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**SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, LANGUAGE,
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EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony- contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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ÉDITORIAL

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre dateraient de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie-contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écrits en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle,

tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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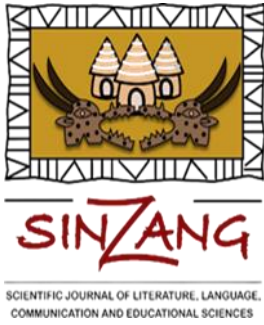
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TOWARD THE USE OF NUMERAL QUALIFIERS IN YORUBA: DISCOURSE IN *IFÁ* CORPORA, *ÌBEJÌ*, PROVERBS, INCANTATIONS AND COUNTING SYSTEMS

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Abstract

It is an established rule in literature that, qualifiers qualify nouns and always come after the nouns in the grammar of Yorùbá language. This is however contrary to numeral interactions with qualifiers around contexts of *Ifá* corpora, *Ìbejì*- twins compound names, proverbs, *ofo* - incantation and Yoruba counting systems. This study seeks to fill this gap. Relevant data relating to nominal quantifiers are carefully selected across various contexts, discourse and texts analyzed with empirical approach- a method that investigates a problem within its real life context through existing cases. It is stated that, like VO and OV languages, Yoruba nominal qualifiers operate NumN and NNum. The study concludes that, rules governing numeral qualifiers in Yoruba are unstable just as the language of *Ifá* is not static.

Keywords: *Ìbejì, Ifá, noun qualifier, numerals, proverbs*

VERS L'UTILISATION DE QUALIFICATIFS NUMÉRIQUES YORUBA: DISCOURS EN CORPUS *IFÁ* , *ÌBEJÌ*, PROVERBES, INCANTATIONS ET SYSTÈMES DE COMPTAGE

Résumé

C'est une règle établie en littérature que les qualificatifs qualifient les noms et viennent toujours après les noms dans la structure grammaticale de la langue Yorùbá. Ceci est cependant contraire aux interactions numériques avec les qualificatifs autour des contextes des corpus *Ifá*, des noms composés des jumeaux *Ìbejì*, des proverbes, de l'incantation *ofo* - et des systèmes de comptage Yorùbá. Cette étude vise à combler cette lacune. Les données pertinentes relatives aux quantificateurs nominaux sont soigneusement sélectionnées dans divers contextes de discours et des textes analysés avec une approche empirique - une méthode qui étudie un problème dans son contexte réel à travers des cas existants. Il est indiqué que, comme pour les langues VO (verbe-objet) et OV (objet-verbe), les qualificatifs nominaux Yoruba utilisent Nombre-N et N-Nombre. L'étude conclut que les règles régissant les qualificatifs numériques en Yoruba sont instables, tout comme la langue d'*Ifá* n'est pas statique.

Mots-clés : *Ìbejì Ifá, nombres, proverbes, qualificatif de nom.*

INTRODUCTION

Importance of numbers in human activities including various academic disciplines cannot be overemphasized. This is why a famous philosopher- Pythagoras of Samos says that, “numbers rule the universe. They play distinct roles in human lives and events” (The Nation, Sept. 16th, 2020, p. 14). As such, roles of numbers in language and culture are indispensable. In the grammar of Yoruba, numerals function as nouns and adjectives- none numeral or numeral qualifiers. A qualifier is, “any word or grammatical (i.e. acceptable) combination of words which qualifies a noun”, while “any word whatsoever qualified by a qualifier is a noun” (O. Awóbùlúyì 1978, p. 30).

Among the nominal qualifiers is Yorùbá numerals, which states the number of nouns, affected in a phrase or sentence. Qualifier has no specific feature except its position and structure (Yusuf 1995). That is, qualifier is best described by its functional roles in a phrase or sentence. What is “most important is to recognize the *head* of the construction” (O. Yusuf 1997, p. 5), because, the noun’s qualifier influences the meaning of the noun’s head. Meaning that, “the modifier adds a specification to the meaning of the head noun” (S. Lobner 2002, p. 86). Influence of meaning through numbers is worth investigating. This is why M. Dryer (1992, p. 118) writes “the two orders of numeral and noun are equally common among OV languages. ...Outside of Africa, VO languages exhibit a strong tendency to be NumN: ...But in Africa there is a very strong tendency in the opposite direction” However, this opinion is contrary to Yoruba numeral qualifiers as being investigated by this study.

