

TOWARDS A CLASSIFICATION OF IGBO VERBS: THE PROBLEM OF STATIVE VERBS IN THE ORLU DIALECT OF IGBO

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The criteria for the classification of Igbò verbs have generated controversies among old and modern linguists and grammarians of indigenous and foreign descents. Some maintain that stative verbs (also called State verbs) are marginal in number and are therefore not appropriate to be used among the criteria for classifying Igbò verbs. This study explores the Orlu variety of Igbò (a dialect spoken by a sizeable population in the Orlu area of Imo State in South-Eastern Nigeria) in order to justify the validity of including stative verbs among the criteria for the classification of Igbò verbs. Our empirical analyses show that though stative verbs are fewer in number than the dynamic verbs, (also called verbs of activity and movement) they have non-negligible, distinctive, morpho-syntactic and semantic behaviours which lend credence to their inclusion among the criteria for classifying Igbò verbs.

Les critères de la classification des verbes en langue Igbò ont fait l'objet d'une controverse parmi les linguistes et grammairiens anciens et modernes d'origines autochtone et étrangère. Certains d'entre eux croient que les verbes statifs (dits aussi verbes d'état) sont trop peu nombreux pour qu'ils soient considérés parmi les critères de classification verbale en Igbò. Ce travail a pour objectif d'étudier le parler d'Orlu (un dialecte Igbò parlé par une population importante dans l'agglomération d'Orlu dans l'Etat Imo au sud-est du Nigeria) afin de justifier la validité de l'inclusion des verbes statifs parmi les critères de classification des verbes Igbò. Notre analyse empirique démontre que quoique les verbes statifs soient moins nombreux que les verbes dynamiques, (dits aussi verbes d'activité et de mouvement) ils ont des comportements morpho-syntaxiques et sémantiques distinctifs non négligeables qui permettent de les inclure parmi les critères pour la classification de verbes Igbò.

0. INTRODUCTION

Verbs are classified in languages using a number of criteria in accordance with their dominant forms and functions in a clause or sentence. In French language, for example, verbs are classified using four criteria, namely transitive, intransitive, pronominal and impersonal. In the English language, verbs are broadly classified into two groups namely main (or lexical) verbs and auxiliary verbs. The main or lexical verbs are subdivided into three major classes as follows:

- i. Regular vs irregular verbs
- ii. Transitive vs intransitive verbs
- iii. Finite vs non-finite verbs

The auxiliary verbs are classified into two major types:

- i. Primary auxiliary verbs (e.g. be, have, do)
- ii. Modal auxiliaries (e.g. can/could; may/might; shall/should; will/would; must; ought to; used to).

In the Igbò language, the criteria for categorization of verbs and their appropriate terminologies have often generated controversies among linguists and grammarians. Anyanwu (2003:798) cites Emenanjo as having classified Igbò verbs into five groups:

- i. Complement verbs
- ii. Inherent complement verbs
- iii. Prepositional verbs
- iv. Ergative complement verbs
- v. Bound complement verbs

Emenanjo does not recognize transitivity as a relevant parameter for the classification of Igbò verbs, and argues in Emenanjo (1984, 1986) that “transitivity is not necessary in the syntax of Igbò verbs since all Igbò verbs obligatorily occur with some complement in both underlying and surface structures” (see Anyanwu 2003:797). Nwachukwu (1983) bases his own classification of Igbò verbs on the following parameters:

- i. tonal (variation of voice pitch levels)
- ii. lexical (subdivided into auxiliaries and non-auxiliaries)
- iii. copula
- iv. stative and non-stative
- v. causative
- vi. complementizable verbs

Uwalaka’s classification (1983, 1997), though not identical with Nwachukwu’s above, could be subsumed under it, since both Uwalaka and Nwachukwu emphasize the indispensability of transitivity in classifying Igbò verbs, contrary to Emenanjo who rather favours complementation.

In his classification of Echie verbs (an Igboïd lect), Ndimele (2003:129) uses four criteria:

- i. morphological (simple vs complex verbs)
- ii. tonal (high vs low tone verbs)
- iii. syntactic (auxiliary (or helping) verbs vs lexical (or main) verbs)
- iv. semantic (sub-divided into dynamic (action vs event verbs) and stative verbs)

Ndimele chooses not to discuss Echie verbs based on the dichotomy of transitive vs intransitive because, according to him, in the Niger-Congo languages, it is fairly difficult to neatly divide verbs into transitive and intransitive due to the fact that some verbs can, under different contexts, manifest the behaviour of both transitive and intransitive verbs.

From the above analysis, it is evident that in the classification of verbs of languages, linguists and grammarians often use a set of parameters they consider paramount in marking out a group of verbs from others. Sometimes, linguists may differ in what may be considered paramount parameters but their choices are normally inclusive and complementary. Some of their criteria may be simpler or more complex than others. From what we have seen so far, Ndimele’s model for the classification of Echie verbs seems to be more relevant to the classification of the Orlu dialect verbs because of its simplicity and clarity.

