

## MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ÀGÀTÚ PERSONAL NAMES

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### Abstract

Language is one of the instrumental components for the expression of culture. It facilitates communication between individuals and groups. Language plays a significant role in the developmental processes of any country. This paper is on the Morphological Analysis of Àgàtú Personal Names. Naming is universal and has become inseparable with human culture and language. Personal names in Àgàtú, just like in other languages of the world, are not just means of identifications but possess morphological properties worthy of scholarly attention. Data for this paper were elicited from the list of secondary school registers and the nominal roll register of the council ward under Àgàtú LGA. The descriptive method of data analysis was used. The analysis is divided into two basic groups. The first has to do with the internal structure of Àgàtú personal names (APNs) as simple, compound, and complex words, and the second group dwells on the morphological processes like derivation, clipping and other word formation strategies productive in the APNs. Àgàtú personal names could be mono-morphemic and bi-morphemic. This study reveals that Àgàtú attests to compound and complex formation in APNs' noun + noun, noun + adjective in order to form compound and complex personal names. Some personal names are derived via prefixation processes. Morphological processes such as Derivation, Clipping, Nominalization and Borrowing. This study analysed and described the morphological properties imbedded in APNs. The study found out that, beyond serving as means of identification, personal names in Àgàtú possess morphological properties that can be systematically analysed.

**Keywords:** Àgàtú, Name, Personal name and Morphology

### Introduction

Language and culture not only create meaning, but also shape one's cognitive process, such as perception, interpretation and judgment. (Krocheret and Lev 1962) affirm that language embodies the spirit of people who speak it; that grammatical forms have influence on the development of ideas. The language spoken by somebody and their identity as speakers of that language are inseparable. This fact must have prompted the claims in Leonard and Law (2004) that language acts, are acts of identity. Language reflects culture and language and culture combined are major components of social identity. The link between language, culture and identity is often so strong that a single phonemic feature suffices to identify someone's membership in a given group. Àgàtú is one of the major languages spoken in

Benue State, North Central Nigeria.

Àgàtú is also a Local Government in Benue state. It was created in October, 1996 with the population of about Eighty Thousand (80,000) people. It used to be Àgàtú district of the old Otukpo division. Other towns and villages in Àgàtú Local Government are Ogwule - Ankpa, Abalichi, Abogbe, Adagbo, Adana, Adun, Agbachi, Agbaduma, Aila among others. The headquarters of the local government is at Obagaji; it is one of the nine local government areas in the southern senatorial zone of Benue state which is mainly occupied by the Idoma people of Benue state. Adanu (2004). Naming is a universal phenomenon and the morphological descriptive analysis of Àgàtú personal names (APNs) examine in this paper is not only timely but significant. This study describes the mono / bi-morphemic,

compound / complex names as well as morphological processes such as derivation, clipping and nominalization.

Scholarly speaking, many studies have been carried out on personal names in linguistics generally but scantily in Àgàtú language. Competent researchers such as Agyekun (2006), Al-Zumar (2009), Crystal (2003), Ogie (2002), Onumajuru (2006), Mensah and Imeobong (2003), Udoye and Ofoegbu (2011), Wappa (2013), Oyishoma Ngbede (2024) among others have carried out some descriptive, socio-cultural, morphological / syntactic analysis on personal names. In Àgàtú, however, a lot is yet to be done especially on morphological analysis of personal names. Therefore, this study undertakes a grammatical analysis of Àgàtú personal names comprehensively on morphology in order to close the existing gap.

