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Causativity in Ìgbò Personal Names

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Abstract

Causativity is a universal feature of the grammar of languages. It is also a fundamental category of human cognition. This has stimulated a wide ranging literature on it. However, there is only one major investigation of causativity in Ìgbò and this work is essentially theory oriented, neglecting the centrality of causativity in Ìgbò tradition, socio-cultural milieu, and belief systems. Thus, this investigation, has the objective of describing the morphosyntactic features and lexicalisation patterns of Igbo personal names in order to situate the significance of causativity in Ìgbò tradition and culture. Ìgbò personal names have causativizing morphemes in their lexicalised forms. These morphemes include *fùnà*, *gbò*, *gbú*, *mé*, *kwé*, *kwú*, and *nà*. They encode causative senses when affixed to nominals or clauses. The lexicalization of these fused forms produce Ìgbò personal names with causative readings and socio-cultural and contextual interpretations. The grammatical analysis of these personal names

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is a contribution from Ìgbò to the cross-linguistic study of causation and the universal cognitive category of causativity. It is also a stimulus for the further investigation of the grammar of causativity and transitivity, and also, verbal compounding and causativity in Ìgbò. This will be fundamental to a better understanding of causativity as a universal feature of the grammar of languages.

Keywords: causativity, cognition, lexicalization, morphosyntax, Igbo personal names, Igbo culture

1. Introduction

Causativity is a fundamental concept in grammar and the philosophy of language, as well as, the sociology of language. It is a straightforward account of the way human beings organise ‘their cultural and physical realities’ (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 69). The centrality of causativity in human relationships has stimulated a wide-ranging literature on its grammar. Indeed, for Shibatani (2002: 1), no grammatical description can be complete without a discussion of causative constructions because every language has at least one strategy for expressing causativity. The cross-linguistic study of causativity has shown it to be significant in delineating verb classes, more so, as the morphology of causativity is a parameter for delimiting the essential properties of verb classes as reported in Levin (1993), Rappaport-Hovav & Levin (2000), and van Valin (2005). In addition, the study of causativity in any language ‘involves the interaction of various components of the overall linguistic description including semantics, syntax, and morphology’ (Comrie 1989: 165). This interaction of the components of linguistic description is actually noticeable in cross-linguistic studies.

In the literature, there are two approaches to the conceptualisation of causative constructions. The first is the structural

linguistic approach and in this, causative constructions are regarded as resulting constructions from two or more original syntactic or semantic structures. This notion is dominant in Baker (1988), Radford (1997), Dixon (2000) among others. The second approach which is the semantic approach is pronounced in the works of Wierzbicka (1988), Comrie (1989), Kemmer & Verhagen (1994), and Shibatani (2002). Kemmer & Verhagen (1994: 115-116) sum up the abiding features of the semantic approach as:

Structurally and conceptually modelled on simple constructions as extensions and elaborations of non-causative clauses; namely two participant clauses and three participant clauses of ditransitive or transitive plus instrumental types.

The claims of Kemmer & Verhagen (1994) is that the structural features of causative constructions are the systematic manifestations of the semantic properties of the language. The structuralist and semantic approaches to causativity have spurned the diverse linguistic frameworks that have been adopted for the analysis of the grammar of causation.

Wierzbicka (1988) makes known the fact that there is a vast literature on the syntactic structure of causative constructions but in contrast, there is a noticeable lack in their semantics and pragmatics. Shibatani (2002) in a seemingly bold attempt to fill this gap has detailed a vast array of literature on causativity, and with the enduring task of discussing it within the context of the meaning the speakers of the language have adduced to the structure and not primarily on how it is derived. Agbo (In Preparation) adopts this approach in discussing Igbo causative constructions. This is because previous studies on causativity in Igbo have centred on the derivation of the syntactic structure of causative constructions and neglected the perspective on how

causativity is entrenched in the Igbo lexicon. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to discuss the centrality of causativity in Igbo by investigating its occurrence in Igbo personal names, which are integral to the lexicon. In section 1.1 below I shall explain the concept and the characterisation of causation adopted in this work with reference to Fleck (2002).

1.1. The Characterization of Causative Constructions

Fleck (2002) citing Shibatani (1976: 1) states the conditions that are necessary for a causative situation to occur. The first condition is that the speaker realises the sequential occurrence of the events, and believes that the occurrence of one event, T_2 (the time of the caused event), has been realised at T_1 (the time of the causing event) and that T_2 occurs after T_1 . The second condition is that of the dependency relations between the two events. This means that the occurrence of the caused event, T_2 , is absolutely dependent on the causing event, T_1 , and that the speaker is able to deduce from the sequence of events that in an ideal situation, T_2 cannot take place without T_1 taking place. The proposal of these two conditions is motivated by the characterisation of prototypical causative events in Langacker (1987: 54-55). These characteristics include the fact that in a causative situation, there is a single agent that does something to a single patient and this patient undergoes a change to a new state of affairs. Moreover, the action of the agent on the patient takes place in spatiotemporal dimensions. In other words, the preliminary action of the agent and the consequent change in state of the patient is a unique event that overlaps in time and space. This one-off event is further characterised by the fact that the agent is human, with a will to act, control the action and bear responsibility for both the action and the change in state of the patient. The action of the agent is carried out with some body parts or instrument and this action and change in the patient is perceptible to both the agent and the

patient. These characterisations reveal that prototypical causative constructions indicate the ‘direct manipulation’ of the patient by the agent. These characterisations, which have influenced the categorisation of causative constructions in the literature, have guided this study in the identification of Igbo names with causative senses.

