Noun Derivation in Izere

Adewumi Anthony Erin
University of Jos
erina@unijos.edu.ng/ademakai@gmail.com

Abstract

This research investigates noun derivation in Izere, a central Plateau language of the Benue-Congo language family with the aid of morpho-lexical rules as proposed by Lieber (1980), which relates derived word forms within a lexical category to their base forms with the aid of word formation rules. It descriptively accounts for the morphological derivation of nouns from adjectives, adverbs, verbs and other nouns in the Izere language. The research attempts to fill the conceptual gap that exists in the study of the derivational nominal morphology of the language. Data for the research was collected in Fobur, Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, using selected nouns from the Ibadan wordlist of 400 basic items and an adapted list of nouns specifically designed for the research. The selected nouns were collected electronically and then transcribed in such a way that they identified derived noun forms from other word classes. The data was then analyzed descriptively. Morpho-lexical rules were also generated to account for the morphological changes in these nouns from their base forms. The findings of the research indicate that prefixation is the dominant morphological process that accounts for noun derivation in Izere as the prefixes ku-/ri-, i-/a-, ki-/ka- and a-fu- are used in nominalization. When these noun class markers are prefixed to a

verb, adjective or adverb, it changes them into nouns. In essence, all derived Izere nouns need to be class marked via prefixation to function as nouns in the language.

Key words: noun derivation, Izere, morpho-lexical rules, nominalization, morphology

1.   Introduction

This research is carried out on the premise that word formation is a universal property of language, though different languages have varied ways in which they carry out this process. Aronoff (1976:2) suggests that traditionally, there are two types of morphological phenomena, derivation and inflection. Inflection and derivation are morphological processes through which words are formed. The two processes differ from one another in diverse ways. Inflection characterizes lexemes with features they need when designated in syntactic constructions. Some of the features they mark in respect to nouns are case, gender, person and number. Derivation is basically concerned with the formation of new words. The focus of this research is noun derivation in Izere, which is an aspect of the derivational morphology of Izere that has not received any attention, to the best knowledge of this researcher. Noun derivation in Izere is carried out on the background of the language being a noun class language, which distinguishes between singular and plural forms of nouns with class marking prefixes which are attached to a root. Isha (2010:199) suggests that "the language ... classifies noun stems according to the way they mark both singular and plural." This research investigates aspects of noun formation in the Izere language. In essence, it morphologically investigates instances of noun derivation in the language. Bauer (2003) clearly distinguishes between two broad aspects of morphology- derivation and

inflection. The research suggests that "these two are usually visualized as being entirely separate…inflection provides forms of lexemes, while derivation provides new lexemes (Bauer, 2003:91). To Haspelmath (2002:68) "creating words for new concepts is one of the chief functions of derivational morphology." Yule (2006:64) also suggests that derivational morphemes are bound morphemes used "to make new words or to make words of a different grammatical category from the stem". In like manner, Arokoyo (2017:103) believes that derivational morphemes "are bound morphemes attached to roots to derive new words. When attached to roots, they may change the syntactic class of the lexical items. This means that the bound morphemes could either be class maintaining or class changing affixes". This is the perspective from which this research is conceived, with reference to noun formation in Izere.

2.   Methodology
This research uses a combination of the descriptive approach and morpho-lexical rules as proposed by Lieber (1980) to analyze noun derivation in Izere. The research is designed to elicit data on the morphology of nouns in Izere, with particular emphasis to noun derivation. A descriptive approach is taken to identify which morphological processes are utilized in the derivation of nouns in Izere. The research population for the study comprises the native speakers of the Ibor dialect of Izere spoken in Fobur, Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State. The sampling technique employed for this research is the purposive sampling technique. The choice of this technique is motivated by the fact that the research dealt with the natural speech environment of native speakers of the language under investigation, and using the purposive sampling technique ensured both ease and convenience of participant

selection for the study. Thirty adult native speakers of the Ibor dialect were selected as respondents for the study. To ensure objectivity, the respondents were divided equally into two parts in terms of gender (15 males and 15 females). Care was also taken to select only respondents above 40 years of age, as it was assumed by the researcher that these older groups were more competent in the language. Both literate and non-literate native speakers of Izere were used for the study, with the emphasis being on competence in the language. Care was also taken to ensure that selected respondents cut across a good geographical spread within the research area.

