

COMPOUNDING IN URHOB0

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Compounding involves a concatenation of words. In the literature, compounding is sometimes analysed as a syntactic process, a morphological process, or both. This is because the processes that produce compounds are said to be morphological and syntactic. The current study focuses on a description of some of the morphological factors involved in compounding in Urhobo. Data was gathered from existing literature on Urhobo language studies and native speaker's competence. It was observed that Urhobo has both headed and headless compounds. An instance of double-headed compound was also observed. Though the heads of Urhobo compounds are left branching, there are instances where the heads are right branching. Pronominal affixes were found to head some Urhobo compounds. There are many examples of headed compounds; however, headless compounding seems to be more productive in the language. These headless compounds range from lexicalized phrases and sentences to coordinate and copulative compounds. The use of complete and partial reduplication of some words result into repetitive rhyme-based compounds in Urhobo. Different kinds of compounds are used in different kinds of discourse.

Le processus de composition implique une concaténation de mots. Dans la littérature, la composition est parfois analysée comme un processus syntaxique, un processus morphologique, ou les deux. La raison tient à ce que les processus qui donnent lieu aux mots composés sont considérés comme morphologiques et syntaxiques. La présente étude focalise sur la description de certains facteurs morphologiques impliqués dans la composition en urhobo. Les données ont été collectées à partir de la littérature existante sur des études de la langue urhobo et de notre compétence en tant que locuteur natif de la langue. Il ressort que la langue urhobo a des mots composés dont un des mots est la tête ou alors aucun des mots ne peut être considérée comme tête. Il y a aussi le cas des mots composés à tête double. Un cas d'un mot composé à double tête a été repéré dans nos données. Bien que les têtes des mots composés urhobo se branchent à gauche, il y en a dont les têtes se branchent à droite. On trouve des affixes pronominaux à la tête de certains mots composés. Il y a de nombreux exemples de mots composés avec tête ; cependant, la composition sans tête semble plus productive dans la langue. Ces mots composés sans tête incluent des syntagmes lexicalisés et des phrases ainsi que des mots composés de coordination et des copulatifs. L'usage de la reduplication complète et partielle de certains mots donne lieu à des mots composés basés sur une rime répétitive en urhobo. Différents types de mots composés sont utilisés dans différents types d'énoncés.

0. INTRODUCTION

Urhobo refers to a group of people and their language. It is a South Western Edoid language of the Niger-Congo family. The language is spoken in two states in Nigeria – in Delta by a large group of people and in Bayelsa by a small group of people called Ofoni. The Urhobo people are the largest ethnic group in Delta State. Delta State is the indigenous home of the Urhobos. The language is the only indigenous language studied up to a degree level in Delta state and is currently being proposed for study at two federal universities in Bayelsa and Lagos States of Nigeria. The Urhobo spoken in Delta State is the focus of our study.

The people are made up of twenty-four kingdoms each of which are autonomous. The Urhobos are located within the rain and swamp forest of the Western Niger Delta region of Nigeria. They cover about 5000 square kilometers of water and land space with a population of over two million people. Unconfirmed sources state that there are about eighteen dialects of Urhobo. Though the dialects are mutually intelligible, some dialects are considered more prestigious than the others. Agbarho dialect is considered the most prestigious. It is the dialect chosen as the standard for

teaching and learning. Current translation of the Holy Bible is in this dialect. The dialect of Urhobo used for this study is the Agbarho dialect.

1. SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

Compounding has been described as a process of word formation which involves joining two or more independent roots to form a single word. (Ndimele, 1999:71) . Spencer (1991:307) and Aziza (2007b:302) describe it as a concatenation of words to form other words. In the literature it is argued that some compounds are formed by a combination of a bound root to a base as in the compound, cranberry. (Katamba, 1993:323). Here the morpheme *cran-* is a bound morpheme because it does not exist elsewhere as an independent word, root or base. Fabb (2001:69) also testifies to this phenomenon and explains further that such bound morphemes have not proven to be words neither are they affixes. They have lexical rather than grammatical meanings. Spencer (1991:311-312) gives examples of compounds in French, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese which are lexicalized phrases like the English *Jack-in-a-box*; *forget-me-not*. For him such compounds are not true compounds.

