

A Morpho-Syntactic Analysis of Personal Names in Òndó

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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 Òndó dialect. By this we mean an attempt is made to explain the morpho-syntactic analysis of personal names in Òndó. Òndó dialect spoken in communities such as Ilẹ̀-Oluji, Òndó, Ìdànrè, Ajué, Òdìgbó, igburowó, etc. The data collected were from the native speakers through interviews on the personal names. The analyses reflect that Òndó'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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Introduction

Naming a child is an integral part of culture that is taken seriously among the Yorùbá. The volume of work available on personal names clearly shows that names not just given randomly to a child but with purpose and reference to the family features at the time of childbirth. This further attests to the common saying that, *ilé là ñ wò kí a tó sọ ọmọ lórúkọ* (the home situation is keenly observed before a child is given a name) (Ogúnwálé, 2016). Thus name-bearing among Yorùbás surpasses simple marks of identification, it is usually given with caution and with full consideration regarding culture, belief, mood, or circumstances surrounding the child's birth. Ògúnwálé

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

YPSs 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 Oṅdó 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 Oṅdó 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 Oṅdó-speaking communities. The analysis shows that personal names in Oṅdó morphologically derived through de-sententialization process while the syntactic structure reveals that most of the personal names in Oṅdó 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 Oṅdó 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 Oṅdó

Oṅdó is grouped under the South-East Yorùbá (Awóbùlúyì 1992), Akinṣọ́lá (2014). This is a dialect spoken in communities such as Oṅdó, Ilẹ̀-Oluji,

Ìdànrè, Ìgbúrowò, Ajùé, Òdìgbó, Òkè-Igbó, Bólórudúró etc. The towns and villages are found in five Local Government Area of the State. The Local Government are: Oñdó West, Oñdó East, Ilè-Oluji/Òkè-Igbó, Ìdànrè and Òdìgbó Local Government Areas. The Oñdó dialect is well known in the Yorùbá language and linguistics as there have been various scholars such as Awóbùlúyì, Bámgbòsé, Adétùgbó, Adésuyan, Akinolá who have carried out varying analyses on the structure and classification of the dialect.

The Concept of Yorùbá Personal Names

A large number of works available on Yorùbá personal names shows that scholars have done much on this particular aspect of Yorùbá culture. Among the scholars, we have Adéoyè (1972), Òdúyoyè (2001), Abíódún (1999), Ogúnwálé (2016). Names are of great significance in Yorùbá culture. It is the means through which a person is identified. Indeed, it is regarded as a very strong entity in the Yorùbá society. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Vol 12, p. 814) in Abíódún (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 Yorùbá, 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:

Name	Meaning
Akinolá (Akin inú olá)	Valor of high-status
Şótúndé (Oşó tún dé)	The seer comes again
Abíódún (Abí ninú ođún)	Child born during a festival
Awoyefá (Awo ye ifá)	A cult is suitable for Ifá
Olúwakáyòdé	God brought joy
Akínkúnmi	The valiant man

Personal names are ‘Orúko Àbiso in the Yorùbá context. Names are often based on social concepts like belief in God, family position, wealth, occupation, heroism, and joy (Abíódún, 1999). According to Yorùbá, these names directly influence the activities and attitudes of individuals living on the earth. Scholars like Ajíbóyè (2011) in Fálójú and Fadairo (2017) noted that these categories of names are determined by the following factors:

- (a) 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 newborn baby has in the home. Notable among these names are:
 Ọmọ́táyò → Ọmọ́ tó ayò → Child is enough joy for me
 Ayòdélé → Ayò dé ilé mi → Joy enters the house
 Akíntáyò → Akin tó ayò fún mi → Valor is enough joy for me
- (b) 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:
 Abíódún → Abi ní nínú ọ́dún → Child born during a festival
 Ọ́dúnayò → Ọ́dún ayò mi → My year of joy
 Ọmọ́lájá → Ọmọ́ la ìjá → Child resolves the quarrel
 Abéjídé → Ó bá eji dé → One who arrives during the raining season.
- (c) The names that shows that the child's parents are wealthy and equally entitled to certain chieftaincy titles. The examples are:
 Bọ́láńlé → Ọmọ́ bá ọ́lá ní ilé → A child that met wealth in the family
 Kọ́láwọ́lé → Ọmọ́ kó ọ́lá wọ́ ilé → A child that brought wealth to the family
 Oyé̀kànmí → Oyé̀ kan èmi → It is my turn to be coronate.
- (d) 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, Ọ̀ṣun Sàngó, Ọ̀gún, Ọ̀ya etc. in names like:
 Ifáfúnmiké → Ifá fún èmi ké → Ifá gave me this to pet
 Omíyalé → Omi ya ilé mi → God of streams visit the house
 Sàngóbùnmi → Sàngó bun èmi → Sàngó (the god of thunder) gave me this
- (e) 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 iyì → A drummer received fame
 Ọ̀ḍeyemí → Ọ̀ḍe yẹ̀ èmi → Hunting befits me
 Alá̀bẹ̀dé → Oní abẹ̀ ti 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 (Odúyoyè (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 Ifè in name like:

- 1
 - a Omisoore → Omi še oore → ‘Water did a good deed’
 - b Omişadé → Omi še adé → ‘Water made a crown
 - c Omítólá → Omi tó ọlá → ‘Water is enough for a thing of honor

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

- 2
 - a Odúyoyè → Odu yọ oyè → ‘The oracle rejoices at a title’
 - b Odùsànyà → Odu san iyà → ‘Oracle avenges an injury’
 - c Odùbèlà → Odu bè èlà → ‘The oracle plead with the Lord of being’
- 3
 - a Şówándé → Oşó wá mi dé → ‘A seer came to look for me’
 - b Şóyínká → Oşó yí mi ká → ‘Seer surround me’
 - c Kóléoşó → Kọ ilé oşó → ‘Build the house of a seer’

Ifá personal names among Ìjèşà and Oñdó people in names like:

- 4
 - a Fásèhùn → Ifá èè sé ohùn → ‘Ifa does not refuse an utterance’
 - b Fábùlújé → Ifá èè ba ùlú jé → ‘Ifá does not ruin a city’
 - c Fágbulú → Ifá gba ùlú → ‘Ifa take possession of the town’

Oya personal names among Ìbòlọ speaking communities like Òfà are noted in names like:

- 5
 - a Abóyarìn → A bá Oya rìn → ‘One who walk with Niger’
 - b Abóyadé → A bá Oya dé → ‘One who arrives with the Niger’
 - c Oyáwoyè → Oya 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 Òndó Personal Names

Many of the Òndó personal names derived through de-sententialization process. Among the sentences are simple sentences, compound sentences, and negative sentences. Òndó speaking communities, like other speakers of Yorùbá 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 Òndó 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 Òndó dialect.

- 6 a Akẹ̀n ó kún mi → Akinkúnmi → 'A valiant supports me'
Valiant HTS support me
- b Ọ̀lórún ó fẹ̀ràn mi → Ọ̀lọ̀hunfẹ̀rànmi → '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 Òndó dialect allow for the clipping of the initial vowel while maintaining their meaning. See the examples given below.

- 7 a Fá é è sé ohùn → Fásehùn → ‘Ifá does not refused utterance’
Ifá TNS NEG refuse utterance
- b Fá gba ùlú → Fágbùlú → ‘Ifá saves a city’
Ifá saves city
- c Ọlọ̀ọ̀n gbó ti emi → Ọlọ̀ọ̀ngbótẹ̀mi → Lóọ̀ng
bótẹ̀mi → God answered me
God answer PREP me

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

The name ‘Gótẹ̀mi’ (answered me) is an acceptable derived personal name in Oñdó 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 Ọláfùmì → Ọláfùmí → ∅NP(s) Wùmí

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

- 8 a Bọ́lá wá → Bọ́láwá → Bọ́lá
Bọ́lá ∅VP
- b Kọ́lá wọ́lé → Kọ́láwọ́lé → Kọ́lá
Kọ́lá ∅VP
- 9 a Fúnmi ní ọ́lá → Fúnmiọ́lá → Fúnmi
Fúnmi ∅PREP
- b Tími ní èyìn → Tímiẹ̀yìn → Tími
Tími ∅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 Oñdó 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 Oñdó dialect as in the following examples:

- 10 a Olúwa ó gbé mi ga → Olúwagbémi ga → ‘personal name’
Lord HTS carry me high
‘Lord lifted me high’
- b Ola ó ghí ulí dè mí → Olághúlídèmi → ‘personal name’
Ola, HTS be house await me
‘Wealthy awaits me at home’
- c Ògún ó wù mí ju → Ògúnwùmíju → ‘personal name’
Ògún HTS like me much
‘The god of iron I like much’

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 Oñdó dialect. These include:

- 11 a Akẹ́n é è kù gbé → Akínkùgbé → ‘Valiant men do not die in vain’
Valiant TNS NEG die vain
- b Awo é è se ikà → Awósikà → ‘cult did not do evil’
Cult TNS NEG do evil
- c Akẹ́n é è ba ẹbí jé → Akíbebíjé → ‘Valiant does not destroy the family’
Valiant TNS NEG destroy family
- d Akẹ́n é è bó ohùn → Akínbohùn → ‘A valiant man does not give up’
Valiant TNS NEG give up
- c Akẹ́n é è dójú tí mí → Akíndójútímí → ‘A valiant does not put me to shame’
Valiant TNS NEG put to same

Conclusion

The study has been able to show clearly that Oñdó personal names are not just ordinarily constructed. The cultural richness in the Oñdó dialect reflected in their personal names. Having done justice by exposing the morpho-syntactic analysis of personal names in the Oñdó dialect, the study revealed that personal names in Oñdó derived morphologically through de-sententialization process, derivable from the simple basic sentence, compound sentence, and negative construction. The study also shows that Oñdó personal names are of linguistic value. It reflects the belief of the people in the supremacy of

God (god) as well as in some other social concepts like joy, happiness, valor, wealth, etc.

List of Abbreviations

HTS	High Tone Syllable
TNS	Tense
NEG	Negative
PREP	Prepositional Phrase
NP	Noun Phrase
VP	Verb Phrase

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