The Reflexive Verb in the Grammar of the Urhobo Language

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In the grammar of a language, the reflexive verb is part of the structure of speech which shows the action of the verb being executed on the speaker while the action of other verbs is received by other objects outside the speaker. Amongst a community of persons, there are often situations which provoke reflexive actions and expressions such as “I see myself”/ Mé mre ómà mè “Lift yourself up” / “kpárōmà”. By this I mean that it is expedient that the grammar of a language contains forms of the reflexive verb; not only should it contain it, the reflexive verb should also be easily recognisable. Currently, the language has several Urhobo dictionaries to its credit. Sadly, though, they do not seem to feature the reflexive verb. Why is this so? This is the question which this study has tried to answer while attempting to fill up the existing lacunae. The approach to this study has been eclectic since it involved the application of various methods. In view of the structure of the reflexive verb, this study was based on Noam Chomsky's Transformational Grammar or Transformational Generative Grammar.

Key words: Reflexive, Verb, Grammar, Urhobo, Language.

INTRODUCTION

This article is sequel to an older article titled “The French Reflexive Verb and its Urhobo equivalent. In the course of that study, it was noted that the reflexive form of the verbs treated had not been documented. By the same token, the reflexive form of the verbs which have been studied in this work, although they have been in colloquial use for as long as one can remember, have not been documented either. For example, “vughè” is the verb to recognize, according to Osubele (2001). It does not seem to have a reflexive form because it is not found in any of the existing Urhobo dictionaries. Also, the reflexive form of these verbs have not hitherto, been documented either even though they have been in use for a long time. For example, the nouns “óma-ébērē”, “óma- énāghān”, “óma-ēsuō”, are all words in colloquial use in Urhobo grammar. They also have their reflexive forms like “bērōmâ” / to lament, “năghōmâ” / to trouble oneself, “sùōmâ” / to comport oneself. These have mostly been identified only in oral/verbal use. They are non-existent in written form. Structures like “Mé mre ómà mè!” / I see myself! “Mì hwe ṏomâ mù” / I keep still” “Mì biómâ” / I move myself” / “I shift” are all forms of the reflexive structure. Since the Author is well acquainted with the reflexive form in French, she has, in this study, taken her bearing from her knowledge of the reflexive verb in French. The verbs which have been discussed in this article are found further down.

The Urhobo People

Some oral tradition has it that the Urhobos are of Edo extraction; that they migrated from Edo and came to settle in the region of Urhobo land where they are currently located; while others state categorically that they came from Egypt. About the people and their geographical location, Egere (2012) posits that:

The term Urhobo is used to describe all the landmarks and indigenes of the settlement covering Delta Central and part of South Senatorial District (Warri main town) Delta State of Nigeria. Their neighbours are the Bini(s) to the North, the Ijaw to the South, the Itsekiri to the West, the Ukwanis to the North East, and Isoko to the East. It covers a total area of about 2000 square miles. The largest and most populated ethnic group in Delta State, and the 5th largest nation in Nigeria.
From what he says, this is clearly the area where the Urhobo people live. Aweto and Igben (2011), cited in Akpofure-Okenrentie (2017) supports this thought by their assertion that the Urhobo people are found mainly in Delta State of Nigeria. The current statistics give a population of the Urhobo people at approximately 2 million, Aweto and Igben, (op cit), cited in Akpofure-Okenrentie (2017), Akpofure-Okenrentie (2018) (unpublished). “The present (2002) overall population of the Urhobo is more than 2 million taking into consideration Urhobo migrants living in other parts of the country and abroad”. However, there is a question mark on this number. It should be noted that fewer and fewer people now speak the language. We call to mind Mowarin’s assertion cited in Akpofure (2015) that the Nigerian pidgin: “has now penetrated the orbit of homes in Urhoboland ... Nigerian pidgin has already acquired a number of native speakers ...”. We ask the question again. Does this number in population include Mowarin’s “miguo generation” because they are Urhobos biologically? Considering the people Egere (op cit.) notes their various clans and he states that:

Presently, Urhobo comprises eight local government areas with 25 kingdoms. These include Ughelli North, Ethiope West, Okpe, Ughelli South, Ethiope East, Sapele, Udu and Uvwie. Including part of Patani, Odorubu, Uduophori, Ofon in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Egere also affirms that “The Urhobo language is simple in form. It is rich in proverbs, poetry, riddles, folklores, epics ...”

