

INTERFIXATION PROCESSES IN IGUTA MORPHOLOGY

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Abstract

Affixal morphology is a process that permits the combination of affixes and stems to develop a new word. Morphologists consistently argue for the realisation of various kinds of affixes that are common to languages. However, except for interfixation, studies on the morphology of African languages suggest the existence of three types of affixes, i.e., prefixes, suffixes, and infixes. Therefore, this paper reconnoitres the interfixation process in the morphology of Iguta, a minority language spoken in parts of Toro and Jos North of Bauchi and Plateau States in Northern Nigeria, via Ado's (2017) 455-word list. Using Hand Analysis Strategy and the Thematic Analytical Process, the paper discovers that the affixes **-di-**, **-en-**, and **-ten-** can interfix between two base or root morphemes to form compound nouns. The paper establishes that interfixation processes exist in the Iguta language and that affixes (bound morphemes) are commonly inserted between free morphemes to derive or inflect nouns. The fact that "char" in Iguta stands for "many/much" and, when it suffixes a base/root it maintains its word class, serving as an inflectional marker, while the insertion of either **-di-**, **-en-**, and **-ten-** interfixes in-between base/root words in the formation of the compound words is derivational. The results revealed that this type of affix is common in the Iguta language. Having this kind of process in word formation serves as part of the uniqueness of Iguta. Therefore, the process could serve as credence to the language, being a member of the Benue-Congo language phylum.

Keywords: *Affixal Morphology, African Languages, Interfixation Process, Northern Nigeria*

1. Introduction

This paper suggests the existence of interfixation in the morphology of the Iguta language. This is not surprising, as extant studies have established that the affixation process is the most common way of creating new words in the languages of the world (Bauer, 1988). Morphologically speaking, affixes are morphemes (free and bound) or affixal elements attached to a base/base/stem to either inflect or derive new words (Katamba, 2009). It is further viewed that affixal morphology permits or warrants the combination of affixes and stems to develop a new word (Crystal, 2008). Moreover, morphologists consistently argue for the realisation of various kinds of affixes that are common to languages, thus: prefixes, suffixes, and infixes (e.g., Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011).

However, except for interfixation, the existence of these affixes has been proven in a few African languages, Hausa inclusive. For instance, scholars such as Ado and Bidin (2017a & b) revealed two types of affixes, i.e., suffixes and infixes in Iguta, while Newman (2000), Umar (2008), and Inuwa (2017) identified four types of affixes, i.e., prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and circumfixes in Hausa. Similar studies on the morphology of African languages suggest three types of affixes, i.e., prefix, suffix, and infix (Abubakar, 2000; Fagge, 2004; Sani, 2002, 2009; and Al-Hassan, 2011) as well as Umar (2008, 2020) who identified five types of affixes, i.e., prefix, suffix, infix, circumfix, and transfix. In fact, Hausa's morphological richness in terms of affixation is not surprising due to its synthetic features. The language belongs to the Chadic languages of the Afro-Asiatic family, which share a similar trend with Semitic and Berber languages like Tamazight and Hebrew (Greenberg, 1963).

In contrast to Hausa, the Iguta language belongs to the Benue-Congounder the Niger-Kordofanian family/phylum (Ames, 1934), and this could provide a reason for having a different morphological setting among the languages. Morphologically speaking, it is observed that the Benue-Congo language family lacks enough published materials to some extent. Some scholars, such as

Gunn (1953), Diamond (1960, 1967 and 1993) and Isichei (1991), have studied the language and its people without focusing on morphology and grammar. Hence, this has attracted studies on morphological aspects of nouns and the nominal system of the Iguta language. In fact, apart from Ado and Bidin's (2017a & b), studies on Iguta suffixation and prefixation, the Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist (BCCW) material remains the most credible published and compiled material on Bauchi and Plateau languages, which motivates the paper. Bauer's (1988) model of affixation is adapted as the underpinning theory in analysing the interfixation processes found in the morphology of the Iguta language. The paper used Ado's 450 word list as corpus for the analysis.