In the descriptive approach to causativity, these categorisations include the well-known opposition between ‘direct’ versus ‘indirect’ causation. In direct causation the agent physically manipulates the patient and the resulting caused event is wholly dependent on the agent without the voluntary participation of the patient. For indirect causation, the patient voluntarily participates in the caused event. In direct causation, the spatiotemporal profile of the causing and caused event is not distinct but can be conceptualised. However, in the indirect causation, the spatial and temporal profiles are distinct in the sense that the place and time of the causing event should be autonomous from the place and time of the caused event and clearly decipherable. The terms ‘direct’ versus ‘indirect’ causation subsumes other distinctions found in Kemmer & Verhagen (1994: 120). Here they propose three parameters for categorising causativity: physical vs nonphysical; direct vs mediated and cause per se vs enablement and permission. Dixon (2000: 61-78) proposes nine additional and interwoven parameters for the distinction between direct and indirect causation. He attributes direct causation as depicting states and indirect causation as depicting activities. In direct causation, the agent has the parameters of directedness, intentionality, naturalness, and involvement while the patient has the parameters of affectedness only. In indirect causation, the agent has the aforementioned features of direct causation but the patient now has the parameters of control, volition, and affectedness. These categorisations and parameters are useful in describing causativity in Igbo personal names. The objective is to show how the facts of Igbo personal names contribute to the knowledge of causativity

in human cognition.

Furthermore, the ‘direct’ vs ‘indirect’ distinction introduces the idea of formal parameters in the classification of causative constructions. Dixon (2000) and Comrie (1989) claim that there is a relationship between the form taken by the causative construction and the interaction between the participants in the causative event. Comrie (1989: 166) makes a three-way typological distinction. These include lexical causatives, morphological causatives, and analytical causatives.

Lexical causatives are morphologically unanalysable. They represent a situation where ‘the relation between the expression of effect and the expression of causative micro-situation is so unsystematic as to be handled lexically’ (Comrie 1989: 168). In other words, lexical causatives represent a situation where the participants and spatiotemporal profile of the caused event and the causing event cannot be conceptualised as distinct units. A typical example is the verb *die*, in the clause *John died*. Here the causing event of John’s death and the caused event of his dying are indistinct. Lexical causatives are actually listed in the lexicon of the language and their use have to be consciously learned.

Morphological causatives are expressed in morphologically complex constructions which result from non-causative predicates by affixation, reduplication, lengthening, tonal change, or other morphological processes. A salient feature of morphological causatives is that it is productive in the language (Comrie 1989, Dixon 2000, Shibatani 2002).

In analytic causatives, the construction contains ‘separate predicates expressing the notion of causation and the predicate of the effect.’ Comrie (1989: 167) gives the following example to illustrate analytic causatives: *I caused John to go*. Here there are two separate predicates *cause* (cause) and *go* (effect).

This three-way categorisation forms a continuum across various languages. This continuum goes from morphological to lexical to analytical, and corresponds to the continuum from indirect to

direct causation. This means that there is an intermediate category between direct and indirect causation that shows the various shades of semantic space bounded by indirect causation on one end and direct causation on the other (Dixon 2000, Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002). Dixon (2000) uses terms like ‘sociative causative’; ‘associative causative’; ‘comitative causative’; ‘instrumental causative’; involved / not involved, to point to this category.

1.2. The Previous Study of Causativity in Igbo

Although, there exists a substantial body of cross-linguistic literature on causativity, for the Igbo language, Anyanwu (2005, 2007) represent the only significant investigation of Igbo causative constructions. I acknowledge the passing references to causativity in the works of Lord (1975: 31), Uwalaka (1988: 22-23; 1995: 157-160), and Mbah (1999: 147-149). The works focused on the relationships between causative and compound verbs in Igbo.

Anyanwu (2007), which is a more extensive effort than Anyanwu (2005) adopts a narrow approach by focussing on data solely from the N̄gwà dialect of Igbo. This mono-dialectal approach engenders a negligible database and this makes it very difficult to make valid generalisations of causativity in Igbo. Besides, the theoretical perspective of Minimalist Syntax used in the data analysis concentrates on the syntactic movements involved in the derivation of causative constructions. This formalism undermines the centrality of causation as a cultural and physical reality in the lives of Igbo speakers. Anyanwu (2007) succeeds in showing how the parameters of Igbo (Ngwa) confirm or modify the principles of the English-centred Minimalist Program.

Agbo (In Preparation) takes an approach which includes a purely descriptive analysis of causation in five representative dialects of Igbo, with a view to determining how causative meaning is conveyed by the interaction of semantics, syntax, and morphology. This method has expressed the facts of Igbo and

contributed more meaningfully to the cross-linguistic literature. Moreover, a study of causativity in Igbo personal names would substantiate the descriptive grammar of causativity in Igbo.

