

Aspects of Deverbal Nominalization in Tee

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1. Introduction

Nominalization is the process of deriving a noun from some other word classes as shown in (1) from English or the derivation of a noun phrase from an underlying clause as also the examples from English in (2) show where (2b) is derived from (2a) (cf. Crystal 1991).

1a) Nouns formed from adjectives: *ability* (derived from *able*), *carefulness* (derived from *careful*), and *difficulty* (derived from *difficult*)

1b) Nouns formed from verbs: *failure* (derived from *fail*), *nominalization* (from *nominalize*), *investigation* (from *investigate*), *movement* (from *move*), *reaction* (from *react*) and *refusal* (from *refuse*)

1c) Gerundive nouns formed from verbs by adding the *-ing* suffix: *drinking* (derived from *drink*), *dancing* (from derived *dance*), *teaching* (derived from *teach*)

1d) Nouns derived from verbs through zero-derivation:

(i) *change*, as in: *Mary collected her change*. (*change* = noun) and, as in: *Mary will change her dress*. (*change* = verb)

(ii) *murder*, as in: *The murder of the magistrate was terrifying*. (*murder* = noun) and, as in: *He will murder the man*. (*murder* = verb)

2a) *He answered the phone*

2b) *His answering the phone* was surprising

Chomsky (1970) has made a distinction between two types of nominalization: lexical and syntactic (grammatical) nominalization. Whereas lexical nominalization produces linguistic forms belonging to the lexical category of noun, syntactic nominalization creates nominal expressions that do not have lexical status (Shibatani and Awadh, 2009). While the derived nouns in (1) result from lexical nominalization, the noun phrase in (2b) is a product of syntactic nominalization. Also, while lexical nominalizations identify the referent and classify them as belonging to a particular class of lexical entity, syntactic nominalizations function to characterize an entity referred to in terms of an event without specifying the identification or names. Clausal nominalizations show a 'mixture' of verbal and nominal characteristics (Comrie & Thompson 1985). For instance, English (and some languages) allows for expressing not only terms, but also propositions in the argument (NP) positions. Chomsky (1970) also argues that lexical nominalization takes place in a separate lexical component of grammar, while the syntactic one is formed in the syntactic component. In some of the frameworks, however, the lexicon is no longer considered a distinct module of grammar. Thus, the same kinds of structure building operations that are employed in generating phrasal expressions are taken to be responsible for building words.

The present paper focuses mainly on lexical nominalization and it is aimed at providing a preliminary descriptive account of an aspect of lexical nominalization in Tee; the deverbal lexical nominalizations. The paper based on data presented will demonstrate that morphophonological processes are involved in the derivation of Tee deverbal agentives, infinitives, gerundives, action nouns and qualificative nominals. Generally, the deverbal nominalizations are primarily achieved by a morphological process of prefixation which carries either the mid tone or low tone which also triggers tonal changes in the verb root of the derived nominals.

The paper is organized as follow. Section 1 is the introduction while section 2 provides an overview of lexical of nominalization. Section 3 provides a background on the Tee language while section 4 examines some aspects of deverbal lexical nominalization in Tee. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Lexical Nominalization

Lexical nominalization is one of the derivational processes of word formation across languages. It is a process that derives a noun from some other lexical category, typically a verb or adjective, by modifying the root. This can be via a morphological process as in English (e.g., *legal*, *legalize* and *legalization*). In essence, it means ‘turning something into a noun’ (Comrie and Thompson 1985). Comrie and Thompson (1985) identify two types of nominalization involving either action/state or participant. Whereas action/state nominalization refers to the formation of a noun from a verb/adjective root designating an action/state, in participant nominalization, the noun formed relates to a semantic role (i.e., agent, patient, instrument, location, product, manner, reason, etc.) of the nominalized verb. Another difference between the action/state nominalization and the participant lies in the fact that the former forms retain certain properties of the verbs or adjectives they are related to, while the later typically behave syntactically like other nouns in the language, bearing only morphological and semantic relations to the associated verb or adjective. While some languages code their action nominals more like their noun phrases, others code them more like sentences (Comrie and Thompson (1985)). Nominalization can also be sensitive to the demands of discourse (Hopper and Thompson 1980, 1984). Thus, a form can be rendered more like a verb if the concept the form refers to constitutes an event while on the other hand, a form is rendered less like a verb if the form refers to a process or a state rather than an action, a description rather than an event, a background rather than a foreground.