### **Objectives**

The aim of this study is to undertake a grammatical description of Àgàtú personal names morphologically. Specifically, the study examines the formation process, structural and behavioral adaptations of Àgàtú personal names as well as the borrowed names from other languages.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is anchored on the lexical morphology theory proposed in Pesetsky (1979) and elaborated by Kiparsky (1982). The theory accounts for the interactions of morphology and phonology in a language. With the emphasis on morphonology, it is a theory in which morphological and phonological rules are brought together within a single framework. It is an approach to morphology that accounts for the interactions of morphology and phonology in the word building process and the approach is based on the insight that much of phonology operates in language. Word formation rules guide the formation of words. These rules combine morphemes to form new words and are also called morphonological rules. Goldsmith (1990:20) states that, 'lexical morphology is arrived at by the concatenation of the morphophonemic rules and the purely phonological rules of the pre-generative years. Hence, the lexical morphology theory is

proposed to account for the interrelationship between the two levels of linguistics, morphology and phonology. However, Lexical Morphology (LM) and Lexical Phonology (LP) constitute the major framework adopted for the analysis in this study. The theory of lexical morphology is preferred over several morphological theories such as word formation theory, generative phonology theory, and construction morphology theory. This is due to the suitability of the theory to the subject matter of investigation in this study. Lexical morphology theory, according to Kenstowicz (1994: 20), receives generative interpretation of the relations between morphology and phonology. Hence, the choice of the theory is informed by its problem-solving efficiency. For instance, the lexical morphology theory, which exploits the interrelationship between morphology and phonology is capable of explaining phenomena in African languages (and indeed, Àgàtú language), which were hitherto regarded as „complex“ or intractable.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Name**

Generally, *name* is a term used to refer to anything. Ainiala, Saarelona and Sjöblom (2016:13) explain: The word name has two fundamental meanings. They explain that on one hand a name is a word or combination of words, such as Eero or Beltic Sea, referring to one identified person, being, subject or object, in which case the term proper noun or proper name can be used. On the other hand, it can mean a word or combination of words, such as a boy, referring to persons, beings, subjects or objects as a representative of its class, whereupon we can speak of a common noun or an appellative.

Crystal (1997:112) in the same vein, observes a name as a word or phrase that identifies a specific person, place or thing. The entity 'name' is seen as an individual and not as a member of a class: 'Everest', for example is a unique name (a proper name) whereas 'mountain' applies to a whole class of objects (a common noun). Again, Rymes (1996) considers names as arbitrary labels that refer to certain signified entities, therefore the

signifier and the signified may not share certain intrinsic qualities. These views are further shared by Lyons (1968) and Palmer (1976) who assert that proper names are merely referential and only denote the persons that bear them and nothing more. These views point to the position that names are mere tags for identification only. Every human being in the world has a name that solely identifies and marks him/her from all other humans in the world. This position is largely shared by European or English culture. However, the African culture sees names as having a lot of social, cultural, historical and linguistic communications.

In the view of Nwagbara (2010:5) 'names are variable sources of information. They can indicate gender, marital status, birth place, nationality, ethnicity, religion and position within a family or within a society'. Our understanding from this position is that there are a lot of information in names and in the exact words of Nwagbara (2010:6) 'names do not only represent nomenclatures and identify items; they are also linguistic and communicative acts that express some functional, aesthetic and assertive meanings and features'. From the perspective of Agyekum (2006), the phenomenon of name as an entity refers to a different element of human experience, that is, to an individual or a collective entity, which it designates or denotes. Similarly, a related notion is shared by Ehusani (1991) and Ayuwo (2004) which state that the meaning of names is important and that names express the world view of the people; explaining that name reflects the belief system of the people, situations or circumstances, events, whether past or present of the givers or bearers.

### **Personal Name**

Personal name is the name by which an individual or a person is identified. It has the potency to conjure immediately an image about a certain individual, its identity, social classification, community and the place of the individual within the community. When written, a personal name usually begins with initial capital letter and does not usually occur with an article either indefinite (a, an) or definite (the). According to Bright (2003), there is a piece of folklore current among anthropologists regarding the question of whether

personal names exist in all societies. He further maintains that this folklore has not been traced to any printed source, but it is somewhat as follows:

Somewhere in the world, there is a society where people live in very small isolated communities. In such a community, the people have no personal names, i.e., individuals have no name which other people use to refer specifically to them. Instead, they referred to them by descriptive expressions, e.g., 'the blacksmith' or the man who lives by the stream'. A woman will be referred to as, e.g., 'the blacksmith's wife'. Children will be referred to by expressions such as 'the blacksmith's elder daughter'; when this daughter gets married, she may be referred to as, e.g., 'the wife of the man who lives by the stream'. The question arises: is there such a society? Or more to the point: is such a society possible? (2003:672).