1.1 Geographical Coverage of Iguta Language

Iguta is a language spoken in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State and Toro Local Government Area of Bauchi State, Nigeria. The speakers call their language 'Iguta', and they are referred to as 'Anaguta'. Persuasively, Hausa natives call them 'Nârkùtá/Nárágùtà', which is also the name of a settlement situated a few kilometres to the Bauchi Plateau border (Gwom, 1983). The Anaguta tribe has four clans: Andùwóng, Andírígízà, Anágòhóm, and Annábór (Anàmbí). On the other hand, the language has five dialects, namely, Andírígízà, Annábór (Anágòhóm), Andóhó, Andìgóng, and Andísâamá. In fact, Andírígízà is the standard and central dialect (Diamond, 1960, 1993; Blench, 1998). Thus, the paper focused on Andirgiza dialect.

Linguistically speaking, it is interesting to note that the Iguta and Ibufe languages of the Buji people living in both the Toro area and the Bassa area of Plateau State exhibit a degree of similarity. Although, the slight differences can be attributed to dialectal variation, as shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: *Lexical Similarities between Iguta and Ibufe Languages*

Iguta language	Ibuze language	Gloss
Dinka	Denka	One
Repu	Repo	Two
Taru	Taro	Three
Bereng	Bereng	Eleven
Vana	Vana	Boy
Shamma	Shammo	Fine

Source: Ado (2017)

According to Ames (1934), the Iguta language falls under the Northern Jos group of the Eastern Kainji sub-branch of the larger Benue-Congo family of African languages. The linguistic studies of Bauchi-Plateau have placed the Anaguta and their neighbours, such as Buji, Sanga, Jere, Gusu, Bujel, and Lamore, under the West Plateau 1B.

Iguta native speakers live side by side with the Hausa and the Fulani nomads. Most Hausa and Fulani natives living alongside the Anaguta speak the language fluently (Ames, 1934). One interesting feature about the language is that, just like the other Benue-Congo languages, it borrows many lexical items from the Hausa language. However, this borrowing process occurs in the non-standard dialect, mostly the Andísámá dialect (Ames, 1934). The study of the interfixation process in Iguta morphology could be considered timely.

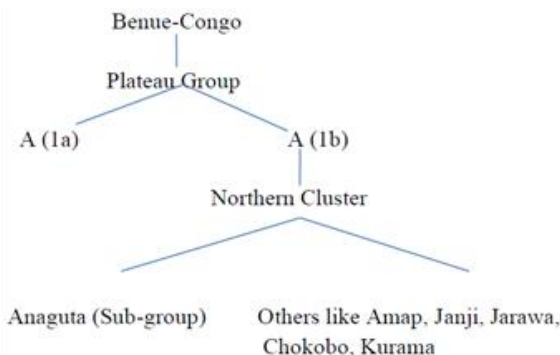


Figure 1.3: West Plateau 1B Language Family

2. Literature Review

Among the large number of language groups that make up Nigeria, the North-Eastern and Central regions are virtually the most composite and diverse in nature, having Plateau and Bauchi with almost 50-120 languages (Blench, 2000a), although the estimate relies on how comprehensive a study intends to be. This is because most of these languages are moribund or potentially endangered, spoken within a small number of villages due to Hausanisation or urbanization (Blench, 1998). The central part of Nigeria is dominated by Plateau languages, which are mostly under the Benue-Congo family (Williamson, 1989). They are widely spread from the axis of Lake Kainji and cover the South Bauchi region, with an estimated number of 1 million speakers, excluding the Kainji and Jukunoid groups. Lexical and morphological evidence provides an actual boundary between Plateau and Jukunoid (Blench, 2007; Williamson & Blench, 2000).