This study does not however aim at the classification of Orlu verbs. Our objective is rather to probe the problems posed by stative verbs in the Orlu dialect. This is because stative verbs constitute a subclass of verbs whose lexical status, morpho-syntactic and semantic behaviours are problematic, especially in comparison to their dynamic verb counterparts whose characteristics are sometimes confused with those of stative verbs. In what follows, we shall define briefly the concepts of stative and dynamic verbs and compare their distinctive characteristics. We shall then isolate stative verbs for closer study in the Orlu dialect. Finally, we shall see from the results of our analyses if we can justify the validity of the status of stative verbs in the Orlu dialect of Igbò.

1. DYNAMIC VERBS

According to Ndimele (2003:135), ‘A dynamic verb expresses an action which an entity is carrying out or an event in which the entity is involved’. He further divides dynamic verbs into ‘action’ and ‘event’ verbs, describing action verbs according to Giering et al (1987:16) as verbs which ‘involve conscious and goal oriented activity of some participant individual and are in most cases of limited duration or occurring at a fixed point in time’. Examples of such verbs in the Orlu dialect include: **gbú:**

ígbū - ‘to kill’, **kpŏkpŏ** - ‘to call’, **lò: ilò** - ‘to swallow’, **shí: íshī** - ‘to cook’, etc.¹

Ndimele (2003:135) defines event verbs as ‘verbs which may not necessarily express any kind of activity’. His examples coincide with equivalent verbs in the Orlu dialect of Igbò thus: **nwŏhwū** - ‘to die’, **tó: ítō** - ‘to grow’, **lá: lā** - ‘to leave’, **fū: ífū** - ‘to disappear’.

Crystal (1997) defines dynamic from linguistic point of view as a ‘term used in grammatical classification, referring to one of two main aspectual categories of verb use, the other is stative or static’. He states that the distinguishing criteria between the two are syntactic and maintains that dynamic verbs occur in progressive forms and in the imperative. He also states that the semantics of dynamic verbs cover a wide range including activity, process (e.g. change, grow) and bodily sensation (e.g. feel, hurt), etc. From the foregoing, we observe that Crystal’s definition of dynamic verbs does not contradict Ndimele’s division of dynamic verbs into action and event verbs. Our dynamic verbs are equivalent to what Welmers (1973), Emenanjo (1978) refer to as active verbs – verbs that have the **–rŏ** aspectual suffix in the indicative construction to translate past time meaning. Some linguists refer to such a construction as factative, but stative when it refers to non-past time meaning. Welmers (1973:141) affirms that ‘a factative construction includes a replacive which can be identified with that of the stative’. In this study, we shall refer to the **–rŏ** suffix as factative when it occurs with dynamic verbs and as stative when it occurs with stative verbs.

2. STATIVE VERBS

The term ‘stative verb’ has been a subject of recurring debate among Igbò linguists and scholars of old and recent times, foreign and indigenous, due to its mor-

¹ Tone-marking convention adopted: All high tones are unmarked; All mid tones are marked; All low tones are marked.

pho-syntactic and semantic peculiarities compared to dynamic verbs. Stative verbs have morpho-syntactic and semantic limitations because they cannot be used in all aspect formations in Igbò, just as dynamic or active verbs can.

Ward (1936) indicates in her discussion of the **Ra**-suffix verb form that there exists 'a number of verbs frequently descriptive, mainly used in the Ra-suffix form to express present time'. What she is referring to is no doubt stative verbs.

Welmers (1973:346) asserts that in many Niger-Congo family, 'a number of languages distinguish two types of verbs – in general 'stative and active'; stative verbs usually include equivalents for most of the 'private' verbs of English'. He maintains that for stative verbs, 'a reference to present time may use the same construction that refers to past time if an active verb is used, or more accurately the construction is timeless for stative verbs – a modifier may indicate that the reference is to past time'. Here we can infer that Welmers is implicitly referring to the **-rV** aspect suffix marker. Welmers further affirms that 'a morpheme consisting of low replacing stem tone occurs with a limited number of verb stems, marking a 'stative construction'. He affirms in (Welmers 1973:359) that 'in Igbò, the stative is used only with a limited number of monosyllabic verb roots (...).' For Crystal (1997), the distinguishing criteria for stativity are mainly syntactic; he asserts that stative verbs do not usually occur in a progressive form or in the imperative. Ndimele (2003), like Crystal, indicates that on semantic grounds, stative verbs can be said to express states of affairs rather than action. Welmers, however, points out that the classification is complicated by the existence of verbs which have both a stative and a dynamic use.

Onumajuru (1985) observes that like in many Igboid groups and dialects, stative verbs in the Orlu dialect can be used not only to express states of affairs but also quality, size, and location of living and non-living things. Stative constructions in Igbò are morpho-tonally characterized by the neutralization of both high and low monomorphemic verb roots to a grammatical low. Some stative verbs take the **-rV** aspectual suffix to express present or timeless meaning, while dynamic verbs use it to express past time meaning.

It is, however, important to note that in some dialects including Orlu, high-tone dynamic verb roots and their inflectional past time suffix **-rV** occur in two morpho-tonal forms, used indiscriminately by speakers as free variations. The forms are:

a) CV-**rV** (HH) b) CV-**rV** (LL) e.g.

