

Garba, Patience Ashesla

Abstract

The article is a linguistic study that analyzes Eggon personal names. The study of personal names is common in most languages around the world. However, nothing has been done on a description of Eggon names. There is a dictionary of Eggon names which only lists the names and their meanings without any linguistic information whatsoever on the names. This necessitates the present study to fill the existing gap. It aims at exploring the sources, morphological, and syntactic structures of Eggon personal names and their meanings. Data were sourced from documented materials, interviews and the intuition of the author as a native speaker. The source of personal names in Eggon can be traced to history, culture, religion, body parts, traditional occupation, circumstance of birth, and geographical location. The study reveals that most Eggon names begin with a vowel (/a/); they are formed from single lexical items, phrases and sentences. The derivation of the complex names involves phonological and morphological processes of elision, shortening, affixation and compounding. Personal names in Eggon can be made up of a single lexical item, nominal or verbal phrases and/or a sentence. Most of the names derived from sentences are declarative, while a few others are imperative and interrogative. The meanings of the names that are made up of single lexical items are literal, but the meanings of the complex names are both literal and non-literal. The study concludes in line with many scholars that Eggon personal names are similar to the grammar of the language. The study adds to the documentation of the language and provides data for further study by researchers and linguists.

Keywords: personal names, source, meaning, Eggon, morphological, syntactic

Introduction

EGGÓN IS THE NAME USED TO REFER TO BOTH THE LANGUAGE AND ITS SPEAKERS. THE LANGUAGE belongs to Eggonic Southern Benue-Congo Plateau group of African languages (Blench 2019). The language is spoken in Nasarawa, north-central Nigeria, where majority of the speakers reside. The language has 26 dialects, out of which only one is not mutually intelligible. Wana dialect is used in this work which is the standard dialect used for Èggón native New Testament Bible. Èggón is a tone language; three tones are attested in the language. The acute accent [´] on a tone-bearing segment represents a high tone and the grave accent [˘] represents a low tone, the unmarked tone represents a midtone. The apostrophe ['] between two consonants represents a sound not written but in pronunciation can be felt.

The concept of personal names is considered a universal phenomenon. This is because one hardly finds a person without a name. However, there was a research on Machiguenga tribe of the Amazon in 1952 which shows that some people had no personal name, as in the extract below (cited by Jenkins, 2013):

Each individual mentioned was described as either the relative of the speaker or the relative of some other individuals referred to either by a kin term or by a descriptive phrase such as “the one who came yesterday” etc. We learned that we had to know exactly how each person was related to every other person ... at the same time we endeavored to elicit the names of various individuals. The usual response we received was *tera nompaitempa* “I’m not named or *tera* “no’... (Snell 1964: 18-19).

This is a very rare case as one hardly finds people without personal names. The researchers found it extremely difficult to write their informants personal information due to lack of names. This shows the importance of names. In addition, in some climes, people often named their newborn on the eighth day. Some even sew uniforms for family and friends in an elaborate celebration (Akin naso, 1980). Name is an important way of referring to an individual identity.

Akin naso (1980, 275) opines that personal names are created historically, maintained socially and depends on the expectations of members of a specific community. Names foster group integration and enhance solidarity (Alford 1988, 35), and “. . . to provide a symbolic system of identification which encodes ethnic identity, culture and nationality” (Griffin 2010:309).

The word “name” can mean any noun, such as orange (name of fruit), robbery (name of crime, etc. More precisely, name refers to proper nouns which can be categorized in Greek into toponyms (name of place), anthroponyms (personal name), ethnonyms (names of nationalities or ethnic groups), and glotonyms (names of languages) (Bright 2003). The present study is restricted to personal names (anthroponyms).

Defining personal names is not easy. Algeo (1973) defines personal names as words that are often written with initial capital letters. A scrutiny of this definition shows that it cannot apply crosslinguistically, e.g. Chinese have no capital letters. Bright (2003) defines proper names as “a social convention for brief reference to a specific entity as opposed to a class of persons or places.”

Personal name could be defined as “any non-deictic sign denoting a specific, singular individual and serving as a sign of that individual’s unique identity” (Jenkins 2013). The present study will adopt Jenkins (2013) definition, since it is concerned with the names humans bear and not other nonhuman species.

Literature Review

Many scholars have studied names as personal names, nicknames, names of places, animal names, etc. Anderson’s (2004) studies of French, Greek and English names proposes that names universally belong to the category of determiners such as pronouns and determiners but are neither definite nor indefinite. However, each language differs: definite and non-definite names are not differentiated in English but are distinguished in some languages like Greek by the use of article for definite names. This shows that the grammar of a language is similar to the structure of its names.