Compounding is recursive. It can admit as many words as possible. Katamba (1993: 297) identifies some cases as in Luganda, where a verb root can be preceded by up to six prefixes and followed by up to three suffixes. Compounding manifests features that relate it with syntax. These include head-modification, predicate-argument, appositional relations and constituent structure. In addition they also have features of words.

Compounds are subject to semantic drift which according to Fabb (2001:66) include metonymy, e.g., a *redhead* is somebody with a red head, rather than a popular game bird (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2011). Their meanings could be non-compositional or even totally idiosyncratic as in the second meaning of *redhead*. A word like *penknife* has drifted from meaning a knife used for sharpening quills (used in writing in those days) to having no real link with pens. Fabb however adds that the meaning of a compound can be compositional to some extent. He states that the meaning of a word like *popcorn* can be derived from the meaning of the components – ‘a type of corn which pops’. One of the factors that accounts for this indefiniteness is that in compounds there are no sufficient grammatical features that could help clarify semantic relations of the various parts of the compound as in the case of sentences.

2. TYPES OF COMPOUNDS

Compounds can be classified into two main types: headed and headless compounds. Headed compounds are referred to as endocentric compounds. These compounds have one of its components as its head. In this case, the characteristics of this component percolate to the whole unit and define it. In some languages the head occurs on the right (as in some English compounds) while in some others it is on the left (as in French).

Headless compounds are called exocentric compounds or ‘*bahuvrihi*’ (the Sanskrit name) compounds. The constituents do not have a head-modifier semantic relationship. Example is *greenhouse* when used semantically to refer to a nursery and not a type or colour of house. The semantic head of these kinds of compounds are not explicitly expressed. A third type of compound which is headless but different from the exocentric is called co-ordinate, appositional or copulative compound. They are called ‘*dvandva*’ in Sanskrit. The headedness of the components are equal, for

3. URHOBLO PHONOLOGY

(1)	ɛ - PX	+ dà INF to drink	→	èdà GER drinking	
(2)	ɛ -	+		chò	
	<i>labialisation + vowel insertion</i>			[cwɔ́]	
				→	
	PX	+		INF to trade	èchuó GER trading

- (4) Èkí èchuó ọ vwèrhá
Market trading be sweet
'trading is interesting'

Compounding in Urhobo is of two major types : headed and headless.

This kind of compound is formed by combining two or more independent words and one of them functions as the head. These are referred to as Endocentric compounds in the literature. A few instances of this type of compounds exist in Urhobo. Examples can be found in compounds that are derived from prefixing the third person singular pronoun to a verb phrase in order to show a person's trade or occupation. These pronouns are the heads of the compounds because the grammatical characteristics of the pronouns percolate to the whole unit, making the compound a nominal; hence they function as agentive nouns. This phenomenon presents an evidence of affix serving as the head of a derived word as proposed by Beard (2001:51). The heads here are left-handed unlike Beard's example (-er in 'breadwinner') which is right-handed. The compounds are not proverbial. They are commonplace in that the pattern of formation are the same in showing a person's trade or occupation. Among these are compounds

like descriptive compounds, double-headed compounds and compounds formed from partial reduplication of verbs.