1. The Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to demonstrate and establish that, Yoruba, like OV¹ languages, is one of the VO² languages in Africa that exhibits NumN³ in addition to NNum⁴ qualifiers within the syntactic layer of the NP. Objectives of this study are to engage the numeral qualifiers in *Ifá*⁵, *Ìbejì* compound names,⁶ *ofò`*,⁷ proverbs and some Yoruba counting systems; to establish that, numeral qualifiers in some cases always occur before the nouns; to contrast noun-qualifiers with qualifiers-nouns in relation to meanings and to demonstrate that in some cases, no discernable difference in meanings when either the numeral or noun is used as qualifier or head as against the general opinion that it is sacrosanct that meaning varies along with changes in the linear order (of noun’s head) within the syntactic layer of the NP.⁸

¹ Object Verb

² Verb Object

³ Number Noun

⁴ Noun Number

⁵ The compendium of Yoruba culture

⁶ These are names jointly shared by twins among the Yoruba.

⁷ Incantation

⁸ Noun Phrase.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology: Empirical Approach

Empirical approach is adopted for this study. Empirical approach is derived from the greek word *empeirikos* which means ‘experienced’ (QuestionPro Survey Software 2020, pp. 1-2). Empirical evidences are sourced from different texts through observations or experiences to validate the claim that, like in OV and VO languages, Yoruba operates NNum and NumN within the syntactic structure of NP.

There are different types of methodologies associated with empirical research such as Survey, Experimental, Correlational, Longitudinal, Cross sectional, Causal-Comparative, Observational, One-on-one interview and Case study research among others. However, case study in relation to Yoruba cultural contexts earlier described is adopted by this study. The case study “is used to find more information through carefully analyzing existing cases. It is a method to investigate a problem within its real life context through existing cases. Using the findings from the case study, conclusion can be drawn regarding the topic that is being studied” (QuestionPro Survey Software 2020, p. 6). The case studies are sampled data from *Ifá* corpora, *Ibeji* compound names, proverbs, *ofo`* - incantation and Yoruba counting systems in Yoruba numeral qualifiers with NNum and NumN are examined and analyzed to establish observation made.

3. Literature Review

Behaviors of numeral qualifiers within a language and across languages vary. This is why linguists focused on the examination of numeral qualifiers in some languages. Among Linguists that worked on numeral qualifiers in other languages is J .R. Hayford, who looks at the interaction between numerals and nouns, sourcing data from non-European languages mostly Hebrew, Sinhala and Shona in contrast with European data. He opines that, “interactions between numerals and nouns are rich and varied. Many of the idiosyncrasies of numeral-noun interaction in specific languages may well surprise, and interest, students of language” (1998, p. 72). As generally observed across languages, the interactions between numerals and nouns is likewise observes to be a tilling research ground in Yoruba syntax because till now, no known study has been carried out on Yoruba numerals interaction with nouns.

It had been suggested that “it might actually be better to separate numeral classifier language from the rest in stating word order correlations, as the presence of a classifier indicates clearly distinct principle for encoding cardinality in relation to counted objects” (J. R. Hurford 1998, p. 4). Numeral classifier languages are those “which an NP consisting entirely of a bare noun may be understood as either mass or count, and as either singular or plural” (D. Gil 2013, p. 2).

While attempting to separate numeral classifier languages from non-numeral classifiers, Gil, examines 400 languages, including Yoruba, into three types with the associated

numbers: languages without numeral classifiers 260, languages with optional numeral classifiers 62 and languages with obligatory numeral classifiers 78. Yoruba, English and Tagalog are examples of the languages without numeral classifiers. Gil’s classifications on numeral classifiers is insightful to general overviews of numerals across languages. Investigations about numeral qualifiers across languages show that, languages without numeral qualifiers which Yoruba is inclusive, are of the highest number- more than half (almost two-third) of the samples languages examined by Gil. Nonetheless, since there is absence of numeral classifiers in Yoruba, such elements are outside the scope of this work.

Previous works on Yoruba numerals such as Adeoye (1979) and Alaba (2015) examine numerals in calculations and counting systems in money, figures, months and days. However, their works did not extend beyond definitions and the counting methods. It is therefore worth the trouble, like other languages to study numerals behaviors within syntactic layer of NP in Yoruba.