1.3. Methodology

The names analysed in this work include the list of graduates in the convocation brochure of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The list is part of the 3,019 names of graduating students from the 2000/2001 to 2004/2005 academic sessions. Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) is a Nigerian university largely made up of students who are natives of the five Igbo-speaking States, in Southeast Nigeria. The names on the list were carefully scrutinised to identify those with causative meaning. 304 names were identified and categorised. The categorised data were then presented to five speakers, each of the dialects of Nsukka, Nnewi, Onitsha, Abakilike, and Owerri. This was done in order to identify differences in the morphological structure of these names in the five dialects. Additional data were collected from Igbo music played on radio and CDs. There is a creative use of the language by Igbo musicians and quite a number of utterances involving causativity in Igbo names were recorded and transcribed. 109 of such names were recorded and transcribed. The paper is organised as follows. In section 1.4, I discuss the argument structure of the Igbo verb because the basic notion of causativity is encoded in the internal structure of the verb. Besides, the verb is the root of the lexicalisation process that results in names with causative readings. I describe this process in section 1.5. In section 2, I describe the various categories of the data and the causative readings of the names. I also describe the context and events that give rise to the names in Igbo tradition and culture. Finally, in section 3, I discuss the findings and conclusion of the work.

1.4. The Argument Structure of the Igbo Verb

At the core of the causative event in Igbo is the causative verb. A study of the argument structure of the Igbo verb in general is the prerequisite to an account of causative events in the language. The affirmation by Emenanjo (1975, 1978, 2005) is that the morphosyntactic structure of the Igbo verb is made up of three mutually obligatory and complementary elements. These obligatory elements comprise the verb itself, the complement, and the bound cognate noun (BCN). The construction in (1) below, with the causative verb *me* ‘make/do’ illustrates the argument structure of the Igbo verb.¹

- (1) Òbí mè-rè èmèmmé.
 Obi do-IND feast
 ‘Obi staged a feast.’

In (1) above, the verb *mé* ‘make/do’ obligatorily co-occurs with the nominal element *èmèmmé* ‘feast.’ The claim here is that every Igbo verb must co-occur with a nominal element which serves as its complement. The idea of the bound cognate noun is illustrated

¹ Igbo is a Nigerian language spoken by about 30 million people. It is a West Benue-Congo language under the Niger-Congo language family (Williamson & Blench 2000). The transcription follows standard Igbo orthography: à (low tone); á (high tone); and ā downstep. All tones are marked to avoid ambiguity due to lexical variance among the dialects. Igbo has phonological features of vowel harmony where the eight vowels in the language are neatly divided into two sets. One set comprises vowels produced with the Advanced Tongue Root (+ATR) while the other set comprises vowels with -ATR. In standard Igbo, -ATR vowels are represented with the sub-dot, e.g., [ɔ̣] while the +ATR vowels do not have the sub-dot. The abbreviations used here are: AGR – agreement marker, CAUS – causativizer, DET – determiner, EMPH – emphasiser, FOC – focus marker, FUT – future marker, INCH – inchoative, IND – indicative, PERJ – perjorative, PROG – progressive, PRON – pronoun, 1s – first person singular, 3s – third person singular, SUBJ – subjunctive.

in (2) below.

- (2) Òbí m̀è-r̀è èm̀èmm̀é émé.
 Obi do-IND feast EMPH
 ‘Obi indeed held a feast.’ or ‘Obi indeed caused a feast to be held.’

Émé is a morphological derivation of the verb *mé* ‘do/make’ and it serves as an emphasiser morpheme. In the literature this is known as the Bound Cognate Noun or BCN. All Igbo verbs have the BCN, which always occur bound to the verb and follows it in the construction as shown in (2) above and illustrated again in (3).

- (3) Ó m̀è-r̀è émé.
 3s do-IND EMPH
 ‘It was made to happen indeed.’ or ‘It indeed happened.’

In examples (2) and (3) above the nominal element *èm̀èmm̀é* and the BCN *émé* are regarded as arguments and/or direct objects of the verb, respectively (Emenanjo 1978: 129). However, Agbo (2013), relying on cross-linguistic evidence, claims that the subject (external argument) of the verb is the participant in the clause that initiates the action represented by the verb, while the object (internal argument) is the participant that is completely affected by the action of the subject as it is represented by the verb. Therefore, while the nominal element *èm̀èmm̀é* is an argument because it is a participant that is completely affected by the action of the verb, the BCN *émé* is simply a morphological derivation of the verb *mé* and not its argument or direct object. Although I adopt the term ‘complement’ to label the nominal element, the sense I use it differs from Emenanjo’s perspective. I use it in the sense of Langacker (1987, 1991) and Croft (2001, 2003) where the verb and its complement is referred to as a construction that is fixed in the mind of the language user as a symbolic unit. In other

words, the verb and its complement is a piece of the lexicon of the language and must be used in context matter-of-factly. This perspective will become clearer as I subsequently discuss Igbo verbs in causative events.

1.5. Igbo Personal Names as Products of Lexicalisation

Brinton (2002) submits that lexicalization is the process by which new items that are considered ‘lexical’ come into being in the language. The process broadly involves (i) the word formation characteristics of the language, (ii) the institutionalization of new lexical items in the language, and (iii) the routinization of these lexical items in the lexicon.