According to Mandende (2009), Tshivenda personal names are derived from different word categories—nouns, verbs, adjectives and phrasal categories in the language. It also shows that names have referential and cultural meanings which trigger processes like compounding and relativization. The study concludes that word categories and cultural background facilitate the understanding of the meanings of personal names in the language which is part of the grammar of the language. Tshivenda personal names is similar to that of Eggon in a way. Eggon names are also derived from nouns, verbs, adjectives and phrases. The names have referential and cultural meanings which are similar to the grammar of the language.

Mensah and Offong's (2013) study of Ibibio death-preventive names shows that the language naming system portrays various aspects of the people's life such as social, family values, traditional occupation, places, geographical features, order of birth, emotions, English influenced names, etc. dDeath preventive names are worthless names given to reincarnated children (strange birth) meant to deceive the spiritual forces. Some of the names are *ídíók* (bad), *íbak* (wicked), *úbuéne* (poverty). In Eggon, there are names that are given to children that are born after several dead children. Most of the names have negative meanings such as Abashi (why did you come), Asaba (she has come again), Ekmo (corpse), etc.

Mensah (2016) opines that female nicknames show that nicknames are innovative ways of self-expression and style, which enhance group socialization and solidarity. Nicknames improve female confidence, independence and status in the society. Sources of nicknames include parents, teachers, artists/stars, classmates and friends etc. Examples of such nicknames are Tall (a tall person), Briefcase (a short person), Liz (Elizabeth), Íwáñ farm (a foolish person), etc.

Ojebode, Odesanya and Odebode (2019) submit that car nicknames advertise and make cars popular than the use of media in Nigeria. The cars are nicknamed based on a number of factors such as external features, movie/TV ad/song, speed, durability, circumstances, Nigeria ethnic group and status/gender (some cars are meant for men while others are seen as feminine in outlook). Examples of these nicknames include envelope (Toyota Camry V6 2002 model), Honda Baby Boy (Honda Accord 1999 Model), Cobra (BMW 5 series 05) etc. This shows that naming plays a significant role on the named and the society. Eggon names also play an important role on the named and the family/community, as in Alaku ("rebuilder of himself, family or community"). Similarly, circumstances, external features and gender determine the names of newborns in Eggon.

In a study of syntactic categories and semantic features of English lexemes used as Christian names in Northern Nigeria by Olaleye & Dahunsi (2019) reveals that most of the words used are nominal however, some of the words can also belong to other categories such as verb. The prosodic features of the names are positive or neutral. No negative prosodic feature was recorded. Similarly, the reason for gender-specific names is not certain. The lexical innovation of the names include compounding (God + win, Good + luck); abstract entities (Love, Wisdom). This type of naming contextualizes words from common everyday use to proper names. This study shows that names are not restricted by categories. Similarly, Eggon names can be formed from the same or different categories through compounding. But in the case of Eggon, the prosodic features of the names can be positive, neutral or negative, as in Ashesla "integrity," Asheozhe "traveler," Aondaka "badluck."

Lusekelo & Mtenga (2020) research on the language Rombo-Chagga (Tanzania) reveal that personal names are chosen based on circumstances of birth, even though it has been influenced by religion and colonization in recent times. There are gender-specific morphemes in Rombo-Chagga which are masculine *nde-* in Nderambia "on a journey" and feminine *mka-* in Mkamondú "wife of a stubborn man." They conclude that in spite of the influence of religion in naming practices, Rombo-Chagga still use native names with religious orientation. The review of Rombo-Chaga personal names shows that it is similar to Eggon personal names. Circumstances of birth and religion determine the choice of Eggon personal names. Similarly, there are gender-specific morphemes in Eggon names for only female names Ashe "woman," as in Aheadzi "beautiful woman."

Mensah and Ishima (2020) equally investigate sentential names in Tiv where they argue that names help to understand the grammar of a language better. The findings also show that most Tiv names are simple sentences made up of complex morphological processes of compounding

and affixation. The names are imperative, interrogative and declarative sentences. The review of Tiv personal names is relevant to the present study. The structure of Eggon personal names is similar to the grammar of the language. In addition, sentences are used as names in Eggon derived through desententialization.