The data for this study were collected from primary sources. The data were collected during several trips by the researcher to Fobur, in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State. In terms of the method of data collection for this research, a total of one hundred selected nouns from the Ibadan wordlist of 400 basic items and an adapted list of nouns specifically designed for this research were utilized for data collection. The selected nouns were collected electronically with the aid of a recorder and then transcribed in such a way that they identified derived noun forms from other word classes (and other nouns) from native speakers of the Izere language in their natural speech environment. Interviews were also utilized to identify suitable respondents for the research. The researcher also employed the use of two native speakers (one male and one female) as research assistants for intuitive verification of elicited data. This was to ensure the reliability of the collected data.

The method of data analysis is qualitative. The data were collected from recordings of native speakers of the Izere language in their natural linguistic settings and were descriptively analyzed in such a way to show how these nouns were derived from their base forms. The present research adopts the approach of Lieber (1980), which makes a proposal of how stems are formed from roots. This

approach broadens the theory of morphology in two respects. First and foremost, it argues that both inflectional and derivational morphology should be performed within the lexicon, and, in fact, they require the same sets of formal processes. Secondly, it attempts to constrain the interaction of morphological rules. This approach also assumes that each category type (e.g. noun, verb etc.) in the lexicon is divided into lexical classes, which consists of roots of that category type and related stems. It suggests that items *A* and *B* listed in the lexicon will be said to be related if there exists a rule of the form: **X   X'**, where *X* and *X'* represent segmental strings differing from one another in some fashion and *A* shares the properties of *X,* while *B* shares the properties of *X'*. These rules are called morpho-lexical rules. The basic tenet of Lieber's approach has its foundations in Aronoff (1976) where it is assumed that structured combinations of morphemes can be referred to by word formation rules. This assumption is maintained within this research. This approach is adapted and applied to the study of Izere nouns and used to describe the derivation of nouns in Izere.

3.   Review of Related Literature

Little research has been carried out on the derivational morphology of Izere, especially in relation to its nouns. Blench and Kaze (2019) suggest that academic descriptions of the Izere language have emanated from Hamburg and been published in the journal *Afrika und Übersee*. They include Lukas & Willms (1961), Wolff & MeyerBahlburg (1979) and Gerhardt (1984), these last two focusing almost exclusively on verbal morphology. Blench & Kaze (2019) also prepared a dictionary with a grammar sketch. Blench & Kaze (2019:1) state that the Izere people, known as *Jarawan Dutse* by Hausa speakers, live predominantly in Jos North, Jos East and Mangu Local Government Areas of Plateau State and in Tafawa-

Balewa and Toro Local Government Areas of Bauchi State in North-Central Nigeria. They further suggest that, linguistically, Izere should generally be considered a part of the Plateau language family, which predominates in Central Nigeria. Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig (2019) classify Izere as Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Plateau, Central, South-Central. Blench (2000:8) suggests that "population figures are controversial and highly politicized, but Izere certainly has more than 50000 speakers. Current population figures suggest as many as 500000 speakers (Eberhard et al, 2019). Izere is considered to have five dialects: Ibor (Fobarza), Isum, Iganang (Wagana), Ifudere (Afudere) and Ikyo (Afucho)."

Blench and Kaze (2019:10) suggest that "there are five tones in Izere, three level and two contour tones (LM & HL). Contour tones occur in loanwords, words with potentially onomatopoeic names such as those of birds and where a tonally dissimilar VV sequence has been shortened. As such these synchronic occurrences are probably transitional and Izere can be regarded as having an underlying three-height system." Conventionally, all mid tones in Izere are left unmarked. This convention is maintained in this paper.