(1) **ri** eat

O	rīri	ji
3s	eat-FT	yam
He/she/it ate yam.		

(2) **ri** eat

O	riri	ji
3s	eat-FT	yam
He/she/it ate yam.		

In (a) above, both the high verb stem and the inflectional past suffix carry high-high tones to express past time meaning, while in (b), they carry low-low tones to express the same past time meaning. In the Orlu dialect, the two forms are attested, but form (a) is used with a limited number of verbs. Form (b) is the one taught in the school as the standard Igbò form and it is used with all verbs. In the dialect, form (a) applies to some high stem verb roots while form (b) can apply to both high and low verb roots

in past time construction and is the form more prevalent in the Orlu dialect. We must, however, point out that not all dynamic verbs subject themselves to form (a) morpho-tonal pattern, e.g. **kpñ** 'call', **mñ** 'give birth to', etc. For our analyses in this work, we shall use form (b), since it applies to both high and low verb stems in the dialect without exception.

Similarly, in the Orlu dialect (and in certain other dialects of Igbo), where the above two morpho-tonal forms occur with some high verb roots in past time construction, the imperative forms follow a similar two-way tonal pattern used freely by speakers, where CV = verb root, -V = open vowel suffix that harmonizes with the verb root, e.g. **ñ**

(3) **ri** 'eat'

rie	anñ
Eat-vowel suffix	meat
Eat meat.	

(4) **ri** 'eat'

rie	anñ
Eat-vowel suffix	meat
Eat meat.	

These two forms of imperative constructions are attested among the Orlu dialect speakers but form (3) is used with a limited number of high verb roots while form (4) is invariably used for both high and low-tone verb roots in imperative construction.

3. DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF DYNAMIC AND STATIVE VERBS

Having defined and explained what is meant by dynamic and stative verbs, we shall now summarize their distinctive characteristics.

3.1 SYNTACTIC TABLE OF THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF DYNAMIC AND STATIVE VERBS IN THE ORLU DIALECT

STATIVE VERBS		DYNAMIC VERBS	
a1)	Characterized by neutralization of lexical high and low tones of monosyllabic verb roots to grammatical low tone. The stative wñbe 'does not obey this rule, as it is normally realized with a high tone in the Orlu dialect. Its equivalent in standard Igbo, bñbe 'does not exist in the Orlu dialect though it is used by some educated and travelled	a2)	Both high and low tone monosyllabic verbs retain their inherent tones in all constructions except in a past construction using the -rV aspectual suffix which we refer to as <i>factive</i> . (8) ga to go: Ezè àgaala ahja v.perf. Eze has gone to market. (9) pñ out/leave:

STATIVE VERBS	DYNAMIC VERBS
speakers in spoken Igbo. bô the official and standard form taught in schools. The proximity of Onitsha to Orlu is another factor which favours the use of -bô it is therefore not uncommon to see an Orlu dialect speaker use the two items interchangeably. (5) wô 'be': Ō wū Dikē (O.D) He/it is Dike. (6) bô 'be': O bō Dikē (O.D) He/it is Dike. (7) sò 'follow': Ó sò nne yā He/She follows his/her mother. In example (5) the stative wū changes to downstep due to its contact with the preceding high tone, thus H+H=H¹H. In examples 6 and 7, both high and low tone lexical tones change to grammatical low tone, typical of stative construction. The above statives do not accept the -rV aspectual suffix.	Ezè apā v.perf. Eze has left. The underlined elements are verb roots which retain their inherent tones in perfective construction. The vowel prefix is low for high tone roots, while the perfective suffix is high-high for both high and low inherent verb roots, as in the above perfective constructions.
b1) Some statives take the -rV suffix which does not translate a past time meaning. We refer to this -rV suffix as stative (ST) in a stative construction using it e.g. bù 'be big/fat': (10) Ada bùrù ibù v.-ST bigness Ada is big/fat.	b2) All dynamic verbs take the -rV (or -rV̇ in the Orlu dialect) aspectual suffix to translate past time meaning. We refer to this -rV as <i>factative</i> (FAC) e.g. gbu 'kill': (12) ǫ gbùrù agwọ v.-FAC snake Uba killed a snake.

STATIVE VERBS		DYNAMIC VERBS	
	chĩ 'want': (11) Ezè chĩ egō v.-ST money Eze wants money.		zà 'sweep': (13) Ada zàrà ĩ v.-FAC Ada swept the house.
c1)	Most stative verbs in the Orlu dialect can feature in an imperative construction. Some cannot, due to their nature e.g. bù 'be big/fat': (14)* Bùo ibù This construction, though grammatical, is not acceptable in the Orlu dialect due to the semantic nature of the verb. (See imperative of stative verbs).	c2)	All dynamic verbs can feature in the imperative e.g. gá 'go': 15. gàa ahĩa – Go to market. pĩ 'leave/go out' (16) pĩ go out, etc. The morpho-tonal structure for both high and low verb roots is CV-V (LH).
d1)	Some statives can take extensional suffix of the type -CV in order to be used in the imperative, e.g. kpù 'to wear/put on': kpùrù: ikpùrù: 'to put on': (17) IMPERATIVE: Kpùru òkpù – put on a cap. Some others cannot be so used ordinarily e.g. bù 'be big/fat': * bùru, ibùru: (does not exist) (18) Bùru ibù This construction is unusual and meaningless in the Orlu dialect, and therefore inadmissible.	d2)	All action dynamic verbs can be followed by the -CV extensional suffix, and all can feature in the imperative e.g bu 'to carry': Example: ibūuru 'to carry for oneself': (19) Bùru anū – Carry meat (for yourself). ibūte 'to carry (for unspecified person)': (20) Bùte anū – Bring meat (for someone not explicitly indicated) e.g. ĩ 'to buy': ĩrĩ 'to buy for oneself': (21.) zĩ àkpà – buy yourself a bag. ĩrĩta 'to buy for', etc: (22) zĩ àkpà! - buy someone a bag!/buy a bag for someone!