4.1.1 Descriptive Compounds

The following (a) constructions show how the different components of the compound are strung together to form the descriptive compounds in the (b) constructions

- (5) a. **gùn** + **édjò** → **guédjò**
 judge case 'judge (case)'
 V N VP
- b. **ò-** + **guédjò** → **Ògùédjò** (compound)
 One who judge case 'Judge'
 PX (PN) VP NP
- (6) a. **sì** + **òbè** → **sìòbè**
 write book 'write book'
 V N VP
- b. **ò-** + **sìòbè** → **Òsìòbè** (compound)
 One who write book 'writer of letters/book', 'secretary'
 PX (PN) VP NP
- (7) a. **bèrè** + **òkpà** → **bèròkpà**
 Tear(apart) oilpalm tear apart oilpalm
 V N VP
- b. **ò-** + **bèròkpà** → **Òbèròkpà** (compound)
 One who split /tear oil palm bunch 'one who tears oil palm bunch'
 PX(PN) VP NP
- (8) a. **hwè** + **ìyènrì** → **hwìyènrì**
 kill fish kill fish(es)
 V N VP
- b. **ò** + **hwìyènrì** → **Òhwìyènrì** (compound)
 One who kill fish 'killer of fish(es)' 'fisherman'
 PX(PN) VP NP

A very important point to note is that tones can be used to differentiate these types of compounds from non-compound constructions :

- | Compounds | | Non-compounds |
|--|----|---|
| (9) a. Òsìòbè
Secretary | cf | b. ò ó sìòbè
3SG ASP VP
3SG is writing/writes (book) |
| (10) a. Òbèròkpà
One who tears oilpalm bunch | | b. ò ó bèrè ókpà
3SG ASP V N
3SG tear(s)/ is tearing oilpalm bunch |

As can be observed in the following examples, it is not only pronouns that head compounds in Urhobo. Nouns also head compounds.

- (11) **òbò** + **èriàrièn** → **òbòèriàrièn**
 doctor knowledge
 N N NP
 ‘Doctor of learning/knowledge (PhD)’
- (12) **ògbú** + **èriàrièn** → **ògbú’èriàrièn**
 killer knowledge
 N N NP
 ‘Killer of learning/knowledge (Professor)’
- (13) **ògbá** + **ùdì** → **ògbúdí**
 ardent(person)drink
 N N NP
 ‘ardent drinker/a drunk’
- (14) **ògbá** + **ùnè** → **ògbàúnè**
 ardent (person) song
 N N NP
 ‘ardent singer/ a songstar’
- (15) **ògbá** + **òrè** → **ògbòrè**
 ardent (person) eating
 N GER NP
 ‘ardent eater /a glutton’

The heads of these compounds are left-handed in that the first components **ògbá**, define the type of personalities that are described .

4.1.2 DOUBLE-HEADED COMPOUNDS

Some double-headed compounds are derived by combining an NP with an adjective base to which the third person pronoun has been prefixed. This base is derived from a single verb or two same verbs. The two verbs undergo partial reduplication.

- (16) **ùdì** + **ó-** + **mièmiè** → **ùdìómièmiè**
 drink that is be.sweet
 N PX (C) V
 ‘Sweet drink , soft drink’
- (17) **àmè** + **ó-** [**djìrì** + **djìrì**] → **àmè òdjídjìrò**
 water that is be.cold be.cold
 N PX (C) [V + V] ADJ
 ‘cold water ’
 water that is coldish
- (18) **àmwá** + **ó-** [**yóvwì** + **yóvwì**] → **àmwá òyòyóvwì** (usually,
àmwóyóyòvwì)
 cloth that is be.beautiful be.beautiful
 NP PX (C) [V + V] ADJ
 ‘beautiful cloth’
 cloth that is beautiful
- (19) **òshàrè** + **ó-** [**krèn** + **krèn**] → **òshàrè òkrèkrèn**
 man that is be short be short
 N PX (C) [V + V] ADJ
 ‘short man’
 man that is short
- (20) **àyè** + **ó-** **gròn** + **gròn** → **àyè ógrógròn**
 Woman that is be.tall be.tall
 N PX (C) [V+ V] ADJ
 ‘tall woman ’
 woman that is tall
- (21) a. **òshàrè òkrèkrèn rọ rọvwọ àyè ógrógròn**
 man short that marry woman tall
 ‘a short man who marries a tall woman’

