

COMPOUNDING STRATEGIES IN TIV WORD FORMS

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Abstract

This research entitled ‘Compounding Strategies in Tiv Word Forms’ is concerned compounding strategies in Tiv word forms. It shows the various ways by which compounds are uniquely formed in Tiv. The study is based on the De Saussurean Theory of Structuralism; suggesting language as a system of systems; a structure that is made up of other structures or sub-units. The data was sourced primarily from a select number of written sermons in Tiv as well as the researcher’s competent knowledge of Tiv with some amount of information obtained from textbooks and other research works. The findings show that compound nouns in Tiv are created with combinations of: noun + noun; noun + verb; noun+ adjective; Noun+ preposition; adjective + noun; adjective + verb; verb + noun; verb + adjective; preposition + noun; compound pronouns exist in Tiv with determiners and nouns; possessives and nouns; and determiners and pronouns combinations; compound adjectives are consisted mostly of number adjectives; and compound adverbs dominantly come in the form of reduplicatives. It concludes that attention must be paid to the fact that Tiv has its own unique structure as regards availability, prominence and combinatory order of constituent elements of the selected compounds.

Keywords: Tiv, compounds, reduplicatives, and word forms.

Introduction

Language continues to be of inestimable importance in human existence. It is the sole means of communication; a determiner for the functional existence of humanity. The relationship between language and communication may be likened to that of farm and tools. It is indeed impossible to satisfactorily carry out the activities on the farm without the necessary implements, and so is communication impossible without language. Just as the farmer uses tools to work on the farm, the communicator uses language to effect communication. The above statement describes the entire life of an individual. Indeed, what chiefly defines an individual is their use of language which is a *sine qua non* of every successful human business. No wonder that researches are needed, and would continue to be carried out in the area of language studies.

Traditionally, language refers to the ‘talking’ aspect of human life, or more generally a system of communication among humans. With language, messages are transferred from person to person, and hence it is said to be a system or an instrument of communication. But a fact must be acknowledged that discussions must be made in particular languages like Tiv or English for the sake of discussions, just as reference must be made to, and examples taken from specific languages for the success of any linguistic discussion. This may be found to mean that the importance of language applies to languages in specific terms.

Language is basically the use of sounds and letters in combination for words and higher units of grammar for effective communication. It includes, by extension, the use of body acts and extra-linguistic signs of various kinds to convey a number of messages. Crystal summarises that in his definition of language as “the concrete act of speaking, writing or signing” (Crystal 2008: 265). Stork and Widdowson (1974:135) define language as “a set of habits acquired by a process of conditioning and what is innate is merely the hereditary potential for such conditioning to take place.” In the words of Sapir (1921: 1), “Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.”Linguistics is the umbrella term for all kinds of investigation into natural languages. At its theoretical level; the micro linguistic aspect, the study of language is identified with the nature and patterns of sounds, words, and longer expressions as well as their meanings. These are studied under phonetics/phonology,

morphology, syntax, and semantics. In all these branches of language studies, none can be said to have no connection with the other, despite the fact that each of them is seen with some degree of independence. In this research, the concern is compounding as a process of word formation.

Compounding as suggested for investigation is a prominent source of word formation. Its importance results from the fact that all languages probably have compounding as a system of word formation, and in some languages like Chinese, for example, as observed by some authors, compounding is the major source for forming new words (Scalise & Forza, 2011:1). As interesting as this morphological process is found to be, more research is important to it, and especially in the Tiv language.

Morphology and the Word Formation Process

Morphology is simply defined as the study of morphemes and word structures. It is about the various rules governing the use of morphemes and how they can form words, either in isolation or in combination. It is within the confines of morphology to note, for example, that *bag* is a morpheme denoting a singular noun. But *bag* + *s* = *bags*, which is another word referring to a plural noun with two morphemes - *bag* + *s* → *bags*. Morphological studies also reveal that the word *kill* is a single morpheme, but when it is *kill* + *-ed* → *killed*. In a Tiv word like *anwan* for example, two morphemes exist with ‘an’ as prefix with diminutive meaning of ‘little’ + ‘wan’ (child), a free or root morpheme. In another example, the word *mbayev* (children) is formed with two morphemes, with ‘mba’ as a bound morpheme which suggests plurality. Many of such cases showing the different ways of forming words through morphemes exist as it can be seen in subsequent explanations.