Accordingly, Greenberg (1963) attributed some languages of Benue-Cross to the present-day East Benue-Congo family. Meanwhile, the contemporary sub-classification of languages in Plateau derives its credit from Greenberg (1963). The study subcategorised the northern Iguta language falls under the Eastern Kainji sub-branch of the larger Benue-Congo family of African languages (Greenberg, 1963). Although the study contained many modifications, changes, and inclusions by most succeeding studies (e.g., Blench, 1998, 2000), the Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist (BCCW) material is an exception. This argument becomes obvious as it is observed that there is a lack of published materials on the Benue-Congo language family. The few ones found are the BCCW (Blench & Dendo, 2006) and Ado's (2017) 455-word list.

2.1 The Morphological Structure of Words Using Affixes

This study adapted Bauer's (1988) affixation approach in the analysis of the Iguta interfixation process. Accordingly, Bauer's approach (1988, p. 19) states that "morphology is used for the sequence of rules postulated by linguists to account for the changes

in the shapes of words”. He established that affixes are the most common way of creating words in the languages of the world. He further claimed that suffixes are the most common sub-branch of affixes existing in languages. He therefore, asserted further that several languages in the world use suffixes to the exclusion of any other type. These include Basque, Finnish, and Quechua, but only a few languages use prefixes to the exclusion of other types of affixes; Thai is an example of a language that does not use any other type of affix exclusively. The scholar further highlighted that suffixes are used for all purposes in morphology. They are used **derivationally** as in: (1) English: *Constitut-ion-al-ity*, (2) Finnish: *asu-nno-ttom-uus* ‘Live Noun-without-abstract-noun “houselessness”’. **Inflectionally**, as in (3) Finnish: *talo-issa-an* ‘House-plural-in-3rd person-possessive “in their houses”’.

Consequently, the scholar states that even though prefixes are rarer than suffixes, they work in the same manner. They can be derivational, as in (4) English: *dis-en-tangle* (5) *Mam:aj-b’iitz* ‘agent-song “singer” (6) *Tagalog: pan-ulat* ‘Instrument-write “pen” or **inflectional** as in (7) *Mam: t-kamb* 3rd – singular-possessive-prize “his prize”, (8) *Tagalog: i-sulat* ‘Modal-write “writing (participle). In terms of infixes, the morphs are normally inserted after the initial consonant of the base. The following examples are from Chrau, a language of Vietnam and from Tagalog, a language of the Philippines:

(9) Chrau: *Vōh* “know” *V-an-ōh* “wise”

Cāh “remember” *C-an-āh* “left-over”

(10) Tagalog: *Sulat* “wrote” *S-um-ulat* “write” *S-in-ulat* “was written”

In terms of interfix, Bauer (1988) asserted that they are a special kind of infix mostly discovered in Germanic languages. The scholar further states that in interfixation, the linking element, appears between the two elements of a compound word. The scholar illustrated this assertion via the German language, thus:

	Elements 1	Gloss	Element 2	Gloss	Compound	Gloss
12.	<i>Auge</i>	<i>eye</i>	<i>Artz</i>	<i>doctor</i>	<i>Auge-n-artz</i>	“eye doctor”
13.	<i>Tag</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Reise</i>	<i>journey</i>	<i>Tag-e-reise</i>	“day’s journey”
14.	<i>Bauer</i>	<i>farmer</i>	<i>Frau</i>	<i>woman</i>	<i>Bauer-s-frau</i>	“farmer’s wife”
15.	<i>Jahr</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Zeit</i>	<i>time</i>	<i>Jah-es-zeit</i>	“season” (yearly)
16.	<i>Strauss</i>	<i>Ostrich</i>	<i>Ei</i>	<i>egg</i>	<i>Strauss-en-ei</i>	“ostrich egg”
17.	<i>Arbeit</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Anzug</i>	<i>suit</i>	<i>Arbeit-s- anzug</i>	“work clothes”

