

## Lesson 7:

# The Uses of "Nà"

by

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One of the biggest problems that students of Igbo face is adhering to the use of "na". I cannot therefore overemphasize the importance of this lecture if one wishes to write Ìgbò according to the convention. The lecture presupposes knowledge of parts of speech (nkeji asụsụ) such as noun (mkpọhà), verb (ngwaà), preposition (mbụzọ) and conjunction (njiko).

### The four uses of "nà"

"Nà" is used in four different contexts in Ìgbò:

- (i) as conjunction
- (ii) as a preposition
- (iii) as an auxiliary verb and
- (iv) as a complementizer.

### "Nà" as a conjunction ("Nà" dịka njiko)

When "nà" is used to conjoin two words as in (1a) below, it is written in full and separately from the two words which it conjoins. Consider the following:

(1) Ñkirū **nà** Chinyeaka bụ ndị klaàsị m. (Ñkirū **and** Chinyeaka are members of my class.)

As the gloss indicates, "nà" in this contexts is equivalent to English conjunction "and." It is crucial to note that in this context, "nà" cannot be written with an apostrophe as in (1b) nor with a hyphen as in (1c). I use asterisks (\*) to indicate that these are unacceptable.

\* (1b) Ñkirū **n'**Chinyeaka bụ ndị klaàsị m.

\* (1c) Ñkirū **nà**-Chinyeaka bụ ndị klaàsị m.

## "Nà" as a preposition ("Nà" dì mbùzò)

This is the only tricky one. When "nà" is used as a preposition, the way it is written depends on whether the noun that follows it begins with a vowel or a consonant. If the noun following the preposition "nà" begins with a consonant, "nà" is written in full, without an apostrophe and without a hyphen. The proper representation is as in (2a, 2b and 2c).

- (2a) Mmirī zòrò **na** mgbèdè. (It rained **in** the evening)
- (2b) Mahadùm dì **nà** Nsuka. (A University is located **in** Nsukka)
- (2c) Ogechukwu bi **nà** Finlànd. (Ogechukwu lives **in** Finland)

If the noun following the preposition "nà" begins with a vowel, the representation is different. First, the "à" in "nà" disappears and an apostrophe appears in its place. Consider (2d - f)

- (2d) MOE bi **n'À**merikà. (MOE lives **in** America.)
- (2e) Azù dì **n'itè** ofe. (There is fish **in** the soup pot)
- (2f) Kènechukwu nọ **n'ụlọ**kwụkwọ. (Kènechukwu is **in** the school)

(2g and h) are unacceptable representations of "nà" as prepositions.

- \* (2g) Chinyeaka nọ **n'klaàsì**.
- \* (2h) Ụbe dì **nà** elù osisi.

## "Nà" as auxiliary verb ("Nà" dìka enyemaka ngwaà)

When "nà" is used as an auxiliary verb, it is always followed by a hyphen. In fact, it is the only time "nà" is followed by a hyphen. (3a - c) illustrate:

- (3a) Nwañkwọ Okerèke **nà-èsi** ọnwụ. (Nwañkwọ Okerèke **is** being stubborn)
- (3b) Onyenkuzì **nà-àkuzì** Ìgbò. (The teacher **is** teaching Ìgbò)
- (3c) Ụmụàgbòghò Ìgbò **nà-àma** mmā. (Ìgbò girls are **(CONTINUOUS)** beautiful)

Note that as auxiliary, "nà" is hyphenated to the verb which it assists and is never written with a hyphen or separately from the verb as in (3d and e) respectively:

- (3d) Ìkechi **nà-àsụ** Ìgbò (Ìkechi **is** learning Ìgbò)
- (3e) Ike **nà-edè** edèmedè. (Ike **is** writing a text)

### **"Nà" d]ka kompulimentaiza ("Nà" as a complementizer)**

When used as a complementizer, "nà" is written separately from the noun that follows. This is exactly the same way as with a conjunction (njikọ). (4) illustrates.

(4) Ñkirū s]r] **nà** Chinyeaka bù ]kpa. (Ñkirū said **that** Chinyeaka is a rascal.)

Since this is very simple, I will not dwell on it.