What we have shown above are what seem to us to be the essential characteristics of stative and dynamic verbs. In what follows, we shall identify and classify stative verbs prevalent in the Orlu dialect. We shall then examine their imperative and past time forms.

3.2 INVENTORY OF STATIVE VERBS IN THE ORLU DIALECT OF IGBO

This inventory will be done in two stages. In the first stage, we shall identify all the stative verbs which do not take the *–rV* aspectual suffix and in the second, we shall feature those that take the *–rV* suffix to translate non-past time meaning. In the two inventories, we shall endeavour to identify the morpho-syntactic and semantic peculiarities of each stative verb.

3.2.1 Stative Verbs Without *–rV* Aspectual Suffix include:

- i. **bi: ibī** to live, e.g.

(23) **Uchè bì (nà) Àba.** Uche lives at Aba.

Here the use of the preposition **nà** ‘at’ is optional. Its omission does not affect meaning.

- ii. **bu: ibū** to carry

The meaning may change depending on the nature of the NP complement that goes with the verb:

(24) **Àda bù ñĩ**
 ST
 Ada carry Mouth
 Ada is fasting (Ada is *carrying* mouth).

(25) **Uchè bù oche**
 ST
 Uche carry chair
 Uche is carrying a chair.

- iii. **gba: ġbā** to run/to wear

This verb can have both stative and dynamic uses, depending on the nature of the NP complement it goes with.

ST: **ġbā**: ‘to wear (e.g. bracelet, ring, etc) on the hand or leg’:

(26) **Àda gbà wọ́ŋd**
 ST
 Ada wear watch
 Ada is wearing a wristwatch.

ST: **gba ǫĩ** to be naked’:

(27) **Uchè gbà ǫĩ**

Uche v. nakedness
Uche is naked.

3.3 DM DYNAMIC VERB USES OF GBA ‘TO RUN/WRESTLE’ + NP

gba ɔsɔ ‘to run a race’:

- (28) a. **Ezè** **gbàrà** **ɔsɔ**
run-FAC race
Eze ran a race.
- b. **gba** **mgbā** ‘to wrestle’
‘run’ ‘wrestling’
- c. **gba** **ibē** ‘to bet’
‘run’ ‘a bet’
- d. **gba** **afā** ‘to foretell’
‘run’ ‘divination’
- e. **gba** **akwāwā** ‘to sue’
‘run’ ‘book’
- f. **gba** **egwū** ‘to dance’
‘run’ ‘dance’
- g. **gba** **ḡàrà** ‘to bleed’
‘run’ ‘blood’
- h. **gba** **àṇmà** ‘to reveal a secret/betray’
‘run’ ‘secret’
- i. **gba** **akpū** ‘to plant cassava’
‘run’ ‘cassava’

From the above examples (cf. (26), (27), (28) a-i, we observe that **gba** can be used in stative and dynamic constructions, depending on the noun complement which is used.

iv. **ha: hā** to be equal This stative must be followed by **kà** ‘as’ – a comparative marker – in order to be meaningful, e.g.

- (29) **Uchè** **hà** **kà** **Ibè**
Uche be equal as Ibe = Uche is equal to Ibe
Uche is as big/tall/fat as Ibe.

v. **ji: ijĩ** to hold/have: e.g.

- (30) **Àda** **jì** **ṁÖ** **ànÑ**
 Ada holds children four
 Ada has four children.

vi. **ka** to be bigger than/be superior to, e.g.

- (31) **Ibè** **kà** **Ḑa**
 Ibe be greater than Uba
 Ibe is bigger than Uba.

vii. **kp̣̌: ṁkp̣̌** to call/to take along. This verb root can function both as stative and dynamic, depending on its NP complement and this, as usual, involves change in meaning. When it means ‘to call’, it can only be used as dynamic and takes the **rV** suffix to translate past time meaning.

ST: **kp̣̌: ṁkp̣̌** ‘to take along’: **ṁkp̣̌**

- (32) **Ezè** **kp̣̌** **ṁÖ** **ya**
 Eze take children his
 ‘Eze is with his children’.

kp̣̌ can also take **-rV** aspectual suffix with a different NP to express present time meaning.

ST: **ṁkp̣̌ ashḐ** ‘to hate’:

- (33) **Ekè** **kp̣̌** **m̌** **ashì**
 Eke v.-ST me hatred
 Eke hates me.

