wùmí

There are also clipping of verb phrase and prepositional phrase in Ondo personal names as in the examples in (8 & 9).

8 a  Bólá wá → Bóláwá → Bólá
   Bólá ₋VP
b  Kólá wọlé → Kóláwọlé → Kólá
   Kólá ₋VP
9 a  Funmi ni ólá → Fümnilólá → Funmi
   Funmi ₋PREP
b  Timi ni èyin → Timíleyin → Timi
   Timi ₋PREP

A close look at the personal names in the examples above would give us an understanding as to why some of these names undergo such clipping in the Ondo dialect. This is because some of the names are morphologically lengthy which gives room for clipping to occur in an environment where the derived name will be meaningful.

Compound Sentence: There are personal names derived from multiple verbs in the Ondo dialect as in the following examples:
The personal names in (10a-c) were derived from multiple verbs where we have the HTS (ó) in the underlying structure deleted.

Negative Sentences: there are personal names derived from negative clauses in the Ondo dialect. These include:

11 a  Aken è è kú gbé → Akínkùgbé → ‘Valiant men do not die in vain’
Valiant TNS NEG die vain
b  Awo è è se ikà → Awósìkà → ‘cult did not do evil’
Cult TNS NEG do evil
c  Aken è è ba ẹbí jẹ → Akibẹbjẹ → ‘Valiant does not destroy the family’
Valiant TNS NEG destroy family
d  Aken è è bó ohùn → Akínbóhùn → ‘A valiant man does not give up’
Valiant TNS NEG give up
c  Aken è è dójú ẹlì mi → Akündójútimi → ‘A valiant does not put me to shame’
Valiant TNS NEG put to same

Conclusion

The study has been able to show clearly that Ondo personal names are not just ordinarily constructed. The cultural richness in the Ondo dialect reflected in their personal names. Having done justice by exposing the morpho-syntactic analysis of personal names in the Ondo dialect, the study revealed that personal names in Ondo derived morphologically through de-sententialization process, derivable from the simple basic sentence, compound sentence, and negative construction. The study also shows that Ondo personal names are of linguistic value. It reflects the belief of the people in the supremacy of
In addition to the importance of God (god) as well as in some other social concepts like joy, happiness, valor, wealth, etc.

**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HTS</td>
<td>High Tone Syllable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNS</td>
<td>Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREP</td>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Noun Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Verb Phrase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**