3. Background on the Tee Language

Tee (Tai, its anglicized form) is one of the Ogoni (Kegboid) (Ikoro 1990) group of languages. Tee is spoken in the Tee district of Tai Local Government in Rivers State, Nigeria by about 313,000 speakers (Nigerian 2006 Census). The name Tee is indigenously used for both the language and its speakers. Tee is an East Ogoni lect in the Delta Cross sub-branch of the Cross River branch of Eastern (New) Benue Congo family in the Niger-Congo Phylum. The other Ogoni lects with Tee within the Ogoni group are Gokana, Eleme, Kana and Baan-Ogoi.

Tee is fast becoming endangered since there is currently a very weak intergenerational transfer of Tee to the younger generation. This situation is even made worse by a very close neighboring predator lect, Kana. Tee and Kana are very closely related (Ikoro 1996), with some degree of mutual intelligibility, though speakers of Tee claim that the two are distinct languages, often drawing attention to some lexical items which are used in Kana but not in Tee (Ladefoged 1995). In addition to the lexical differences, there are also noticeable differences in the phonological inventories of Kana and Tee. For instance, Tee has some phonemic consonants which are not found in Kana. These include the voiceless alveolar nasal / η /, the voiceless bilabial nasal / η /, the voiceless palatal approximant / \jmath / and the voiceless alveolar lateral / l /. Despite the lexical and phonological differences however, some speakers of Kana still regard Tee as a form of Kana. Tee speakers to a large extent understand Kana but not vice versa. Kana unlike Tee has got a fairly developing literary tradition with primers and hymns. Also most of the influential literary and political ‘heavy weights’ of the Ogoni stock are of the Kana sub-group. The linguistic implication of this situation being that in primary schools located in Tee districts, the pupils are likely to be taught in Kana since there are no primers in Tee. There is also the general tendency for Tee speakers to use Kana, a lect of wider currency which, apart from providing them with a linguistic affinity with the Kana people but obviously, integrates them into the social and political groups in Kana. Thus, it is clear that Tee is fast losing its speakers to Kana and it can be categorically stated that Tee may be threatened with extinction.

It must be mentioned that some description of certain aspects of Tee has been done, though very peripheral. Among such descriptions are Ladefoged (1995), entitled *Voiceless Approximants in Tee* and some undergraduate projects written by a group of five students in 1995 at the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. These projects provide

preliminary information on consonants, vowels, and an outline of Tee sentence structure. These undergraduate projects however, have very limited circulation around the shelves of the departmental library; quite remote in form and in space from researchers. Others include Anyanwu (2004, 2010) and Anyanwu & Omego (2011). This present paper is also a contribution to the description and documentation of an aspect of Tee grammar.

There are twenty-six phonemic consonants (/p t k k^w kp b d g g^w gb ʔ s z ŋ m ñ n ɲ n^w ɹ ɻ l j ʃ w/) and twelve phonemic vowels (/i e u o ε ɔ a ī ē ɔ̄ ũ ā /) in Tee (cf. Ladefoged 1995). The phonemic vowels comprise seven oral and five nasalized ones. The glottal stop [ʔ] should be regarded as phonemic if all verbs are taken as having a CV structure. It contrasts as in the following examples:

- 3a) ʔó 'drink'
 b) jó 'juju'

There is no even division of the vowels into two sets, [+ATR] and [-ATR] since the vowels [a i u] can co-occur with both sets as shown by the following words.

- 4a) bùrà 'think'
 b) súé 'tobacco'
 c) píó 'nail'
 d) níē 'heart'
 e) mání 'urine'
 f) ʔè mà 'taste'(v)
 g) súé 'tobacco'

There are three phonemic tones which are high, mid and low as shown by the following words which display tonal contrast.

- 5a) bé 'fight (noun)'
 b) bē 'home'
 c) bè 'fence'

In Tee, a syllable may be either mono-moraic or polymoraic. A mono-moraic syllable may be any of the following types: V, N (syllabic nasal), CV and CVC as shown below.