DM: **kp̣̌** ‘call’ (uses the **rV** verbal suffix to express past time meaning).

- (34) **Ezè** **kp̣̌** **ṁÖ** **ya**
 Eze call-FAC children his
 Eze called his children.

viii. **kp̣̌: ikp̣̌** ‘to wear (e.g. cap)’

- (35) **Ibè** **kp̣̌** **òkp̣̌**
 Ibe wear cap
 Ibe is wearing a cap.

ix. **kù: ikù** ‘to carry in the hand e.g. baby’

- (36) **Àda** **kù** **nnwa**
 Ada carry child
 Ada is carrying a child (in her hands).

(37) Àda kwÓ nnwa
Ada carry child
Ada is carrying a child on her back.

ST: kw^htō ‘stand erect’:

DM: kw^hto commit suicide/to hang oneself':

(39) Ibè kwöö öó
Ibe hang-FAC rope
Ibe hanged himself.

xii. **nóhó** be/to stay. In the Orlu dialect, this stative can be used with both animate and inanimate beings indiscriminately unlike in the Standard Igbo where it can only be used with animates. In the Standard Igbo, the stative **dị** ‘be’ is only used with inanimate objects. This stative does not exist in this form in the Orlu dialect, as we shall see later in this section.

(40) Eze nÓ n' ñ
Eze be in house
Eze is in the house/Eze is at home.

(41) Eghu nÓ n' èzi
 Goat be in outside
 A goat is outside.

(42) Oche nÓ ġa à
Chair be place here
There is a seat/chair here/A chair/seat is here.

xiii. **nyà: ìnyà** to drive. This verb can be both stative and dynamic depending on the NP complement that follows it and this affects also the meaning.

ST: **nyà** ‘to wear something’, e.g. jewellery:

- (43) **Àda** **nyà** **ọlànṭì**
 Ada wear earring
 Ada is wearing an earring.

DM: **nyà: ìnyà** ‘to drive’:

- (44) **Uchè** **nyàrà** **ḡbọ̀là**
 Uche drive-FAC motor
 Uche drove a motor vehicle.

(But **Uchè nyà ḡbọ̀là** is not semantically clear in dynamic use)

xiv. **ḡma: ìḡmā** ‘to know’:

- 45). **Ezè** **ḡmà** **ìhe**
 Eze know thing
 Eze is intelligent/Eze is knowledgeable.

- (46) **Ezè** **ṣmà** **ahà** **m**
 Eze know name me
 Eze knows my name.

xv. **ru: ò** ‘to be’ (descriptive). This is the equivalent of the Standard Igbo (S.I.) stative **di** ‘be’ used with inanimate objects. This S.I. stative **di** ‘be’ does not exist in the Orlu dialect. Its use can be noticed with speakers living in border towns with Anambra state and among educated speakers who have learnt the S.I. at school, or who have travelled to other parts of Igboland where **di** is used. In Orlu heartland, **rö** ‘be’ is predominantly used:

- (47) **Ùwà** **rö** **ṣmā**
 World be good
 The world is good.
- (48) **ṣṣkà** **rö** **otutu**
 Children Be many
 Children are numerous.
- (49) **Oche** **rö** **iri**
 Chair be ten
 The chairs are ten (in number).
- (50) **Ngozi** **rö** **imē**
 Pr.N be deep
 Ngozi is pregnant.

xvi. **shi: ishī** ‘to come from/to cook’. This stative can also function as dynamic depending on the NP complement that follows it, and its actual meaning and structure depend on the nature of the NP complement.

ST: **shi** ‘to come from’

- (51) **Ezè** **shì** **Àba**
 Pr.N come from Aba
 Eze comes from Aba/Eze is coming from Aba.

DM: **shi nri** ‘to cook food’

- (52) **Ezè** **shìrì** **nri**
 Pr.N cook-FAC food
 Eze cooked food.

xvii. **sò: isò** ‘to follow’

- (53) **Ha** **sò** **anyî**
 They Follow we
 They follow us/They are following us.

It is worthy of note that the first person plural **anyî** 'we' is realized with high-high lexical tone in the Orlu dialect as against elsewhere where it is represented with low-high lexical tone.

xviii. **wôwû** 'to be' (see 3.1 a1)

xix. **yi: iyî** 'to wear/to resemble'. This stative verb is peculiar in the sense that it can have two stative uses – either with the **–rV** aspectual suffix with descriptive, timeless meaning or state. The NP complement determines the meaning of the verb.

ST₁: **yi** 'to wear'.

- (54) **Àda** **yî** **akwà**
 Ada wear dress
 Ada is wearing a dress.

ST₂: **yi**: 'to resemble'. This takes the **–rV** suffix.

- (55) **Ekè** **yîrî** **nnà** **ya**
 Eke resemble-ST father him
 Eze resembles his father

3.4 OBSERVATION

Our inventory of stative verbs which does not take the **–rV** aspectual suffix in the Orlu dialect of Igbo is tentative and does not claim to be exhaustive. We notice in some cases where the same verb behaves at the same time like stative and dynamic, depending on the nature of the NP complements. We also witness few cases where the same stative is used with or without the **–rV** non-past time meaning.