Methodology

Data for the study was sourced mainly from documented sources: dictionary of Eggon names (Kuje 2010) and Eggon dictionary draft (Blench 2006). Data were also collected from three native speakers of Eggon through interviews. These sets of data were those not recorded in the dictionaries and they were collected for pragmatic verification and cross-referencing. The informants include two females and a male aged 64, 58 and 75, respectively. The informants were literate and nonliterate, born and brought up in Eggon-speaking communities. They were chosen based on their consent, interest and indepth knowledge of Eggon naming as name-bearers, givers and having wide experience of names and naming. The author as a native speaker also used her intuition, linguistic knowledge, and grammaticality judgment to crosscheck collated data which oriented the study. The collated data were written down using field notes and audio recording where necessary. The study sets out to analyze Eggon names that are lexical words, phrases or sentences morphologically, syntactically and semantically.

Presentation of Data and Discussion of Findings

The findings would be discussed in sections. The first will be sources of Eggon personal names, followed by the morphological and syntactic structures of the names and their meanings, as well as the phonological and morphological processes involved in the derivation of the names.

Sources of Eggon Personal Names

There are various sources of Eggon personal names, which are influenced by factors such as religion, education, to mention a few. These sources can be traced to history, culture, religion, traditional occupations, body parts, circumstances of birth, experience of the name-giver, hope and aspirations, life experience during the pregnancy/birth, name of places/clan, emotions, etc.

Historically: Eggon people often name their children after their ancestors, and oracles. Some of such names include *Amgbashim* "a shrine," *Amgbadzu* "oracle remain," *Amgbazhe* "an oracle that makes trouble." The name *Amgbashim* is given to a male as a representative of the family's ancestors, who is believed is in the position to bless and protect the family members. *Amgbadzu* is also given to a male as the protector of the family boundary. *Amgbazhe* is often given to the son of a troublesome man.

Cultural names are those influenced by people's ways of life and beliefs. Eggon people pay respect to the dead by sleeping over at the dead person's house for some days, especially relatives of the deceased. There are so many names given to children born during such mourning visit, such as *Aleku* "mourning a loved one," *Abimiku* "accepted to die," *Kuje* "born during mourning," *Abmazhen* "song of mourning," *Obenri* "soil eat," *Ekmo* "corpse," *Ayiku* "eye death," *Kudu* "death wants me to talk," *Azgaku* "the hoe used for digging graves." *Aleku* is a male name given to a child that was given birth to when the mother went to mourn a loved one; *Abimiku* is a male name given to a child that was born after the death of a family member, believing he has come to replace the deceased; *Kuje* is a male name given to a child born during the mourning of a family member; *Ekmo* is given to a child whose older siblings have died. *Andaoka* is a female name given to a child whose father, mother or close relative died shortly before she was born. Eggon people also believe

in reincarnation, which is another source of names such as Asaba "she has come again," Abaka "she came before," Anna "mother," Adugu "father," etc.

Anna or Adugu or the parents' real name is often given to a child that lost either parent before their birth or shortly after their birth. Such names imply that the dead parent is back.

Religious beliefs: names are influenced by religion of the name givers. Originally, Eggon people name their children after their ancestors and shrine, as in historical source of names above, but the coming of Christianity had great influence on Eggon naming system in recent times. Some names influenced by Christianity include *Asede* "He gave," *Ahwileyime* "He gave me understanding," *Ahwilemeozhe* "He gave me breakthrough," *Oshlahobre* "salvation of God." Other names derived from religion include Biblical names such as *Efilimo* "Philemon," *Ehezakiya* "Hezekiah," *Emanuwe* "Emmanuel," *Ojosiya* "Josiah," *Osolomo* "Solomon," *Ojotam* "Jothan," etc

Traditional occupations: the occupation of the name-givers often reflects in the names of their children. The names common under this category include: *Anzena* "chaff of locust beans," *Ajege* "local brew," *Ajegenā* "mother's local brew," *Ajegeku* "plenty local brew," *Ichuku* "market," *Ataowyi* "trader," *Alaso* "to lie on grass," etc. The name *Anzena* "chaff of locust beans" is given to a child born during the harvest of locust beans. A child can be named *Ajege* (male) "local brew," *Ajegenā* (male) "mother's local brew" or *Ajegeku* (female) "plenty local brew" if he/she is born during festive season when there is plenty drinks or born to parents that drink or sell local brew. A child can be named either *Ichuku* "market" or *Ataowyi* "trader" if he/she was born on market day, in the market or by parents who are traders. *Alaso* "to lie on grass" is given to a child born in the farm/bush.

Body parts: personal names are also derived from body parts such as mouth, eye, heart, as in these names: *Otsanyu* "as a result of mouth," *Akaiyi* "s/he looks" *Anzayun* (he washes the mouth "an orator/ a talkative"), *Esōn* "heart," *Agbuesō* (he reaches the heart "dear to the heart"), *Asheson* "woman after one's heart," *Anyuabga* (mouth kill "much talked about situation"), *Abeson* "owner of one's heart," *Anzayi* (wash eye "clear"), etc. *Otsanyu* is a child that was much talked about due to delay in childbearing. *Akaiyi* "s/he looks" is given to a child whose mother often looked absentmindedly during pregnancy.

