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Explicating the Concept of Blending, Clipping and Echoism as Word Formation Processes in Bole Language

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Abstract

The paper investigates a range of existing morphological patterns that cannot be easily segmented into two meaningful parts. The research deploys the use of both primary 'introspective' and secondary data through direct elicitation and recording of connected speech to generate data. Interview and conversation with randomly selected focused groups also features in the field. Thus, the research identified words that are created through echoic sounds, blends and clipped items by only providing their orthographic representation and indicates the primary and secondary lexical items using English gloss accompanying the analysis for easy understanding. The research adopts Haspelmath and Sims' (2010) Word-Based Theory of Morphological Analysis, where non concatenative patterns are described quite naturally and emphasizes the fundamental significance of the word. This study therefore examines the structure of some of the new complex lexical items, created from existing simple ones and found as sources of forming new words into the language. The research found that some non-concatenative patterns of different morphological forms exist in Bole language and function in different contexts. It also reveals that many words created through blending, echoism and clipping in Bole are mostly nouns.

Key Words: Concatenation, Lexical items, Introspective' elicitation

Introduction

As native speakers, every day one recognizes and understands how new words are formed. New words can be created without only arranging string of words but through distorting their original form. Thus, through non-Concatenative processes like Echoism, clipping and blending. Non-Concatenation is a process that involves derivation that does not add anything on the base. Matthews (1991) defines word-formation as the branch of morphology which deals with the relations between a complex lexeme and a simple(r) lexeme (p, 36) Matthews further categorises morphology into: lexical and inflectional and lexical morphology is subdivided into compounding/composition and derivation. Morphology is the study of word

formation, including the ways new words are coined in the languages of the world (lexical), and how words vary depending on how they are used in sentences (inflectional). Many linguists use the term word formation as lexeme formation, but this usage can be confusing, as all of morphology is sometimes referred to in a larger sense as 'word formation'. Derivational morphology is the process of changing the word-class of the base i.e. nouns can be derived from verbs, adjectives from nouns, and so on. One frequent characteristic of derivation is creating new words for new concepts, and since we have a greater need for naming diverse nominal concepts, languages generally have more means for deriving nouns than for deriving verbs and adjectives (Bauer 2002 in Haspelmath and Sims 2010 p, 87).

This paper is guided by the following objectives: To identify different types of echoic, clipped and blended forms and explain the word formation processes used in Bole. It also seeks to explain the function of echoic, clipped and blended forms in phrases and sentences in Bole language.

The following also are the research questions that drive the paper: What types of echoic clipped and blended forms are found and how they are formed in the Bole language? Do the morphological forms function in Bole language in different contexts?

Literature Review

Relevant literatures are reviewed with the view to establishing the theoretical base and the gaps needed to be filled by this paper.

Hamans, C. (2020) studies the difference between bends and clipped compounds and concludes that there is an essential formal difference between blends and clipped compounds, stub compounds. Stub compounds are compounds of two clipped lexemes. Some of these clipped lexemes are already free morphemes. Being compounds stub compounds have a right-hand head and exhibit the compound stress rule. Blends are also concatenations of parts of two source words. However, blends are composed of the initial or left-hand part of the first source word and the final or right-hand part of the second source word. The paper also posits that blends also exhibit a formal right-hand head, which suggests that blending is a form of compounding. However, the compound stress rule does not apply to blends. Blends form a single phonological word, which is a copy of the prosodic and syllabic properties of the second source word. Therefore, blends can best be described as a borderline or intermediary case between compounds and simpler words, especially in the case of blends derived from a monomorphemic second source word.

Aronoff and Fudeman (2011) define Morphology as the mental system involved in word formation and a branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure and how they are formed (p. 36). It is the study of

structure and context of words. The base of a morphologically complex word is the element to which a morphological operation applies, while for Matthews (1991), it is the branch of linguistics theory that studies the forms of words (p. 14). Base modification or stem alternation is a range of morphological patterns that exists and cannot be segmented into two meaningful parts.

In addition, Aronoff and Fudeman (2011) study word formation and discuss different processes of derivation and introduce a key notion of the morpheme, and present some basic beliefs and principles that will help to undertake morphological analysis. The study establishes that derivation forms complex lexemes, which may or may not be stored in the speaker's mental lexicon. They also examine some verbal derivational suffixes and reveal that blends occur in several languages. Their findings reveal that the commonest and only derivatives of blending are nouns with particular examples in English and Hebrew languages. This is directly in tandem to our quest in exploring the occurrence complex lexemes such as blended words in Bole.