Akmajian et al (2007: 12) define morphology as; “the subfield of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the relationships among words.” In Crystal’s Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, morphology is said to be “the branch of Grammar which studies the Structure or forms of words, primarily through the use of the Morpheme construct” (Crystal, 2008:314). Indeed, anything that has to do with building, forming, or structuring of words is the concern of morphology. In addition to the earlier examples, one could also be interested in looking at how a suffix is added to a verb to produce a noun. *Employ* + *ment*, for instance, gives rise to *employment*, thereby causing a change from one word class (a verb) to another (a noun). The same word (employment) can be prefixed by another morpheme *un* to realise *unemployment*, while still maintaining the class of the word. In a similar fashion, several morphemes – *un* + *faith* + *ful* + *ness* can be brought together to form a single word – *unfaithfulness*.

Those specific elements as exemplified under morphology are morphemes of different categories. Morphemes that produce meanings independently as in the case ‘employ’ are said to be free. But ‘ment’ for example is called a bound morpheme because on its own, it has no meaning; it becomes meaningful only when attached to a free morpheme. The connection between words and morphemes is that a free or independent morpheme is also referred to as a word as described in the fore-going, so that, a free morpheme is alternatively referred to as a word. Based on this description, a word may be defined as a free and an independent unit of grammatical analyses with a meaningful definition. These units of grammar regarded as words are realised through a number of processes, one of which is compounding.

Compounding as a Morphological Process

When two or more free morphemes or separate words are joined to be a single unit, a new word is created with the name – compound. The process by which such a word is created is termed compounding. This can be done by using a hyphen in between the morphemes, leaving them separately without a hyphen, or bringing them closely without any connective mark of punctuation. This expressly means that there is no consistency regarding a particular way of forming a compound word. In Denham and Lobeck’s words: ...There is no consistent spelling or punctuation of compounds: they can occur with hyphens, as separate words, or spelled out as a single word (Denham & Lobeck, 2013: 197), as is shown in the table below:

Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs	Prepositions
Headline	Man-made	Babysit	Downwards	Upon
Headman	Over-grown	Double-date	Henceforth	Within
Bookcase	High-handed	Broadcast	Moreover	Without

Textbook	Childlike	Downsize	Furthermore	Into
Blackboard	Shallow-minded	Update	Upward	Onto
Mother-in-law	Forthcoming	Brain-wash	However	Towards
Director-general	Well-to-do	Sidestep	Therefore	Out of
Fingerprint	Outgoing	Overdo	Nevertheless	Along with

Source: Denham & Lobeck, 2013: 197

The following words represent the multiplicity of compounds in the Tiv language:

Msendoo → msen(prayer) + doo (good) =	prayer is good/rewarding
Ngoivo → ngo (mother) + ivo (goat) =	she goat
Tomaondo → tom (work) + aondo (God) =	God's work/decision
Tor Tiv → Tor + Tiv (king + Tiv) =	King of the Tiv people
Orya → Or + ya (person + village/compound) =	village-head, family-head or landlord
Torkwase → Tor + kwase (Chief + woman) =	Queen/woman leader
Torkasua → Tor + kasua (Chief + Market) =	Market Overseer
Iyouici → Iyou + ici (house + medicine) =	Hospital/clinic
Kuhemba → Ku + hemba (Death + greater) =	Death is supreme
Torgbande → Tor + gbande (king + drum) =	Band /drum leader

Similar examples abound in Tiv language as will be shown later in data analysis.

Source: Iorchir (2011: 43 – 45)

Theory of Structuralism

The theory of structuralism as introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) is considered for this study. It suggests that language is a system of systems. Carrier (2023: 1) says, “This approach centered on determining the common components of language systems.” That is to say that language is a structure that is made up of other structures or sub-units. It can be said, for instance, that grammatical structure comprises morphemes, words, phrases, etc., which are also formed by other elements. From another point, a sentence may be seen as a structure that is constituted by phrases, which are formed by words, which are built up by morphemes. And each of those elements depends on another element for its proper function. This is what Syal and Jindal (2014:106) mean when they say that, “The elements of this system (sounds, words, etc.) have no validity independently of the relations of equivalence and contrast which hold between them”. According to them, a sound unit is usually meaningful not in isolation, but in combination with other sounds. Similarly, the words that can be formed with the combination of such sounds would further join to form units of higher level.

The relationship between the sounds and the meanings of words — or the signifier and the signified, respectively — were given particular attention. In modern linguistics, structural scholars study the smallest individual segments of words that produce sound or meaning, otherwise known as phonemes and morphemes (Carrier, 2023: 1) The concern of this study, therefore, is the structures of natural languages, as introduced by the Swiss scholar, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), and particularly as it was narrowed down by the Bloomfieldian school of language analysis, which followed after the methods of Leonard Bloomfield in the 1930s. This view of structuralism is interested in the structures of those basic aspects of language studies, including morphology, our area of study, which has to do with the study of word structures. Analysis of language within this framework gives express attention to the manner that linguistic features can be described in terms of structures and systems. This relates well with the existing attempt to describe compounding as a system of word formation, specifically as it concerns structural organisation of certain compounds in a specific language. Crystal (2008:457) opens up that structuralism has a more restricted definition than the general Saussurean sense, which allows structuralist ideas to enter into every school of linguistics. This restrictive meaning refers to the Bloomfieldian emphasis on the processes of segmenting and classifying the physical features of utterances such as compound words.