**The Urhobo language**

According to Aziza (1997) also cited in Akpofure (2016), the “Urhobo language is spoken in the Delta State of Nigeria as well as in the diaspora”. As touching the linguistic classification of the Urhobo language, Aziza (1997), also cited in Akpofure (2015) notes that:

Westermann (1927) classifies the Edo Group, to which Urhobo belongs, under Kwa languages Group (g); Talbot (1932), Greenberg (1955, 1963), Wolff (1959), Wescott (1962), Armstrong (1964), Hoffman (1973), Elugbe (1973, 1978), Bennett and Sterk (1977) as well as all the linguists who have worked on this language since then.

Aziza (2008) also notes that Urhobo is a South Western Edoid language of the Niger – Congo family.

**An Overview of Some Previous studies**

It is true that there has been very little documentation concerning the Urhobo people and their language, but we can mention a few, such as Studies in Urhobo Culture edited by Peter P. Ekeh in which, amongst other subjects, he discusses the “Characteristics of Urhobo and other Edoid languages”. While discussing this Ekeh (2005), cited also in Akpofure (2015) quotes Elugbe (1989) as stating that the “Urhobo (and Benin) vowels are “a e e i o o u” . He also displays the Urhobo consonants and notes that the letters “c”, “h”, “q” and “x” are absent from the Urhobo alphabet as “stand-alone” letters. He also mentions the double, triple and quadruple consonants. Of these he says: “In the realm of triple and quadruple consonant systems, Urhobo language appears to be limited and specialized. The cases of triple consonant formations that I can come up with are three: ghw, phr, vwr. In the quadruple sphere, I can only come up with a single case”. There is also The Urhobo People edited by Onigb Otitte. This book traces their history as well as their social and cultural life including their politis. There is also Aziza’s PhD thesis titled The Urhobo Tone System. This thesis sheds great light on the phonology of the language. In her discussion of “The Neutralization of Contrast in the Vowel System of Urhobo”, also cited in Akpofure-Okenrentie (2018) (unpublished), Aziza (2008) touches on the Urhobo verb in relation with the vowels e, o, ε in verbs. She also discusses the infinitive form of the Urhobo verb and says that: “The verb derives its infinitive form by adding a prefix vowel E to the root”. The reflexive form of the verb is yet to be addressed in documents on Urhobo language. Also, in her thesis titled Une étude comparée des systèmes phonologiques du français et de l’Urhobo, Akpofure (2015) compares the phonological systems of both the Urhobo and French languages.

There are currently in existence a few grammar text books such as (i) Obe re ojegba re Urhobo re A to Si (First Urhobo Grammar Book) by E.O. Ege; Oba ve Irhi re wvo si ephere re Urhobo, Ephere r’Urhobo, (Oba okpokpo r’uyono r’iseses, isiesi v’ojegbe r’Urhobo), Obe r’esosuo, Ephere r’Urhobo, (Rien Urhobo se, rien Urhobo si, rien Urhobo je), Ephere r’Urhobo, (Ikwegbe, enano ve ekpaho vwoke obe r’erha na), all by J.I. Arererian. There are about four or so Urhobo dictionaries in existence.

**METHODOLOGY**

The reflexive verb in the grammar of the Urhobo language is not necessarily a new topic. It can be said that this particular verb has been in verbal or oral speech for as long as can be remembered. It has simply not been documented. To highlight it, the approach has been eclectic. There was first a general revision of the Urhobo verb and its infinitive form; an understanding of which lent a bearing to the structure of the Urhobo verb in its various sequences and that of the Urhobo reflexive verb in particular. The next leg involved a search in the current Urhobo dictionaries for verbs that could possibly serve as reflexive verbs. The third stage came as the structure of
the reflexive verb was identified, analysed and determined as the Urhobo reflexive verb. The fourth and last step involved verbal interaction with Colleagues who are Urhobos and who speak the language and teach it. This was necessary in order to confirm the usage of the reflexive verb in Urhobo. Finally, there was a description of the Urhobo reflexive verb as an Urhobo verb whose action reflects on the speaker.