3.1   The Morphology of Plateau Languages

The Izere language belongs to the Plateau branch of the Benue-Congo language family which Blench (2004:5) suggests is "the largest and most complex branch of the Niger-Congo phylum…. The Benue-Congo languages are centered in present-day Nigeria, although considered with Bantu they cover most of Eastern and Southern Africa".

On the morphology of Benue-Congo as a major language family within Niger-Congo, Blench (2004:10) remarks that "Niger-Congo is remarkable for an elaborate system of noun classification

which marks singular/plural alternations with affixes…. In some families or branches the system has been remodelled, or indeed lost with virtually no trace." This noun classification refers to noun class systems, which Lieber (2009:202) describes as "groupings of nouns that share the particular inflectional forms that they select for. Noun classes can be based roughly on gender, shape, animacy or some combination of these semantic properties, but frequently the membership in noun classes is largely arbitrary". The Izere language shows evidence of having a noun class system that is largely arbitrary and the noun class markers morphologically mark singular and plural on the nouns as exemplified in Isha (2010:199) below:

(1) a. ri-nyi 'tooth'   *a-nyi* 'teeth'
     b. *ka-nu* 'mouth'   *na-nu*
'fingers'
     c. *ka-ta* 'bow' (sg.)   na-ta 'bows'

The data above indicates that Izere inherently pairs most of its nouns into singular and plural with alternating noun class prefixes which are marked for number, as seen in examples 1 (a)-(c). The data indicates that the first syllable of these Izere nouns serves as a noun class marker, which is usually morphologically marked for number, followed by a root. In essence, Izere nouns have to be class-marked and this class marking licenses such words to function as nouns with inherent grammatical number properties. This background information on the noun class system of Izere, though inflectional in nature, is absolutely vital for understanding the derivational aspects of its noun morphology as the words being nominalized have to be class-marked before they can function as nouns in the language.

3.1.1   Noun derivation in Plateau languages
Noun derivation according to Arokoyo (2017:106) is "a process whereby nouns are derived from another part of speech...and from

other nouns". Bitrus, Pwajok & Ganan (2015) investigate a few aspects of noun derivation in Berom, a Benue-Congo language of the same Plateau sub-group, which also shows evidence of noun classes. Their findings show that a derivational prefix: *n-* is used for nominalization of adjectives as exemplified below:

>   (2)   a. *tong* 'fool'   *n-tong* 'foolishness'
>   b. *ta* 'sweet'   *n-ta* 'enjoyment'

The examples above indicate that prefixation is a prevalent aspect of the derivational noun morphology of Berom. These prefixes also function as noun class markers in the language.

Longtau (2008) discusses the nominalization of Tarok verbs. Tarok is also a noun-class language of the Plateau sub-family of Benue-Congo, spoken in Plateau state, Nigeria. The research suggests that verbal nominalization in Tarok is achieved via prefixation of some verbs. The research establishes that the prefixes *m-, n-, i-* and *a-* are used for nominalization in Tarok. Consider the following examples:

>   (3)   a. *mán* 'to love'   *mmán* 'love' (N)
>   b. *càng* 'to be sweet'   *ǹcàng*
>   'sweetness/enjoyment'
>   c. *ɗék* 'to be heavy'   *ìɗék*
>   'responsibility/weight'
>   d. *cì* 'to refuse'   *acì* 'refusal of s.t.' (out
>   of annoyance)

The Tarok data above also indicates that the language also morphologically uses prefixation for the nominalization of some verbs, and they also function as noun class markers in the language.

