The study examines the eleven compound verb types identified in Oha (2010) in terms of the combinatorial patterns of the verb components. Three headings of Verb classes, Co-occurrence restriction and Positional constraints form the evaluative yardstick. It is discovered that the selection of the two verb bases in realising a compound is systematic. In forming a compound verb type, verbs from attracting concept classes must be chosen. Verbs maintain particular positional linearity in composing into the required compound verb types.

Introduction
One of the claims made by Lord (1975) is that the first component of the Igbo compound verb can be any action verb while the second component may be stative or action verb. Perhaps to Lord (1975), the class of Igbo verbs is just limited to action and state verbs if the only limiting constraint to the formation of Igbo compound verb is on the speaker’s intellectual capacity and cultural experience. It is not surprising that she restricts the combining components in Igbo compound verbs to the above classes since to her all Igbo compound verbs are action result type because her restricted understanding of the nature of Igbo verb directed her orientation. Just as Levin (1986) classified English verbs, Igbo compound verbs have their own classified types that go beyond just the action result type in compounding. If this holds true it is doubtful how, according to her, “the actual verbs and suffixes which can join to form compounds, according to the combining processes (49) and (50) are otherwise limited by the speaker’s intellectual or cultural experience that would be appropriate to the meaning of the compound”. However, Uwalaka’s (1988) classification of Igbo verbs show a lot more number than what Lord (1975) has characterized. Oha (2010), based on Uwalaka’s classification, identifies the following eleven Igbo compound verb types:

a. Causative Compound Verbs
b. Multi-event Compound Verbs
c. Motion Compound Verbs
d. Change-of-Ownership Compound Verb
e. Compound Verbs of Occurrence
f. Surface-Contact Compound Verbs
g. Compound Verbs of Placement
h. Experiencer Compound Verbs
i. Compound Verbs of Mental Exertion
j. Compound Verbs of Communication
k. Compound Verbs of Emission
The following extracts from Oha (2010) examine the combining relations of the components of the V-V compounds including their constraints in terms of the operative relations that hold between them. In effect, the interaction between the conceptual structure of compound verbs and morphosyntax is explored, following Hong, Li and Huang (2004), to determine if the internal relations in the compounds can be predicted by the conceptual classified event types of the two verb bases. These are done under the three headings of Verb classes, Co occurrence constraint and Positional constraint.

1. Verb Classes and Compound Verb Types
The eleven compound verb classified in this study is based on the verb component that has its argument structure adopted by the compound being the head of the compound. In furtherance of our findings, the study argues that the compound verb components have common essential properties which ensure the unification of the verbs into the classified compound. Hong, Li and Huang (2004) observe that the ordering of the two verb components in a compound is determined by their eventive relations which in itself can be inferred through the conceptual reading of each verb. We follow this logic in determining the conceptual template of Igbo compound verbs.

In order to determine the conceptual composition of the V-V compound we made a random selection of five compound verbs from each group. Then the internal structure of each verb is analyzed by decomposing it into its conceptual elements. Conceptual element refers to a set of universal components to which a given word is characterized. What are called conceptual elements are also called concept classes by Gamerschlag (2000), and for verbs, are the smaller components of meanings to which verbs are decomposed.

For verbs occurring in a particular position (either as first or second) in the compounds, the shared semantic features (e.g. MOTION, CAUSE, etc.) are arrived at by an aggregation of the sense of the elements to form the generalization about the verb type; what we call the abstract LEXEME. Thus with this, the abstract lexemes that form the generalization of the verb types that combine in a given compound type is predicted.

i Causative Compound Verb
The following compound verbs randomly chosen from the causative group form the samples for examination in the following analysis:

1a. kpọ́-wa: V1-KPỌ́ = peg. V2-WÁ = break, slice
b. pị̀-wá: V1-PỊ̀ = press, squeeze V2-WÁ = break, slice
c. gbá-ji: V1-GBÁ = MOTION V2-JÍ = snap
d. mé-bì: V2-MÉ = do, act V2-BÌ = end, stop
e. kụ́-wa: V1-KỤ́ = hit, knock V2-WÁ = break, slice

The following components give the sense of the combining verbs of the causative compound verb:

V1: peg, press, squeeze, MOTION, do, hit.
V2: break, slice, snap, and end
By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non-head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>Result</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure column in the table shows that the common core meaning of the initial verb component of causative compound is CAUSATION while that of the second verb is RESULT.

ii Multi-event Compound verbs

Multi-event Compound Verbs selected are the following:

2a. Gbúri: V1-GBÚ = kill, cut V2-RÍ = eat  
b. **síri:** V1-SÍ = cook V2- RÍ = eat  
c. šekpú: V1-SÈ = pull V2-KPŮ = drag  
d. déri: V1-DÉ = write V1-RÍ = eat  
e. gèrí V1-GÈ = listen V2-RÍ = eat

The sense of the combining verbs is represented in the following components:

- V1: kill, cook, pull, write, and listen
- V2: eat, drag

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>PROCESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be observed that in the event structure shown in the table the common core meaning of the initial verb component of Multi-event compound is ACTION while PROCESS depicts the second verb.

iii Motion Compound Verbs

The following Motion Compound Verbs fell into our sample analysis:

3a. gbá-fù: V1-GBÁ = MOTION V2-FÙ = be lost  
b. gá-fè: V1-GÁ= go V2-FÈ =cross  
c. byá-rú: V1-BYÁ =come V2-RÚ = cross  
d. lá-bá: V1-LÁ =leave (home) V2-BÁ=enter  
e. fè-pù: V1-FÉ = fly V2-PŮ = exit

The following components give the sense of the combining verbs of the Motion compound verbs:
By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Non-Head</td>
<td>Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>MOTION</td>
<td>DIRECTION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure column in the table shows that the abstract lexeme for the initial verb component is MOTION while that of the second verb is DIRECTION.

**iv Change-of-Ownership Compound Verbs**

Samples representing this group of verb compounds are as follows:

4a. **nyé-fè**: V1-NYÉ = give, V2-FÈ = cross
b. **zụ́-nye**: V1-ZỤ́ = buy, V2-NYÉ=give
c. **nyé-ru**: V1-NYÉ=give, V2-RÚ= reach
d. **bi-nyè**: V1-BỊ = loan, V2-NYÉ = give
e. **nyégbu**: V1-NYÉ = give, V2-GBŬ = kill

The following components give the sense of the combining verbs of the Change-of-Ownership compound verb:

V1-give, buy, loan, 
V2-fly, give, reach, kill.

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>TRANSFER</td>
<td>MOTION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure column in the table indicates TRANSFER as an abstract lexeme for the initial verb component while that of the second verb is MOTION.

**v Compound verbs of Occurrence**

The verbs of the Compound Verbs of Occurrence that fell into our samples are as follows:

5a. **kpō-chu**: V1-KPỌ́ = dessicate, V2-CHŬ= abort
b. **chá-rụ**: V1-CHÁ=ripen, V2-RŬ=spoil
c. **tá-chu**: V1-TÁ = evaporate, V2-CHŬ=abort
d. **chá-sì**: V1-CHÁ=ripen, V2-SĬ = cease
e. **ré-nyu**: V1-RĔ=glow, V2-NYŬ =extinguish
The following components give the sense of the combining verbs of the compound verbs of occurrence:

V1-dessicate, evaporate, ripen, glow
V2-spoil, cease, abort, extinguish

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>CHANGE</td>
<td>TERMINATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it can be observed that in the event structure column the common core meaning of the initial verb component is CHANGE while for the second verb is TERMINATION.

**vi Surface-Contact Compound Verbs**

The compound verbs falling into our samples are as follows:

6a. tá-kwụ: V1-TÂ = bite V2-KWÛ = plug, stand
b. má-dó: V1-MÁ = thrust V2-DÓ = Dump
c. gbú-kwụ: V1-GBÚ = cut V2-KWÛ = plug
d. bi-chá: V1-BÌ = touch V1-CHÁ = scrub
e. bi-sá: V1-BÌ = touch V2-SÁ = extend

The components to which the compound verbs reduce to are as follows:

V1-bite, thrust, cut, touch, extend
V2-plug, stand, dump, scrub, extend

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non-Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>PROJECTION</td>
<td>LOCATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure column in the table shows that the abstract lexeme for the initial verb component of Surface-Contact compound verb is PROJECTION while that of the second verb is LOCATION.