The circumstances surrounding the birth of a child can also influence the naming of such child. Some of the names that fall into this category include: *Abekne* "a poor person," *Embigbu* "hunger arrives," *Leku* "condolence visit," *Ozhenwhin* "the road opens," etc. A female child is named *Abekne* if the child was born when the parents were very poor or passing through a difficult situation. *Embigbu* is also a female named whose birth was during famine or when food was scarce or expensive. *Leku* is a child born during a condolence visit by the mother. *Ozhenwhin* is given to a child that was born during a major breakthrough in the family or community.

Name of places/clan: this is another source of personal names in Eggon. Some names of places common include *Akwanga*, *Maikeffi*, *Nasarawa*, *Awayi*, etc. names of Eggon clans include *Wakama*, *Abakyono*, *Alogani*, *Alizaga*, etc. *Akwanga*, *Keffi* and *Nasarawa* are names of local government areas in *Nasarawa*, where majority of Eggon people are found. *Wakama*, *Kyono*, *Alogani*, and *Alizaga* are clans of Eggon which some people name their children.

Emotion: both positive and negative emotions form sources of personal names in Eggon. These include positive emotions: *Oklo* "love," *Ovyē* "appreciation," *Aga* "thought, while negative emotions include *Awuku* "cry," *Amanyi* "tears," *Akpuwu* "suffering."

Structure of Eggon Personal Names

The structure of Eggon personal names can be classified morphologically and syntactically. The names can be single lexical items (words), phrases or sentences. Most of the complex names are nouns made up of words from the same or different syntactic categories such as N-N, N-V, V-N, N-A, etc. Similarly, the names are declarative, imperative or interrogative in nature, which gives a clue to the grammatical structure of Eggon language.

Morphological Structure of Eggon Personal Names

Eggon personal names can be classified into single lexical items, phrases and sentences. The single lexical items are mostly nouns derived from different sociocultural activities which portray the people's occupation, geographical location, emotion, etc. Some of such names include: *Ajege* "local brew," *Agum* "medicine," *Akyle* "woven cloth," *Ichuku* "market," *Akla* "bush/struggle," *Anva* "a tree," *Amgbalaga* "termites," *Asoku* "insensitive," *Avaŋ* "waster" etc.

Phrases also constitute a source of Eggon personal names. The phrases which are compound words can be nominal phrase or verb phrase. There is a phonological process of elision of the first vowel of the second constituent of the compound, but there are exceptions. This is similar to the compounds in Eggon language which shows that the grammatical structure of Eggon personal names is the same with the grammar of the language.

Eggon Personal Names as Nominal phrases

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1a. | Evigo + ídzi | → | Evigodzí |
| | Finger good | | "good luck" |
| b. | Anzé + éná | → | Anzénà |
| | Chaff locust beans tree | | "chaff of locust beans" |
| c. | Ashé + édá | → | Ashédá |
| | Woman wise | | "wise woman" |

The examples above involve elision of the first vowel of the second word that makes up the name. 1a is made up of noun *evigo* "finger" + adjective *idzi* "good," meaning good luck, with the elision of /i/ in *idzi*; noun *anze* "chaff" + noun *ena* "locust beans tree," a name given to a male child born in the season of harvesting locust beans, the derivation of this name also involves an elision of the first sound in the second word; 1c consists of a noun *ashe* "woman" and an adjective *eda* "wise" it also involves an elision of /e/.

Eggon Personal Names as Verb Phrases

Eggon personal names that are verb phrases consist of a verb and another verb, adverb or adjective.

Some examples are found below:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|--|
| 2a. | Kaiyi + blibli | → | Kayiblibli |
| | To look dishonestly | | "untruthful person" |
| b. | Ewu + gre | → | Ewuga |
| | Suffer go | | "one that has suffered to achieve something" |
| c. | Otso + kaku | → | Otsokaku |
| | To poison many | | "to curse many people" |

In the examples (2) above, *Kayiblibli* "untruthful person" in (2a) consists of a verb *kaiyi* "to look" and an adverb *blibli* "dishonestly." There is an elision of /i/ in *kaiyi* which is a compound word literally "see eye"; the name is given to a male child whose either parent is dishonest. (2b) *Ewuga* "one that has suffered to achieve something" consists of two verbs *ewu* "suffering" and *gre* "go." There is

a deletion of the last sounds *re* and an insertion of *a*. *Otsokaku* "to curse many people" consists of a verb *otso* "to poison" and an adverb *kaku* "many."