As illustrated in the aforementioned examples, it is understood that the bound morphemes “n”, “e”, “s”, “es”, and “en” are interfixes and are used to derive possessive nouns and pronouns in the language. This suggests that the linking morphemes are empty-bound morphemes with semantic implication. In fact, many scholars contend that interfixes are morphemes flanked by other morphemes. Accordingly, interfixation incorporates a wide variety of functions and characteristics. For instance, interfixes often occur in an intermorphemic position in a word, that is, before, after, or between roots. In other instances, interfixes are mostly considered devoid of meaning. Libben et al. (2009) claimed that interfixation can mark nouns, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs. They further professed that the combination of root plus interfix does not normally constitute a word. Hence, the paper dwells on the exploration of the interfixation processes that could be found in the Iguta language.

Meanwhile, reviews of related studies on morphology and affixation in the Nigerian context revealed the existence of various affixation processes in most of the languages, particularly languages of Bauchi and Plateau States of Northern Nigeria. The studies conducted on the morphology of nouns include Felicia (2012), while those on nominal morphology include Blench and Dendo (2006).

Studies on morphological processes include Yakubu (2009), Muazu (2009), and Giwa (2011). Other related studies are Rufa’i (1979), Al-Hassan (2011), and Fomwul (2011). Most of the studies adopted Matthews’ (1974) approach. Moreover, it is also observed that very little has been done on the linguistic aspect of the Iguta language. The few identified are the morphological descriptions of noun formation processes through suffixation and prefixation in the Iguta language (Ado & Bidin, 2017) and the developing documentation of an endangered language: a case study of Iguta wordlists (Ado & Bidin, 2017). In fact, these provide credence to the language.

Regarding Hausa morphology, the first assertion was made by Rufa’i (1979) in describing certain processes that exist in the language within the framework of morphology theory. Rufa’i (1979) explained the principal processes that account for word formation in Hausa, where he examined six morphological processes, namely: compounding, affixation, reduplication, zero derivation, borrowing, and manufacturing. Although Rufa’i (1979) provided a detailed morphological analysis of Hausa, the shortcoming of the study is the lack of formulated rules to safeguard the study. In fact, there are some items that are explicitly not part of the core morphology, like “manufacturing,” and some others are even bewildering. Certain items like vowel length were also analysed, while tone and inflection were not even mentioned.

In a similar vein, Yakubu (2009) conducted a study on the morphological processes of Tarok personal names to provide an effective and practical contribution to the body of knowledge. The aim was to develop the language with teaching materials in Nigeria, and prevent its extinction. The study used oral interviews and tape-recording in gathering information from the participants. The focus was on competent native speakers of the language. In the study, textual materials written by both natives and foreign researchers served as the secondary source of data. The study found three morphological processes involving the derivation of personal nouns via affixation, compounding, and reduplication. The affixation processes include the suffixes ‘*cit*’ and ‘*kat*’. On the other hand, the

compound name formation processes involve *noun + noun*, *verb + verb*, *noun + verb*, *verb + noun*, *adjective and verb + adverb*, and *adjective + noun*. There are also monosyllabic names, variant names, and circumstantial names, and feminine and masculine names in the language.

Muazu (2009) conducted a morphological study of Kilba language via Matthew's (1974) and Abubakar's (2000) models of approach. The study found three basic processes: reduplication, affixation, and modification. Affixation is the most common in the Kilba language. Ma'azu observed four prefixes in the language, which include “*ndər-*, *njir-*, *mbor-*, and *vi-*” and another five suffixes, which are: “*-kur*” as an abstract noun suffix, “*-da*, *-nga*, *-nyə*, *-kə'yə*, *-kənda*” as possessive suffixes, while “*-na* and *-nda*” mark both demonstrative and emphatic suffixes, and “*ari*” suffix marks emphasis in the Kilba language. The study also identified other suffixes in the language like “*-áni*, *-tì*, *-yà*, *-bìyà*, *-nà*, *-nyà* with *rì*. The study does not indicate the number of participants and their age category.