Longtau (2008) also discusses tone as a morpho-phonological property of the grammar of Tarok. The research

establishes that the noun classes in Tarok can be distinguished via tone changes on the prefixes and noun stems in Tarok. The research provides the following evidence to substantiate its claims:

Table 1 Number Marking via Tone in Tarok

Singular	Plural	Gloss
LH *Ùcár*	MH *ocár*	woman/women
LL *Ùpòn*	MH *opón*	father/fathers
LL *Ùnèm*	MM *onem*	person/people
LL *Ìnà*	ML *inà*	cow/cows
LH *Ìwá*	MH *iwú*	eye/eyes

Adapted from Longtau (2008:91-92)

The data in Table 1 indicates that a change in the noun class marker together with a tone pattern change in the root of the noun is responsible for number inflection in these nouns. This suggests that tone and morphological segments are intertwined in the morphology of the language. Nkamigbo (2009:211-213) also suggests that for Jaba, another Plateau language, spoken in Kaduna state the application of pitch variations to certain lexical items results in the distinction along the dichotomy of singularity and plurality. This indicates that tone plays a very vital role in the morphologies of these Plateau languages.

4.   Noun derivation in Izere

This section considers noun derivation as an aspect of the nominal morphology of the Izere language. Noun derivation from adjectives, verbs, adverbs and other nouns is investigated in this section

4.1   Derivation of deadjectival nouns in Izere

Noun derivation is a process whereby nouns are derived from other parts of speech or other nouns, through a process of nominalization. Deadjectival nouns are nouns which are derived from adjectives. Consider the examples below:

(4)   a.   *yìk* 'great'   *kù-yìk*
                                                        CM#great (Adj)
                                                        '   greatness' (N)

        b.   *whè* 'kind'   *kù-whè*
                                                        CM#kind (Adj)
                                                        'kindness' (N)

        c.   *réréng* 'bitter'   *kù-réréng*
                                                        CM#bitter (Adj)
                                                        'bitterness' (N)

        d.   *kpatón* 'blind'   *rí-kpatón*
                                                        CM#blind (Adj)
                                                        'blindness' (N)

        e.   *kóp* 'old'   *ri-kóp*
                                                        CM#old (Adj)
                                                        'oldness' (N)

        f.   *shíshím* 'jealous   *ri-shíshím*
                                                        CM#jealous(Adj)
                                                        'jealousy' (N)

The data in 4 (a)-(f) indicates that Quality nouns are derived from corresponding Quality adjectives in Izere. This involves the use of a nominalizing class marker (CM) which always appears as a prefix.

The data indicates that this prefix has two allomorphs- [kù-] and [ri-]. Haspelmath and Sims (2010: 24) suggest that "allomorphs that are not similar in pronunciation ...are called suppletive allomorphs". The examples in 4 (a)-(c) (which have [kù-]) and 2 (d)-(f) (with [ri-]) do not seem to have any general phonological rule that is responsible for the derivation of one allomorph from another. For example, the adjective in 4 (a) *yìk* 'great' is nominalized to become the noun *kuyìk* 'greatness'. The [ri-] allomorph, on the other hand, is used in 4 (e) to derive the noun *rikóp* 'oldness' from the adjective *kóp* 'old'. Using morpho-lexical rules, the derivation of deadjectival nouns in Izere is captured with the following rule:

Rule 1: Adj. ⟶ D. Adj. N / CM $\begin{bmatrix} \text{[ku-]} \\ \text{[ri-]} \end{bmatrix}$ # __ [+Quality] ##

This rule states that the prefixing of the nominalizing class marker to a quality adjective in Izere leads to the formation of a deadjectival noun. The nominalizing class marker thus licenses the adjective to function as a noun in the language. It should be noted that this rule only accounts for the derivation of these deadjectival nouns in Izere, but does not account for the conditions of allomorphy. Haspelmath and Sims (2010: 26) also suggest that lexical conditioning of allomorphs is a situation "where the choice of allomorph cannot be derived from any general rule and must be learned individually for each word". This is clearly the case for the data in 4 (a)-(f).