Numerals are realized in two linear forms in Yoruba: vowel and consonant initials. The root structure or form in numerals with consonant initials such as in “*méjì*” to have been derived from “*mú + èjì*”, has remains contentious. There is a suggestion that, “those of the nouns beginning with the consonantal sound *m*, e.g. *méjì* (two) seem to be made up of a now obsolete word (probably a verb *mú* and the nouns *ọ̀kan* (one) ...*ẹ̀wá* (ten)” (O. Awóbùlúyì 1978, p. 15). In the opinion of A. Bamgboṣe (1967, p. 14) the root word formation of “*méjì*” is:

1. $\begin{matrix} m\acute{e}j\grave{i} \text{ 'two'} \\ m\acute{e} \acute{.}rin \text{ 'four'} \\ m\acute{e} \acute{.}w\acute{a} \text{ 'ten'} \end{matrix}$

Bamgboṣe only identified four sets of numeral qualifiers among which examples in 1 belongs to the first set. This set, as indicated above is mostly explored by *Ifá* system most importantly, *méjì* ‘two’ and its multiples.

O. Ajíbóyè (2005) is of the opinion “that H tone of *m*- forms comes from the morpheme *mú* ‘take’:

2. $\begin{matrix} \grave{e}j\grave{i} \ m \acute{.} + \grave{e}j\grave{i} \ m\acute{e}j\grave{i} \\ \text{ 'two'} \\ \acute{e} \grave{.}ta \ m \acute{.} + \acute{e} \grave{.}ta \ m\acute{e} \acute{.}ta \\ \text{ 'three'} \end{matrix}$

Ajiboye advocates for two hypotheses, where: “the floating H tone is there underlining with the *m*-prefix as part of plural morpheme, the H tone either delete or it associate with a tone- bearing unit adjacent to it. In this case, under consideration, the H tone associate with the initial vowel of the base and the L tone delete.... In other words, numerals such as *méjì* ‘two’ and *méje* ‘seven’ are derived from *mú + èjì* and *mú + èje*” (O. Ajiboye 2005, p. 262). He however identifies two problems with the proposal: “the problem of meaning with *mú*, with the H tone, used with numeral in L tone initials, suggesting that, “morpheme is *mú* ‘take.’ This suggestion

came from our knowledge of counting system in Yoruba. Native speakers count, *méní* ‘take one’, *méjì* ‘take two’, *mẹ́’ta* ‘take three’ etc. It is probably the case that this morpheme combines with the base form and undergoes vowel deletion as in:

3. $mú\ èjì > m' > méjì$
 $mú\ èje > m' > méje$ (O. Ajíboye 2005, p. 239).
 ‘pick seven’ > seven

Furthermore, Ajíboye is of the opinion that, “whenever nouns are reduplicated in Yoruba, they have the specific function of distributive quantification with numerals, such as;

4. $\begin{matrix} Èjì & èjì\ èjì & èjèèjì \\ \text{‘two’} & \text{‘two two’} & \text{‘all two’} \\ Èje & èje\ èje & èjèèje \\ \text{‘seven’ ‘seven seven’} & \text{‘all seven’} & \end{matrix}$ (O. Ajíboye 2005, p. 261).

On the one hand, opinion of Ajíboye that, $mú + èjì$ is the root of *méjì*, that is ‘take two’ support the proposal in this study that consonant initial numerals are rendered in counting numerals; as such numerals usually occur after the nouns. On the other hand, opinions of authors on the base or root forms of numerals is subject to further research. For example, the suggestion that the principle behind the word ‘ $mú + èjì$ ’ to be the root of ‘*méjì*’⁹ may not be always applicable to all Yoruba numerals such as:

5. $\begin{matrix} Ogún \text{ ‘twenty’} \\ Ogbò\ n \text{ ‘thirty’} \\ Ogóji \text{ ‘fourty’} \end{matrix}$

It will be inappropriate to say $mu + ogún > mógún$, $mú + ogbò\ n > mọ́\ gbo\ n$ or $mú + ogo\ ta > mọ́\ go\ ta$. It has been suggested that numerals select their verbs in some Yoruba names.

Depending on individual’s knowledge in relation to context of culture, different meanings can be associated with a morpheme or word. This is because, morphemes or “words, though they may be formed by regular rules, persist and change once they are in the lexicon, the morphemes out of which the words seem to have been formed, and into which they seem analysable, do not have constant meanings and in some cases have no meaning at all” (M. Aronoff 1976, p. 18). This opinion implies that, depending on the linguistic element under examination, one may occasionally need not be bothered with the meaning of a sound or morpheme in the composition of a word as such components may sometimes be meaningless or unanalyzable. Linguistic or language element cannot be “successfully undertaken independently of the cultural function of the material being analyzed” (W. Abimbola 1982, p. 77). Yoruba have different interesting ways of numeral expressions beyond figural

⁹ This will later be explained in this work.

significations such as in, 6 *Ogún* ‘twenty’ is generally known as *okòóỌgọ́ fà* ‘One hundred and twenty’ is known in the context of farming profession as *ọ̀fà Ọgọ́ rùn ún* “One hundred” is known in the context of farming profession as *ọwọ́ kan*.