**vii Compound Verbs of Placement**

Compound verbs identified in this group include the following:

7a. gbú-nye: V1-GBÚ = cut V2-NYÉ = give
b. dọ-nye: V1-DỌ = place V2-NYÉ = give
c. dọ-chi: V1-DỌ = place V2-CHÍ = block
d. tù-nye: V1-TỤ = throw V2-NYÉ = give
e. nọ-chi: V1-NỌ = stay V2-CHÍ = block
The following are components generated by the combining verbs:

V1-cut, place, throw, stay,
V2-give, block,

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Non-Head</td>
<td>Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>PLACEMENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the event structure of the compound verb of Placement is composed of the initial verb with the abstract lexeme ACTION and the second verb with PLACEMENT.

viii Experiencer Compound Verbs

The verbs identified in this group include the following:

8a. hụ́-ju (anyá): V1-HỤ́=see V2-JÚ=fill
b. lé-bá (anyá): V1-LÉ=look V2-BÀ=enter
c. ghọ̀-gbú: V1-GHỌ́=trick V2-GBÚ=kill
d. hà-zí: V1-HÁ=select V2-ZÍ=straighten
e. ché-mi (echiche): V1-CHÉ=think V2-MÍ=deepen

The following are the components that composed each of the combining verbs:

V1-see, look, trick, select, think
V2- fill, enter, kill, strengthen, deepen

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non-head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>SENSATION</td>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure column in the table indicates TRANSFER as the abstract lexeme for the verb initial while that of the second verb is ACTIVITY.

ix Compound Verbs of Mental Exertion

The following compound verbs fell into this sampling group:

9a. sọ́-pụ̀ (ányá): V1-SỌ́=revere V2-PỤ̀=exit
b. rú-be: V1-RÚ=genuflect V2-BÉ=lean
c. kpụ́-rị́: V1-KPỤ́=sip V2-RỊ=bear
d. kpá-su: V1-KPÁ=rout V2-SÚ=provoke
e. nyá-pụ́: V1-NYÁ=cock V2-PỤ̀=exit

The following are the products of the senses generated by the verb components of the compounds:
V1-revere, genuflects, sip, rout, cock.
V2-exit, lean, eat, provoke.

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non-head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>CAUSATION</td>
<td>PROCESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure of the compound verb indicates that the abstract lexeme for the initial verb component is CAUSATION while that of the second verb is PROCESS.

x Compound Verbs of Communication

The following compound verbs fell into the sampling group:

10a. bụ̀-nyé:  
V1-BỤ̀=sing  
V2-NYÉ=give

b. kwú-hyè:  
V1-KWÛ=say  
V2-HYÈ=gaffe

c. bék-kú:  
V1-BÉ=cry  
V2-KÚ=call

d. kà-rú:  
V1-KÁ=talk  
V2-RÚ=reach

e. kwú-sò:  
V1-KWÛ=talk  
V2-SÒ=follow

Compound verbs of this class decomposed into the following components:

V1-sing, say, cry, talk, 
V2-give, miss, gaffe, call, reach, follow

By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non-head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>VERBALIZATION</td>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure of the compound verbs indicates an abstract lexeme VERBALIZATION for the initial verb component while that of the second verb is ACTIVITY

xi Compound Verbs of Emission

The Compound verbs of the group consist of the following:

11a. gbọ-pụ:  
V1-GBỌ=vomit  
V2-PỤ=exit

b. nyụ-chi:  
V1-NYỤ=stool  
V2-CHI=block

c. kwá-pụ:  
V1-KWÁ=cough  
V2-PỤ=exit

d. hi-tè:  
V1-HÌ=sleep  
V2-TÈ=wake

e. rí-pụ:  
V1-RÌ=eat  
V2-PỤ=exit

The composing elements of this compound type are as follows:

V1-vomit, stool, cough, sleep, eat  
V2-exit, block, wake
By syntax/morphology and event structure mapping the following derivation is arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic order</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Non-head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event structure</td>
<td>EMISSION</td>
<td>PROCESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The event structure of the compound verbs indicates the initial verb component with the abstract lexeme EMISSION and the second verb PROCESS.

What has been presented above is the event structures of the compound verbs revealing the nature, types and the constitutive forces of each verb in combination including its role. Thus a statement can be made that in determining a causative compound verb, for example, one will select from a CAUSATION verb, the head, and a RESULT verb.