4.2   Derivation of deverbal nouns in Izere

Deverbal nouns are nouns which are derived from verbs. Arokoyo (2017: 107) suggests that these derived nouns have different meaning components which include agent nouns...patient nouns…action nouns…instrumental nouns…e.t.c. Newman (2000:

156) believes that from a syntactic point of view, deverbal nouns function just like ordinary common nouns. Types of deverbal nouns, found in Izere, include gerunds, instrument nouns and occupational nouns. These are discussed below:

   i. **Gerund**: This is a type of deverbal noun. Crystal (2008: 352) describes a gerund as "a word derived from a verb...used as a noun". Consider some examples of gerunds in Izere below:

(5)   a.   *ríp* 'ask'   *ku-rip*
                                              CM#ask (V)
                                              'asking' (N)

       b.   *tóm* 'send'   *ku-tom*
                                              CM#send (V)
                                              'sending' (N)

       c.   *nyím* 'meet'   *ku-nyim*
                                              CM#meet (V)
                                              'meeting' (N)

       d.   *kú* 'die'   *ri-kú*
                                              CM#die (V)
                                              'dying' (N)

       e.   *kos* 'vomit'   *ri-kos*
                                              CM#vomit (V)
                                              'vomiting' (N)

       f.   *kpa* 'fall'   *ri-kpa*
                                              CM#fall (V)
                                              'falling' (N)

The examples in 5 (a)-(c) and 5 (d)-(f) support the assumption of the existence of allomorphs of the nominalizing class marker ([ku-] and [ri-]) which appear as prefixes in Izere. It is also a case of suppletive allomorphy. The data here also indicates that the nominalizing morpheme in Izere is lexically conditioned. Like previously noted in the case of deadjectival nouns, it is observed that no general phonological rule can account for the derivation of the allomorphs

of this morpheme. In essence, nominalization of this set of nouns is achieved via prefixation. This nominalization of verbs in Izere is captured with the following morpho-lexical rule:

Rule 2: V $\longrightarrow$ **D. verbal N / CM** $\left[\begin{array}{c} \textbf{[ku-]} \\ \textbf{[ri-]} \end{array}\right]$ # __ ##

This rule states that the addition of the nominalizing class marker to a verb in Izere, just like in the case of deadjectival nouns, licenses it to function as a noun in the language. It further identifies the two allomorphs of the nominalizing morpheme, but does not propose any rule that can account for the variants of the allomorph. This indicates that the allomorphs of this morpheme are also lexically conditioned.

ii. **Instrument nouns**: These are deverbal nouns that indicate the instrument with which an action is performed. Izere derives instrument nouns via prefixation. A verb is thus converted into a noun of instrument when certain prefixes are attached to the base. Consider the following examples:

(6) a. *shér* *i-sher*
          'hang' CM#hang
                  'hangar'

     b. *kyɔr* *i-kyɔ̀r*
         'scrape' CM#scrape
                   'scraper'

     c. *kanang* 'shine' *àkanàng*
                            CM#shine
                            'light'

     d. *kárák* 'open' *àkàràk*
                          CM#open
                          'opener'

The data in 6 (a)-(d) shows how some instrument nouns are derived in Izere. The data indicates that verbs can be changed to instrument nouns when they are class marked with the prefix [ì-], or [à-] alongside a tone lowering of the root. For example, in 6 (c), the root of the base *kanang* 'shine' has a mid-mid tone pattern, while the derived noun *àkanàng* 'light' has a lowering of the tone in the root of the word (apart from the prefix tone) to mid-low (the second syllable has a lowered tone). The [à-] allomorph is realized when the root of the word begins with a velar consonant, as seen in 6 (c) and (d) above, while the [ì-] allomorph appears when the root of the word begins with a non-velar consonant, as seen in 6 (a) and (b). In essence, prefixation, alongside tone lowering of the root in the derived nouns are responsible for the derivation of this set of nouns in Izere. This process is captured with the following morpho-lexical rule:

Rule 3:   V ⟶ Instrument N / CM $\begin{bmatrix} \text{[ì-] [-velar]} \\ \text{[à-][+velar]} \end{bmatrix}$ #__ [+tone lowering] ##

The reading of this rule states that a verb becomes an instrument noun in the environment where it is class-marked with the prefix [ì-] attached to a root that begins with a non-velar consonant or [à-] attached to a root that begins with a velar consonant. There is also a tone lowering of the root.

iii.   Occupational nouns: These are nouns which indicate a profession. In Izere, occupational nouns are also morphologically derived via prefixation as exemplified below:

(7) a. *tú*   *à-tù*
         'to smith'   CM#to smith
                                               'blacksmith'

    b. *tom*   *à-tòm*
         'send'   CM#send
                                             'messenger'

    c. *fék*   *à-fèk*
         'to rear'   CM#to rear
                                             'shepherd'

    d. *nɔk*   *à-nɔ̀k*
         'to build'   CM#to build

                                             'builder' (mason)

The data in 7 (a)-(d) indicates that by class-marking activity verbs with the noun class marker [à-] an occupational noun is derived. The nominalization of these nouns is also achieved via a combination of prefixation and tone lowering of the base tone in the derived nouns. The following morpho-lexical rule is used to capture the process:

Rule 4:   V ⟶ Occupational N / CM [à-] #__ [+Activity+ tone lowering]##

This rule states that a verb changes to an occupational noun in the environment where it is prefixed with [à-] alongside tone lowering of the base form and the verb is an activity verb.

4.3   Derivation of denominal nouns in Izere

According to Arokoyo (2017:112) "denominal nouns are nouns that are derived from other nouns through the use of denominal affixes." Types of denominal nouns found in Izere include dimunitives and speaker nouns, which are discussed in this section.

    i.   **Dimunitives:** These are a type of denominal noun that show a reduction in size of such a noun. Lieber (2009:40) suggests

that dimunitives "signal a smaller version of the base." Izere dimunitive nouns are formed by prefixation as seen below:

(8)   a.   *í-nyak* 'cow'   *kí-(i)-nyak* ⟶ *kínyak*
                                       Dim. P#(CM)-cow
                                       'small cow'

      b.   *í-nyon* 'chicken'   *kí-(i)-nyon* ⟶ *kínyon*
                                       Dim. P#(CM)-chicken
                                       'small chicken'

      c.   *á-sòm* 'hare'   *ká-(a)sòm* ⟶ *kásòm*
                                       Dim. P#(CM)-hare
                                       'small hare'

      d.   *á-ner* 'person'   *ká-(a)ner* ⟶ *káner*
                                       Dim. P#(CM)-person
                                       'small person'

The data in 8 (a)-(d) shows that the derivation of dimunitive forms of nouns, in Izere, involves the prefixation of the dimunitive prefix (Dim. P), to a root noun. It also indicates that this morpheme has two allomorphs- [ka-] and [ki-], which are realized in two different phonological environments. 8 (a) and (b) indicate that the [ki-] dimunitive allomorph is realized in environments where the root begins with palatal consonants, while [ka-] is found with roots that begin with non-palatal consonants. The class marker of the noun is usually deleted at the morpheme boundary to break vowel clusters. This morphological process is captured with the following morpho-lexical rule:

Rule 5:   N ⟶ Dim. N / Dim. P $\begin{bmatrix} \text{[ki-]} \\ \text{[ka-]} \end{bmatrix}$ #__ $\begin{bmatrix} \text{[C +palatal]} \\ \text{[C –palatal]} \end{bmatrix}$ [+Size] ##

This rule indicates that the addition of the dimunitive prefix to a quantifiable noun derives a dimunitive form of that noun in Izere. It also specifies the environment under which each allomorph is realized. This derivational process is class maintaining because the

82

derived form doesn't change its word class, though it adds an additional semantic property to the noun from its base form in terms of decrease in size.