In the above examples, eventhough, *Ogún* and *Okòó* are numeral words meaning twenty (20), one will not say *Okòó ọmọdé* ‘twenty children’ but, *Ogún ọmọdé* ‘twenty children’ in the same context to mean the same expression. In *Ogún ọmọdé*, *Ogún* ‘twenty’ is an independent numeral qualifier; while *Okòó* ‘twenty’ is dependent numeral.

This is the case in some languages where “numeral which is used to qualify a noun in a noun phrase is not necessarily the same form as the corresponding numeral in the conventional recited counting sequence. There are various degree of idiosyncratic difference between a counting numeral and a quantifying (attributive) numeral" (J. R. Hurford 1998, p. 4). It is proposed in this study that, this is also the case in Yoruba, where the context of counting numeral is perceived to occasionally vary from that of modifying numeral. The choice of the numeral in discourse is influenced by the cultural appropriateness. This is because symbols including numerals do not take place in isolation from other events; rather they operate within a wider framework of human activity. Any piece of language is therefore part of a situation, and so has a context, a relationship with that situation. Indeed, it is this relationship between the substance and form of a piece of language on the one hand and the extra-linguistic circumstances in which it occurs on the other, which gives what is normally called ‘meaning’ to utterances (J. Spencer & M. Gregory 1964, p. 68). Implication of the above opinion in relation to Yoruba numerals is that their use and meanings depend on the contexts.

4. Data Presentation, Discussion and Analysis

There are empirical evidences from *Ifá* corpora texts, *Ìbejì* compound names, proverbs, *ọfọ̀* - incantation texts and Yorùbá numerical counting systems validating that it is not sacrosanct for numeral qualifier to follow the noun in the syntax of Yoruba. Sourcing for various examples from different texts in this study is occasioned to authenticate findings of the study beyond doubt.

The two linear of numeral qualifiers are NNum and NumN. Examining names of principal *odù-Ifá*¹⁰, the rules are classified into two. The numeral 2: *èjì* or *méjì* are prominently used in *Ifá* as “the word *Èjì* or *Méjì* (two)... accompanies each of their names either as a precede or follow ... In other words, when we see the same generic pattern both on the right and left, the signature is that of one of the *ọjú odù* to which a name *Èjì* + X = Rule or X + *Méjì* = Rule 2 will be ascribed” (W. Abímọ́lá 1977a, pp. 16 &17). This is peculiar to compound noun formation realized in all the sixteen *odù-Ifá*. The sixteen principal *Odù* are rendered in these

¹⁰ There are two divisions of *Ifá* corpora: The principal, basic or major *Ifá* corpora comprises of sixteen and 240 minor or secondary *Ifá* corpora. The minor *Ifá* corpora derived their existence from the sixteen major *Ifá* corpora. The addition or total number of major and minor *Ifá* corpora is 256.

forms: *Èjì* + *Ogbè* = *ÈjìOgbè* as in *Èjì* + X (Rule 1). This is not peculiar to *ÈjìOgbè*¹¹ alone, but, with other *Odù* that have *Èjì* ‘two’ as their prefix such as in *ÈjìO`yẹ̀*, *ÈjìO`bàrà*, *ÈjìÒdí* ‘two or double *O`yẹ̀*, *O`bàrà*, *Òdí* and so on. The noun is formed by the word that precedes or follows *O`yẹ̀`kú* + *Méjì* = *O`yẹ̀`kú Méjì* to *O`fún Méjì* as in X + *Méjì* (Rule 2). Arrangements of fifteen principal *odù-Ifá* besides *ÈjìOgbè* are listed in 7-20 below account for these rules.