**OBJECTIVE**

The Urhobo language is still in the early stages of its evolution. As such, so many aspects of the language are yet to be documented. Lack of documentation hinders knowledge and research. The main objective for this study is therefore to highlight the existence and use of the reflexive verb in Urhobo grammar by documenting it.

**Theory of Transformational Grammar**

The question of the reflexive verb in Urhobo has come up at this point because it is naturally expected that all the components of the grammatical structure of a given language should be able to be accounted for whenever the need arises, especially since the Urhobo language is in its early stages of evolution. An examination of the transformational grammar would help in the study of the reflexive verb and how the verb can be put in its proper grammatical perspective in Urhobo. According to linguistic specialists the Transformational Grammar (TG) is a linguistic theory that analyses the relationship between elements in the sentences of a given language using rules. It was propagated by Noam Chompsky, an American Linguist in the 1960s. For Innovateus, (2006-2013) “Transformational grammar is a form of language analysis that establishes a relationship with the different elements in the sentence of a language and makes use of rules or transformations to recognize these relationships”. In other words, Transformational grammar takes cognisance of all the elements of speech found in the sentences of a given language as well as the rules. Transformational Grammar is also called Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). Apart from this information, the Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, (2018) support what Innovateus (op cit) says above when they say that:

Transformational grammar (also called) Transformational Generative Grammar, a system of language analysis that recognizes the relationship among the various elements of a sentence and among the possible sentences of a language and uses processes or rules, (some of which are called transformations) to express these relationships.

Using this theory, sentences can be generated again and again. These sentences have both their deep structure and their surface structure. This theory describes the relationship between these surface structures and the deep structures of sentences while bearing in mind both the phonetic and semantic expressions.

Claro (2018) suggests that Transformational grammar is “a device for generating sentences in a language”. For the Writing Centre (2018) “A sentence is a sequence of words containing a subject and a predicate. It can convey a statement, question, exclamation or command”. Every community in existence has a language. The people of a community would express themselves in sentences in the language of the given community. This implies that every living community has a grammar. It is by its grammar that their sentences are generated. For example, the sentence “Oshāré nā óhwó re Úrhōbὸ” / “The man is an Urhobo person”, is a complete sentence in Urhobo since it has a subject and a predicate. This sentence gives credence to what Claro (op cit) states when she says that Transformational grammar “generates only the well-formed or grammatically correct sentences of a language since it is meant to create the rules and principles which are in the mind or brain of a native speaker”. The sentence “Oshāré nā óhwó re Úrhōbὸ” is an example of the “well-formed and grammatically correct” sentence which Claro refers to. Claro (op. cit.) also opines that: Transformational Process of the Syntactic Structures according to Chomsky’s Transformational Grammar can be best summarized by adding, deleting, moving, and substituting of words. These changes take place through specific rules, which are called Transformational Rules.

This process applies very well to the forming of the reflexive verb in Urhobo since to form the reflexive verb; there is the process of deletion, of exchanges, prefixes and possibly affixes. Claro (op cit) explains further that: Generally, any sentence structure contains a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP), ... In the sentence: “Vicki laughed.” “Vicki” is a NP and “laughed” is a VP. The sentence could change to: “The woman laughed”; “The woman” is the NP and “laughed” is the VP. You can extend the sentence to: “Vicki who lives near me laughed”. “Vicki who lives near me” is the NP; “laughed” is the VP. Expanding the sentence, “Vicki who lives near me laughed loudly” The NP consists of “Vicki who lives near me” and the VP is “laughed loudly.”