Brinton & Traugott (2005: 96) view lexicalization as the ‘adoption into the inventory’ of new morphological forms, syntactic constructions, and grammatical items. These forms undergo some modification in the inventory of the language with the items losing their formal and semantic properties to evolve into new forms with new contents. These new forms must be learned by the language speaker because the new meanings are exceedingly personal and abstract. Brinton & Traugott (*ibid.*: 97) enumerate the features of a lexicalization process to include fused syntactic phrases, fused compounds, phonological processes, and affixation.

Igbo personal names are derived from clauses (Oñukawa 1995, 1999). The term ‘desententialisation’ is used to describe the derivation of these names. According to Oñukawa (1995: 267) desententialisation is a morphological process where the subject, verb, and complement of a clause are fused resulting in a nominal. The typical desententialised clause include a structure like (4) below cited from Oñukawa (*ibid.*) where S = Subject, VR = Verb Root, and CMP = Complement.

(4) S-VR-CMP

Therefore, personal names like *Nwákàùbá* ‘a child is more valuable than wealth’ (5) and *Irókánsí* ‘enmity is worse than poison’ (6) are derived from clauses by the morphological fusion of the constituents of the clause (Onùkawa 1995: 274).

(5) Nwá kà ùbá
 S VR CMP
 child surpass wealth
 ‘a child is more valuable than wealth’

(6) Íro kà nsí
 S VR CMP
 enmity surpass poison
 ‘enmity is worse than poison’

Examples (5) and (6) are simple clauses with the constituents of the clause shown in the clausal construction before their fusion as personal names as already stated.

Although, the term desententialisation is a specific term for this occurrence in Igbo grammar, a comparative analysis of similar occurrences cross-linguistically would reveal that the process in (5) and (6) has the features of lexicalization as discussed above. Following the assumptions of Brinton & Traugott (2005), examples (5) and (6) have the lexicalization features of being fused syntactic structures that result in a new forms with idiosyncratic and abstract meanings. Therefore, Onùkawa’s (1995) idea of ‘desententialisation’ is simply a word formation process that is at the preliminary stage of lexicalization. A new word is said to be fully lexicalized when it has undergone the process of institutionalization and ‘adoption into the inventory’ to be learned by the speaker of the language. This is the view taken in this paper. The Igbo personal names will be analysed with the view to determining the lexicalization patterns and hence the semantics of causativity therein. In section 2, I discuss the categories of Igbo

personal names in my data with causative readings.

2. Causativizing Morphemes in Igbo Personal Names

The categorization of the data is based on the causativizing morpheme in the nominal construction. Thus, the data comprise names with the causativizing morphemes *fùnà*, *gbò*, *gbú*, *mé*, *kwé*, *kwú*, and *nà*. The *kwú* and *mé* morphemes occur as an interfixes, although *mé* does also occur as prefix and suffix in the data. *Gbó*, *gbú*, *kwé*, *fùnà*, and *nà* also occur as suffixes, however, *kwé* does occur also as a prefix in one example. These morphemes in their various occurrences encode the causative parameters defined in section 1.1 thereby expressing causativity in a cognitive and cultural milieu as the subsequent description of these names show. In the next section I shall discuss the syntactic occurrence of the *fùnà* causativizer.

2.1. Personal Names with the *-Fùnà* Causativizer

These names include the data in (7a-e) below. The names present petitions to a higher being for intercession in the affairs of the name giver or the one who is so named. The petition is usually a form of thanksgiving and also a plea for this higher being to intervene and prevent something valuable from getting lost. The names all end with the causativizing *-fùnà* suffix, which encodes the mediation activities of the higher being.

- (7) a. *Áhàrnéfùnà* ‘may my name not be lost’
 b. *Álòéfùnà* ‘let the advice not be lost’
 c. *Àniéfùnà* ‘let my inheritance not be lost’
 d. *Ámáéfùnà* ‘let the lineage not be lost’
 e. *Ndùéfùnà* ‘let life not be lost’

As examples (8a-e) below demonstrate, these names are Igbo clauses. Each of these clauses encode two sub-events occurring sequentially. The sequence of occurrence of these sub-events can be conceptualized. For example, in (8a) the first event is the situation where the bloodline is threatened due to the lack of a male child but thankfully a male child is delivered in the family. The second event is the subsequent petition to the higher being for the preservation of the bloodline. Since the sub-events can be distinctly conceptualized, (8a) is an instance of indirect causation as stated in section 1.1 above and the characteristic features of indirect causation are noticeable here. For example, the agent of the clause in (8a) is the higher being who acts to preserve the ancestry. The nature of this higher being is to intentionally direct its action on the family as petitioned. The patient of the clause is *Áhà m̀* ‘my name’ which represents the bloodline. This patient has the characteristic features of voluntarily being affected by the acts of the agent. The event structure of (8b-e) is similar to (8a). The variance lies only with the patient participants of the clauses as will be explained subsequently.

The examples in (8a-e) demonstrate the clause structure of these names prior to lexicalization. Igbo word formation processes include prefixation, interfixation, and suffixation. Thus, preceding lexicalization in (8a) is the fusion of the morphemes *f̀ù* and *nà* to form the *-f̀ùnà* suffix. This suffix goes on to attach to the *é* subject-focus marker to form the clause *éf̀ùnà* which the Igbo speaker understands as a clipped form of any of the names in (8a-e). The structure *éf̀ùnà* further fuses with the subject of the clause *Áhà m̀*, and this results in the completely fused structure, *Áhà m̀éf̀ùnà* which loses its formal characteristic as a clause and becomes established in the language as an accepted utterance. This utterance, (7a), describes a single event structure of only the petition to the higher being for the preservation of the bloodline. The characteristic features of the agent in the event remains the same as in (8a) but the patient loses its semantic feature of

volition. This characterizes the event in (7a) as an example of direct causation. Therefore, confirming that it is a lexicalized form. The event structures of (7b-e) are similar to (7a).