Similarly, a study on morphological processes of Alago (a case study of the Doma dialect) of Eastern South-Central Niger Congo has been done (Giwa, 2011). The data were retrieved from ten native speakers used as informants through Matthew's (1974) model. The study revealed affixation, reduplication, and modification (Giwa, 2011).

On a similar note, Shina'an (2011) conducted an introductory study of Jakattoe morphology, a branch of the Angas-Goemai of the West Chadic languages of Nigeria. The study attempted to identify the morphological concept and other relevant topics of discourse in the language. Data were primarily obtained through non-structured interviews from six different native speakers between the ages of 40 and 70 years. The study was conducted using Yule's (2007) model and discovered that Jakattoe is a tonal language with affixes mostly serving as *quantifiers*. The results also showed that affixes distinguish gender, and can be used in word derivation. The ‘*mūep*’ suffix, on the other hand, is seen as a plural

marker in the language. Furthermore, reduplication is also used to place emphasis and functions as an adverbial in the Jakattoe language (Fomwul, 2011).

In the same vein, Nkanga (2012) provided a detailed analysis of the morphological and internal structure of Ibibio nouns. The researcher used interviews, books, and journals as sources of data. Essen's (1990) model was adopted in examining the effect of tones and how nouns are formed in the language. It was found that Ibibio has base formed nouns, compound and blended nouns. It was also shown that nouns in Ibibio begin with *vowels or syllabic nasal sounds*. Sometimes, this involves the process of elision. This process refers to some sounds of a word being dropped or deleted to form *compound names*. The result also highlighted that when the sound plummeted, its tone marking remained as in the case of blending. In other cases, the compound words are reduced to a shorter form, as in the case of clipping.

Meanwhile, Durueke (2012) studied reduplication in the Tiv language of central Nigeria. The study was conducted to provide pedagogical materials for teachers and students of linguistics. Data were collected through interviews, and the study revealed that adjectives and nouns are reduplicated to derive adverbs. However, not every noun can be reduplicated in Tiv. This suggests that there are few *'true' adverbs and adjectives* in the Tiv language. A similar study focused on aspects of compounding in Tiv, a West-Benue-Congo language spoken mostly in Benue and Nasarawa States in North Central Nigeria and Taraba State of the North-Eastern Nigeria. In the study, Mbabuun (2021) established that almost, if not all, the aspects of lexical compounding found in European and African languages are available in the Tiv language. Hence, he concludes that compounding is a productive word formation process in the Tiv language.

A recent review revealed growing attention to the morphophonemic patterns of affixation in Tiv plural formation (Ayagah, 2023). The scholar investigated the sound changes occurring when morphemes concatenate via affixation processes in

order to produce plurals in the Bantoid language (Tiv), spoken mostly in the central part of Nigeria, Specifically in Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Nasarawa, and Cross River States. The study revealed the phonological factors that affect morphemes, or grammatical factors capable of influencing the phonemes in Tiv plural formation.

In another study, Ayagah and Akpagher (2024) focused on the autosegmental analysis of morphologically conditioned epenthetic processes in Tiv nouns. The scholars adopted a qualitative research design to understand the constraints that govern the processes and the implications of Tiv grammar. The scholars utilised monolingual native speakers of the Tiv language. With the aid of Leipzig glossing rules, the researchers organised, coded, and analysed the data and revealed that epenthetic processes are morphologically conditioned and occur through affixation in pluralisation. This is particularly common in the Gboko dialect of the Tiv language. In a similar trend, Igbaukum and Adzer (2024) studied the grammatical relevance of affixation in the Tiv language. The study is geared towards inflectional and derivational affixes in an attempt to identify their grammatical relevance in Tiv. Using a qualitative approach, Igbaukum and Adzer (2024) revealed that Tiv has inflectional affixes serving grammatical functions, by giving additional meaning to a word. It was also found that derivational affixes are used in deriving new words from other classes of words. The scholars recommended further studies on the morphological processes of other languages of northern Nigeria. This gives the current paper's motivation.