Data Collection Sources and Techniques

The data for this study was sourced primarily from a select number of written sermons in Tiv language. The sermons were of:

- (a) Pastor D. T. Afer of Reformed Theological College, Mkar, who preached on: *Ka nyi Se Gbe Teman Heen Zan Zan Se Va Kpe Nahana?*
- (b) Pastor Tom Igya of Full Gospel Mission, in Makurdi, who preached on the topic: *Hanmakwagh Ngu a Shighe na.*

The sermons were read thoroughly, with particular attention to the use of compound words, as it concerns the condition for their formation. Rather than assuming the existence of certain compounds, these documents will be chosen to ascertain the facts of their existence. Each of these words shown to be a compound will be underlined in the reading process for easy identification in time of need. The researcher's competent knowledge of Tiv language was also considered primary. This knowledge, in part, could assist in the observation of certain useful utterances in interactions with fellow speakers, particularly of the Tiv language. Having the consciousness of an intended research, the researcher could go to the extent of asking questions in active contributions to informal communications. This knowledge and experience as a linguist and a competent speaker is found very important in this research because in formal linguistic researches such as this, such knowledge always proves useful as it avoids over-dependence on secondary sources for the achievement of set goals. It is the same knowledge that could assist in the identification of the many compounds that have been used by the writers of the selected sermons. For the sake of examples, and with a view to showing the broad nature of language studies, some amount of information was obtained from textbooks and other existing literatures on linguistics and the Tiv language.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Compounds are classified syntactically. The syntactic classification has separated compounds into a number of grammatical classes, which are identified as:

- i. The Nominal Compound, Compound Adjectives, Compound Verbs, Compound Adverbs and Prepositional Compounds

Each of these is formed by a combination of any two or more lexemes among the classes of words. It is an express fact that most natural languages have compounds, but the positioning of words as regards order of constituents for the creation of compounds varies according to languages. That means that Tiv, as chosen for this study, has its own set of compounds with distinct arrangement of constituent parts.

Tiv Compound Nouns

In the Tiv language, Compound nouns are created with:

1. **Noun + Noun**
 - a. Tine kwagh
Tine + kwagh
N – stem N – something
Subject matter
 - b. Mkpeiyol
Mkpe + iyol
N – dying N – body
Enjoyment
 - c. Iyoltyaver
iyol + tyaver
N – body Adj – strong
Strenghtful
 - d. Mbayev Kasev
Mbayev + kasev
N – children N – women
Young ladies

- e. Ikpa-sheti
Ikpa + sheti
N – Ikpa N – sheti
Pocket of shirt
- f. Tor kasua
Tor + kasua
N – king N – market
Market chief
- g. Amboravungu
Ambor + avungu
N – Oases N – Owls
Wealth-making
or
Talisman
- h. Iyouci
Iyou + ci
N – house N – drug/medicine
Hospital
- i. Tomaondo
Tom + Aondo
N – work N – God
God's work
- j. Orya
Or + ya
N – man N – house
A house head (or a husband)

2. **Noun + Verb**

- a. Kwaghyan
kwagh + yan
N – something V – eating
Food
- b. Kwaghfan
Kwagh + fan
N – something V – knowing
Knowledge/Wisdom
- c. Rwam-nahan
Rwam + nahan
N – Food V – driving
Flour-made fufu
- d. Tyoakaa
Tyo + akaa
N – kinsmen V – Will say
Kinsmen will say
- e. Kuhemba
Ku + hembra
N – Death V – Wins
Death is victorious
or
Death surpasses all
- f. Tyavbee
Tyav + bee
N – War V – Finished
War has ended
- g. Aondo-rumun