These utterances (7a-e) go on to become additions to the register of personal names in the language. These additions to the inventory of Igbo come with the forms each assuming a personal and distinctive meaning in the ordinary use of the language.

- (8) a. *Áhà m é-fùnà*
 name 1s FOC-lose.CAUS
 ‘may my name not be lost’
- b. *Álò é-fùnà*
 advice FOC-lose.CAUS
 ‘let the advice not be lost’
- c. *Àni é-fùnà*
 land FOC-lose.CAUS
 ‘let my land inheritance not be lost’
- d. *Ámá é-fùnà*
 clan FOC-lose.CAUS
 ‘let the clan not be lost’
- e. *Ńdù é-fùnà*
 life FOC-lose.CAUS
 ‘let life not be lost’

The lexicalisation of the names in (8b-e) takes the same pattern as explained for (8a). The lexicalized forms have different nuances of meaning but they all express the prayer for mediation and protection from the loss of something valuable. For example, *Álọ́éfùnà* in (8b) is a prayer for the one who is thus named not to forget the communal advice and goodwill given to him. By

keeping to this advice the name bearer keeps forever the family inheritance. There is no theme of thanksgiving in (8b). *Ániéfùnà* in (8c) has the same theme as the prevention of the loss of inheritance. It is a prayer for the protection of the land inherited from the progenitors. This protection is needed because the ownership of a piece of ancestral land is the only symbol of identity in the clan. *Ámáéfùnà* in (8d) is also a prayer for the clan to be preserved. This clan includes the land and the male progenitors and their families. *Ndùéfùnà* in (8e) has a more personalized meaning because it is a prayer for the preservation of the life of he who bears the name. In the Igbo world view, the possession of life is supreme to all other possessions. The analysis of (8a-e) shows that the causativizing *-fùnà* morpheme in the lexicalized personal names encodes the subject matter of mediation cum protection which brings about the traditional concepts expressed by these names.

2.2. Personal Names with the *-Gbò* Causativizer

The *-gbo* causativizing suffix is found in names like *Múógbò* ‘let the ancestral spirits settle the matter,’ *Chígò* ‘let *Chí* settle the matter,’ *Nwágbò* ‘the child has settled the matter,’ and *Ọnwúgbò* ‘let death settle the matter.’ These *-gbò* causativizing suffix encodes the theme of adjudication in the names. The bearers of these names carry with them some event in the family history where a physical or spiritual force is invited to intervene in a complicated situation. For example, *Múógbò* represents the invitation of the ancestral spirits to intervene in the difficult situation and *Chígò* expresses this same invitation to *Chí* (the personal god of the name bearer). *Nwágbò* is a name given to a child born after a couple have remained childless for so long. The name signifies that the coming of the child is an intervention to end the bitterness of a childless marriage. *Ọnwúgbò* is an invitation for death to intervene in a difficult situation. This

situation could be the presence of a despicable character in the family who is disagreeable to everyone. A child born and given the name *Ọ́nwúgbò* would be an invitation for death to end the life of this character.

The event structure of these names indicate that the differences in their spatiotemporal occurrence is not distinct. This is because they are lexicalized forms of the clauses in (9a-d) below. These lexicalized forms represent instances of direct causation as explained in section 1.1. However, for each of the names the causing event is that depicted by the nominals *Múó*, *Chí*, *Nwá*, and *Ọ́nwú* in the lexicalized forms while the *gbó* causativizer represent the caused event. The data (9a-d) is the representation of these forms prior to lexicalisation.

- (9) a. *Múó gbòò*
 spirit intervene
 ‘let the spirits settle the matter’
- b. *Chí gbòò*
 Chi intervene
 ‘let Chi settle the matter’
- c. *Nwá gbòò*
 child intervene
 ‘the child has settled the matter’
- d. *Ọ́nwú gbòò*
 death intervene
 ‘let death settle the matter’

The clauses in (9a-d) are instances of indirect causation because in conceptualization, they depict two distinct spatio-temporal events. They become lexicalized first by the syntactic fusion of the *gbòò* causativizer to the nominals. This results in a word form

which later becomes institutionalized and subsequently routinized as explained in section 1.5. The loss of formal and semantic properties leads to the new meanings ascribed to the names.

2.3. Personal Names with the *-Gbú* Causativizer

These include names like *Ásíégbú* ‘let hatred not cause death,’ *Ányànàégbú* ‘the eyes can cause death,’ *Àkwùégbú* ‘let trouble not cause death,’ *Ìbènaégbú* ‘folks can cause death,’ and *Ófóégbú* ‘let expectations not kill.’ These names represent aspects of folk wisdom and the oral transmission of folk knowledge. They all have the *-gbú* causativizing suffix with the reading ‘cause.kill.’ The examples in (10a-e) illustrate the clausal occurrence of these names prior to their lexicalization. Each of these examples represent two sequentially occurring sub-events. In example (10a) the first event is the existence of hatred as a human emotion exhibited by one’s enemies. This event is followed by the delivery of a child and the giving of the name *Ásíégbú* to the child. The intention of the name giver is to let the child and the community at large be wise to the fact the hatred of one’s enemies should not cause one to worry to death. The occurrence of these two events in space and time is conceptually distinct. As stated in section 2.1 this is a feature of indirect causation with its characteristic features.