ii. **Speaker nouns**: These are a type of human reference noun that refer to speakers of a language or dialect. This is achieved via prefixation of *a-fu-* which is a bound morpheme that equates 'male speaker of...' (the *a-* prefix on *a-fu-* serves as a noun class prefix for the derived speaker noun). Consider the examples below:

(9) a. *Ízeré* 'Izere language' À-f(ú)-i-zeré ⟶ Àfízeré
CM-Sp.M#CM-Izere
'Izere person'

b. *Ábùr* 'Hausa language' A-f(ú)a-bùr ⟶ Àfábùr
CM-Sp.M#CM-Hausa
'Hausa person'

c. *Ínyémrí* 'Igbo language' À-f(u)-inyémrí ⟶ Àfinyémrí
CM-Sp.M#CM-Igbo
'Igbo person'

d. *Àgbàng* 'Berom language' A-fú-(a)-gbàng ⟶ Àfúgbàng
CM-Sp.M#CM-Berom
'Berom person'

e. *Àgòng* 'Iguta language' A-fú-(a)-gòng ⟶ Àfúgòng
CM-Sp.M#CM-Iguta
'Anaguta person'

f. *Akpang* 'dialect of Federe' A-fú-(a)-kpang ⟶ Àfúkpang
CM-Sp.M#CM-Federe
'Federe person'

The data in 9 (a)-(f) shows instances of the derivation of speaker nouns from language or dialect names in Izere. This involves the prefixation of the Speaker Morpheme (Sp.M), [fu-], to the language noun. The next process involves the class marking of the derived form with [à-] to license it to function as a noun in the language (as

all Izere nouns must be class-marked). Lieber (2009: 112) suggests that "we only call an affix an infix if it occurs within another morpheme". In the data in 9 (a)-(f), what we have is a sequence of two morphemes before the root. In 9 (a)-(c), the data indicates that in these instances there is a deletion of the final part of the speaker morpheme, [-*f(u)*-]. This happens when two vowels meet at the morpheme boundary of the speaker morpheme and the root of the language noun begins with a non-velar consonant. This gives rise to an allomorph, [-f-], of the speaker morpheme. In 9 (d)-(f), where two vowels meet at the morpheme boundary of the speaker morpheme and language noun, the initial vowel of the class marker on the language name is deleted when its root begins with a velar consonant. There is also a general tendency for Izere words to avoid vowel clusters at these morpheme boundaries. Instances of vowel clusters are avoided. This process is captured with the following morpho-lexical rule:

Rule 6:   N ⟶ Speaker N / CM#Sp.M $\begin{bmatrix} \text{[-f-]} \\ \text{[-fu-]} \end{bmatrix}$ #__ $\begin{bmatrix} \text{[-velar]} \\ \text{[+velar]} \end{bmatrix}$ [+Lang reference] ##

The reading of this rule indicates that a language noun in Izere becomes a speaker noun in the environment where it is prefixed with a class-marked speaker morpheme, [*à-f(ú)*-]. The rule also establishes the condition(s) that derive the allomorphs of this speaker morpheme. It indicates that the [-f-] allomorph appears where the root of the language noun begins with a non-velar consonant, while the [-fú-] allomorph appears when the root of the language noun begins with a velar consonant.

4.4 Derivation of Deadverbial Nouns in Izere

Deadverbial nouns are nouns which are derived from adverbs. Consider the examples below:

(10) a. *kpùkpòk*   *a-kpùkpòk*
          'humourously'   CM#humourously
                               'jest'

      b. *kyɔ́n*   *à-kyɔ́n*
          'secretly'   CM#secretly
                               'secret'

      c. *bóp*   *à-bóp*
          'early'   CM#early
                               'early morning' (dawn)

      d. *yìyàk*   *à-yìyàk*
          exaggeratedly'   CM#exaggeratedly
                               'exaggeration'