For the verbs with both stative and dynamic uses, there is no rule to determine such a behaviour in advance. This complicates the classification of stative and dynamic verbs. It may be perplexing to note in our inventory that such statives like **bôbe** and **dî** 'be' widely used in S.I. do not diachronically exist in the Orlu dialect where they now compete with **wô** and **rô** respectively.

3.5 INVENTORY OF STATIVE VERBS THAT TAKE THE **–rV** ASPECTUAL SUFFIX WITH NON-PAST TIME MEANING IN THE ORLU DIALECT OF IGBO

i. **ba: j̄bā** 'to be rich'

This stative takes either a BCN or a noun complement formed from the verb root without change in meaning:

- (56) **Ibè** **bàrà** **àba**
 Ibe v.-ST BCN
 Ibe is rich.
 Variant: **Ibè bara àba**
- (57) **Ibè** **bàrà** **ôa**
 Ibe v.-ST wealth

Ibe is rich.

Variant:

Ibè bara Òà

ii. **bà: âà** to enter. This verb has both stative and dynamic uses, depending on their NP complements which also affect their meanings.

ST: **bà** **urù** ‘be useful’
enter gain

(58) **Egō** **bàrà** **urù**
Money enter-ST gain
Money is useful.

DM: **âà** ‘to enter’

(59) **Òà** **bàrà** **n’** **Ô**
Uba enter-FAC prep. house
Uba entered the house.

In all examples of dynamic use, the –rV aspectual suffix has past time meaning as in the above example.

iii. **âÑbô** ‘to become too soft’ (e.g. pounded yam/cassava).

(60) **ârà** **bâó** **âbÑ**
Pounded food be soft-ST BCN
The pounded food is too soft.
Variant: **ârà bÑbÑ**

iv. **bù: ibù** ‘to be big/fat’

(61) **Àda** **bùrù** **ibù**
Ada be big-ST Fatness
Ada is fat.

v. **chÑthô** ‘to look for/to want/to find/to need’

(62) **Àda** **chó** **egō**
Ada need-ST money
Ada needs money/Ada wants money.

vi. **dà: âà** to fall. This verb can have both stative and dynamic uses and has different meanings with different NP complements.

ST: **dà** **ogbù** ‘be dumb’
fall dumb

(63) **Ibè** **dàrà** **ogbù**
Ibe fall-ST dumb

Ibe is dumb.

ST: **dà** **bà: ìlà bà** ‘be lazy’
 fall dormancy

(64) **Ibè** **dàrà** **bà**
 Ibe fall-ST dormancy
 Ibe is lazy.

DM: **dà** **adā** ‘fall down’
 fall (v) fall (n)

(65) **Ibè** **dàrà** **ada**
 Ibe fall-FAC fall (n)
 Ibe fell down.

dà àdà : ìdà àdà ‘to fail’, e.g. exam, election, contest, etc.

(66) **Ibè** **dàrà** **àdà**
 Ibe fall-FAC fall (n)
 Ibe failed.
 Variant: **Ibè dhàrà àdha**

vii. **gba** run. We have already treated this verb under statives without –rV suffix. With certain NP complements, it can take the –rV aspectual suffix without past time meaning, in a stative construction (cf. 26, 27, 28)

gba **ụkā** ‘be sour’
 run sour
 (67) **Ofe** **gbàrà** **ụkā**
 Soup run-ST sour
 The soup is sour.

gba mkpurū ‘to turn into small, seed-like lumps (e.g. pap, pounded yam, etc)’
 run seed ‘to be lumpy’

(68) **àrà** **gbàrà** **mkpurū**
 Pounded food turn to-ST seeds
 The pounded food is lumpy/full of small lumps.

viii. **-jọ: ịjọ** ‘to be ugly/bad’

(69) **Èliza** **jéó** **njọ**
 Eliza be ugly-ST ugliness BCN
 Eliza is ugly.

ix. **nwe: inwē** ‘to have/possess’

- (70) **ŭa** **nwèrè** **egō**
Uba have-ST money/cash
Uba has money/Uba is rich.

Ibe is tall.

xv. **tọ: ɪ̄tọ** 'to be sweet'. This verb can function as stative as well as dynamic with different meanings depending on the type of complement that follows the verb.

ST: **tọ** **ɪ̄tọ** 'to be sweet'
be sweet sweetness

(77) **Ofe** **à** **téó** **õĩ**
Soup this v.-ST sweetness
This soup is delicious.

ST: **táótó** 'to be in a fix'

(78) **Anyị** **téó** **àtĩ**
We v.-ST Fix
We are in a fix.

DM: **túútọ** 'to unwrap'

(79) **Ibè** **téó** **letà**
Ibe unwrap-FAC letter
Ibe unwrapped/opened a letter.

xvi. **yì: iyĩ** 'to resemble'. We have already seen that this stative can also function without the -rV aspectual suffix or with it in stative constructions (see 54, 55)

(80) **Àda** **yìrì** **nne** **yā**
Ada v.-ST mother her
Ada resembles her mother.

xvii. **za: izā** 'to be swollen'. This verb can also be used as a dynamic verb to mean 'to answer' depending on the complement.