Yule (2010) studies word formation and identifies several processes like: blending, clipping, backformation, conversion among others. The study examines the differences between derivational and inflectional morphemes and demonstrates the operation of derivational affixes in forming new words into English language. The study reveals that there are some words in language with sound that seem to 'echo' the sounds of objects or activities and hence seem to have a less arbitrary connection. These words are onomatopoeic and are relatively rare in human language (p, 33). He further defines Clipping as the formation of words whose sounds suggest their meaning; it occurs when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form usually used in casual speech (cf. 56). This has also provided us with a background in investigating the rare prevalence of echoism in Bole and find out the few ones that exist and which form the lexical inventory in the language.

Similarly, Yule (1996) examines word formation processes and describes them as affixes, acronym, backformation, borrowing, blending, coinage, compounding, clipping and conversion". He identifies coinage as one of least common processes of word formation in English as it deals with the invention of totally new terms. He provides some examples of newly invented words as a result of trade names and company products such as: *aspirin, nylon* and *zipper*. Other examples also include: *Kleenex*, *Teflon,* and *Xerox*. Several world languages were used to cite practical examples including some Nigerian languages that are related to Bole.

Haspelmath and Sims (2010) examine morphology in a wide variety of non-concatenative patterns which involves base modification. The study reveals that non-concatenative morphological processes are similar to concatenative processes in having restrictions that are equivalent to combinatory potential. The research argues that word-based model allows for

a more straightforward and provides more empirically satisfactory explanation of both non-concatenative patterns and issues of analysis, such as back-formation and cross-formation. The study also identifies Word-Based Model as capable of describing many kinds of morphological patterns that are not found in the world's languages. This work is very relevant to this research as it captures the morphological description in focus and provides the needed explanation of the model of approach which we adopted in this research.

Similarly, Haspelmath and Sims (2010), posit that "one important class of non-concatenative patterns is base modification (or stem modification/alternation). They further add that it is a collective term for morphological patterns in which the shape of the base is changed without adding segmentable material" (p. 35). These notions have gone a long way in shaping our understanding that Bole morphology involves some operations that that create grammatical words by altering the base and without adding any morpheme.

Lieber (2009) investigates the different types of rules that can be used in forming new lexemes in the languages of the world. The study finds out other types of affixes known as infixes and circumfixes, and new processes like internal stem change (ablaut, umlaut, and consonant mutation). He describes vowel changes: ablaut and umlaut with illustrated examples of some words where internal vowels change is responsible for formation of singular/plural pairs in English, for example: *foot ~ feet* or *goose ~ geese*. English verbs like: *sing* (past *sang*, participle. *sung*) or *sit* (past and past participle. *sat*. This study will help this work for the fact that it deals with vowel change.

Plag (2003) studies and describes word formation in English. The research discusses both concatenative and non-concatenative ways of forming morphologically complex words. He describes concatenation as the linking together bases and affixes as in a chain, while non-concatenation involves derivation that does not add anything on bases. The major finding of the research demonstrates several cases of non-concatenation to include conversion, clipping, blends, acronyms and abbreviation. The research would be of great help as it is directly related to this research, though in different languages.

Abubakar (2001) examines a comprehensive approach to the description of Hausa morphological processes such as: subtraction, clipping, blends, zero derivation, acronyms, hypocorism and word manufacturing. The study formulates rules to account for predictable processes of noun – plural formation. The study also finds that word formation is divided into two smaller sub-fields, one of which is concerned with the processes of derivation and the other compounding. In order to form a word or inflect it, one of the three morphological processes namely, -a- affixation, -b- reduplication and –c-

modification is used. For him, Clipping may be seen as another word coining by shortening the base, while still retaining the same meaning and still being a member of the same form or class (Abubakar, 2001, p. 15). The research is of great importance because it provides a guide as Hausa and Bole almost share common grammar.