An example of this is found in the sentence “Ívōké ñìghí rē” / Voke knows him/her/it. Ívōké is the NP while “ñìghí rē” is the VP. To use this verb reflexively, the sentence would be “Mí ñìghómà mé” / “I know myself”. An analysis of this would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mí ñìghómà mé</th>
<th>Mí</th>
<th>NP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ūghómà mé</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of the reflexive verb ùghómà is deliberate at this point because it is our reference point in this study.
Deep Structures / Surface structures

Claro (op cit) explains that: “Deep structures are the input to the semantic component, which describes their meaning”. The sentence “Ôshāré nà óhwó re Ûrhōbō” also indicates both the deep structure and the surface structure. Note that the connotation of “Ôshāré nà óhwó re Ûrhōbō” is very clear semantically. She further explains that: “Surface structures are the input to the phonological component, which describes their sound”. When this is phonetically transcribed, the surface structure is expressed thus:

“Ôshāré nà óhwó re Ûrhōbō” [ɔdrɛndohworuhobo]

This is why Claro (op cit) says that: “… deep structure determines meaning, surface structure determines sound…. The helical line connecting deep structure to surface structure represents the transformational cycle introduced in Chomsky (1965).

This aspect is also very applicable to the Urhobo language because Urhobo is a tonal language. Finally, Claro (op cit.) sums up all of the qualities of the Transformational grammar in three essential characteristics thus:

First, the meaning, or semantic interpretation, of a sentence is determined from its deep structure.

Second, the pronunciation, or phonetic interpretation, of a sentence is determined from its surface structure.

And third, the role of transformations is seen as converting the semantically relevant level of linguistic description into the phonetically relevant level.

Considering all that is said about the Transformational Grammar or the Transformational Generative Grammar, it was determined quite adequate for the execution of the study on hand.

The verb

Ordinarily, verbs are generally noted as action words. Another term which describes it is “doing word” because any time you use a verb you are doing something. For example “I watch a program”, “I listen to a story”, “I prune the flowers”. The verbs in all three sentences are watch, listen and prune. Hornby (2010), defines the word verb as “a word or group of words that expresses an action (such as eat), an event (such as happen) or a state (such as exist): regular / irregular verbs  Transitive / intransitive verbs ….”. In Urhobo, these would be such words as mrè (to see), yārâ (to go) mű (to carry) that would be identified as verbs. In a sentence the verb would be expressed thus:

Mê mrè ùwēvwī nà / I see the house.

“Mê yâ kpo ēkì” / I am going to the market.

“Mi mu ēkpō nà / I am carrying the bag.

Lawless (2018), cited in Akpofure – Okenrentie (2018) (unpublished) says the same thing when she says that “verbs are action words that express the action (he runs) or state of being (I am tired) of a sentence. They are one of the main parts of speech”. As touching verbs Ade Ojo (2005) states that:

Every verb has an infinitive. It is the nominal or basic form of the verb. It is not conjugated, that is, not marked with regard to person/number and mood/aspect/modality. It is marked only by time in the sense that it has two tenses: the present (simple tense) and the past (temps composé introduced or supported by an auxiliary: avoir or être). But then it does not have any in-built grammatical index to enable one to identify its person, number and time.

By implication, the Urhobo verb also has an infinitive which is the basic form of the verb.

The Urhobo verb

For Aziza (2008) “The basic form of the Urhobo verb is monosyllabic, i.e., CC or CCV. Urhobo vowels are presented in monosyllabic verb roots …” Example:

- vūghè (to recognize) CCVC,
  Béré (to lament) CVVC
  kpēri” (to shout) CVVC
  mrè” (to see) CCV

Aziza (op cit) also classes Urhobo verbs into 2 tonal groups. These are (a) +ATR verbs and (b) -ATR verbs. Imu (2015) agrees with Aziza (op cit) when she notes that: “In view of the fact that tonal classification cuts across both the syntactic and semantic classes, it is more appropriate to classify Urhobo verb(s) into tonal classes since Urhobo is a tonal language, and since tone runs concurrently with the argument structure of Urhobo verb as applicable in this research work. … The Urhobo verbs are classified into two-tone classes: High tone and Low tone classifications,….”