As earlier pointed out, Lord (1975) presents the picture that any verb can combine with any other one to form compound in Igbo, the only limiting consideration being, of course the non occurrence of affix at an initial position. Anoka (1983) on the contrary notes that “… restrictions are essentially semantic in that what verb goes with lexical item is determined by the inherent meaning of the verb”. This observation also holds for the combination of two verbs in compound verbs. Since verbs denote events, the operative relations holding between them in compound verbs, according to Hong, Li and Huang (2004) is conceptual. The two combining verbs must have sub events of the whole predication to contribute to the compound meaning. A look at the event structures of the compound verbs shows a match between the compound labels of each type and the argument-linking grouping established for them. The following constraints determine the co-occurrence relations between verbs in compound:

2 Co occurrence Constraints

The Verb components of compounds have been observed to express sub-events of the total predications (Gamerschlag, 2000). Hong, Li and Huang (2004) state that the event relations between the verb components of a compound can be inferred through the conceptual analysis of each component. This conceptual analysis is made possible by inferring the constituent parts the verbs decompose into in terms of whether they possess what Katz (1972) calls the essential meaning relationship necessary for collocating as compound. Where this does not hold, then there will be no basis for their collocation. This therefore forms constraints restraining how these verbs are ordered so that they do not combine arbitrarily. This is a more restrictive constraint than what Lord (1975) has specified. There must be some cohesion among the verbs in forming a meaningful compound. In fact that such exists has been attested by the fact that, as shown by Anyanwu (2007), the following is not a possible compound in Igbo:

12. mé nwụ́ *ménwu
    do die
The two verbs mé “do” and nwụ́ “die” cannot be compounded because of this strong collocational restriction in terms of essential meaning relation between them. As observed from the data the following semantic relations underline co-occurrence restrictions in compound verb formation in Igbo:

a. Co-hyponymous Relation  
b. Superordinate Relation  
c. Converseness Relation

**a Co-hyponymous Relation**

The relation of sense which holds between a more specific or subordinate lexeme and a more general one is called hyponymy. While the more specific lexemes are called hyponyms the more general one is called the superordinate lexeme. The terms are appropriate for Anoka’s (1983) study on the Igbo verbs of buying zụ́ –“the common denominator of the group of verbs meaning ‘to buy’”, which in this context is the superordinate word while all the other verbs that “collocate(s) only with specific lexical items” are hyponyms of zụ́. It involves a paradigmatic relation in that the co-hyponyms are in complementary distribution with one another. In general, co-hyponyms of the same superordinate lexeme contrast in sense.

Many verbs fail to form compounds based on the conceptual relationship of co-hyponymy. In such relations the two co-hyponymous verbs are expressing senses of a common core but of different dimensions that do not share the required essential meaning relations as in the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unnaceptable gloss</th>
<th>superordinate gloss</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gá-kpù</td>
<td>go-stoop</td>
<td>jé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pù-fè</td>
<td>exit-cross</td>
<td>jé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wù-zò</td>
<td>jump-march</td>
<td>jé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hú-lé</td>
<td>see-look</td>
<td>chó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chè-hú</td>
<td>think-see</td>
<td>chó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chè-lé</td>
<td>think-look</td>
<td>chó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bù-kwú</td>
<td>sing-say</td>
<td>zí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpó-kà</td>
<td>call-talk</td>
<td>zí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwá-kà</td>
<td>tell-talk</td>
<td>zí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gù-kà</td>
<td>sing-talk</td>
<td>zí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dọ̀-gbọ́</td>
<td>dump-stagnate</td>
<td>dèbé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyụ́-gbọ́</td>
<td>defecate-vomit</td>
<td>wépù</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The combining verbs in 13 lack the essential meaning relation required for them to form a coherent unit in a compound. In each of these pairs a sense of a more general concept can be observed encompassing the pairs. However, within this superordinate sense lies the distinguisher in one or each member that is not found in the other. For example, for the combination gá-kpù in 13, the super-ordinate term is MOTION or MOVEMENT. However each expresses a more specific form of motion. gá involves movement primarily with the leg while kpù specifies stooping motion, or more specifically, the first is a direction-of-motion verb while the second is a manner-of-
motion verb following Uwalaka (1988). It therefore becomes difficult to simultaneously express such differing predications in compounding. Lehrer (1969:53) has observed the same restriction with English verbs of cooking forming compound as follows “…one cannot form new verbs …or with two processes (referring to verbs of cooking that form hyponyms)… *to boil-roast…”