According to Fromkin and Rodman (1998), "two words may be combined to produce blends." Blends are similar to compounds, but parts of the words combined are deleted and so they are less than compounds. Examples of words formed through blending process in English include: *Brunch*: from breakfast and lunch, *Motel*: from motor and hotel, *Chunnel*: from channel and tunnel, *Spork*: from spoon and fork, *Urinalysis*: from urine and analysis (p. 89). Others include: *Inex*: from Interior and Exterior. Blending on the other hand is a morphological process that involves blending of two or more lexemes to form a new word which does not show transparent analysis into morphs (Abubakar 2001). It involves taking two or more conjoined words, removing parts of each, and joining the residues together to create a new word whose form and their meaning are taken from the source words (p. 17). This would also provide insight on how Bole blends two independent words to create another shape of structure and meaning.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Haspelmath and Sims' (2010) Word-Based Theory where both concatenative and non-concatenative morphological patterns are described quite naturally. The theory emphasizes the fundamental significance of the word and the relationship between complex words is captured not by splitting them up into parts. It captures the processes of base modification and allows morphological rules of virtually any type that exist in any language, and morphological rules that effect a wide variety of changes on bases. The word-based theory is more empirically adequate non-restrictive and satisfactory, favourable and more general. It is capable of describing many kinds of morphological patterns that are not found in the world's languages including our concern in this research - that is, *Base Modification'*. Many non-concatenative patterns historically began as phonological patterns which involves derivation that does not add anything on the base. (The reader may notice that most of the discussions on base modification will be described using terms from phonology.) For example, the Bole noun *gorzo* male sg, undergoes phonological processes of vowel change in the first syllable $o \rightarrow u$ and palatalisation in the second syllable $z \rightarrow /dʒ/$ to derive a complex word *gurjawi /gurdʒawi/* male pl. In the singular form, *nonu,* it is infixed to create a plural form *nonne* with vowel changes $u \rightarrow e$ on the final syllable. This of course, affected the stem-final vowel, but did not affect the class. While the word-based model can describe many morphological patterns that do not exist

in natural languages, including Pig Latin-type long distance movement of sounds, perhaps this is not a problem if those patterns would never arise by historical processes.

The study of morphology deals with word formation and inflection (i.e. lexical and inflectional morphology). Word formation is subdivided into two smaller sub-fields, one of which is concerned with the process of derivation and the other compounding. In order to form a word or inflect it, one of the three morphological processes, namely; affixation, reduplication and modification is used. Abubakar (2001) also establishes the following rules as possible inputs and their corresponding outputs in Hausa morphology:

Noun	→	Noun
Verb	→	Noun
Adjective	→	Noun
Noun	→	Verb
Adjective	→	Verb
Noun	→	Adjective
Verb	→	Adjective

The perspectives of (Abubakar 2001) also helps in generating new complex lexical items as the input and output products of morphophonological operations on the base. The word based theory is found to be appropriate in capturing and describing lexical items that undergo modifications/alternations that occur on bases. Similarly, the theory can help the research towards important discoveries of word formation in the language. It might lead to raise questions we might not have raised, and seek data we might not have considered. In addition, the theory can help this research see connections that might not be made, as well as pinpoint problems that might have been overlooked (p. 23).

Methods of Data Collection

This research uses mixed methodology which involves direct elicitation, and recording of connected speech. Similarly, the researcher asked for translations of unfamiliar words or sentences in the language to get the words correctly. Other methods employed, include: Fieldwork at the research area and listening of audio materials (CD and cassettes) in Bolewa language from Gombe Media Corporation (Radio). "With the modern accessibility of audio and video recording devices, speech can now be recorded from a variety of genres, including conversation" (Marianne in Newman & Ratliff 2001). Similarly, relevant printed materials were used as additional secondary sources (p. 36). The researcher's intuition being a native speaker too, is an additional primary source of data. These activities are strictly concerned with Gaɗam/Gombe dialect only.

Discussion

This section present and analyse the data drawn from Gaɗam/Gombe dialect to find the categories of words formed through the processes and discuss the resultant changes the bases undergo and ascertain the extent at which blends, clips and echoic words are created in Bole. English gloss will accompany each element and where there is need for interlinear glossing would be provided.

Blending in Bolewa

Blending deals with bringing together, two or more lexemes to form a new word. It is a common process of word formation in English. Blends are formed by combining parts of more than one word to arrive at a new word.