- b. **rién òkè rò vé òyén yàn**
 know time that with her walk
 ‘knows when to walk beside her’

The method of compounding in (16) to (20) is derivational. The prefixing of these pronouns to the verb phrases results into nominals. Pronouns are themselves subclasses of nouns (Carnie, 2007:46). The third person pronoun *ó* means ‘that [which]is _’. This pronoun is a Complementizer (C). It heads the clause it precedes and embeds this subordinate clause into the root or matrix clause to form a compound word. The complementizer with its specifier modify the initial NP of the compound. Traditionally, one would say that the initial NP heads the compound. There however seems to be a doubling of headship of the compound. One of the major reasons is that the characteristics of the two heads percolate to the entire compound. In addition, in terms of pluralization, both heads get inflected, except in cases of mass nouns like **àmè** - water’. Observe also that compound adjectives and compound nouns can be pluralised in the language. Examples are shown below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (22) Singular | Plural |
| a. ù-diòmièmiè
drink soft | ĩ-diímièmiè
drinks soft |
| b. a-mè ò-djídjiró
water cold | a-mè ò-djídjiró
water colds |
| c. a-mwá òyòyóvwì
cloth beautiful | è-mwá òyòyóvwì
cloths beautifuls |
| d. ó-shàrè ó-křẹkřẹn
man short | é-shàrè í-křẹkřẹn
men shorts |
| e. à-yè ó-grógròn
woman tall | è-yà í-grógròn
women tall |

Apart from these set of compounds the preceding examples of endocentric compounds above also exhibit inconsistent patterns of pluralisation. We reserve these details for some other studies as going further on this phenomenon is outside the scope of this present consideration.

4.1.3 Partial reduplication of verbs

Some bases which seem to have been derived from gerunds in the language combine with independent verbs to form nominal compounds. The independent word which is the head of this compound is *right handed* and defines the meaning of the compound. These compounds are rhyming compounds. The unbound base in the resultant words are more or less partial reduplications of the head of the independent base. Examples are

- (23) **éfá + fàn → éfáfàn**
 confess ‘confession’
 V N
- (24) **éghá + ghò → éghághò**
 entertain ‘entertainment’
 V N

- (27) **Ọghènè** + **-è** + **brù** + **órhiè** $\longrightarrow$ **Ọghènèbrórhiè** (compound)
 God -ASP cut judgement
 N -ASP V N
 ‘It is God that judges.’

- (28) **Èdáfè + nà + tà + nùré¹ → Èdàfetànùré** (compound)
 Wealthy the speak finish
 N DET V (PST) PERF
 'The wealthy have spoken.'
- (29) **Údù + mệ + brù + áyèn → Ûdùmẹbráyè** (compound)
 Heart my cut them
 N POSS V 3PL
 'My confidence intimidates them / My doggedness intimidates them.'

These personal names attest to the presence of compounding by conversion of sentences in the language. In the literature, such tendencies are described as lexicalisation of phrases and sentences. The data above also attest to agglutinating tendencies in the language. These names often reflect personal ideologies, worldviews, hopes and aspirations of the parents on the one hand and often chart a roadmap for the bearer of such names on the other hand. The result is that the name – bearers make their names their life signatures.

4.2.1.2 Gerunds

- (30) a. **è- + mù + labialisation + vowel insertion → èmuó**
 carry carrying
 PX V(root) GER
- b. **.ò mà + è- mu-ó + phìyò**
 CFX1- V -CFX2
è-mu-ó
 |
 /w/
- c. **.ò mà + è- mu-ó + phìyo² → ò mà émuó phíyò**
 N CFX1-V-CFX2 PP
 body carrying put.into
 |
 Ø
- ò mémuó phíyò**
 GER
 despondency