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| V (owel): à | 's/he' | CV: té | 'tree' |
| é | what? | bá | 'hand' |
| CVC: lòp | 'ten' | N (syllabic nasal): m̀ | 'I' |
| tūp | 'twenty' | n'-ziĩ | 'one' |
| zím | 'extinguish' | m'-kpùrù | 'short' (of person) |
| dám | 'bite' | m'-má | 'full' |

Polymoraic syllables can be of the following types: CV-V (jéé 'buy'), CVVC, (tùàg 'pin') CV-V-N (fiòm 'swiftly') and CV-N (nàm 'meat'), etc. Nouns may be simple or derived. Simple nouns may be further sub-classified into CV (bē 'fence(noun)'), CVC (jép 'dance (noun)'), CV-N (dám 'husband'), CVV (péé 'goat'), CVVC (bíág 'iguana'), CV-CV (zínā 'star'), CV-CV-CV (dzágárá 'dream (noun)') syllable structures with varying tone patterns while derived nouns can be of varying degrees of syllable structure depending on their compositions. A Tee verb root is generally made of one or two syllables. Tri-syllabic structured verbs are possible but they are less common. A monosyllabic verb root may be either mono or bimoraic. All non-derived lexical verb items have an initial consonant. The basic word

order for a minimal sentence in Tee is subject, verb, and object (SVO). The following examples illustrate:

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|------|---------|
| 6a) Lédùm | <i>bēè</i> | kwé | lògbó |
| S | | V | O |
| Ledum | <i>past</i> | kill | the dog |

4. Deverbal Nominalizations in Tee

Deverbal nominalization in Tee is achieved by some morphophonological strategies and derived deverbal nominals can be sub-classified into participant nominalization and action/state nominalization. Derived agentive nominals are examples of participant nominalization while the gerundive, infinitive, derived action nouns and derived qualificative nouns are examples of action/state nominalizations. These are examined in the following sections.

4.1. Agentive Nominalization

The Tee deverbal agentive noun denotes the ‘doer of something’ or ‘one which verbs (Comrie &Thompson 1985). The human agentive nominals in Tee are formed by prefixing a nominalizing mid-mid tone CVV “personalizing” prefix **nēē-/nēē-** to the verb root. The choice of **nēē-** or **nēē-** is determined by the ATR feature of the verb root. Whereas **nēē-** with the [-ATR] vowels attaches to verb roots with [-ATR] vowels, **nēē-** with the [+ATR] vowels attaches to verb roots with [+ATR] as the following examples in (7) and (8) show respectively.

| Verb Roots | | Derived Agentives | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 7a) tógé | ‘teach’ | nēē- tógé | ‘teacher’ |
| b) ʔém | ‘write’ | nēē- ʔém | ‘writer’ |
| c) kóh ^w ébàrì | ‘preach’ | nēē- kóh ^w ébàrì | ‘preacher’ |
| d) kwé | ‘kill’ | nēē- kwé | ‘killer’ |
| e) jéé | ‘buy’ | nēē- jéé | ‘buyer’ |
| f) ʔóp | ‘drive’ | nēē- ʔóp | ‘driver’ |
| g) kpéé | ‘sweep’ | nēē- kpéé | ‘sweeper’ |
| h) n̄ó | ‘learn’ | nēē- n̄ó | ‘learner’ |
| i) kíá | ‘travel’ | nēē- kíá | ‘traveler’ |
| 8a) dé | ‘eat’ | nēē- dé | ‘eater’ |
| b) sú | ‘receive’ | nēē- sú | ‘receiver’ |
| c) kpúé | ‘protect’ | nēē- kpúé | ‘protector(a person who protects)’ |
| d) jép | ‘dance’ | nēē- jép | ‘dancer’ |
| e) jíp | ‘steal/rob’ | nēē- jíp | ‘thief/robber’ |
| f) bíé | ‘judge(verb)’ | nēē- bíé | ‘judge (noun)’ |
| g) dá | ‘hear’ | nēē- dá | ‘hearer’ |
| h) wé hióó | ‘sing (a song)’ | nēē- wé hióó | ‘singer’ |
| i) múé dʒágára | ‘dream (a dream)’ | nēē -mūé dʒágára | ‘dreamer’ |

The examples in (7a-c) and (8a-1) also show that with the prefixation of the agentive **nēē-** morpheme to a verb root, the mid tone of the agentive morpheme spreads, displacing an immediately following high tone vowel syllable of the verb root such that the syllable is also realized with a mid tone in the derived agentive nominal. If the initial high tone vowel syllable of the verb root is also immediately followed by a second vowel, the second vowel is also affected by the mid tone spreading (cf. 7e, 7g, 8c and 8f).