However, proper/personal names (noun) in Bole with kin qualifiers are often blended as in the following examples:

			Primary		Secondary
a.	i	Masculine	Yaya Abdulmalik	→	yaamáali
			Yaya Madaki	→	yaadaaki
			Yaya Mamúda	→	yaamúda

The operations involved in blending of compound words (personal names) are the clipping of the first syllable in (a) *yay*a, the two initial syllables in *Abdul*malik and the first syllable in *ma*daki respectively. Other examples include:

ii		Yaya Usman	→	yaaussu
		Yaya Jibrin	→	yaajibbo
		Yaya Ibrahim	→	yaa'ibbo
		Yaya Idirisa	→	yáadísa

The operation in the above data (a.ii) differs in the second constituent of the primary element by removing only the final syllable of the structure *(man)* in Usman and *(rin)* in Jibrin. Thus become *ussu*, *jibbo*.

b.	Feminine	Adda Hajara	→	daahajo
		Adda Halima	→	daahali,
		Adda Ladi	→	daaladi
		Adda Jumme	→	daajumme
		Adda fatima	→	daapatu

<div align="center">

Dada Altine   →   daaalti

Dada maryamu   →   daamaryo

</div>

The operation in 4b here is the same as in 4a, above.

The product of blends in this case is a noun to noun derivation of both genders. The derived elements are nativised and appear to be shorter and simpler versions than their original compound forms. While all the first constituent of the compound words experienced similar operation in their first syllables, only the second syllables of the primary constituent undergo clipping in order to create a blended structure. The most reoccurring rule in this case is the dropping (deletion) of the first syllable of the kin words. Hence it may be regarded as the general rule in this regard. Another example may include **Bíwà:** a blend of Bolewa towns (i.e. Biiri and Wawa) in the defunct Bíwà LGA in Gombe State.

Clipping in Bole

Clipping is another way of coining words by shortening the root/stem while retaining the same meaning and still remain a member of the same form or class. For practical realities, two types of clipping are identified in Bole, namely; back clipping and front clipping and it appears that there are more cases of back clipping than front clipping in the language. The data here shows that there are a number of clipped forms in Bole language. All these forms are categorized into different word classes. Back clipping and front clipping are found to be the only prevalent types of clipping in Bolewa language. Examples illustrated below:

Back-Clipping: This is the shortening of one or more syllable depending on the syllable structure of a word. Examples below illustrate, with the clipped syllables being italicised.

Stem		Derived	Gloss
tántanì	→	tánì	how? 'tan' only used among age peers
kélè ga sátò	→	sátò	good morning
ée lò ?	→	lò ?	Who?
Muhammadu	→	Hámmàdu	male proper name
úsmánu	→	mánu	male proper name
Abdulhamidu	→	Mídù	male proper name
Abdulmalik	→	Máliko	male proper name

Since morphology deals with structure, we can understand from the data above that the derived elements differ only from the stem in their structure and still maintain their original semantic function and class. The derived elements in this

fashion take high tone on the first syllable of original form to their initial syllable. That is to say, all the derived forms also begin with high tone.

Front Clipping: This is a direct opposite of back clipping where the shortening occur on the final syllable (s)**.** Examples below illustrate with the shortened form being italicised:

i. jámmátè   →   jám   again

shímmâkì   →   shím   little

kélè ga sátò   →   kélè   good morning

lóə ?   →   lò ?   Who?

Beyond lexical items, some personal names undergo clipping, in which Arabic based names are nativised in Bole as can be seen below:

ii.

Base		**Derived**	**Gloss**
Ibrahim	→	Búre	male proper name
Abubakar	→	Búkko	" " "
Jibrin	→	Jíbbo	" " "
idríisa	→	íidi	" " "

It is important to note that clipped forms of personal proper names in (ii) above are for simplification of speech in Bolewa and are used by the same social class of people strictly (i.e. sociolect).

The following clipped forms in (iii) are used in Bolewa in place of the original forms, however, it is used as kin qualifier to a proper noun as in *bamusa* instead of *Baba Musa, ya iidi* instead of *yaya idriisa*. Etc.

iii.

Base		**Derived**	**Gloss**
bába	→	bá	father
dáda	→	dá	elder sister
yáya	→	yá	elder brother
ádda	→	dá	elder sister

lò? Is an interrogative pronoun and appears in front and back clipping because both *ée* lò? and lóə? are acceptable forms in Gaɗam/Gombe dialect. They mean

the same interrogative pronoun (Who?) in the language. It is a matter of sociolectal variation.

Echoism in Bole

Echoism in Bole is a product of sounds that denotes their meaning; it can be either natural or artificial. Sounds in this language generate their name through their sounds, physical outlook; shapes and motion. In this research, we have therefore described the words based on those classifications.