Eggon Personal Names as Sentences

Eggon sentential names can be classified based on structure and function. Structurally, most names are simple sentences with the pattern subject, verb, object (SVO). The sentence functions as declarative, imperative, and interrogative, which performs the semantic functions of serving as statement, command/wish and question in the language. The various types of sentences that can serve as personal names in Eggon are exemplified below.

Eggon Personal Names as Simple Sentences

These types of names have the structure of SV or SVO. The S is a pronoun/noun, the V is a verb and the O is a noun or adjunct. It can be two or three words which are compounds, as in the examples:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---|----------------------|
| 3a. | Ame + ri | → | Ameri |
| | 1SG win | | "I won" |
| b. | A + gbu | → | Agbu |
| | 3SG arrive | | "he/she has arrived" |
| c. | A + ba + ka | → | Abaka |
| | 3SG come before | | "she once came" |

In (3a) and (3b), the names were formed from pronouns and verbs without elision because the second constituent begins with a consonant; (3c) consists of pronoun *a* "s/he," verb *ba* "come" and adverb *ka* "before." A female child that is believed to have reincarnated or resembles a dead relative is given this name.

Eggon Personal Names as Declarative Sentence

Eggon names can be in form of a declarative sentence when the name makes a statement, offer an explanation or gives information. This type of name is structurally made up of subject, verb and complement. The subject can be a noun or pronoun. Some examples are

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 4a. | Awo + adzi | → | Awadzi |
| | It is good/beautiful | | 'a good thing, a beauty' |
| b. | A + wile + iyi + me | → | Awileyime |
| | 3SG open eye my | | "He gave me understanding" |
| c. | A + kpo + ewu | → | Akpowu |
| | 3SG do suffer | | "to suffer, indigent" |

(4a) *Awadzi* "a good thing, a beauty" is given to a girl whose mother is loved in the family, there is an elision of the last vowel in the first constituent; (4b) *Awileyime* "He gave me understanding" is a unisex name whose derivation involves a deletion of the first vowel in the third word *iyi* "eye" (4c) *Akpowu* "indigent" is often given to a female. The name involves a deletion of the first vowel in the third word, the name is given to a girl whose parents have suffered a lot.

There are also instances of negative declarative sentences in Eggon personal names as found in 5 below

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---|--|
| 5a. | A + yi + me + mbo | → | Ayimembo |
| | 3SG know 1OBJ NEG | | "s/he does not know me" |
| b. | A + kpo + mbo + ari + mbo | → | Akpomboardimbo |
| | 3SG do not to eat not | | "s/he that does not work should not eat" |

The examples in (5) are unisex names. The name in (5a) *Ayimembo* "s/he does not know me" is given to a child whose parents were denied home/farm, or a child whose paternity is contested during

the pregnancy; a child is named *Akpomboarimbo* "s/he that does not work should not eat" to instill hard work in the child and either of the parents.

Eggon Names as Imperative Sentence

Imperative sentences give command, make request or express wishes. This type of name in Eggon begins with a noun, pronoun or verb and can be a single lexical item or have more words, as in the examples below:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 6a. | Odum | | | |
| | Quiet | | "let there be silence" | |
| b. | Da + mo + lu | → | Damolu | |
| | Let 3PL say | | "let them say whatever they want" | |
| c. | Ka + gbu | → | Kagbu | |
| | See able | | "well chosen" | |
| d. | A + la + ma | → | Alama | |
| | 3SG lie there | | "s/he lives there" | |

Example (6a) *Odum* "quiet" is a unisex name given to a child whose parents had secondary barrenness, the command is meant for the people that have called the parents' names; (6b) *Damolu* "let them say" is a masculine name telling busybodies to say what they want to say; a child born out of wedlock bears such name. (6c) *Kagbu* "well chosen" is a male name referring to either of the parent's good looks, hard work or eloquence; (6d) *Alama* "s/he lives there" is a unisex name referring to the parents or child given birth to in a strange land.