ST: **za** 'to swell'

(81) **Ẹwụ** **Āda** **zàrà** **àza**
Leg Ada swell-ST swelling
Ada's leg is swollen.

DM: **za** 'to answer/reply'

(82) **Ezè** **zàrà** **òkù**
Eze answer-FAC call

Eze answered a call.

3.6 OBSERVATION

In the above inventory of stative verbs (in the Orlu dialect) that take the $-rV$ aspectual suffix with non-past time meaning, we recorded seventeen verb roots out of which six share both stative and dynamic morpho-syntactic features. They are **bà** ‘enter’, **dà** ‘fall’, **pe** ‘be small’, **shi** ‘cook’, **tñ** ‘be sweet’, and **za** ‘swell/answer’. The nature of their complements though unpredictable, determines the behaviour of the verb as stative or dynamic and consequently their meanings. We also recorded two stative verbs namely **dà** ‘fall’, **tñ** ‘be sweet’ with two different stative meanings each, involving different complements (cf. 77, 78).

3.7 PAST TENSE OF STATIVE VERBS IN THE ORLU DIALECT

Past tense formation with stative verbs is problematic in the Igbò language, in the sense that stative verbs are poor or rather limited in the number of inflectional affixes they can co-occur with in order to express different nuances of tense and aspects. On the other hand, dynamic (or active) verbs are richer in the number of inflectional affixes they can co-occur with in order to express different tense values and aspects. However, our objective in this section is to examine how the two types of stative verbs form their past tenses in the Orlu dialect.

The two types of stative verb forms, namely, the simple CV form and the CV + rV form (both the CV and $-rV$ bearing low tones) form their past tense using two different morpheme past markers namely, **bù** and **bùbù** respectively. Both low- and high-tone stative verbs of the two types as well as their corresponding past markers are reduced to low tones. The following examples are illustrative:

STATIVE PRESENT			STATIVE PAST		
(83) a.	Ha	rÖ ndhÖ	(83) b.	Ha	rÖù ndÖ
	3P	be life		3P	be-pst life
	They are alive.			They were alive/used to be alive.	
(84) a.	Ibè	bì n’ Àbġ	(84) b.	Ibè	bìbù n’ Àbġ
	Pr.N	live prep Abuja		Pr.N	live-pst prep Abuja
	Ibe lives at Abuja.			Ibe used to live at Abuja.	
(85) a.	Ezè	nwèrè egō	(85) b.	Ezè	nwèbùrù egō
	Eze	have-ST money		Pr.N	have-pst money
	Eze has money/Eze is rich.			Eze used to be rich.	
(86) a.	Àda	ġmàrà ġmā	(86) b.	Àda	ġmàbùrù ġmā
	Pr.N	be beautiful- beauty		Pr.N	be beautiful- beauty
	ST			pst	
	Ada is beautiful.			Ada used to be beautiful.	

In the above examples, (83a) – (84b) belong to the simple CV stative form (or type A) while (85a) – (86b) belong to the CV + $-rV$ form (or type B). Both forms of the two types have their corresponding past markers as **bù** for type A and **bùrù** for type B re-

spectively.

Nwachukwu (1984:94) indicates that the above stative past markers are also used in the Onitsha dialect and argues that these forms are becoming so popular among speakers and writers of standard Igbò that they may end up becoming the standard past tense marker for all stative verbs in all dialects of Igbo. Other Igbò dialects have other ways of presenting stative past tense forms which lie outside the scope of this study.

3.8 IMPERATIVE FORMATION WITH STATIVE VERBS IN ORLU IGBO

The two stative verb groups have different ways of forming their imperative, reminiscent of their past tense formation. We shall rapidly examine the imperative forms of the two stative verb types in what follows.

3.8.1 Imperative Form of Type A (Stative Verbs that Use the Simple CV Stem Without the –rV Suffix to Express Present Time Meaning)

Nwachukwu (1984) argues that by their nature, some stative verbs of this group cannot be used in the imperative, and he also states that ‘for those that can be so used, the imperative is formed by adding the open vowel suffix –V to the CV stem’. He cites few examples of such stems apt to imperative construction as **kwe** ‘agree’, **sò** ‘follow’, **to** ‘grow’ and **chè** ‘think’.

The above rule of imperative formation applies in the Orlu dialect, but it is extremely unproductive with the stative verbs of this group due to the nature of their semantic content and application. For instance, it is unacceptable and unusual to give commands with such stative verbs of this group as **to** ‘grow’, **nwe** ‘have’, **pe** ‘be little’, **ɲma** ‘be beautiful’, **sa** ‘ripen’, **bù** ‘be fat/big’, **re** ‘be rotten’, **yi** ‘resemble’, **jñ** ‘be ugly/bad’, etc. Commands given with such statives can never be carried out or realized. However, only very few of this group of stative verbs can be used in the imperative in Orlu Igbo. Without pretending to be exhaustive, we can think of the following:

(87) **chñ** ‘to look for’

Chñ	Ibè
Look for-VSF	Ibe (Pr.N)
Look for Ibe.	