Words Based on their Natural Sounds

	Word	**Class**	**Gloss**
i,	ráarà	noun	cry
	túfì	noun	spit
	pélpélì	noun	air
	réeriyò	noun	sieve
	gĩriiɗì;	noun	frightening

sound made using stick, finger and calabash to caution a child.

	úmpà	noun	nishi
	ngórù	noun	snoring
	ɓóorà	noun	diarrhea
	ɓòlà	noun	breaking
	áawè	noun	cat
	kwáarà	noun	cricket
	ngáakì	noun	crow
	míl'yíntín	adjective	very tiny

The structure of the following onomatopoeic words in 4.1, a, ii, below appear to be reduplicative.

ii,	zúrún zúnkù	noun	ground hornbill *bucorvus* (bultu)
	sháshshâlà	noun	cattle egret
	tolotolo	noun	turkey
	táttáliya	noun	rain ice block

Some of the echoic sounds denoting names of birds are shown below:

iii.	kúuyí gájà	noun	cock crow
	ngôrɗǒokû	noun	grey heron *ardeacinerea* (zalɓe)

Some human activities such as snoring (*ngórù*) imitate their referents, and most birds and some insects derive their names through echoism as seen above. Only nouns appear to be more prevalent in this case.

Words Derived based on their Physical Outlook/Shape

	Word	Class	Gloss
i,	páali	noun	lake
	dínkirî	noun	hill
	bómbîlà	noun	turban crown
	kùrèɗì	noun	snake
	mí'yĩlĕ	noun	thunder flashes

The structure of the following derivands in 2.1.b, ii, below appears reduplicative.

	Word	Class	Gloss
ii,	ódò ódò	noun	kidney
	kókkìɗòk	adjective	hard/stiff
	súlsúl	adjective	smooth

The words in this category in Bole language seem to have a less arbitrary connection. *ódò* means beans, *kûrêdì* means snake, so its referent denote roundness beans shape (kidney). Both nouns and adjectives are derived here.

Words Derived Based on their Physical Motion

Words in this paradigm are derived based on the movement (motion) of the referents, either as a result of the droplets of ice in the rain, frog movement (jump) and busy-body and unstable nature of human movement.

Word	Class	Gloss
dìndì	noun	frog
tôtól-´tôtól	noun	unstable/busy-body
dídĩyà	noun	moving up and down
téetéetè	noun	toddling

Echoism as word formation occurs in Bole in which words in their physical outlook: (shapes), sounds and motion suggest their meanings. These words function as either Adjectives or Nouns. In case of noun echoic words, their referents can be both animate and inanimate objects. Most echoic words in Bole are in their base form, and most if not all echoic nouns in the language have high tone in their first syllable. However, some of the words formed through this process appear to be reduplicative. They are not a product of other roots, they are

stems, but they can undergo morphological operations to derive another lexeme, eg: *ɓóorà* diarrhea (noun) when '*wo'* is suffixed it becomes → *ɓóorúwo* (verb; past tense). Most birds and insects derive their names through this process n Bole language, Example: zûrùn-zúnkù: ground hornbill *bucorvus* (Bultu in Hausa), however, adjectives and nouns are the commonest derivands.

Conclusion

This study investigates non concatenative word formation processes; echoism, clipping and blending in Bole language. Each of the three processes were discussed with relevant examples from the available data in the language. Echoism Clipping and blending as shown in the study have been part of the processes of word formation in the language. The research established that it is often easier to describe non-concatenative patterns as results of processes or operations that apply to a base form. The research also found that various forms of echoism clipping and blending are prevalent in the language. These include; verbal clipping, noun clipping, adjectival clipping and compound clipping. Moreover, all the clipped forms in Bole are traced based on the modern day – to – day use of the language among speakers and especially on radio programmes. The research also conclude that the derived clipped forms differ only from the stem in their structure and still maintain their original semantic function and class. The research also concludes that both front and back clipping operates in the language. In Bole language, blending is described as a combination of two or more clipped words to create a new one; it is productive in simplifying proper names by the native speakers. The operations in blending involved clipping of the of the first syllables of compound words (personal names in deriving proper names of male gender and clipping of the final syllable in deriving female gender. It appears to be the only instance of blending process that is actively used to refer to people names in the day to day communication among the natives. The study concludes that some human activities imitate their referents, and most birds and some insects derive their names through echoism. While adjectives have been accounted for as part of echoism, nouns appear to be more prevalent in the language. Similarly, echoism was found to have derived words based on their natural sounds, shape and motion in forming words in Bolewa language.

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