The infinitive form of the Urhobo verb is constructed by adding a prefix. Aziza (op cit) supports this assertion when she says that: “the verb derives its infinitive form by adding a prefix E to the root. The variants of this prefix are ε for [+ATR] verb and e for [-ATR] verbs”. 0, it does not have particular verb endings as does the French infinitive. An example is the verb “vūghè” which Osubele (2001) translates as (i) to recognize, (ii) to identify. If the verb derives its infinitive form by adding a prefix E then the infinitive form for the verb “vūghè” would be “évūghè”. Aziza (op cit) notes that all nouns begin with a vowel prefix. This in turn implies that the infinitive form of the verb could easily be taken for a noun since, with the prefix of the vowel E they both now have the same spelling and the same sound: Verb – evūghè, Noun – évūghè. This type of noun, according to Ukere (2005) could be referred to as a “verbal noun.” Also, khōrhō” / “boiling”. “Ô khōrhō” / It is
boiling. / If the prefix e is added, it becomes “ékhôrhó”, the
infinitive form of the verb “khôrhó”, and also the noun which
expresses a state of being, being formed directly from a
verb. To create a noun from the verb ‘vughè’ the prefix
vowel (e-) is added. This transforms the verb ‘vughè’ into
the noun expressing the state of ‘recognizing’ – ‘évughè’. One
can therefore say in verbal form:
Mi vughè ómô nà / I know the child
But as a verbal noun the sentence would be:
Évughè re ómô nà te émù
The recognition of the child is important

The reflexive verb

(unpublished) the reflexive verb is an:
(adj,ln.) (refl, REFL, reflex) A term used in
GRAMMATICAL description to refer to a VERB or
CONSTRUCTION where the SUBJECT and the
OBJECT relate to the same entity. English uses
reflexive pronouns to express this relation (e.g.
he kicked himself), but the same verbal
MEANING is often present without the pronoun
(e.g. I shaved (myself)). ... In
TRANSFORMATIONAL grammar, reflexivization refers to a rule which introduces
the reflexive pronouns into a sentence – in one
formulation by changing the syntactic feature on the
object personal PRONOUN from [-reflexive]
to [+reflexive], when it is CO-REFERENTIAL with the
subject, e.g. she saw her = she saw herself.
In GOVERNMENT-BINDING THEORY,
reflexives, together with RECIPROCALS, NP-
TRACES and PRO, are BASE-generated
ANAPHORES – a class of NPs. Other classes are
pronouns and R-EXPRESSIONS.

The reflexive verb is quite common in French. Chevallier-
Karlis (2017) refers to them as the “se” verbs, and
according to her the reflexive form in French is used when
one does something to oneself. This means that the verb
in question must be one whose action must reflect on the
one executing the action. Harcourt (2016) explains that:
A reflexive verb infinitive is identified by its
reflexive pronoun se which is placed before the
infinitive and that serves as a direct or indirect
object pronoun. A reflexive verb shows that the
subject is performing the action upon itself and,
therefore the subject and the reflexive pronoun
refer to one and the same person or thing as in
‘Je m’appelle”, (I call myself) which is translated to ‘My name is …’

The reflexive verb in Urhobo

It was noted in the aforementioned article that the reflexive verb is not featuring in documentations of the Urhobo
language as yet; but, colloquial uses of certain sentence structures are indicative of its existence. Structures such
as the root of the verb placed before the affix, i.e. (V + Affix = RV)
Kpârè + ómà = Kpârómà / get up.
Kpârómà is now the reflexive verb, where ékpârò is the
infinitive and ómâ-ékpârò is the noun.

There are other verbs such as:
1. “Rù” / Do.
   (Infinitive) érû / to do.
   (noun) ómâ-érû / to do to oneself,
   (Reflexive) Ruómà / to do to oneself,
2. “Kpôkpô” / trouble, worry
   (Infinitive) Ékpôkpô / to trouble
   (Noun) ómâ-ékpôkpô / To trouble oneself
   (Reflexive) Kpôkpômâ / to stress oneself,
3. “Phi” / throw
   (Infinitive) Óphiô / to throw
   (Noun) Óma phphiô / (to throw oneself)
   (Reflexive) Phiómâ

These verbs and many others come into play at this point.
It has been noted above that the presence of the pronoun
“se” before the infinitive form of the French verb creates
the ambience for the reflexive verb. What Chevallier-Karlis
(op cit) says above also has an implication for the reflexive
verb in Urhobo. That is to say that the introduction of the
Urhobo noun “ómà” as an affix, after the Urhobo noun
Éruô, creates the reflexive form “ruómà”. This means that
ómà could pass as an equivalent for the French pronoun
“se”. For this reason “ruómà” is able to translate “se faire”
effectively. Example:
1. Mi ruómà (me) / I do it to myself