- 11a) *nēē-nīm ‘swimmer’
 b) *nēē-tēē ‘runner’
 c) *nēē-wēē ‘singer’
 d) *nēē-mūē ‘dreamer’
 e) *nēē-bùù ‘reader’

4.2. Gerundive Nominalization

Tee gerunds like those of other languages express ‘acts of verb-ing’ (cf. Comrie and Thompson 1985). The Tee gerundive is generally formed by attaching a low tone prefix **lò-** to the verb root which denotes an activity. In addition to the prefixed morpheme **lò-**, if such a verb root is just a CV or CVC root, it is fully reduplicated. Examples are shown in (12a-h).

| Verb Roots | | Derived Gerunds | |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 12 a) dé | ‘eat’ | lò-dé-dé | ‘(act of) eating’ |
| b) jép | ‘dance’ | lò-jép-jép | ‘(act of) dancing’ |
| c) ʔó | ‘drink’ | lò-ʔó-ʔó | ‘(act of) drinking’ |
| d) k ^w é | ‘kill’ | lò-k ^w é-k ^w é | ‘(act of) killing’ |
| e) ʔém | ‘write’ | lò-ʔém-ʔém | ‘(act of) writing’ |
| f) ʔóp | ‘drive’ | lò-ʔóp-ʔóp | ‘(act of) driving’ |
| g) ním (máá) | ‘swim (river)’ | lò-ním-ním <i>máá</i> | ‘(act of) swimming’ |
| h) wè (híó) | ‘sing (song)’ | lò-wé-wé <i>híó</i> | ‘(act of) singing’ |

However, if the verb root is a CV-V or a non-monosyllabic, the reduplication is blocked as shown in the following examples (13a-f).

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 13a) ʔóó | ‘sell’ | lò-ʔóó | ‘(act of) selling’ |
| b) kíà | ‘travel’ | lò-kíà | ‘(act of) travelling’ |
| c) jéé | ‘buy’ | lò-jéé | ‘(act of) buying’ |
| d) tée- rá | ‘run (run)’ | lò-tée rá | ‘(act of) running’ |
| e) múé-dʒágára | ‘dream (run)’ | lò-múé <i>dʒágára</i> | ‘(act of) dreaming’ |
| f) bùù -kpa | ‘read (book)’ | lò-búú <i>kpá</i> | ‘(act of) reading’ |

With respect to [ATR] vowel harmony in the derived gerundive nominals, the low tone [+ATR] vowel of the gerundive prefix **lò-** harmonizes only with [+ATR] verb roots as can be observed in (12a-b, 12g-h, & 13a, 13d-f). The harmonization is however blocked between the low tone [+ATR] vowel of the gerundive prefix **lò-** with [-ATR] vowel verb roots as can be observed in examples (12c-f and 13c). This is unlike the agentive nominalization where the [ATR] vowel feature of the prefix is determined by the [ATR] vowel feature of the verb root. The prefixation of the gerundive morpheme **lò-** does not trigger any tonal changes in the derived gerundive nominal. Both the prefix and the verb roots maintain their inherent tones in the derived nominal. Also, some Tee gerundives just as their respective verb roots are compound in nature, obligatorily co-occurring with their inherent complements (12g-h, 13e-f). Without the inherent complements, the derived gerunds are not acceptable as shown in (14a-d).

- 14a) *lò-ním-ním (cf. 12g)
 b) * lò-wé-wé (cf. 12h)
 c) * lò-múé (cf. 13e)
 d) * lò-bùù (cf. 13f)

4.3. Action Noun (Non-Gerundive) Nominalization

The semantics of the derived deverbal action nominals in Tee relate to their verb root counterparts and some of the derived nouns in this group are involved in zero derivation with their respective verb roots as the following examples in (15) illustrate:

| Verb Root | Derived Action Nominals | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------|--|
| 15a) dém ‘create’ | dém | ‘creation’ | |
| b) lú ‘arrive’ | lú | ‘arrival’ | |
| c) bíjábú ‘hate’ | bíjábú | ‘hatred’ | |
| d) hèrèlò ‘love (v)’ | hèrèlò | ‘love (n)’ | |
| e) bíé ‘judge (v)’ | bíé | ‘judgment’ | |