In the researcher's view, there can be no society where personal name does not exist. From creation, when God created everything, and when He made Adam, Adam by God's instruction gave names to all that God created and whatsoever Adam called the things created by God was their names (Genesis 1:19-20, the Holy Bible).

### **Morphology**

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words and forms a core part of linguistic study today. Morphology is another level of linguistic analysis that is a major focus of this study. Morphology is the level of grammar that studies the way morphemes organize themselves to form words. The structure of the word could be simple, compound, complex and compound-complex as attested in the word structure of the language. According to Kari (2015:25), simple words are unadorned words, words that have no word-building elements, such as affixes attached to them. In other words, they are mono-morphemic words. Words that are morphologically compounds consist of two or more words that are divisible into independent components, all of which combine to form new words. They are also

referred to as di-morphemic word. According to Kari (2015:100), there are different types of compounds, which are classified on morphological, syntactic and semantic grounds. Morphologically, compounds are classified into *affix* (affix is attached to one of the members of the compound) and *non-affix* (compound words that do not have any affix attached to the stem of any member of the compound) compounds. Syntactically, they are classified into endocentric and exocentric compounds, and coordinative and appositional compounds. On semantic grounds, compounds are classified into semantic and non-semantic compounds. Complex words are wording whose morphological structures consist of independent or free root morphemes and one or more affixal morphemes. And finally, morphological compound-complex words consist of two or more independent or free root morphemes and one or more affixal morphemes. Furthermore, morphological processes are word formation strategies through which languages constantly enrich their vocabularies to enable the languages express new ideas/concepts as well as to name new objects so as to meet the linguistic needs of a people in their constant interaction with new objects, ideas/concepts and people from other cultures. According to Omachonu (2001) in Atadoga (2011:102), morphological processes serve as the productive resource for creating more words and new lexical items. Kari (2015:93) opines that inflection and derivation are among the major morphological processes. These linguistic features are analysed in this study based on those attested in APNs.

### **Empirical Review**

Àgàtù language is undergoing scientific study following several attempts in the past and present to document, develop, socialize, modernize and standardize the language. This began as far back as the days of missionary activities in Nigeria. Some missionaries and a few other British as well as American scholars at that time made significant contributions to the study of the Àgàtù language.

Oyishoma (2024) in his study titled ‘ the pragmatic analysis of Ìdomà names’ reveals that for the interpretation of the meaning of names,

which is an important aspect of oral literature, one has to go beyond explicating meaning at the lexical level and look at paralinguistic measures and tools. Elements like implicature, presuppositions, or literary uses of language which go beyond the ordinary meaning of words have to be applied. The impacts of factors such as the historical, environmental, cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds should be taken into consideration for one to explicate the meanings of Ìdomà names. Umaru, Yusuf and David (2017) study titled ‘the syntax of Àgàtù personal names’ examined the grammatical structures of the names where words and phrases are creatively combined to convey certain meanings as a special form of cultural identification. According to them, Àgàtù personal names carry semantic weight and communicative values in their structures. Personal names in Àgàtù are therefore not ordinarily labeled; rather, they convey a sense of history, beliefs and act as a vehicle of communication. According to the study, the grammar of the language could determine the naming system. The study revealed that the syntactic description of Àgàtù personal names is found within words, compounds, phrases and sentential names such as interrogatives, declarative sentences as well as calquing or desententialisation. However, the focus of Umaru, Yusuf and David (2027) was on the syntactic analysis leaving a very wide gap on other level of linguistic analyses like morphology. This study aims at filling this gap and contribute to the body of knowledge.