¹ **nùré** literally means 'finish'. Used with a verb, it shows perfection. This is also attested to by Aziza 2007a:282 where she says that "A full word **nùré** may serve Aspect marking sometimes, as in what translates as perfective Aspect.." and she gave examples. In addition to her explanation, it was observed that sometimes speakers use a high toned duplication of the vowel in the verb plus **re** to indicate perfective aspect (Ajiboye 2012:32). **Nure** is not a past tense marker but perfective marker. In addition to suffixing **-ri/-re/-ru/-ro** to mark simple past in Urhobo (Aziza 2007a:277), Ajiboye (2012:30) also observed that simple past tense in Urhobo can also be semantically coded. Thus the two types of tenses are marked distinctly in the language.

² **phìyò** is not a verb but a preposition. It literally means 'put into'. Aziza 2007c:309 also analysed this word as a preposition 'in, on'.

- ### 4.3. SYNTHETIC VERBS

(33) **ghwà** + **èvùn** + **kpó** + **ìróró** → **ghwèvùnkpiróró**
 pack belly home('to') thought 'Ponder, meditate'
 V N PP[DIR OBL] V
 PATIENT PATH GOAL

- Observe that though the preposition is the head of the phrase here, in one situation it is left branching, and in another it is right branching.

³ Examples (33) (34) and (35) are synthetic verbs. The translations that follow show that they are sentences. These expressions are in the imperative. They are one-word expressions, the reason being that no one says **ghwà èvùn kpó ìróró** but **ghwèvùnpìróró** etc.

4.4. COMPOUND VERBS

These are verb phrases that are made up of verbs that often collocate with object NPs which serve as their complements. In some cases the verb could be used ditransitively as in (36b) below where the benefactor or recipient of the process described by the verb is introduced into the sentence. The first object is indirect while the second is direct. In other cases, as can be observed in Example (38b) below they are used as collocates in a single syntactic unit functioning as verbs.

- (36) a. **brù + úchè → brúchè**
 cut advice ‘advise’
 V N V
- b. **Ēsè brù émó nà úchè**
 3SG cut children the advice
 N V N(recipient) DET N(object)
 ‘Ese advised the children’

In actual speech it is rendered as,

- c. **Ēsè br-émó nà úché**
 3SG cut- children the advice
 N V -N(recipient) DET N(object)
 ‘Ese advised the children’
- (37) a. **kàrè + òkò → kàrókò**
 carve boat ‘carve boat’
 V N VP
- b. **Akpesiri ĩ kàròkò**
 Akpesiri ASP VP
 3SG ASP carve boat
 ‘Akpesiri is carving the boat’ or ‘Akpesiri carves boat’
- (38) a. **hwórè + òbò → hwòròbò**
 wash hand ‘wash hand’
 V N VP
- b. **Mì hwòròbò ómó nà**
 I wash.hand child the
 1SG VP(PST) N(object) DET
 ‘I washed the child’s hand’

Some verbal inflections are the properties of nominals in the language. As can be observed in (37b) above aspect is marked on the subject NP and not on the verb. See Ajiboye (2012) for more details on the inflectional morphology in Urhobo Verbs.

4.5 REPETITION COMPOUNDS

The process of partial and complete reduplication in the language results into some rhyme-based compounds. This kind of compound has been described as repetition compounds by Fabb (2001:69), who identifies some in Tamil. These compounds are copulative. The data following are examples in Urhobo as observed in Aziza (2007b : 300-301).

4.5.1 Complete Reduplication

Here, a whole stem is copied and attached to another as in the examples below. There are no changes in tone observed here. Verbs in the language are very productive in the formation of other grammatical categories. In the following examples a complete reduplication of the verb bases result into compound words which function as adverbs of manner.