Aondo + rumun
 N – God V – Agrees
 God accepts

Iorver

Ior + ver
 N – People V – Keep
 People have kept

- h. Iyol-kpiligh
 Iyol + Kpiligh
 N – body V – Surprising
 Surprising mood

3. **Verb + Noun**

- a. Vihishima
 Vihi + shima
 V – Destroy N – mind
 Anger
- b. Zaiyol
 Za + iyol
 V – go N – body
 Problem/trouble
- c. Sughter
 Sugh + ter
 V – Greet N – father
 Thank God
- d. Tavershima
 Taver + shima
 V – hard N – mind
 Strong minded
- e. Sonter
 Son + ter
 V – request N – father
 Ask God
- f. Dugh-Or
 Dugh + Or
 V – remove N – person
 Choose someone
- g. Lutor
 Lu + tor
 V – be N – king
 Be a king
- h. Kortor
 Kor + tor
 V – hold N – king
 Hold a king
- i. Nyor-uke
 Nyor + uke
 V – enter N – Hausa
 Becoming a Hausa person
4. **Noun + Adjective**
- a. Bemdoo
 Bem + doo
 N – Peace Adj – good
 Peace is good
- b. Or-vesen

- Or + vesen
N – man Adj – large
An elder
- c. Or-ganden
Or + ganden
N – man Adj – elderly
A mature man
- d. Msendoo
Msen + doo
N – prayer Adj – good
Prayer is good
- e. Yadoo
Ya + doo
N – House Adj – good
House is good
- f. Yavihi
Ya + vihi
N – house Adj – bad
House is bad
- g. Tarhee
Tar + hee
N – world Adj – disgrace
The world is in shame
5. **Adjective + Noun**
- a. Gyam-usu
Gyam + usu
Adj – large N – fire
Hell fire
- b. Tion-wondo
Tion + wondo
Adj – Short N – trousers
Knickers
- c. Il-Or
Il + or
Adj – Black N – man
Black man
- d. Iniun kwase
Iniun + kwase
Adj – fresh N – woman
A maiden
- e. Gum-or
Gum + or
Adj – Fresh N – man
A young man
- f. Zege-ya
Zege + ya
Adj – big N – house
A big house
Zege-ian

Zege + ian
Adj – big N – space
A wide space
- g. Kom-gbenda
Kom + gbenda

- Adj – Barren N – road
A street
- h. Tse-makeranta
Tse + makeranta
Adj – old N – school
Old school
- i. Tion-sheti
Tion + sheti
Adj – short N – sleeve
Short sleeve (shirt)
6. **Adjective + Verb**
- a. Doosuur
Doo + suur
Adj – good V – depend
Good to rely upon
- b. Doeren
Doo + eren
Adj – good V – doing
Good to do
- c. Gandepuun
Gande + puun
Adj – excel V – unspeakable
Beyond criticism
7. **Noun + Preposition**
- a. Mkendesha
Mkende + sha
N – raising P – up
Uplift
- b. Ityo-tar
Ityo + tar
N – bottom P – country/world
South
- c. Korsha
Kor + sha
N – carry P – up
Hold up
8. **Preposition + Noun**
- a. Shater
Sha + ter
P – up N – father
Up to God
9. **Verb + Adverb**
- a. Zendesha
Zende + sha
V – walk Adv – up
Vagabond
- b. Gba-kera
Gba + kera
V – fall Adv – apart
Laziness/weakness/inability
- c. Dekera
De + kera
V – leave Adv – apart
Forgiveness
- d. Dekaren

- De + Karen
V – stop Adv – passing
Stop passing
- e. Za-hemen
Za + hemen
V – move Adv – forward
Progress
10. **Verb+ Verb**
- a. Desoon
De + soon
V – stop V – loving
Stop loving
- b. Zersoon
Zer + soon
V – continue V – loving
Continue loving
- c. Aver-kar
Aver + kar
V – pass V – over
Pass-over
11. **Pronoun + Verb**
- a. Mngohol
M + ngohol
P – I V – receive
I receive
- b. Serumun
Se + rumun
P – We V – accept
We accept
- c. Seson
Se + son
P – we V – request
We request
12. **Adjective + Adjective**
- a. Nyohon-Yuan
Nyohon + yuan
Adj – sweet Adj – bitter
Sweet-bitter

Source: Karshima (2013)

In what we have seen from the above presentation, compound nouns in the Tiv language are created with combinations of: noun + noun; noun + verb; noun+ adjective; Noun+ preposition; adjective + noun; adjective + verb; verb + noun; verb + adjective; preposition + noun. It could be seen that examples under some of the combinations were more in number than what is realised in some. Those combinations with fewer examples are a clear indication that such compounds are not common. In particular, those combinations of noun + noun; noun + verb; verb + noun; and adjective + noun are shown to be more prominent. It could be said that the others are less prominent, but some are presented to be hardly found as in the case of adjective + verb; preposition + noun; adjective + adjective; and verb + verb formations, each of which was identified with only one or two examples. There is one other unique feature of Tiv nominal compounds; a good number of such words refer to names of individuals. Such names as: Aondorumun, Tyavbee, Dekaren, Zahemen, Serumun, Mngohol, Iorver, Lutor, Kuhemba and Bemdoo among others, are named after individuals as a mark of identification. Again, many of such compounds, like those represented above, are words, from the angle of morphology, but semantically, they can be regarded as sentences. This follows a fact that

each of them carries a complete meaning, and with the overt subject-predicate feature, except for a few like 'lutor' (Be a king) whose subject is covert, yet with a complete meaning.