Imoh, Johnpaul and Dansabo (2022) focused on the structural characteristics of Ìgalà death prevention names. The study revealed that Ìgalà death prevention names serve as appellations and a means of communication to address who are usually ancestors and deities whose main aim is to forestall further mortality of the named infants. Johnpaul (2022) on the morphological description of Ìgalà proverbial names asserts that the names do not just contain philosophical and cultural values, but are morphologically compound, complex and compound complex words derived in part from the full proverbial expression embedding rich linguistic information that are useful for understanding the grammar of the language.

Akase (2015) in 'The Tiv Personal Name: Form and Meaning' classifies Tiv personal names into twenty groups or categories according to function or structural components. Tiv personal names according to him are meaningful and they reflect the socio-cultural behaviours of the people. The names consist of morpho-syntactic components that give insight into the grammar of the language. Akase (2018) in another work titled 'Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis of Tiv Personal Names' stresses the importance of semantics and pragmatics in the linguistic study of names. According to him, the study of names can never be complete without exploring the social and cultural meanings which differ from the literal or conceptual meaning. This helped to underscore the contextual and cultural meanings of Tiv names that formed the object of his study.

#### **Methodology**

The primary data were sourced through interview and observation methods by getting

information from five (5) native speakers of Àgàtù. The instruments used for data collection, list of personal names registers in Àgàtù were used to elicit data. The elicited data were thoroughly and systematically examined and analysed with the proper guidance of the three (3) language assistants (Àgàtù English bilinguals) who possess vast knowledge in the chosen dialect which could be verified by any other native speaker of Àgàtù. The three (3) research assistants also language scholar and tutor which adds to the integrity as well as the authenticity of the data and the work in general. The study adopted descriptive analysis of the data based on the meanings of personal names given by the native speakers of Àgàtù. Firstly, the data were analysed having been translated, tone marked; and glossed using the Leipzig glossing rule to make them ready for presentation and analysis. The data were analysed morphologically for comprehensive understanding and description of the Àgàtù personal names.

#### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section is concerned with the analysis of the word structure of APNs. The analysis here is divided into two basic groups. The first has to do with the internal structure of APNs as simple, compound, and complex words, and the second group dwells on the morphological processes like derivation, clipping and other word formation strategies productive in the APNs.

#### **Word Structure of APNs**

Here, we consider the word structure of Àgàtù personal names. The APNs could be simple, compound, and complex words reflecting the morphological operations inherent in the language. The detailed discussion of the APNs is there presented thus:

#### **APNs as Simple Words**

Simple words are called mono-morphemic words. The Àgàtù basic word structure is mono-morphemic words. For example: *jé* 'read', *tá* 'write' are simple words in Àgàtù. This claim is illustrated in data (1) thus:

1.

- i. *ígbè*  
share  
'portion'
- ii. *phòì*  
good  
'goodness'
- iii. *océ*  
king  
'king'
- iv. *ádà*

- father  
'father'
- v. emà  
Relation  
'relative'
- vi. eçò  
stone  
'rock'

The data in (1) illustrate monomorphemic APNs with a noun stem. This is evident in the number of examples given. This is the smallest morphemic structure of APNs as the names in this group cannot be further divided into any morphemic structures.

### APNs as Compound Words

Àgàtù language attests to the existence of compound words. This is reflected in the APNs as an offshoot of the language. Words that are morphologically compounds have two or more words that are divisible into independent components, such components combine to form new words. They are also referred to as bi-morphemic words. Consider the data in (2):

2. Noun + Noun
- i. *ikwú oçè* → *ikwoçè*  
 death king  
 'Death is king'
  - ii. *enè ádà* → *enádà*  
 mother father  
 'Paternal grandmother'
  - iii. *ádà oí* → *ádòí*  
 father child  
 'One's father reincarnated in the son'

Moreover, the data in (3) illustrate examples of Noun + Adjective compound APNs

3. Noun + Adjective
- i. *oí ónóbi* → *oínóbi*  
 child black black child  
 'black child'
  - ii. *oí hyee* → *oíhyee*  
 child small little child  
 'little child'
  - iii. *oí colo* → *oícolo*  
 child heavy weighty child  
 'weighty child'



position. Also shown in the data is the affixal morpheme ‘ n ’ indicating negation as shown in example (4 iii). Though, the language aligns more to prefixation, there are instances of suffixation.