Eggon Personal Names as Interrogative Sentence

Interrogative sentences ask questions. Some Eggon names are questions. Question words can appear at the beginning or end of a sentence in Eggon. Eggon names follow same pattern where question-words have no specific position in a name. This shows that Eggon personal names give a better understanding about the grammar of the language. Some question words in Eggon include *eshi* "what/why," *ayi* "who/whose," etc. below are some names that are interrogative in nature.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 7a. | Awu + eshi | → | Awushi | |
| | to cry why | | "why should i cry?" | |
| b. | A + kpo + mo + eshi | → | Akpomoshi | |
| | 3SG do 3PL what | | "what has he/she done to them?" | |
| c. | A + kyen + ayi | → | Akyenayi | |
| | 3SG run who | | who is s/he running from? | |
| d. | Ayi + ayi | | Ayiayi | |
| | who to know | | "who knows" | |

Example (7a) *Awushi* "why should I cry" is a female name given to a child as a consolation to the parents over past misfortune; (7b) *Akpomoshi* "what has s/he done" is a unisex name for a child who lost a mother or a tragedy befell the family after his/her birth. The question is directed to the presumed powers that caused the tragedy; parents give the name *Akyenayi* to "a fearless person" (7c) because of the tough times they went through at the time of the pregnancy or birth; (7d) *Ayiayi* "who knows" is a unisex name asking a question that is beyond the parents' understanding.

Syntactic Structure of Eggon Personal Names

Complex Eggon personal names can be formed from the same category such as Noun-Noun (N-N), Verb-Verb (V-V), and from different categories such as Noun-Verb (N-V), Verb-Noun (V-N), Noun-Adjective (N-A), Pronoun-Verb-Noun PVN, etc. Names formed from different categories are more productive. Montague (1973) and Anderson (2007) opine that the syntactic feature of names is

that they function as noun phrases rather than single words within a phrase. This can be seen in a sentence where a name can replace a noun phrase e.g.

- 8a. The girl went to the stream.
b. Titi went to the stream.

Eggon personal names formed from the same categories are mostly N-N and V-V. These names are not as productive as names derived from two or more categories. Below are some examples

Noun-Noun (N-N)

The names here are derived from nouns through compounding. The meaning of the names is both literal (9b) and nonliteral (9a) and (9c), as in the examples below.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 9a. | Ashe + olo | → | Ashelo |
| | Woman sickness | | "a sickly or healer of sickness" |
| b. | Evigo + Ahogbre | → | Evigohogbre |
| | Finger God | | "finger of God" |
| c. | Ashe + ango | → | Asheango |
| | Woman plate | | "slavery" |

All the names in the above examples are female names. There is a process of elision of the first vowel in the second constituent in examples (9a) and (9b). A girl is named *Ashelo* if her mother was very sick during pregnancy or there was a disease outbreak; 9b *Evigohogbre* is a recent name influenced by Christianity; a girl is named *Asheango* 9c if she was born during an invasive raid on the community, insecurity or in a strange land.

Verb-Verb (V-V): The names found in this category are formed from two verbs. The names are compound words whose derivation involves elision at word boundary. There are some exceptions to this process. Below are some examples

- | | | | |
|------|-----------------|---|---|
| 10a. | adga + dzu | → | Adgadzu |
| | stay long sit | | "to be away for a long time" |
| b. | Ewu + gre | → | Ewuga |
| | Suffering go | | "one who has suffered before succeeding." |
| c. | Alu + umbugu | → | Alumbugu |
| | To talk quarrel | | "a judge" |
| d. | Kpo + asu | → | Kpasu |
| | Do to announce | | "someone that announces what he has done" |

Example (10a) *Adgadzu* is a male name given to a child whose father has been away for a long time; (10b) *Ewuga* is a male name given to a child who was born after a period of suffering in the family or community; (10c) *Alumbugu* is a male name given to a child believed to be a good advocate in the future; A child of parents that announce their good deeds or achievement is named *Kpasu*, as in example (10d). Personal names that are formed by combining words from different word-classes include:

Noun-Adjective (N-A).

The names here are formed from a combination of nouns and adjectives. The names are compound words whose derivation involves vowel elision at word boundary. All the second constituents' initial vowels /i, e/ were elided. Below are some examples.

- | | | | | |
|------|---------|------|---|---------------|
| 11a. | Aga | ibi | → | Agabi |
| | Thought | bad | | "bad thought" |
| b. | Ashe | eda | → | Asheda |
| | Woman | wise | | "wise woman" |
| c. | Oshpa | idzi | → | Oshpadzi |
| | Gospel | good | | "good news" |
| d. | Ozhen | idzi | → | Ozhenzi |

Road good "good path"

In the above examples (11a) *Agabi* "bad thought" is a male name; (11b) *Asheda* "wise woman" is a feminine name given to a girl that the parents hope to become a good mother to the people. (11c) *Oshpadzi* "good news" is a unisex name given to a child that was born when the gospel came to the community or is believed bring good news to the family or community; (11d) a child named *Ozhenzi* "good path" is believed will grow to be a good example for others.

Noun-Verb (N-V) The names here are formed by combining nouns and verbs.