- (39) a. **fárhien** + **fárhien** → **fárhienfárhien**
 be.rough be.rough ‘rough rough’ i.e., ‘roughly’
 V ADV
- b. **ò mó nà-á** **riémú fárhienfárhien**
 Child the-ASP eat.food roughrough
 ‘The child eats (food) roughly.’
- (40) a. **dòghò** + **dòghò** → **dòghòdòghò**
 be.loose be.loose ‘loose loose’ i.e., ‘loosely’
 V ADV
- b. **òshàré nà gbà** **írihřen nà dòghòdòghò**
 Man the tie (PST) rope the looseloose
 ‘The man tied the rope loosely.’
- (41) a. **bòrò** + **bòrò** → **bòròbòrò**
 be.cool be.cool ‘cool i.e., cooly cooly; also means calm(ly)’
 V ADV
- b. **Àmè (ùrhié) nà** **vwá bòròbòrò**
 Water (river) the be cool/calm
 ‘The water(the river) is cool /calm.’

4.5.2 Partial Reduplication of nouns

Partial reduplication of some nouns produces compounds meaning ‘only’ or ‘so many/much’ + Noun.. Examples are

- (42) **ègò** + **ègò** → **ègé gò**
 bottles bottles ‘only/so many bottles’
 N NP
- (43) **Íghó** + **igho** → **íghí'ghó**
 money money ‘so much money’
 N NP
- (44) **íré'ré** + **íré'ré** → **íríré'ré**
 towns towns ‘so many towns’
 N NP
- (45) **ìwènvwì** + **ìwènvwì** → **íwíwènvwí**
 house house ‘so many houses’
 N NP
- (46) **èghwá** + **èghwá** → **èghwè'ghwá**
 bushes bushes ‘so many bushes’
 N NP

Only the plural forms of these nouns are used in this type of construction. The use of the singular forms will result into ill-formed constructions. Structures like the following may not be permitted in the language:

(47) ***ogogo** (sl)

(48) ***orerere** (sl)

íghó and **èghwá** are collective nouns and so exist basically as plural forms. In some patterns partial reduplications produce compounds to express intensity. The resultant compounds function as post-verbal modifiers in the verb phrase. Some examples here include those given by Ekiugbo (2011:34-5).

(49) **djìrì** → **djìdjírò**
 ‘be cold’ ‘coldish’ i.e. cold
 V ADJ

(50) **yówwì** → **yòyówwì**
 ‘be good/fine/beautiful’ ‘goodish/fineish/beautiful’
 V ADJ

Sometimes compounding through partial and complete reduplication of a gerund produces another gerund that shows continuous activity as in (51) to (56) below. These patterns are very common in folktales. As can be observed, they violate the syllable structure of the language in permitting occurrence of vowel sequence. The structure is permitted for stylistic reasons in order to effect some literary colouration. The storyteller uses this speech pattern to highlight a point, for emphasis, create tenseness (climax), and to draw and sustain the attention of the listening audience. Usually, he would accompany the speech act with a demonstration of the actions being depicted. In the compounding of these gerunds the final vowels of the first word assimilate to the initial vowels of the second word in the process of forming the compounds and retain their tones. Note also that the gerunds which undergo complete reduplication are monosyllabic while those that undergo partial reduplication have disyllabic stems.

4.5.3 Complete reduplication of gerunds

Complete reduplication of gerunds to form compounds meaning continuous activity occur with gerunds that are monosyllabic. Observe that the final vowel of the first stem assimilates to the the initial vowel of the second segment. The tones are retained.

(51) a. **èsuó** + **èsuó** → **èsuéèsuó**
 singing singing’ ‘continuous singing’
 GER GER

b. **únè ké èsuéèsuó**
 Song be continuous singing
 ‘3SG just kept on singing.’

(52) a. **èrió** + **èrió** → **èriéèrió**
 eating eating ‘continuous eating’
 GER GER

b. **èmú ké èriéèrió**
 Food be continuous.eating
 ‘3SG just kept on eating.’

- b. **mì ghwè èmwá nà yè òbúkò éché nà**
 1SG pack PL.cloth DET DIR/GOAL back door DET
 'I packed the clothes (in) to the back of the door.'