However, in some cases the verb root and the derived action nominal are involved in tonal metathesis. The verb roots of those involved in the tonal metathesis have a high-low pattern, while the derived action nominal counterparts have a low-high tone pattern as shown in (16 a-f). In most cases, the verb root is of the CVCV syllable structure which perhaps may trigger the tonal metathesis between it and the derived action nominal. Exceptions to this observation however, are the forms **éblò** ‘examine’ and **ánà** ‘deny’ which have V-CCV and V-CV syllable structures respectively.

| | | |
|----------------------|------|----------------|
| 16a) bílà ‘play (v)’ | bílá | ‘play (n)’ |
| b) dóbà advise | dòbá | ‘advice’ |
| c) dákò explain | dàkó | ‘explanation’ |
| d) síjà ‘announce’ | şjá | ‘announcement’ |
| e) éblò ‘examine’ | èbló | ‘examination’ |
| f) ánà ‘deny’ | àná | ‘denial’ |

The fact that the action-noun nominals involved in zero derivation with their respective verb root in (15) can function as subjects of simple sentences in Tee is strong evidence that they are nominalized forms.

16g) ndá hèrèlò lò ní
 my love be your
 ‘My love is yours’

16h) lò bíé lú lé
 the judgment be good
 ‘The judgment is good’

Also compare (16g & h) with their usages as verbs in (16i & j).

16i) n hèrèlo órò
 ‘I love you’

16j) Lédùm bēē bíé wá bíé
 Ledum past judge them judgment
 ‘Ledum judged them’

4.4. Infinitive Nominalization

The Tee deverbal infinitive nominal is marked by a CV-CV low-low tone prefix **gìjà-** attached to a corresponding verb root as the data in (17) illustrate.

| Verb Roots | | Derived Infinitives | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 17a) tógé | ‘teach’ | gǐjà-tògé | ‘to teach’ |
| b) bílà | ‘play (v)’ | gǐjà-bìlá | ‘to play’ |
| c) dóbà | advise | gǐjà-dòbá | ‘to advise’ |
| d) dákò | explain | gǐjà-dàkó | ‘to explain’ |
| e) síjà | ‘announce’ | gǐjà-sìjá | ‘to announce’ |
| f) gbètǒ | ‘listen’ | gǐjà-gbètǒ | ‘to listen’ |
| g) bàrà | ‘farm(v)’ | gǐjà-bàrà | ‘to farm’ |
| h) jìrà | ‘believe’ | gǐjà-jìrà | ‘to believe’ |
| i) éblò | ‘examine’ | gǐjà-èbló | ‘to examine’ |
| j) ànà | ‘deny’ | gǐjà-àná | ‘to deny’ |
| k) dé | ‘eat’ | gǐjà-dè | ‘to eat’ |
| l) jèp | ‘dance’ | gǐjà-jèp | ‘to dance’ |
| m) ʔém | ‘write’ | gǐjà-ʔèm | ‘to write’ |
| n) kwé | ‘kill’ | gǐjà-kwè | ‘to kill’ |
| o) ʔóó | ‘sell’ | gǐjà-ʔóó | ‘to sell’ |
| p) jéé | ‘buy’ | gǐjà-jéé | ‘to buy’ |
| q) sú | ‘receive’ | gǐjà-sù | ‘to receive’ |
| r) ʔóp | ‘drive’ | gǐjà-ʔòp | ‘to drive’ |
| s) kpéé | ‘sweep’ | gǐjà-kpéé | ‘to sweep’ |
| t) ñó | ‘learn’ | gǐjà-ñò | ‘to learn’ |
| u) bùù kpá | ‘read (book)’ | gǐjà-bùù kpá | ‘to read(book)’ |
| v) ñim máá | ‘swim (water)’ | gǐjà-ñim máá | ‘to swim (water)’ |
| w) wè híó | ‘sing (song)’ | gǐjà-wè híó | ‘to sing(song)’ |

From the examples in (17), it is observed that the prefixation of the low-low tone prefix **gǐjà-** to low tone verb roots does not result in any tonal changes in such verb roots in the derived infinitive nominals (cf.17 (b-j, etc.)). However, with high tone verb roots, the low tone of the prefix spreads to the immediately following high tone syllable, displacing the high tone. This spreading however, affects the first vowel when a double vowel [VV] is used in the syllable (17o, 17p & 17s). Thus, the nominalization process in such cases generates a contour on the [VV] syllable. This situation is observed in examples (17a, 17k-t). As in other cases of nominal derivation from verb roots with inherent complements, the infinitive nominal derivation from inherent complement verb roots require obligatorily the inherent complements as can be observed in (17u-w) else the resultant derivations will be ungrammatical as shown below in (18).