The data in 10 (a)-(d), shows how nouns are derived from adverbs in Izere. The data indicates that the class marking of some adverbs with the prefix [à-] in Izere changes the adverb into a noun. It is observed that all the adverbs above are adverbs of manner. The process is captured with the following morpho-lexical rule:

Rule 7: **Adv** ⟶ **N / CM [à-] # __ [+Manner] ##**

The rule indicates that an adverb changes to a noun in the environment where it is class marked with the prefix [à-] and the adverb is an adverb of manner. If the adverb is not a manner adverb, the derived noun will be ungrammatical as seen in the examples below:

11) a. *mákòng* 'now'   **à-mákòng*
     b. *kuré* 'yesterday'   **à-kuré*

It can be seen in 11 (a) and (b) that trying to use adverbs of time to derive nouns leads to ill-formed words in Izere.

5.   Summary and Conclusion

This research investigates noun derivation in Izere. Prefixation was identified as the only process involved in noun derivation in Izere. The findings of the research indicate that these affixes which appear as prefixes are sometimes used for class-marking other word classes and thus performing the derivational process of deriving nouns from such words in the language. Lieber (2009:71) suggests that "several factors contribute to productivity: the phonological and semantic transparency of the process, the size of the pool of bases it can apply to, and its usefulness". One of this derivational prefixes, ([ku-] and [ri-]), in both of its allomorphic variations, is responsible for the derivation of nouns from bases like verbs and adjectives, showing that it can still be applied to new forms, and its usefulness cannot be questioned in any way. It is also semantically very transparent when it derives new nouns.

The research establishes that nominalization of adverbs, adjectives, verbs and the denominalization of other nouns are essential aspects of Izere noun derivation. It further identifies the conditions of allomorphy for several nominalizing morphemes in the language. In essence, this research establishes prefixation as the only morphological process involved in nominalization in Izere.

References

Arokoyo, B. E. 2017. *Unlocking morphology* (2nd edition). Ilorin:

    Chrimadel Publishing House.

Aronoff, M. (1976). *Word formation in generative grammar.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bauer, L. 2003. *Introducing linguistic morphology* (2nd edition). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bitrus, M. P., Pwajok, D. I. & Ganan, P. E. (2015). A study of the morphological processes in Berom language. *Education and Linguistic Research* 1(1), 54-66.

Blench, R. M. & Kaze, B. 2019. *A dictionary of the Izere language of Fobur.* Retrieved from http://www.rogerblench.info/RBOP.htm

Blench, R. M. (2004). The Benue-Congo languages: A proposed internal classification. http://homepagentlworld.com/roger_blench/RBOP.htm

Blench, R.M. (2000). Transitions in Izere nominal morphology and implications for the analysis of Plateau languages. In: A. Meißner & A. Storch (eds.) *Nominal Classification in African Languages,* 12, 7-28. Frankfurter: Afrikanische Blätter.

Crystal, D. 2008. *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (6th edition). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F. & Fennig, C. D. 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world.* (22nd. edition.). Dallas, Texas: SIL International http://www.ethnologue.com

Haspelmath, M. & Sims, A. D. 2010. *Understanding morphology* (2nd edition). London: Hodder Education.

Haspelmath, M. 2002. *Understanding morphology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Isha, V. I. N. 2010. Inflectional morphology: A study of grammatical categories in Izere. *Journal of Nigerian Languages and Culture*, 12 (2), 197-204.

Lieber, R. 1980. On the organization of the lexicon. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lieber, R. 2009. *Introducing morphology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Longtau, S. R. (2008). *The Tarok Language: Its Basic Principles and Grammar*. Jos: Development Alternatives, Research & Training (DART).

Newman, P. 2000. *The Hausa language: An encyclopedic reference grammar*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Nkamigbo, L. C. Lexical pluralization in Jaba. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria 12,* 205-213.

Yule, G. 2006. *The study of language* (3rd edition). New York: Cambridge University Press.