Compound pronouns

A good number of compound pronouns exist in Tiv language and are observed to have determiners and nouns; possessives and nouns; and determiners and pronouns combinations as presented below:

Hanmakwagh = everything (determiner + noun)

Nyi-or = anybody (determiner + noun)

Iyol yam = Myself (possessive + noun)

Iyol you = yourself (possessive + Noun)

Orgen = somebody (determiner + pronoun)

The above presentation shows that certain word classes come together to form compound pronouns. Considering the order of arrangement of those classes of words in the formation of such compounds, it is observed that Tiv has the determiner + noun order. But unlike other European languages like English which have possessive + noun order, Tiv has noun + possessive order. If a direct translation were to be made in the example above, 'iyolyam' would be realised as 'selfmy' in English just as 'iyol you' would be translated as 'selfyour'. In a similar fashion, 'orgen' could be translated literally as 'onesome'. So, it could be said generally from the above analysis that the grammatical elements for forming compound pronouns in Tiv are somewhat unique, particularly considering its pronoun + noun combination, and the order of arrangement of certain elements which are observed to differ from other languages.

Compound Adjectives

This study reveals that the Tiv language is not rich with compound adjectives. Out of the manifold compounds marked in the studied sermons, only a few instances of number adjectives have been identified to function as adjectives. E.g:

Pue-kar-uhar

Pue-teratar

Pue-taan-kar-uhar.

Besides, other instances of reduplication are observed to have the potential of compound adjectives. The following sentence, for instance, contains a reduplicative that functions as an adjective:

Ior mba anza kposo kposo.

Apart from those examples and the likes, not even from other secondary sources have we been able to discover Tiv compound adjectives in a variety of ways as could be discovered for other languages such as English.

Compound Verbs

In the Tiv language, compound verbs are very difficult to come by, and especially the compound single-word verb, which may be regarded as the perfect type of verbal compounds. What we have been able to produce from investigation is from Taiwo and Angitso, who worked on *verb-noun constructions in Tiv*. The authors recognise what they call verb-noun construction to be a sub-category of compound verb. Some of the examples produced were:

13.	Verb-Noun	Gloss	Literal Meaning
a.	wawegh	put hand	to endorse, to help/assist
b.	ta wegh	hit hand	to help/assist
c.	ta iwanger	hit light	to enlighten/explain
d.	za iyol	go body	to disturb
e.	ôriyol	wash body	to bath

From those examples, it could be said that few instances of verbal compounding exist in the Tiv language.

Compound Adverbs

Adverbs also exist as compounds. That is when two words are joined to perform a lexically whole function of modifying a verb, an adjective; and/or another adverb within a sentence structure.

In the Tiv language, compound adverbs dominantly come in the form of reduplicatives, which are usually realised through lexico-phonological repetition of morphemes. Some of these examples are:

<i>Ayem ayem</i>	=	<i>hastily/speedily</i>
<i>Kule kule</i>	=	<i>gradually</i>
<i>Fele fele</i>	=	<i>fast/quick(ly)</i>
<i>hange hange</i>	=	<i>must</i>
<i>nyian nyian</i>	=	<i>today/soon</i>

Source: Karshima (2013)

Reduplication in Tiv grammar is processed through a repetition of morphological forms in order to enhance or intensify its meaning. The word *ayem ayem* is constituted by two free morphemes (*ayem* + *ayem*) which carry the same structure and pronunciation. The repetition conveys a sense of haste which results in the adverb – *ayem ayem*; with *hastily* or *speedily* as its English equivalent. Same is applied to the several others in this category, such as *kule kule*, *fele fele*, *hange hange*, and *nyian-nyian*, as exemplified above.

Conclusion

The Tiv language has been identified with the syntactical criteria for compound hood; with the specific ways of forming the various compounds in the language. It is certain that the compounds, given the nature of compounding, are formed with two or three lexemes or words. But information regarding availability; prominence and combinatory order of constituent elements of the selected compounds is found in certain aspects to give the Tiv language a unique structure. The uniqueness is in line with the fact that all natural languages operate in some unique ways in their grammar, which include, among others, the various processes of word formation, and compounding particularly as it concerns the current study.

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