### Morphological Processes in APNs

Àgàtú as a language is rich in morphological operations and allows some processes that can modify the structure and composition of an existing name or word. This is achievable by either adding some elements to the base form of the word or by changing the internal structure so as to express a new meaning. Consider the following word formation processes or strategies operational in Àgàtú.

#### Derivation

Derivation is the process of appending an affix to an existing linguistic unit, with the addition a new linguistic unit is formed. The data in Table 1 illustrate derivation of APNs from verbs using prefixation.

#### Prefixation

Table 1: Derivation of APNs from verbs through prefixation

Prefix	Verb	Derived APNs	Gloss
ò-	nyoçẹ ‘save’	Ònyoçẹ ‘salvation’	Salvation
ò-	yigbihi ‘be faithful’	Òyigbihi ‘faithful person’	Faithfulness
ò-	kọ̀nù ‘help’	Òkọ̀nù ‘helper’	Helper
ei-	kwoḍáni ‘catch something not’	Eikwoḍáni ‘eyes do not catch things’	Eyes are not catchers
ò-	jọnyẹ ‘enjoy’	Òjọnyẹ ‘merry maker’	Merry maker
á-	gbọçẹ ‘serve anybody’	Ágbọçẹ #ni → Ágbọçeni ‘not serving anybody’	Not serving anybody
á-	çoçẹ ‘accept people’	Áçoçẹ # ní → Áçoçení ‘not accepting people’	Unfriendly
ò-	Nú ‘pursue’	Ònú # m → Ònúm ‘my pursuer’	My pursuer

As shown in the data in Table 1, the nominalising prefixes are attached to the verb to form APNs. Also, appending the prefixes to the verbs phrase, desententialized APNs are equally formed. be derived. Consider the examples in (5).

5. Sentence → Desententialized form
- i. Ócọ wẹ ẹcì → Ócẹcì  
 God BE medicine AGENT- have medicine  
 ‘God is the healer’ ‘God is the healer’
- ii. Ócọ ó yá ẹhì → Ócọyẹhì  
 God AUX do gift God gives gift  
 ‘God gives gift’
- iii. ọí wẹ ẹhì → ọìwẹhì  
 child BE gift child BE gift  
 ‘child is gift’ ‘child is gift’

The data in example (5) illustrate APNs that are desententialised. The process of desententialisation is basically by the use of nominalised affixes, specifically through prefixation to the verb phrase being the most important component of the sentence.

### Clipping

This is a morphological process via which new words are formed by fragmenting an existing word with more than one syllable. This process is productive in APNs. Here are examples:

6. i. *Ó lẹ ócẹ wẹ ócẹ* → *Ólọcẹwẹ-ócẹ*  
Prefix have person is king  
'one who has people is a king'
- ii. *Ólẹócẹwẹócẹ* → *Ólọcẹ*  
Prefix have person is king  
'one who has people is a king'
- iii. *Ólọcẹ* → *Ócẹ*  
Prefix have king  
'has king'
- iv. *Ócẹ* → *Ócẹ*  
King  
'king'
7. i. *Ócẹjẹlágọbú* → *Ócẹjẹ*  
Person grow talk go front  
'life is progressive'
- ii. *Ócẹjẹ* → *Ócẹjẹ*  
person grow  
'Human progresses'

Instances of clipped APNs are presented in data (6-7). The first instance of APNs in each of the clusters is the full realization of the APNs. Nevertheless, the name givers and bearers deliberately shorten to suit their desired purpose.