Preceding the lexicalization of (10a) is the suffixation of the causativizer *-gbú* to the *é* focus marker to produce the form *égbú* which is semantically null and this leads to the fusion of this form with the *Ásí*, the subject of the clause to form *Ásíégbú* which loses its clausal features and becomes fully lexicalized with the features of direct causation and lexical causatives (cf. section 1.1). Examples (10b-e) have the same description but the pre-existing events cum folk wisdom transmitted varies according to the subject of the clause. For example, the subject of (10b) transmits the wisdom that hostile looks from the enemy can cause death but

that should not be permitted by the name bearer. In (10c) the name bearer carries in the name the folk wisdom that he should not let the troubles of this world cause his death. For (10d) the name represents a folk belief that one's kith and kin could cause one's death and in (10e) the name represents the knowledge that *Ófò*, the symbol of equity and justice by which one alleges his personal integrity, can cause death, especially if a false oath is sworn before the *Ófò*. In all these the name bearer is given life lessons on survival.

- (10) a. *Ásí* *é-gbú*
 hatred FOC-CAUS.kill
 'let hatred not cause death'
- b. *Ányá* *nà-é-gbú*
 eye PROG-AGR-CAUS.kill
 'the eyes can cause death'
- c. *Àkwù* *é-gbú*
 trouble FOC-CAUS.kill
 'let trouble not cause death'
- d. *Íbè* *na-é-gbú*
 folks PROG-AGR-CAUS.kill
 'folks can cause death'
- e. *Ófò* *é-gbú*
Ófò FOC-CAUS.kill
 'let expectations not cause death'

The examples in (10a-e) result in lexicalized forms which are names given to males. This is because the received folk wisdom is that the male members of the community are the typical targets

of malevolent physical and spiritual forces. So these names act as beacons of wisdom to the name bearers as they make their journey through life. In the next section I discuss the *mé* causativizer which is the most productive in the data.

2.4. Personal Names with *Mé*- Causativizer

These names fall into three categories. The first category comprise names with the causativizer occurring as a prefix while in the second category the causativizer is an interfix. In the third category the causativizer occurs as a suffix. The first category includes names like *ménùbá* ‘do something in the midst of wealth,’ *Mégáfú* ‘do for all to see,’ *Mènàrí* ‘do more than is expected,’ *Mènákáyá* ‘do something with the support of someone,’ and *Mémbólú* ‘do something to me.’ In the second category there are names like *Mádùéméziá* ‘people should stop doing whatever,’ *Éméchèbé* ‘when it’s done then it’s thought about,’ *Émékwúé* ‘when it’s done it’s talked about,’ *Éméànú* ‘when it’s done it’s talked about,’ and *Mgbémèná* ‘whenever it’s done.’ The third category include *Ékwúémé* ‘when it’s said, it’s done,’ *Mbànémé* ‘the nation does,’ *Múódémé* ‘the spirits assist by doing,’ *Òbù mnèmé* ‘am I the one causing it,’ and *Kánémé* ‘let’s keep doing.’

In section 2.4.1 below the clausal occurrence of the first category is illustrated.

2.4.1. Names with the *Mé*- Causativizer

The illustrated examples in (11a-e) include the clausal representation of the names with the *mé*- prefixal causativizer prior to lexicalization. In (11a) *na ùbá* ‘in wealth,’ written orthographically as *n’ùbá*, is a prepositional phrase. The causativizer *méé* prefixes to this prepositional phrase in the word formation process prior to lexicalization. The resulting form, *Méénùbá* ‘make/cause in wealth’ loses its formal and semantic contents and assumes a new

The *me-* prefix causativizer in (11a-e) encodes the culture of grandstanding and playing to the gallery. The pre-existing events in (11a-e) include the values of affectation which is now transmitted to the name bearer as a way of life. It is noteworthy that these names are typically borne by speakers of the Onitsha variety of Igbo.

2.4.2. Names with the *-Me-* Causativizer

This section includes names of the second category. Their clausal occurrence is exemplified in example (12) below. The names all ring the message of letting things to be done at the right time. This thing that is to be done can only be inferred from the name giver. However, the names are typical in the sense that they clearly depict causativity as explained in section 1.1. The two-event structure of causativity is distinctly sequential as (12a) shows. *É mée* ‘when it’s done’ is the first event and it is followed by the second event, *É chè-bé* ‘it is thought about.’ It is an instance of indirect causation. These two sequential clauses eventually fuse to become the word form *Émèèchèbé*, which goes on to become lexicalized in the language and depict direct causation in its conceptualization. The new meaning in the lexicalized form is that one should rightly think about an action before carrying it out at the appropriate time. In a similar vein, (12b) involves two sequential sub-events expressed by *Màdú* and *É mée zía*. The first event expresses the undesirable thing people have been doing to the name giver while the second event is an imperative command for the people to stop doing the undesirable thing at that point in time. The two forms eventually fuse and lexicalize to mean a plea for the name bearer to be left live in peace during his time on earth. For (12c) the event *É mée* ‘when it’s done’ precedes the next event *É kwú-é* ‘it’s talked about’ and it’s lexicalized form means that what is done at the appropriate time will be praised. While in (12d) *É mée* precedes *à nù* ‘it’s

heard’ and fuse to the lexicalized form *Émèànú* meaning that whatever is done at the right time will be eventually appreciated. The name *Mgbèmèná* in (12e) means that it is never too late to achieve anything. This is the lexicalized form of the pre-existing forms of *Mgbé* ‘whenever’ and *è mè-nà* ‘it is done.’ As already stated, the fusion of these two forms and events results in the lexicalized form.

