THE MORPHOTONE OF AKYEM REINCARNATE NAMES

 ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Morphotone of Akyem reincarnate names, which is one of the personal names in Akyem, a dialect of Akan. The study discusses how tones operate at the level of morphology in Akyem reincarnate names. In Akan society, when a mother suffers constant child mortality,the explanation is that it is the child's mother in the underworld that does not want the child to stay in the living world (see Agyekum, 2006). In order to avoid such misfortune, parents try to give these children certain names that could protect them from being taken away by their mother in the un-seen world. Such names are known as reincarnate names and they are formed through morphological and phonological processes such as compounding, cliticization, deletion and tones. In this study, the focus is on compounding, cliticisation, gender equality, tone and ambiguity in reincarnate names in Akem. Using the autosegmental framework, tonal characteristics such as polarization, assimilation and obligatory contour principle are unveiled in these reincarnate names. The corpus for the analyses were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprised the corpus I recorded from the typical Akyem people. The secondary source was those I collected from the existing literature in Agyekum (2006). The paper argues that clitics in reincarnate names sometimes, when they are encliticized to truncated day names in the phonetic forms, copy some of their tones. The work reveals that tonal changes that occur when clitics in reincarnation names are attached to day names. The paper concludes that the semantics of reincarnate names does not depends only on what is in literature but also depends on phonology and morphology.

Keywords: reincarnation names, encliticized, clitics, polarization, assimilation, obligatory contour principle, cliticisation, compounding, deletion, tone

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