### Nominalisation in APNs

APNs in this group are words that were originally verbs are transformed into nouns through the process of prefixation. The claim is buttressed in data (8) thus:

- 8.
- i. *gbẹnẹ* → *ò-gbẹnẹ*  
Serve mother Nom.PRE- serve mother  
'one who serves his/her mother'
- ii. *gbọlẹ* → *ò-gbọlẹ*  
guide house Nom.PRE- guide house  
'One who keeps home'
- iii. *gbójí* → *ó-gbìjì*  
delay Nom.PRE- delay  
'One who delays'

The APNs in data (8) demonstrate how verb forms are nominalized to form APNs. The nominal makers are appended to the verb form, agreeing with one of Àgàtú' s most productive morphological processes. The

nominal marker is “o” with a rising tone “ó” or a falling tone “ò”.

### **Borrowing in APNs**

Due to language contact, different languages loan words and expressions from languages their speakers interact with. Agàtú language is not exempted in this linguistic ‘partnership’ as it has borrowed personal names on religious ground, shared boundaries and other socio-cultural relationships. Borrowing, as a word formation contributes its quota to enriching APNs. However, it does so with morphological adherence to the language. Consider the morphological adaptation of borrowed APNs discussed in the following section.

### **Morphological Adaptation of Borrowed APNs**

Borrowing as a morphological concept is a process of word formation that entails taking words from a donor language to recipient language. Agàtú has borrowed a good number of words, specifically, personal names from Igálà, Hausa, Arabic, English and even Hebrew among other languages. The morphological adaptation of APNs is discussed hereunder.

### **Borrowed APNs from Igálà**

9.	Igala	Agàtú
i.	ojochidè	ojochidè ‘God guides’
ii.	ojochenemì	ojochenemì ‘God is mine’
iii.	Ádùkwú	Ádùkwú ‘slave of death’
iv.	Ónú	Ónú ‘king’
v.	Ónùkwù	ónùkwù ‘friend’

The Agàtú people occupying communities in Akele, Oladapa, Olomachi, Okwutanobe, and Okpagabi share common boundaries with the Igálà people of Kogi State. Apart from sharing common boundaries with Igálà, there are a number of Igálà people living in Agàtú, they inter marry and share almost the same religious beliefs. This informs some of the borrowed names from Igálà. We have noticed that the APNs in this group enjoy complete transfer/borrowing into Agàtú without cases of phonological, morphological or semantic alterations.

### **Borrowed APNs from Hausa/ Arabic**

10.	Hausa/ Arabic	Agàtú
i.	<i>Ladidi</i>	<i>Aladi</i>
ii.	<i>Umar</i>	<i>Umolu</i>
iii.	<i>Sani</i>	<i>oçani</i>
iv.	<i>Bako</i>	<i>oçakwo</i>
iv.	<i>Sale</i>	<i>oçale</i>
v.	<i>Sarduana</i>	<i>icaduna</i>

As a result of trade contact, Àgàtú people had relationship with Hausa people as well as Àgàtú’s strong affinity with Islam, they bear some Hausa and Arabic names. As evident in the data in (10), it is obvious that both languages have some differences in their linguistic operations. This informs the need to nativise the names to suit the structure of Agàtú words. As earlier stated, Àgàtú nouns are majorly vowel initial. Therefore, the initial consonants had to be replaced with a vowel or deleted completely and other consonants nonexistent in the language are replaced with their equivalents in the language as evident in data (10, i - iv).

### **Borrowed IPNs from English /Hebrew**

As a result of Nigeria's colonial experience, some parents, because of their likeness for some European officials, gave their children some of the names borne by the European officials. The Hebrews names borne by Àgàtù people are as a result of their strong affinity with Christianity. The names are nativised to sound and read like Àgàtù names. Consider the examples in data (11).