Or 'I kept the clothes at the back of the door.'

- (58) a. **òb(ẹ)** + **èvùn** → **òbévùn**
 LOC N COMPOUND
 at belly inside, in'
- b. **Ómó nà dóró tiò óbévùn ùwènvwìn**
 Child the throw (PST) into inside house
 'The child threw (it) into the house.'
- (59) a. **òb(ẹ)** + **ótáfè** → **òbótáfè**
 LOC PREP
 at outside 'outside'
- b. **Òkóró yán jè ìmótó rọyè vwò òbótáfè**
 3SG walk leave car his leave outside
 'Okoro left his car outside.'

These compounds do not seem to have heads as the two words that make up the compounds semantically denote positions. The items within the structure have equal status.

4.6 INVENTIVE COMPOUNDING

These are a class of descriptive compounds derived by describing an object imported into the language from another culture. The following examples are taken from Ekiugbo (2011: 33, 41-42)

- | (60) Description of object | Compound |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| a. àmè + rẹ + ísàgwè →
water/liquid of groundnut | àmèísàgwè
'groundnut oil' |
| b. ékpèti + rẹ + ùghé →
box of spectacle | ékpèti ùghé
'television' |
| c. òkọ + rẹ + érhàrè →
canoe of fire | òkọérhàrè
'steamship' |

The headedness of inventive Urhobo compounds are difficult to determine because of the way they are derived hence they are discussed here under headless compounds. In these examples parallels of the object in the target language are simulated and used descriptively for the objects in the source language. By the process of description which results into these types of compounds, the compounds could be termed copulative compounds in that they are coupled from the words with which they are described. This method of compounding is highly productive in forming words for a foreign phenomenon in the language.

4.7 CO-ORDINATE COMPOUNDS

The numeral system of Urhobo after number ten exhibit the characteristics of co-ordinate compounds. Some link words that are introduced in the process of numeracy produce copulative or coordinating compounds. Examples of these compounds are taken from Urhobo.net (2011), Arhagba (2011:59, 68, 100-101) and Obarorakpo (2011:26-40). As from the first recursive digits, 11, **gb(ẹ/ẹ)** (meaning 'plus') is introduced. This goes on to 39. At 40 there is an implied duplication (by

multiplication) of twenty as **ùjè ivè or ùjúvè** (meaning , ‘twenty in two places’). With the addition of other digits, **gb(è/è)** is held constant. The tables below illustrate these :

Table 1 Compounding in Urhobo numerals 11 – 20

Numeral	Gloss	Numeral	Analysis	Gloss
òvò	1	Íhwè gbè òvò (Íhwè gbòvò, íhwòvò)	Ten plus one	11
ivè	2	Íhwè gbè ivè (Íhwè gbìvè, íhwivè)	Ten plus two	12
Érhà	3	Íhwè gbè érhà (Íhwè gbérhá, íhwerhá)	Ten plus three	13
èné	4	Íhwè gbè èné (Íhwè gbènè, íhwené)	Ten plus four	14
Íyòrìn	5	Íhwè gbè íyòrìn (Íhwè ìyòrìn, íhwiorìn)	Ten plus five	15
Ésán	6	Íhwè gbè ésán (Íhwè gbèsán)	Ten plus six	16
íghwrèn	7	Íhwè gbè íghwrèn (Íhwè gbíghwrèn)	Ten plus seven	17
èrénrèn	8	Íhwè gbè èrénrèn (Íhwè gbéérénrèn)	Ten plus eight	18
Írhínrìn	9	Íhwè gbè írhínrìn (Íhwè gbírínrìn)	Ten plus nine	19
Íhwè	10	Ùjè	Twenty	20