Al-Hassan (2011) conducted a study entitled "Does Hausa Really Have Infixation? The study indicated the existence of prefixes and suffixes but doubted the appearance of infixes in the language. According to him, infixes could be a mere erroneous perception, as scholars might have been viewing suffixes with obscured phonological or removed morphemes as infixation. Other views shared by Al-Hassan (2011) on infixation could be due to a simple case of wrongful utilisation of terminology as a result of a

superficially extraneous premise. He, therefore, regards infixation in African Nigerian languages as questionable or non-existent.

In another study, Umar (2008 & 2020) also focused on infixes and infixation processes in Hausa morphology. The study generates the data-driven outputs of Hausa infixes close and empirically observes their nature and behaviour. With the aid of a descriptive approach, the study reviewed the general outlook of Hausa infixation processes and highlighted certain points debated over the realization of infixes by some Hausaists. The findings revealed the manifestation of a reasonable percentage of functional infixal morphemes that are both derivational and inflectional in nature. Umar (2020) further subcategorised the infixes into vocalic, consonantal, and syllabic in accordance with the Semitic or Berber language of the Afro-Asiatic phylum. He also discovered other affixal morphemes used in the Hausa language game.

The review of related studies ascertained the existence of some related works on interfixation. For instance, a study on the morpho-syntax of interfixation in Ika (Imu & Cooney, 2022). In the study, the scholars utilised the segmental principles as a theoretical framework and revealed a claim testifying interfix is a single segment. According to their arguments, both consonant sounds and syllabic nasals are normally inserted in between the root word and are duplicated. Imu and Cooney (2022) further stated that the vowel elements must align with the vowel harmony principle (-AIR and +AIR sets group). Accordingly, the initial derivation is made of syllabic elements. It suggests that a vowel or nasal is followed by a consonant and a vowel after the root word in the formation of the interfix. Imu and Cooney (2022) concluded that an interfix is inserted in between two identical words, showing or serving as a linking item other than in word-initial or final position. Hence, in the Ika language, interfixation attracts a change of meaning and derivation. A review of a similar study on typology of interfixation in the Yorùbá language was conducted (Oyinloye, 2024). It was found that interfixation in Standard Yorùbá language involves reduplicating. This is typical of a root noun (base) to the left, after

which an affix is inserted between the reduplicant and the root noun. Therefore, Oyinloye (2024, p. 1) concluded ‘that Yorùbá strictly subscribes to “bi” morphemic interfixation with identical constituents’ and predominantly attests “interfixation with modification...’. Oyinloye (2024, p. 1) further affirmed that there are “...few instances of “interfixation without modification in the language.” These are peculiar and involve only consonant-initial roots using the -kí- interfix (Oyinloye, 2024, p. 1).

Meanwhile, Aor and Iorember (2025) recently studied the interfixation in Tiv morphology. With the aid of Hockett’s (1954) Item-and-Process Theory, the scholars have examined the interfixal composition of Tiv morphology. The results revealed vowel ‘a’, syllable ‘-mba-’, as interfixes. Aor and Iorember (2025) further identified interfixed vowels, syllable and words in compound words and triplications. They conclude that Tiv interfixes and infixes have their typical features. It was also revealed that Tiv has unique interfixes that determine futureprobability or produce the prepositional functions of ‘of’ and ‘with’; the plural morpheme ‘-mba’ with adjectival roots and plural nominal roots, as well as the formation of triplications in Tiv.