A contrary result of an action somebody takes can elicit
such an expression. “Ómèvwé yi ruómà mè” / “I am the
one who did it to myself”. A kindly counsel would be given
to him in the following sentence:
   - Oye ómà-érûô, / to do by or to oneself. (self-inflicted)

Here are some more examples of the reflexive structure in
Urhobo.
1. Mè wîenómà / I trouble myself, I stress myself
2. Mi phiómà / I throw myself
3. Mi gbómà / I soil myself, I stain myself
4. Mi djómà phìa / I show myself
5. Ó kârhìómà / He scratches himself, she scratches
   herself.

Conjugating the Urhobo verb

To conjugate the Urhobo verb we will have recourse to the
subject pronouns as provided by Aziza (op cit), as well as
the knowledge of the French model of conjugation of verbs
according to Ade Ojo (2005). Let the verb “vughè” / to
recognise serve as an example.
The Roots of Some of the Verbs under Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>URHOBO</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Vúghè</td>
<td>to know, to recognize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>phi</td>
<td>to throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>béré</td>
<td>to mourn/ to lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>kpéri</td>
<td>to yell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>nághàn</td>
<td>bother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Nature of the verbs after the prefixes have been added

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>URHOBO</th>
<th>INFINITIVE</th>
<th>NOUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>vúghè</td>
<td>évúghè</td>
<td>évúghè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>béré</td>
<td>ebéré</td>
<td>ebéré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>kpéri</td>
<td>ékpére</td>
<td>ékpére</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>nághàn</td>
<td>énághàn</td>
<td>énághàn</td>
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Conjugation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>URHOBO</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st p.s.</td>
<td>Mí vúghè ómó nà</td>
<td>I recognize the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd p.s.</td>
<td>Wó vúghè ómó nà</td>
<td>You recognize the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd p.s.</td>
<td>Ó vúghè ómó nà</td>
<td>He/she recognises the child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st pp Ávwáren vúghè ómó nà | We recognise the child |
2nd pp Ówá vúghè ómó nà | You recognise the child. |
3rd pp Ayè vúghè ómó nà | They recognise the child. |

Wó vúghè ómó nánà? É. Mí vúghè ré.
Do you recognize this child? Yes. I recognize him.

In this response to the question, something happens to the verb ‘vúghè’ although it is still being used in the present tense. The final vowel /e/ modulates into /i/. In another sequence,

“Wó vúghè ómó nánà? Uuuuuuum, mí vúghè”
“Do you recognize this child? Hmmm, I am trying to recognise him”.

The sentence above shows a state of uncertainty which is indicated by a present continuous tense. The final vowel returns to its natural state. This means that the Urhobo verb can possibly be affected by time.

### Some Reflexive Verbs in Urhobo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>URHOBO</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bárómà</td>
<td>To avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bèrómà</td>
<td>To Lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bórmà</td>
<td>To console oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bòvwómà</td>
<td>To punch oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Chómà</td>
<td>To wedge oneself, to support oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Dómà</td>
<td>To throw oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Dùvwómà</td>
<td>To prick oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Fenómà</td>
<td>To discriminate in favour of oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Fa-ómà</td>
<td>To confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Gerómà</td>
<td>To bend oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Gharómà</td>
<td>(Of persons). To divide into groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ghwómàrè</td>
<td>To cheat, deceive, swindle oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Guérómà</td>
<td>To stir up oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Heriómà</td>
<td>(Of persons). To divide into groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Kénómà</td>
<td>To beware, to avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Kpárómà</td>
<td>To get up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>K̀kómà</td>
<td>(Of persons) To assemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Kpèrómà</td>
<td>To scream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Nághómà</td>
<td>To disturb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Nue ómà</td>
<td>To lean towards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Núviómà</td>
<td>To expose oneself, to reveal oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Nyómà</td>
<td>To be patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Phieghómà</td>
<td>To swing oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Phiómà</td>
<td>To throw oneself, toss oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Phieómà</td>
<td>To cheat oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Phieghómà</td>
<td>To cheat, deceive, swindle oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Phidómà</td>
<td>To behave oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Phieghómà</td>
<td>To behave oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Phieghómà</td>
<td>To behave oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Rórómà</td>
<td>To consider oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Sánómà</td>
<td>To discriminate in favour of oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Sása-ómà</td>
<td>To exercise oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Sívwómà</td>
<td>To nurse, to treat, to save oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Suómà</td>
<td>To behave oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>So-ómà</td>
<td>To mock oneself, to ridicule oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Vúghómà</td>
<td>To recognize oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Vuómà (ne oto, ne asa)</td>
<td>To uproot oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Vwóvwómà</td>
<td>To cover oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Vwóvwómà</td>
<td>To disgrace oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Wene ómà (wènómà)?</td>
<td>To change oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Wien-ómà</td>
<td>Worry oneself, fret oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Yanghómà</td>
<td>be distraught</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS

In this exercise, we have been able to analyse the Urhobo verb and its reflexive form. It has been found that: As we noted in Akpofure-Okenrentie (2018), (unpublished)

1. The prefix è placed in front of the root of the verb creates the infinitive form of the verb. Example:
   Root of verb = Rhà
   Infinitive = Prefix + Root of verb (è + Rhà) = èrhà
   Èrhà / To untie

2. Urhobo verbs which end with the vowel /u/ take on the prefix è and the affix o to form the infinitive of the verb.
   Example:
   Root of verb = Phù
   Infinitive = prefix è + root of verb + affix o (è+phu+o) = èphuò. Èphuò / to swell up

3. The prefix òmà placed before the infinitive of the verb, makes the verb a noun. Example:
   Noun = Prefix + Infinitive (òmà + èrhà) = òmà-èrhà
   Ómà-èrhà / to untie oneself
   Noun = Prefix + Infinitive (òmà+èphuò) = Òmà+èphuò
   Òmà-èphuò / Pride.

4. The reflexive structure has always been in oral use in spoken Urhobo.

5. The reflexive verb had always been in oral, non-documented existence.

6. To form the reflexive verb, the affix òmà is placed after the root of the verb.
   Example: Afix òmà + root of verb = (rha + òmà) = rhòmà
   Rhòmà / to untie or release oneself
   i.e. Gbà rhòmà wè nà / Untie yourself, release yourself

7. It was also found that when conjugated, the verb endings of the reflexive verb in Urhobo remain the same for all the persons. Example:
   Phusòmà / to be proud.

PRESENT TENSE

1st p.s. Mí phuómà / I am being proud.
2nd p.s. Wó phuómà / You are being proud
3rd p.s. Ò phuómà / He is being proud
1st p.p. Òvwàrèn phuómà / We are being proud
2nd p.p. Òwà phuómà / You are being proud
3rd p.p. Ò phuómà / They are being proud
1st p.p. Òvwàrèn phuómà / we were proud

2nd pp. Ówà phuómà / You were proud
3rd pp. Ò phuómà / They were proud
E.g. “Ókè yè nà, Ò phuómà / At that time, they were proud.

9. While the verb endings of the reflexive verb remain the same the intonation changes to determine the exact tenses

10. Every Urhobo verb is not reflexive; but, depending on the context, a given verb can be used reflexively.

11. Certain verbs which are found to be reflexive in Urhobo cannot be used reflexively in French. For example: “Phuómà” / to be proud. Ex: Ò phuómà / He is proud. The Urhobo reflexive verb sometimes modulates into an adjective in French.

12. The Urhobo verb can be affected by time in tenses.

13. In some cases, the Urhobo reflexive verb is not pronounced as spelt.

CONCLUSION

This topic has by no means been exhausted. Given the nature of an evolving language such as the Urhobo language there is still a lot to be researched. To some extent, the question as to why the reflexive verb is found to be missing from the existing Urhobo dictionaries has been answered. It had simply not been documented even though it had been used in various life situations. Now the time has come for it to be documented, as will also be the case for other parts of the Urhobo grammar that are yet to be discovered and researched. This study therefore recommends that:

i) Further studies should be carried out in this area of Urhobo studies.

ii) That as well as the root word of a verb, the dictionary should also contain the infinitive form of the verb, the noun as well as the reflexive form.

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