Chñ	egō
Look for-VSF	money
Look for money.	

(88) **kwe** ‘to believe’

Kwèè	nà	Chukwu	(also, Kwèrè nà Chukwu)
Believe-VSF	prep	God	
Believe in God.			

The two forms co-occur in the dialect.

(89) **chè** ‘to think’

Chèè	màkà	okwu	ahÖ
Think-VSF	about	case	that
Think about that matter/Think about that case.			

In the above examples, we observe that both high- and low-tone stative verb roots are neutralized to a grammatical low tone, while the suffix imperative verbal marker -V carries a high tone for both high-tone and low-tone stative verb roots. The imperative formation of stative verbs of this group is identical to that of the dynamic verbs (cf: 3,4).

3.8.2 Imperative Form of Type B Stative Verbs (Those that Take the -rV Suffix to Express Present Time Meaning)

The stative verbs belonging to this group form their imperatives by adding a high-tone-rV suffix to the CV stem thus:

Imperative = CV (stem) + -rV (suffix)

Below are some examples with high and low tone stative verb stems:

(90) **bu ɔnū** ‘to carry mouth’

Buru	onū	rùo	mgbèdè
Carry-SF	mouth	reach-SF	evening
Fast till evening.			

(91) **kwó** ‘to carry on the back’

Kwó	ɲnwā	gì
Carry-SF on back	child	you
Carry your child on the back.		

(92) **nó** ‘to stay’

Nó	n’	èzi
Stay-SF	prep	premises
Stay outside.		

(93) **ji** ‘to hold’

Jiri	egō	gî	n’	aka
Hold-SF	money	you	prep.	hand
Hold your money at hand.				

From the above examples, we observe as follows:

- Stative verbs of the simple CV type form their imperative by adding a high-tone -rV suffix to the verb root (or stem).
- The vowel of the -rV suffix harmonizes with the vowel of the verb root.
- Both low- and high-tone stative verb roots carry a grammatical low tone.

4. CONCLUSION

Our inventory of the two forms of stative verbs (those that do not take the **-rV** aspectual suffix and those that take it) in the Orlu dialect of Igbo shows that of the 19 stative verb roots that do not take the **-rV** aspectual suffix, five of them (notably **gba** ‘run’; **kwô** ‘stand’; **kpî** ‘take along with’; **nyà** ‘wear something on the neck’; and **shí** ‘come from’) have both stative and dynamic uses under certain contexts, while seven (namely **bà** ‘enter’; **dà** ‘fall’; **gba** ‘run’; **pe** ‘be small’; **shi** ‘cook’; **tî** ‘be sweet’; and **za** ‘to be swollen’) out of the 17 stative verb roots that take the **-rV** aspectual suffix to translate non-past time meaning exhibit both stative and dynamic uses. That is to say statistically that about 34.3% of the Orlu dialect stative verbs have both stative and dynamic uses.

Consequently the question which arises is this: Is it pertinent to talk of stative verbs or simply of stative use of verbs in the Orlu dialect of Igbo? This question seems a puzzler. However, since about two thirds (65.7%) of stative verbs in the Orlu dialect behave purely as stative verbs and only about a third (34.3%) is apt to dynamic use, we can conclude that the concept of stative verbs is relevant in the Orlu dialect. In that case, we can envisage to some extent the dynamic use of some stative verbs in the Orlu dialect of Igbo or vice versa.

It is important to note that out of the three S.I. stative verbs of ‘being’, namely **nô**, **bô** and **dî** only the first (**nô**) exists in the Orlu dialect, but its usage is slightly different. Whereas **nô** ‘be’ is used to situate only animates in S.I., it is indiscriminately used to situate both the animate and the inanimate ‘beings’ in the Orlu dialect. In S.I., **dî** ‘be’ is used for only inanimate objects. In the Orlu dialect, the S.I. statives **bô** and **dî** are replaced by **wô** and **rô** respectively. Unlike its S.I. equivalent (**bô** **wô** ‘be’) of the Orlu dialect retains its inherent high tone in morpho-syntactic construction and does not automatically change to grammatical low tone associated with stative construction. It fulfils the same functions as **bô** ‘be’ in S.I. Similarly, **rô** ‘be’ is the Orlu equivalent of **dî** ‘be’ but its usage differs slightly from that of **dî** **rô** as descriptive and numeral functions (see 47-50) while **dî** ‘be’ has the two functions plus situative function, which **rô** does not have. In situative function, the stative **nô** ‘be’ doubles for both **nô** and **rô** (see 40-42) in the Orlu dialect. For proper understanding of stative verbs in Igbo, it may be necessary to study their forms and uses in other dialects of Igbo.

ABBREVIATIONS

BCN	Bound cognate noun	pst	Past
CV	Verb root (consonant + vowel)	-rV	r + Vowel
DM	Dynamic use	S.I.	Standard Igbo
FAC	Factative	SF	Suffix
N	Noun	ST	Stative use
NP	Nominal Phrase	V	Verb
O.D.	Orlu dialect	VS	Versus
PERF	Perfective	VSF	Open vowel suffix
PREP	Preposition	3s	3 rd person pronoun
Pr.N	Personal name		

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