The reviewed studies clearly highlighted certain morphological processes and how they appear in the languages of Northern Nigeria. However, the paper did not come across a study on Iguta interfixation processes, and this prompted the current paper.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This paper utilised a qualitative approach to explore the interfixation process in the morphology of the Iguta language. Merriam (1998) clearly demonstrated three qualities of using a qualitative approach in the study of this nature. Thus, qualitative design is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic as it enables in-depth analyses and detailed findings. In addition, being particularistic implies that a researcher has a clear understanding of the exact phenomenon in focus. Hence, the current paper is centred on identifying and establishing the

infixation processes and infixes in the morphology of the Iguta language. ‘Heuristically speaking, the paper is explicitly clear on the steps taken to arrive at the findings used in the paper. Therefore, this approach allows the paper to provide a detailed description of the secondary data being used with precision of purpose.

3.2 Data Source and Instrument

The data used for this paper were sourced from secondary sources. The paper used the content of Ado’s (2017) 455 Iguta wordlists as data for the analyses, based on the Andirgiza dialect. The rationale is that Andirgiza is the standard dialect spoken by natives residing in both Toro and Jos North LGAs of Bauchi and Plateau States. Ado’s (2017) 455 Iguta wordlists were obtained through qualitative means in the native speakers’ residences. The Ado’s (2017) Iguta wordlist is a stable set of Iguta lexicons that can be used as an instrument (i.e., bank of vocabularies / lexicons) for any morphological analyses of the language. The wordlist was initially collected and published in Ado and Bidin (2017). In their study, Swadesh (1955) wordlist was used as gloss in interviewing and tape-recordings the corresponding words of Iguta. The tape-recorded interview was used subsequently as a guide for the transcription of the data collected and its tone marking.

3.3 Data analyses

To obtain results on interfixation processes in the morphology of the Iguta language, the paper used a hand analysis strategy and a thematic analytical process. The strategies enable the paper to develop insights from Ado’s (2017) 455 Iguta wordlist during the analysis. In the process, the data were systematically sorted via mind mapping and the various interfixes were identified in accordance with the theme of the paper. In the preparation process, every bit of the data was studied to obtain familiarity. Upon completion, the researcher searched and studied every lexicon to relate meanings of the roots, stems, and morphemes peculiar to the language and objective of the paper. In fact, these are the foundation of generating

codes and themes during the thematic analysis process as recommended (Braun & Clark, 2006). This is because thematic mapping is best applied at the initial stage of data analysis to sort out the correlations of themes at different levels (i.e., main and sub-topics within them). Afterwards, the paper reviewed the themes to obtain a coherent pattern based on its objective. Subsequently, the researcher had a reasonable idea of the kind of themes required for the paper. Hence, the themes were defined, refined, and determined which aspect of the data each theme captures. This was made possible through the arrangement of the individual analysis into a coherent manner and the subsequent derivation of subtopics within the topics of the designed models. At the final stage, the results of the thematic analysis were written up through the guide of Bauer (1988), word-building processes using affixation: interfixation processes.

4. Results and Discussions

According to Ado and Bidin (2017a & b), the most common way of building new words in Iguta is through affixation. Both inflectional and derivational affixes exist in the Iguta language (Ado & Bidin, 2017b). An inflectional affix does not change the syntactic category of its base morpheme, while a derivational affix sometimes changes the grammatical category of a word. This means that a derivational affix may have a semantic shift, while an inflectional affix may not. An inflectional affix indicates certain grammatical functions of a word. However, to describe the noun formation in the Iguta language, the current paper explored the Interfixation processes, under Iguta Affixation.