- 18a) *gǐjà-bùù ‘to read (book)’
 b) *gǐjà-ñim ‘to swim (water)’
 c) *gǐjà-wè ‘to sing (song)’

4.5 State (Qualificative) Noun Nominalization

The Tee derived deverbal state or qualificative nominals seem to be derived from their verbal stem by a morphological process of back-formation, which deletes/subtracts the underlying verbal root prefix **lu-** as the following examples in (19) show.

| Verb Roots | | Derived Infinitives | |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 19a) lúkpè | ‘be sweet’ | kpé | ‘sweetness’ |
| b) léèjìè | ‘be happy’ | éjìè | ‘happiness’ |
| c) láàsú | ‘be annoyed’ | ású | ‘annoyance’ |
| d) láàgà | ‘be strong’ | ágà | ‘strength’ |
| e) lúlē | ‘be good’ | lé | ‘goodness’ |
| f) lúmèné | ‘be rich’ | méné | ‘wealth’ |
| g) lúpààjìjì | ‘be tall’ | jàjìjì | ‘tallness’ |
| h) lúpà | ‘be ugly’ | pá | ‘ugliness’ |
| i) lú?ē | ‘be white’ | ?é | ‘whiteness’ |
| j) lúbìrà | ‘be black’ | bírá | ‘blackness’ |

From (19), it is observed that the verb stems from which the state nominals are derived consist of two morphemes; the underlying **lú-** prefix and a verb root. The vowel of the verb root regressively assimilates fully the vowel of the prefix in verb roots that begin with initial vowels. This is the case in (19b, c & d). Prior to the deletion/subtraction of the underlying prefix to derive the state/qualificative nouns the inherent high tone of the prefix spreads locally and docks on the immediately non-high tone syllable, displacing the non-high tone. This can be observed in the whole of (19a-j). There is no effective ATR vowel harmony between the vowel of the prefix and the vowels of the verb roots. Both the vowels on either of the boundary between the prefix and verb root are neutral to the ATR harmony. While the deverbal state (qualificative) nouns can be used as typical nouns where they can function as subjects of the simple sentences in Tee, their verb root sources can acquire the capacity to function as subjects only in their infinitive forms as shown below in (20a-j).

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 20a) gǐja- lúkpè | ‘to be sweet’ |
| b) gǐja- léεjìè | ‘to be happy’ |
| c) gǐja- láàsú | ‘to be annoyed’ |
| d) gǐja- láàgà | ‘to be strong’ |
| e) gǐja- lúlē | ‘to be good’ |
| f) gǐja- lúmèné | ‘to be rich’ |
| g) gǐja- lúpààjìjì | ‘to be tall’ |
| h) gǐja- lúpà | ‘to be ugly’ |
| i) gǐja- lú?ē | ‘to be white’ |
| j) gǐja- lúbìrà | ‘to be black’ |

5. Conclusion

Thus far, this paper has discussed an aspect of the morphology of Tee derived nominals. Specifically, the paper has examined morphophonological processes involved in the derivation of agentive, infinitive, gerundive, action nouns and qualificative nominals. It has been observed that generally, Tee seems to have a fairly rich morphological process for the derivation of nouns from verb stems and that prefixation is one of the major morphological processes for achieving this since for most cases; a prefix is attached to a verb stem, a derivational source. In most cases, the nominal prefixation triggers a mid or low tone tonal change in the derived nominal and this perhaps, explains why the high-tone verb roots are usually the target for tonal changes (tonal spreading) while low-tone verb roots do not undergo a tonal change. It is also observed that the meanings of the resulting nominalized nouns are generally related to those of their corresponding verbal stems. This is just a preliminary study; a detailed study is required to examine other forms of lexical nominalizations and also account for the interplay of morphophonological rules which derive the surface forms.

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