7 (a)	<i>O`yẹ̀`kú Méjì</i> <i>O`yẹ̀`kú two</i>	‘Two <i>O`yẹ̀`kú</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì O`yẹ̀`kú</i> ¹² two <i>O`yẹ̀`kú</i>
8 (a)	<i>Ìwòrì Méjì</i> <i>Ìwòrì two</i>	‘Two <i>Ìwòrì</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì Ìwòrì</i> ¹³ two <i>Ìwòrì</i>
9 (a)	<i>Òdí Méjì</i> <i>Òdí two</i>	‘Two <i>Òdí</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì Òdí</i> ¹⁴ two <i>Òdí</i>
10 (a)	<i>Ìrosùn Méjì</i> <i>Ìrosùn two</i>	‘Two <i>Ìrosùn</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì Ìrosùn</i> ¹⁵ two <i>Ìrosùn</i>
11 (a)	<i>O`wọ̀`nrín Méjì</i> <i>O`wọ̀`nrín two</i>	‘Two <i>O`wọ̀`nrín</i> ’ <i>O`wọ̀`nrín</i> ¹⁶	(b)	<i>Èjì</i> two <i>O`wọ̀`n</i>
12 (a)	<i>O`bàrà Méjì</i> <i>O`bàrà two</i>	‘Two <i>O`bàrà</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì O`bàrà</i> ¹⁷ two <i>O`bàrà</i>
13 (a)	<i>O`kànràn Méjì</i> <i>O`kànràn two</i>	‘Two <i>O`kànràn</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì O`kànràn</i> ¹⁸ two <i>O`kànràn</i>
14 (a)	<i>Ògúndá Méjì</i> <i>Ògúndá two</i>	‘Two <i>Ògúndá</i> ’	(b)	<i>Èjì Ògúndá</i> ¹⁹ two <i>Ògúndá</i>

¹³ *Èjì*+ *Ogbè* = “Two *Ogbè*” W. Abímbo`lá (1977b, p. 4).

¹² *Èjì* ‘two’ + *O`yẹ̀`kú* = *ÈjìO`yẹ̀`kú* : *Oyeku Méjì* ‘two *O`yẹ̀`kú*’ as contained in (W. Abímbo`lá 1968, p. 36).

¹³ *Èjì* (two) and *Ìwòrì* = *Èjì Ìwòrì* ‘two *Ìwòrì*.’ This has a meaning equivalence with *Ìwòrì Méjì* as evinced from W. Abímbo`lá (1977b, pp. 44-5). For example, the *Ifá* corpus says:

A díá fÈjì Ìwòrì

‘cast divination for *Èjì Ìwòrì*...

¹⁴ *Èjì* ‘two’ + *Òdí* = *ÈjìÒdí*: *Òdí Méjì* ‘two *òdí*’. This is the same as *Òdí Méjì*, as contained in (W. Abímbo`lá, 1968, p. 56).

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 77

¹⁶ *Èjì* ‘two’ + *O`wọ̀`n* = *ÈjìO`wọ̀`n*: *O`wọ̀`nrín Méjì* ‘two *O`wọ̀`n*’. This is the same as *O`wọ̀`nrín Méjì*, as contained in W. Abímbo`lá (as above) *Èjì* ‘two.’

¹⁷ *O`bàrà* = *Èjì O`bàrà* ‘two *O`bàrà*.’ This has a meaning equivalence with *O`bàrà Méjì* as evinced from W. Abímbo`lá (1969, p. 63) *O`bàrà Méjì* that: For example,

Ejì O`bàrà kìn lo tà, To fì dalájé?

Ejì O`bàrà, what did you sell to become prosperous?’

(W. Abímbo`lá, 1968, p. 75).

¹⁸ *Èjì* ‘two’ and *O`kànràn* = *Èjì O`kànràn* ‘two *O`kànràn*.’ This has a meaning equivalence with *O`kànràn Méjì* as evinced from W. Abímbo`lá (1968, p. 92) that:

Èjì O`kànràn bá wa lé bi lọ nílẹ̀`yì

‘*Èjì O`kànràn* drive evil away for us in this land.

Èjì O`kànràn

‘*Ejì O`kànràn*’

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 48

15 (a) <i>Ọ̀sá Méjì</i> Two Ọ̀sá	‘Two Ọ̀sá’	(b) <i>Èjì Ọ̀sá</i> ²⁰ two Ọ̀sá
16 (a) <i>Ìká Méjì</i> Ìká two	‘Two Ìká’	(b) <i>Èjì Ìká</i> ²¹ two Ìká
17 (a) <i>Òtúúrúpo`n Méjì</i> Òtúúrúpo`n two	‘Two Òtúúrúpo`n’	(b) <i>Èjì Òtúúrúpo`n</i> ²² two Òtúúrúpo`n
18 (a) <i>Òtúá Méjì</i> Òtúá two	‘Two Òtúá’	(b) <i>Èjì Òtúá</i> ²³ two Òtúá
19 (a) <i>Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀ Méjì</i> Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀ two	‘Two Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀’	(b) <i>Èjì Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀</i> ²⁴ two Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀
20 (a) <i>Ọ̀fún Méjì</i> Ọ̀fún two	‘Two Ọ̀fún’	(b) <i>Èjì Ọ̀fún</i> ²⁵ two Ọ̀fún

(W. Abímbo`lá 1976, p. 27).