Interfixation is a special kind of infix, and it is a situation where there is a linking element that appears between the two elements of a compound (Bauer, 1988). The results revealed that this type of affix is very common in the Iguta language. For instance, in the Andirgiza dialect, two elements are joined together to inflect without a linking element. Whereas, the linking element in the compound is an affix (i.e., bound morpheme) and appears/comes

between two elements (both are free morphemes) to produce a compound word in the language. This is illustrated in the following instances:

Element 1	Gloss		Element 2	Gloss		Compound	Gloss
						1 2 3	
1. àdìjì	<i>Eye</i>	+	chár	<i>much/many</i>	=	àdìjì- dí -chár	<i>many eyes</i>
2. ìgíní	<i>Fishes (two)</i>	+	Char	<i>much/many</i>	=	ìgíní- dí -chár	<i>many fishes</i>
3. àshàrí	<i>Stone</i>	+	Char	<i>much/many</i>	=	àshàrí- dí -chár	<i>Stones</i>
4. ìnnámá	<i>Meat</i>	+	Char	<i>much/many</i>	=	ìnnámá- dí -chár	<i>much meat</i>
5. rìshén	<i>Fetish</i>	+	Char	<i>much/many</i>	=	rìshéndé- dí -chár	<i>much fetish</i>
6. ìyèwá	<i>Fear</i>	+	chár	<i>much/many</i>	=	ìyèwá- én -dáh	<i>much fear</i>
7. kàbàh	<i>Dig</i>	+	chár	<i>much/many</i>	=	kàbàh- tén -chár	<i>many digs</i>
8. nàná	<i>Now</i>	+	chár	<i>much/many</i>	=	nàná- di -chár	<i>much now</i>
9. ùshàhrà	<i>Pollution</i>	+	chár	<i>much/many</i>	=	ùshàhrà- di -chár	<i>much pollution</i>

Based on the results as exemplified above, it is found that bound morphemes—*di-*, *-en-* and *-ten-* are bound morphemes that occur in the medial position of two free morphemes as an interfix. The results also show that the interfixes found in the language are semantically empty and occur between two bases or root words to produce compound nouns. Based on the instances presented, it is safe to argue the results in favour of both derivational and inflectional affixes. The fact that “char” in the language stands for “many/much” and could sustain the suffixing of the base/root words stands as inflectional, while the formation of the compound words

stands for derivational. In clarification, for instance, if the base “àdiji” (an eye) is attached or affixed to another element/base “char” (many/much), it becomes “àdijichár (eyes), and this is inflectional. However, with the insertion of bound morpheme (an interfix) in-between two roots, it becomes a compound word “àdijí-**dí**-chár” (*many eyes*). In turn, this becomes derivational in the language. Having this kind of process in word formation serves as part of the uniqueness of Iguta. The process is credited to the language, being a member of the Benue-Congo language phylum. The rare cases of interfixation are not surprising, as equally revealed in Oyinloye (2024). In the Yorùbá language, the scholar argued in favour of having only “bi morphemic interfixation”, and few instances of -kí- “interfixation without modification” in the language.

Meanwhile, contrary to the findings of the reviewed related studies of northern languages, this kind of affixation process is peculiar to Iguta. The findings of the reviewed related studies (e.g., Abubakar, 2000; Muazu, 2009 & Umar, 2008, 2020) were limited to prefixation, suffixation, and infixation. The limitation could emanate from the adaptation of Matthew’s (1974) model of approach that suggests only three affixation processes, viz, prefixation, suffixation, and infixation. This contradiction is evidently reported by Shina’an (2011), who established that suffixes, infixes, and interfixes do not exist in the noun formation of Goemai (an African language). The findings of Blench et al. (2006) also debunked the existence of interfixation in the languages of northern Nigeria by reporting prefix, infix, and suffix, alternating with zero or similar affixes as the noun-class/nominal class of affixes, commonly exhibited in Plateau languages.

In a nutshell, the results of this paper substantiate the claim of Bauer (1988) regarding the interfixation process. It established that interfixation processes exist in the Iguta language and that affixes (bound morphs) are commonly used to insert between free morphs to derive or inflect nouns. Therefore, the paper could serve as a guide to researchers who might be willing

to carry out further studies on other aspects of infixation of Iguta, specifically on circumfixing aspects of morphology.

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