Table 2 Compounding in Urhobo numerals 21- 40

Numeral	Analysis	Gloss	Numeral	Analysis	Gloss
ùjè gbòvò	Twenty plus one	21	ògbà gbòvò	Thirty plus one	31
ùjè gbìvè	Twenty plus two	22	ògbà gbìvè	Thirty plus two	32
ùjè gbérhá	Twenty plus three	23	ògbà gbérhá	Thirty plus three	33
ùjè gbènè	Twenty plus four	24	ògbà gbènè	Thirty plus four	34
ùjè gbìyòrìn	Twenty plus five	25	ògbà gbìyòrìn	Thirty plus five	35
ùjè gbésán	Twenty plus six	26	ògbà gbésán	Thirty plus six	36
ùjè	Twenty plus seven	27	ògbà	Thirty plus seven	37
gbíghwrèn			gbíghwrèn		

ùjè gbérénrèn	Twenty plus eight	28	ógbà	Thirty plus eight	38
			gbérénrèn		
ùjè gbírhírìn	Twenty plus nine	29	ógbà gbírhírìn	Thirty plus nine	39
ógbà	Thirty	30	ùjívè	Twenty in two places	40

Other words used in coupling numeral compounds are ‘**kpàvwe**’ (meaning ‘over’ or ‘in excess’ - a kind of plus); ‘**kùgbé**’ (plus); ‘**àsàkwè**’ (‘multiplied by’, ‘in multiples of’); ‘**núro**’ (minus); ‘**ákèghè**’ / ‘**ákè**’ (‘fraction of’). At 200, ‘**úri**’ (meaning two hundred), is used. With these higher figures computation is done through additions, subtractions and multiplications.

The whole essence of these analyses is to show that numeracy is compounding in action in Urhobo and that compounding in Urhobo numerals after number ten is co-ordinating. Numeral compounds are descriptive and picturesque, showing how the numbers build up or are taken apart. We restrict our illustrations to the contents of Tables 1 and 2 above in order not to go into issues outside our present considerations.

6. CONCLUSION

The current study is based on the assumption that Urhobo words can be concatenated to form compounds just as in many other languages. The foregoing has unearthed various patterns of compounding in the language by examining different data used in studying other phenomena in the language from available literature. It was observed that compounding is very productive in Urhobo.

The system of compounding in the language spans a wide range of morpho-phonological processes such as conversion, incorporation, derivation, reduplication, invension, deletion and assimilation; vowel insertions and glide formations, to produce compounds that are used in a variety of fields of discourse in the speech community, including the expression of location. Urhobo has compounds that are semantically compositional and those that are not. There are also compounds that are headed and those that are not headed. From the data gathered in the course of the investigation, it was observed that the heads of Urhobo compounds are often positioned to the left hand, like Tagalog (O’Grady, Archibald, Aronoff and Rees-Miller, 2001:150). In some cases however as in the case of compounds formed from a partial reduplication of verbs, the head is positioned to the right. Constructions in some compounds incorporating prepositional phrases show that the head of the prepositional phrase can sometimes be left branching and some other times right branching (See Examples (33) to (35), above).

Some nominal compounds in Urhobo have the third person pronoun as the head. This pronoun is affixed to the base of the compound and provides an evidence of an affix heading a compound. The affix performs a nominative role. In synthetic compounds the verb is the head of the compound. Whereas some compounds are descriptive, some others perform specific grammatical functions such as, gerunds, nominal, verbal and prepositional functions.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADJ	Adjective	OBL	Oblique
ADV	Adverb	PERF	Perfect
ASP	Aspect	POSS	Possessive
C	Complementizer	PN	Pronoun
CFX1	Circumfix 1	PP	Prepositional phrase
CFX2	Circumfix 2	PREP	Preposition
DET	Determiner	PST	Past
DIR	Direction	PX	Prefix
GER	Gerund	Q	Question
INF	Infinitive	V	Verb
LOC	Locative	VP	Verb phrase
N	Noun	1SG	First person singular
NEG	Negative	3SG	Third person singular
NP	Noun phrase	3PL	Third person plural

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