b Superordinate Relation
A verb may be in super ordinate relation with others. This means that in such relationship the sense of a super ordinate verb is included in the senses of its hyponyms. Lyons (1968) illustrates this with flower, “the class of entities referred to by the word ‘flower’ is wider and includes the class of entities referred to by the word ‘tulips’…” For example, what Anoka (1983:168-170) variously calls the ‘general meaning’, ‘neutral’, ‘embracing’ or ‘a common denominator’ is a circuitous substitute for the term ‘superordinate’. Verbs in such relationship fail to form compound as illustrated in example 14 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Superordinate</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mè kú</td>
<td>do hit</td>
<td>mé</td>
<td>make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mè kè</td>
<td>do share</td>
<td>mé</td>
<td>make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bú fu</td>
<td>carry snatch</td>
<td>bú</td>
<td>carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wè hô</td>
<td>take select</td>
<td>wè</td>
<td>take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we zú</td>
<td>take steal</td>
<td>wè</td>
<td>take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpó z i</td>
<td>call inform</td>
<td>kpó</td>
<td>call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí hụ́</td>
<td>cook roast</td>
<td>sí</td>
<td>cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí ghẹ́</td>
<td>cook fry</td>
<td>sí</td>
<td>cook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compounds fail to form in these verb pairs because, again they lack the essential meaning relation necessary for such unification. In the pairs in 14 one verb is predicating an event inclusive of the predicating scope of the more general verb - the superordinate verbs. In the pair:

15 wè hô,

họ́ “select” is a type of wè “take”. Therefore wè is the superordinate term. In the process of taking, it may be by selection (họ) or by theft (zu). Therefore wè is a superordinate of họ́ while họ́ is its hyponym. In the same vein the cohyponym of họ́ and another hyponym of wè is zú “steal” which is another type of “taking”.

c Converse Relation
When verbs fail to form compounds on account of converseness it means that the verbs are diametrically opposed to each other in meaning as in 16 below:

| Pi-dó | squeeze-pulls |
| Vọ-kpú | expose-cover |
| gè-gú | listen-sing |
| gá-byá | go-come |
| bà-pù | enter-exit |
In converseness the main relationship is that of opposition, widening the essential meaning relation gap. A lexical item is defined by what it is lacking. The basic property of two words that are converse is that they share all but one semantic property. They contrast sharply in one dimension. For example, tá “dry” and dè “soften” can be associated with one semantic distinguisher; liquid. While tá lacks liquid dè has the feature of saturated liquid. For this reason the two verbs fail to compound. The same applies to other verb pairs in 16.

The above findings and analyses reveal that sense relation is fundamental to the non productivity of some verbs in verb compounding in Igbo. Lieber (1983:259 footnote12) highlights this crucial role of semantics in deriving compound in the following 17:

17 drop air

Here the syntactically well-formed argument structure of “drop” is fulfilled with “air” but compound fails to form because “air” violates the selectional restriction on “drop”.

The three sources of constraints to verb compounding are defined by opposition ranging from hyponymy to Converseness. This observation is in line with Kaufmann (1995) and Kaufmann and Wunderlich’s (1998) COHERENCE principle which states that sub events encoded by the predicates of a decomposed SF (compound) structure must be contemporaneously or causally related to each other.

3 Positional Constraints

For verbs to form compound they must express sub events that are coherently linked to the argument of the compound. Thus for certain verb pairs to be compounded they must be arranged in certain linear order. Because of the “totally affected” implication of the causative compound verb, it is impossible for the component verbs to have their positions switched and still generate meaningful compounds in Igbo. Thus, the verbs which form compounds that mostly expresses result cannot switch positions respectively as in 18 below:

18 dè si instead of sidè “cook to soften”
   ghé mé instead of méghé “cause to open”

The Multi-event compound verb also maintains strict positional constraint even though the combining verbs are all action verbs. Action verbs occurring in compound must be sequential in their eventive relations. Thus the verbs are ordered according to the sequence of events represented in the compound. Consider Example 19 below:

19. dérí “embezzle”
dé “write” has to precede rí “eat” in the scheme of event even as the relationship is not of action-result. Other compound verbs that maintain this strict linearity include verbs occurring in experiencer compound verbs, compound verbs of communication and compound verbs of emission. The experiencer compound verbs cannot have the verb components switched. Compound verbs of communication, because of the semantic role of the initial head verb in predications relating to communication, cannot have its verb components switched. The following illustrate the point:

20. Kàrú say reach ‘inform’ *rúkà
   Kwúnye talk give ‘include’ *nyékwu
   Kwúhyè talk miss ‘gaffed’ *hyèkwú
   Békù wail call ‘chant’ *kùbè

The following asterisked forms illustrate that the verbs cannot be switched to derive other compounds in Igbo. Compound verbs of emission also demonstrate this strict linearity in composition as below demonstrates:

21. gbópụ vomit exit ‘throw up’ *pùgbó
    Nyúchí defecate seal ‘seal off with stool’ *chínyú
    Kwápụ cough exit ‘cough out’ *pùkwá
    Hítè sleep long ‘sleep long’ *tèhí

In all the switched verb components, none derived a meaningful compound verb in Igbo.

There are other compound verbs however whose switch of verb components yields meaningful compound verbs in Igbo, though perhaps in other compound groups. Such compound types include motion compound verbs, change-of-ownership compound verbs, surface-contact compound verbs, compound verbs of Placement and compound verbs of mental exertion. The positional mobility of verbs in these compound types follow from the relaxed strict linearity brought about by the internal relations holding between the verbs. This relationship is evident in the motion compound verb. The first verb relates to general motion while the second is associated with either direction-of-motion or manner-of-motion verbs. Thus, the nature of motion has to be stated by the second verb. The two combining verbs can all be motional. In such an instance, the motion type at issue precedes the second motion verb indicating the manner, as in 22:

22. gbábà run enter “run into”

bà in other instances can be a head in a switch of verb components to yield a meaningful but different compound, as in 23:

23. bákpwú enter stoop “enter (right) inside”

Example 23 illustrates the reversibility of the order of combination in the compound verbs of motion, as in 24:

24. kpúbà stoop enter “enter stooping”
The ability of the components of these compound verbs to switch forms one of the diagnostics for classifying it differently from the causative verb compound.

The change-of-ownership compound verbs have a relatively high rate of switch of verb components that are still meaningful, as shown in the following:

25. nyéfè give cross ‘give across’ fenyé ‘cross into’
   nyéru give reach ‘give onto’ runye ‘acknowledge’
   binyé loan give ‘loan to’ nyèbi ‘give a bit’
   nyègbu give kill ‘poison’ gbúnyle ‘cut into’

Another compound verb of this type with an extant example of just one as reflected in our data is the surface-contact compound verb, as the following indicates:

26. bichá touch scrub ‘scrub’ chábi slit end ‘buy to measure’

Location compound verb can also have its components switched to derive a meaningful compound verb, as in the following:

27. gbúnyle cut give ‘cut into’ nyégbu ‘poison’
   tünyle throw give ‘throw into’ nyétụ ‘give a little’
   tufè throw cross ‘throw across’ fétụ ‘fly down’

Compound verb of occurrence also exhibits this switch of the verb components, as examples in 28 illustrate:

28a. dáwụ “fall over” wúdà “jump down”
   fall jump jump fall

b. dákó “suspend on” kódà “hook down”
   fall hang hook fall

Another compound verb of this sort is the compound verb of mental exertion as illustrated in the following:

29. tule examine létụ look a little
   tucha criticize chátụ causticize a little

The foregoing discussion shows that compound verbs are not freely formed in Igbo but under some constraints. There is a strong relationship between the conceptual properties of the compound verbs and their compound types; one which according to Gamerschlag (2000) derives the argument structure from such conceptual properties. The section confirms that position is a general constraint in syntax and plays a vital role in meaning of a linguistic constituent. Free elements of a compound verb can be re-ordered in certain cases realizing different meaning and different context of use.

Conclusion

The study has proved that Igbo compound verbs are not arbitrarily formed. They conform to certain semantic criteria which classify verbs into clusters that actually
project into conceptual domains. It is from these domains that the essential meaning relationship as conceived by Katz (1972) is realised in compounding.

References