(12) a. *É* *méé* *è* *chè-bé*
 PRON do PRON think-INCH
 ‘when it’s done it’s thought about’

b. *Màdú* *é-mé-zí-á*
 person NEG-do-EMPH-IMP
 ‘people should stop doing whatever’

c. *É* *méé* *é* *kwú-é*
 PRON do PRON talk-IMP
 ‘when it’s done it’s talked about’

d. *É* *méé* *à* *nú*
 PRON do PRON hear
 ‘when it’s done it’s heard’

e. *Mgbé* *è-mèè* *nà*
 when PRON-do EMPH
 ‘whenever it’s done’

The lexicalized forms of (12a-e) contain the folk wisdom of doing things at the right time. The name giver strives to let the bearer and the community know that there is a time and season for doing anything.

2.4.3. Names with *-Me* Causativizer

The examples in (13) portray the names with the *-mé* suffixal causativizer. These names mean that whatever action the name bearer carries out is enabled or permitted by an external non-physical force. In other words, the life achievements of the name bearer are enabled by unseen forces external to him. For example, in (13a), *Múódèmé* ‘the ancestral spirits enable the action’ means that the ancestral spirits of the name bearer will assist him in his life endeavours. *Ékwúèmé* ‘when it’s said, it’s done’ in (13b) implies that the pronounced wish of the ancestral spirits, in favour of the name bearer, will come to pass. In (13c), *Mbànèmé* ‘the nation permits’ means that it is the nation, (which includes the ancestral spirits) that determines any course of action of the individual. That is, the individual is not independent of the nation in his life actions. The name in (13d) is a rhetorical question. *Òbùrínèmé* ‘am I the one enabling it?’ is a question meant to provoke thought and prevent envy or jealousy, especially when fortunate events befall the name bearer. This rhetorical question acclaims unseen forces as the enablers of the fortunate events. In (13e) *Kànèmé* ‘let’s keep doing’ is an encouraging piece of advice to the name bearer not to relent in doing his bit in any human endeavor and letting the ancestral spirits bring the endeavor to completion. The description of (13a-e) shows their lexicalized forms and meaning. The conceptualization of the events in these forms shows that they are instances of direct causation with no distinction in the spatio-temporal events denoted.

- (13) a. *Múó* *dù* *è-mée*
 spirit lead FOC-do
 ‘the ancestral spirits enable the action’

- b. É kwú è mé
 PRON talk PRON do
 ‘when it’s said it’s done’
- c. Mbà nà-è-mé
 nation PROG-AGR-do
 ‘the nation permits’
- d. Ò bù m nà-è-mé
 WH COP 1s PROG-AGR-do
 ‘am I the one causing/doing it?’
- e. Ká á-ná-è-mé
 SUBJ PROG-AGR-do
 ‘let us keep doing’

As explained for other examples (7-12) above, the clausal occurrence (13a-e) are instances of indirect causation depicting two sequential sub-events. The first event is the fact that human beings initiate all their earthly endeavours, while the second event is the fact that the ancestral spirits enable these endeavours and bring them to fruition.

2.5. Names with *Kwe-* and *-Kwe* Causativizers

The names include *Kwénìtọ* ‘let me live long,’ *Òràkwé* ‘let the folks agree,’ *Ndìókwèrè* ‘those it allows to do,’ *Chiékwé* ‘Chi has allowed it,’ *Ọgùékwé* ‘Ogu has allowed it,’ and *Ọnyémèlùkwé* ‘who has done evil and agreed to it?’ In example (14) below these names are represented as clauses. In these clauses the *kwé* causativizer represents one of the two sub-events of indirect causation. In (14a) *kwéé-* ‘enable’ represents the first event of

permission by the ancestral spirits while *n' tóó* 'I grow old' is the second event of the name bearer wishing to grow old. In (14b-e) the respective nominal forms *Òrà* 'folks,' *Ndí* 'those,' *Chí* 'personal god,' and *Ònyé* 'who' represent the first conceptualized events in the clauses while *kwéé* represent the sequential second event. The syntactic fusion of the first and second forms in (14a-e) produces the lexicalized forms in the processes already explained.

- (14) a. *Kwéé n' tóó*
 enable 1s grow old
 'let me grow old'
- b. *Òrà kwéé*
 folk agree
 'let the folks agree'
- c. *Ndí ó kwè-rè*
 3pl 3s agree-IND
 'those it allows to do'
- d. *Chí è-kwé*
 Chi FOC-agree
 'Chi has allowed it'
- e. *Ònyé mè-lù kwé*
 WH do-IND agree
 'who has caused evil and agreed?'