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| 12a. Anda oka | → | Andoka |
| Day to see | | "bad luck" |
| b. Anyu abga | → | Anyuabga |
| Mouth to kill | | "a talkative" |
| c. Ayi wulu | → | Ayiwulu |
| Eye pain | | "wicket" |

Abimiku is a male name given to a child born during or after the death of a hero who was a relative or from the community. Example (12b) *Andoka* is a female child that was born when something bad happened in the family such as death, loss of goods, etc. A child of parents that talk without control can be named *Anyuabga* "a talkative," as in example (12c). *Ayiwulu* 12d is a male name of a child whose father is considered "wicked" for stinginess or not sharing farm with others. This syntactic process of forming words is very productive in Eggon.

Verb-Noun (V-N). Some personal names in Eggon are also verb-noun compounds.. The names formed from this process can be male or female. The combination of verbs and nouns is the most productive way of forming names in Eggon. This also applies to compound words that are formed by combining verb and noun, which shows that Eggon names are similar to the grammar of the language, as shown in 19-21. This process is sometimes accompanied by elision at word boundary.

Consider the examples below:

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 13a. Alaaku | → | Alaku |
| To lie relics | | "abundance, reformist" |
| b. Adzu ayi | → | Adzuayi |
| to sit eye | | "a beauty to behold" |
| c. Adzu ako | → | Adzako |
| to sit room | | "one who stays inside the room" |
| d. Anza anyun | → | Anzayun |
| to wash mouth | | "sweet tongue, talkative" |

In the above example (13a), *Alaku* is a male name given to a child born after a family or community tragedy, he is believed to restore what was lost; (13b) *Adzuayi* is a feminine name given to a beautiful girl or handsome/beautiful parent; (13c) *Adzako* is a female name given to a child whose mother was on bed rest during pregnancy due to illness; 13d Anzayun is a male name given to a child whose either parent talks a lot.

Pronominal-verb (P-V)

The names in this category are formed by combining a pronoun and a verb. There is hardly the process of elision here because most of the word boundary is a vowel and consonant.

| | | |
|------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 14a. A gbu | → | Agbu |
| 3SG arrive | | "he/she arrived" |
| b. A shiki | → | Ashiki |
| 3SG cover | | "he closed/he gathered a thing" |
| c. A chuku | → | Achuku |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--------|----|---|-------|------------------|
| 3SG | pursue | | | | "he drive away" |
| d. | Ame | ri | → | Ameri | |
| 1SG | eat | | | | "I won/overcome" |

(14a) *Agbu* can be a unisex name; (14b) *Ashiki* is a male child that was born after a period of secondary bareness; (14c) A child is named *Achuku* also *Akyku* when the parents' divorce/separation coincided with its pregnancy or when it was born; (14d) *Ameri* can also be a unisex name given to a child that was born after a victory in the family.

Phonological Process in Eggon Personal Names

One of the most common phonological processes found in Eggon personal names is elision in names that consist of more than one base. The deletion/elision is not compulsory for all complex names but for ease of pronunciation in some names where necessary. Some examples of elision are found below:

| | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|---|-------------------------------|
| 15a. | Ékú | udu | → | Kudu |
| | Death | talk | | "death want me to talk" |
| b. | Abimi | ékú | → | Abimiku |
| | Agree | death | → | "accepted to die for a cause" |

In the examples (15) above, the initial vowels /e/ and /u/ in the name constituents *ékú* "death" and *udu* "talk" were elided in (15a) respectively; in example (15b), the initial vowel /e/ in the second constituent *ékú* is elided.

Morphological Processes Found in Eggon Personal Names

The most common morphological process in Eggon names is compounding. This is the use of two or more words from the same or different syntactic categories to derive a single word as a personal name, as in the names derived from phrases and sentences above. Another morphological process is blend. This involves the combination of syllables from two or more words. Examples of names that show morphological processes in Eggon include:

| | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|---|---------------------|---|--------|---|---------------|
| 16a. | Agbi | + | tse | + | me | → | Agbitseme |
| | Farm | | enough ₁ | | SG OBJ | | "productive" |
| b. | Agre | + | eshê | | | → | Ageshen |
| | to enter | | inside | | | | "an intruder" |

Agbitseme "productive" in (16a) is a male name given to a child that was born during or after a bountiful harvest. The name consists of three words (agbi "farm" tse "enough" me "me") put together by compounding; (16b) *Ageshen* "intruder" is a compound derived from the words *agre* "to enter" and *eshê* "inside."