11. European and Hebrew names	Àgàtù equivalent
i. Lord	<i>ilòdù</i>
ii. Captain (of a ship)	<i>icapi</i>
iii. Head master	<i>iheluma</i>
iv. James	<i>ijemihi</i>
v. Paul	<i>upòlu</i>

It is evident from the data in (11) that Àgàtù language borrowed personal names from both English and Hebrew for reasons already established. The names were however not maintained in the forms they had from the donor languages. They have to align with the new language. To achieve that, the names have to go through both phonological and morphological processes. Just as discussed under phonological analysis of APNs, the names equally go through morphological operations to be in tune with Àgàtù language. For instance, in data (11 i), the English name, 'Lord', is spelt as 'ilòdù', while maintaining consonant //l/, vowel /i/ is inserted at the initial position of the name. Similarly, vowel /i/ is inserted at the initial positions of examples (ii), (iii), (iv) and vowel /u/ is inserted at the initial position of example (v) respectively. In the same manner, were internal elements of the names changed by introducing vowel to the final positions of the names and substituting some consonants in the names. All that we have observed accounts for the differences noticed in the new spellings of the names in Àgàtù.

### Discussion of Findings

Naming is a universal phenomenon and morphological descriptive analysis of Àgàtù personal names (APNs) as examined in this paper is not only timely but significant considering better understanding of the language. The study adopted lexical morphology theory proposed in Pesetsky (1979) and elaborated by Kiparsky (1982). The theory accounts for the interactions of morphology and phonology in a language This study carried out mono-morphemic and bi-morphemic analysis of Àgàtù personal names. The morphological processes such as derivation, prefixation, clipping, compounding, borrowing and nominalization. This study described the mono / bi-morphemic, compound / complex names in Àgàtù. This has proved that in naming, thorough morphological analysis could be carried out in Àgàtù beyond just mere means of identification. This, by extension, will further add to the body of knowledge and lay a solid foundation for further study.

Morphologically, the internal word structures of APNs were discovered to be simple, compound and complex words formation with productive prfixation and other morphological processes such as derivation, insertion, clipping

and nominalisation in APNs. The internal structure further reveals APNs comprising of two independent morphemes known as compound APNs. They are noun + noun and noun + adjective compounds; they are endocentric and have the head first structure. Also, at the morpheme boundary of these APNs, the data revealed the interplay of the phonology of vowel elision, tone deletion and replacement in the derivation of these compounds. The internal structure of two or more independent morphemes and an affixal morpheme is accounted for under complex APNs. The affixal morpheme is found to appear word initially to the verb. Finally, the use of word formation strategies such as prefixation, clipping, nominalization, denominalisation and borrowing were used to enrich APNs in the language. This study discovered that there are significant numbers of borrowed APNs from Hausa, Hebrew, Arabic, and even English. This study is, however, limited to morphological analysis of Àgàtù personal names, contributing to the body of knowledge while also laying solid foundation for future study.

### Conclusion

Morphological analysis is as important as other branches of Linguistics and this fact is not an

exception in Àgàtú personal names. This study described the mono / bi-morphemic, compound/complex names as well as morphological processes such as derivation, clipping, prefixation and nominalization. This has proved that in naming, thorough morphological analysis could be carried out in Àgàtú beyond just mere means of identification. This study has established that Àgàtú nouns are majorly vowel initial. The Hebrews names borne by Àgàtú people are as a result of their strong affinity with Christianity. The names are nativised to sound and read like Àgàtú names. The nominal makers are appended to the verb form, agreeing with one of

Àgàtú's most productive morphological processes. This study is comprehensive and worthwhile; however, it does not claim to have exhaustively examined all dimensions of APNs. Consequently, it recommends that future research should extend the scope of inquiry to other categories of names, such as place names (toponomastics) and death-prevention names, which merit systematic scientific investigation. In addition, further studies should explore the phonosemantics of APNs, undertake comparative analyses across different dimensions of naming practices, and examine the interdependent relationships that exist within APNs.

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