The names in (14a) represent a plea to the ancestors to permit the name bearer to live to a ripe old age. In (14b-d) includes the meaning that whatever course of action the name bearer proposes for his life should be permitted by the ancestral spirits

metaphorically represented by the nominal forms in the clauses. Example (14e) is a rhetorical question with folk wisdom contained in it. It asks who would cause evil and agree to it. This means that the ancestral spirits forbid and punish evil deeds and that is why evil doers would never confess their machinations.

2.6. Names with *-kwú-* and *-kwú* Causativizer

The names include *Ékwútòsì* ‘don’t cause slander,’ *Ékwúnifè* ‘don’t make a secret open,’ *Anìékwú* ‘Ani has spoken,’ and *Òràkwúé* ‘let the folks have their say.’ Their clausal expressions are shown in (15). The *-kwú-* causativizer is an interfix in examples (15a & b) while it is a suffix in (15c & d). The causativizer *-kwú-* in (15a & b) encode the folk wisdom that causing slander is a vice. So the name bearer is pleading that his or her character should not be defamed. In (15b) the folk wisdom therein is that whatever is a secret should be kept so. In other words, divulging the secrets of a community is prohibited. For (15c & d) the causativizer encodes adjudication by the ancestral spirits. Therefore, in (15c) whatever the spirits have pronounced as judgment must come to pass. And in (15d), whatever is the wish of the folks should be allowed.

The event structure for (15a & b) includes *É* as the first event for both clauses and *kwútòsì* and *kwúnifè* as second events respectively for (15a & b). In (15c & d) the respective nominal forms represent the first events while the form *-kwú* represent the second events. Their lexicalization pattern follows what has been described thus far.

- (15) a. *É* *kwú-tòsì*
 NEG talk-PERJ
 ‘don’t cause to slander’

- b. É kwú n' ifé
 NEG talk-PREP open
 'don't make a secret open'
- c. Ànì é-kwú
 Ani FOC-talk
 'Ani has spoken'
- d. Òrà kwù é
 folks talk-IMP
 'let the folks have their say'

2.7. Names with *-Na* Causativizer

The names include *Chíéjìnà* 'let the night not come,' *Ámáéchìnà* 'let the clan not be annihilated,' *Ífẹ́ájù̀nà* 'let *Ife* have no cause to refuse,' *Úzòéchìnà* 'let the road not be closed,' and *Òbíéchìnà* 'let the *Obi* not be closed.' The clausal representation is shown in (16). These names are borne in cases where the name giver is pleading to the ancestors not to prevent misfortune from befalling the name bearer or his bloodline. So in (16a) the petition is for the gods not to allow any misfortune befall the name bearer. In (16b) the plea is for the clan not to be annihilated probably by the enemies or by a lack of male children. For (16c) the petition is specific to the god *Ífẹ́*, not to refuse to intercede in the affairs of the name bearer. (16d) is a plea for success in life. So the name bearer makes a plea for the ancestral spirits to always create opportunities for prosperity. While in (16e), the plea is for prevention of any misfortune to happen to the *Òbí*, the symbol of the bloodline. This misfortune could be the lack of a male child or a fatal attack by enemy forces.

- (16) a. Chí é-ji-nà
 atmosphere NEG-darken-CAUS
 ‘let the night not come’
- b. Ámá é-chi-nà
 clan NEG-close-CAUS
 ‘let the clan not be annihilated’
- c. Ífè á-jù-nà
 Ife NEG-refuse-CAUS
 ‘let Ífè have no cause to refuse’
- d. Úzò é-chi-nà
 road NEG-close-CAUS
 ‘let the road not be closed’
- e. Òbí é-chi-nà
 Obi NEG-close-CAUS
 ‘let the Obi not be closed’

The event structure of (16a-e) follows my description for examples (7-15) above. In the lexicalized forms, *-nà* encodes the causative reading of the clause and the lexicalized forms individually.

3. Conclusions

This description of causativity in Igbo personal names represents a straightforward analysis of the grammar of causation in Igbo. For each of the personal names discussed, a morphosyntactic analysis of its clause structure is done parallel to an analysis of

its lexicalized structure. The morphosyntactic analysis exemplifies the interaction of the syntax, morphology, and semantics of Igbo causative constructions. Similarly, the analysis of the lexicalized forms is an inquiry into the construction of socio-cultural identities by the Igbos. Causativity in these lexicalized forms define the essence of the name bearers and transmit the folk wisdom and psychology of the Igbo people.

This investigation also shows that Igbo has the two universal categories of lexical and morphological causatives. For Igbo, the morphological causatives are very productive as shown in the data analysis. This morphological productivity is a universal feature of causativity in languages like Japanese, Turkish, Quechua, Olutec, among others (Shibathani 2002: 3). The construction of socio-cultural identities as a feature of the verbal act of naming, in Igbo, is also a universal feature of languages, especially African languages. This study is a contribution from Igbo to the cross-linguistic study of causativity universally. It is a stimulus for further research in the grammar of causativity especially in the relationship between verbal compounding and causativity and also the relationship between causativity and transitivity. Investigations of these grammatical relationships will make clearer and more copious the contributions from Igbo to the study of the universal phenomenon of causativity.

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