Affixation is another morphological process which is less productive. This involves the use of the vowels /a/, /o/, /u/ or /i/ as prefixes before the root. This is common in names that are single lexical items, as in the names:

| | | | | |
|------|---------|-------|---|----------------|
| 17a. | O + | klo | → | Oklo |
| | PRF | love | | "to love" |
| b. | O zigi | | → | Ozigi |
| | PRF out | | | "to come out" |
| c. | O + | vye | → | Ovye |
| | PRF | thank | | "appreciation" |

In the examples above, *o* has been prefixed to *klo* to form *Oklo* "to love" in example (17a); *o* is prefixed to *zigi* to form *Ozigi* "to come out" in example (17b) and (17c) *Ovye* "appreciation" involves prefixing *o* to *vye* "thank."

Blends is another morphological process in Eggon personal names.

| | | | | |
|------|----------|---------|---|---------------|
| 18a. | Agre | eshé | → | Ageshen |
| | To enter | inside | | "an intruder" |
| b. | Ozhen | idzi | → | Ozhenzi |
| | Road | good | | "good path" |
| c. | Ahogbre | sede | → | Asede |
| | God | to give | | "God's gift" |

The derivation of (18a) *Ageshen* "an intruder" involves the shortening of the first constituent *agre* "to enter" by deleting *-re*; (18b) *Ozhenzi* "good path," the second constituent *idzi* "good" has been shorten to *zi*; both constituents of the name in (18c) *Asede* "God's gift" *Ahogbre* has been shorten to *A*, while *sede* is retained.

Eggon Grammatical Structure

This section is meant to show how Eggon personal names is related to the grammatical structure of the language. Eggon has declarative sentence (which makes a statement/ express an assertion); imperative sentence (gives command, make wishes); interrogative sentence (ask question). Some examples of the various sentences follow:

| | | | |
|-----|----------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| 19 | declarative sentence | | |
| a. | ogbgá | o vú | ɲa "s/he has a flu" |
| | Cold | | to catch him/her |
| b. | mógré | igbí | nyányé "they went to the farm since" |
| 3Pl | went | farm | since |

Example (19a) consists of S *ogbgá* "cold" V *o vú* "to catch" *o ɲa* "him/her"; (19b) has *mó* "they" as subject, *gré* "went" as verb and *igbí nyányé* "farm since."

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|--------|------------------|
| 20 | imperative sentence | | |
| a. | zǐ | ídzi | "go out!" |
| go | outside | | |
| b. | anó | ó shan | "you are healed" |
| 2SG | to heal | | |

The structure of imperative sentences is S/V + O as in the example (20a) *zǐ ídzi* "go out!" V+O, shows a command, 2ob *anó ó shan* 'you are healed" show a wish. Similarly, Eggon names follow the same pattern as in 6.

| | | | | |
|---------|------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------------|
| 21 | interrogative sentence | | | |
| a. | eshiko | no | ri | eyi? "What is your name?" |
| Name2SG | bear | who | | |
| b. | eyí | a bá? | | "Who is coming?" |
| who | to come | | | |
| c. | eshí | a kpo? | | "What happened?" |
| what | to do | | | |
| d. | ékú | kpú | áná? | "Where was a death recorded?" |
| death | die | where | | |

In the examples above, the question-word in (21a) *eyí* "who" comes at the end of the question; in (21b) the question word *eyí* "who" comes at the beginning of the sentence; the question word *éshí* "what" comes at the sentence initial position in (21c); the question word *áná* "where" in (21d) comes at the question-final position. The appearance of the question word at word-initial and -final positions show that question-words do not have specific positions in a sentence, as also shown in (7) above.

Conclusion

The chapter studies the structure and meanings of Eggon personal names. It aims at finding out the sources of Eggon personal names and their morphological and syntactic structures. The findings show that Eggon personal names are formed from circumstances of birth and many others such as religion, occupation, natural environment, etc. The names can be single lexical items, phrases or sentences. Syntactically, the names are derived from the same or different word categories. The derivation of the names results in phonological processes of elision, shortening and morphological processes of compounding and affixation.

This research shows that Eggon personal names are simple and complex forms formed from a single lexical item, phrases and sentences. The meaning of most names consisting of single lexical items are literal while the meaning of complex names are both literal and non-literal. Names are used for referential and cultural purposes in the language (Mandende 2009).

The article, in line with several authors (Anderson, 2004; Gerba, 2014; Mandende, 2009; Mapara, 2013; Mensah & Offong, 2013; Mwangi, 2015; Mensa & Ishima, 2020), shows that the grammatical structure of a language (Eggon) is in harmony with the personal names, as shown in 19-21 above. This research adds to the study of names and anthropology in Nigerian, African and other languages.

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