NNum (as in a) and NumN (as in b) are expressed in the names of the principal *Ifá* corpora above. Looking at the linear forms of *Odù-Ifá*, “the signature of each major divinity consists of two identical halves and this is why the name of each odu has the word ‘meji’ in it, e.g. Èjì-Ogbè (two identical Ogbè), Ọ̀yẹ̀kú-Méjì (two identical Ọ̀yẹ̀kú), etc” (O. Longe 1983, p. 25). The use of *èjì* or *méjì* in *Ifá* depends on the context of occurrence.

There are two linear forms of numerals: consonant and vowel initials (as earlier explained). The selection of one in favor of the other depends on the syntactic relationship with the head noun. For example, *èjì* ‘two’ is mostly used as pre-modifier in *Ifá*, expressed as: *a díá fún èjì* (x)²⁶ – ‘cast divination for x.’ Whereas, *méjì* ‘two’ is mostly used to refer to the sixteen major *odù-Ifá* (except for Èjìogbè: that *èjì* precedes Ogbè which takes NumN form).²⁷ Other *Ifá* major chapters are in form of NNum. In addition, *èjì* + x (NumN) will hardly be used (except

²⁰ Èjì (two) and Ọ̀sá = Èjì Ọ̀sá ‘two Ọ̀sá.’ This has a meaning equivalence with Ọ̀sá Méjì as evinced from W. Abímbo`lá (1968, p. 15) Ọ̀sá Méjì verse three that:

A díá fÉjì Ọ̀sá
‘cast divination for Èjì Ọ̀sá’

²¹ Ibid, p. 44

²² Èjì (two) and Òtúúrúpo`n = Èjì Òtúúrúpo`n ‘two Òtúúrúpo`n.’ This has a meaning equivalence with Òtúúrúpo`n Méjì as evinced from Agboólá (1989: 141), as used as Òtúúrúpo`n Méjì that:

Akítì ló fẹ̀`yìnjo erè
‘Akítì’s back resembles Cobra’
A díá fÉjì Òtúúrúpo`n
‘cast divination for Èjì Òtúúrúpo`n.’

²³ See W. Abímbo`lá (1977b, p. 40)

²⁴ Ibid, p. 76

²⁵ Èjì (two) and Ọ̀fún = Èjì Ọ̀fún ‘two Ọ̀fún.’ This has a meaning equivalence with Ọ̀fún (Ọ̀ràngún) Méjì as evinced from W. Abímbo`lá (1977b, p. 93). This is contained in Ọ̀fún Méjì verse three that:

A díá fún Ejì Ọ̀fún
‘cast divination for Ejì Ọ̀fún’
Baba ó sẹ̀`é`gun ọ̀ tá dandaandan
‘Farther will certainly-certainly overcome the enemies’

²⁶ X can be any name(s) from the *odù-Ifá*

²⁷ Èjìogbè is expressed as *Ogbè Méjì* in *Ifá* corpus.

in ÈjìOgbè) to introduce the sixteen major *Ifá* books or chapters²⁸ but x + *méjì* (NNum). This is as a result of dichotomy between numeral used as a modifier and counting.

Observation made from the linear numeral of NP in *Ifá* corpus suggests that, pre-nominal quantifiers is permissible along or in addition to post-nominal quantifiers. Such pre-nominal qualifiers can either be vowel or consonant initials: *èjì* or *méjì* depending on the context and appropriateness of use. When any of the numerals comes before the noun's head it qualifies, it either takes the form of initial bilabial nasal /m/, or vowels initials as indicated in the examples of principal *Ifá* corpora above. That is, numerals are indicated in two forms-modifier (in vowel initials) and counting (in consonant initials) such as in *Èjì* and *Méjì* 'two.' The NumN as indicated in 7b – 20b are numeral modifiers (the pro form) while NNum are counting (the variants) as indicated in 7a – 20a.

Examining *Ifá* corpora in 7 - 20 show that, there are two forms for each of the *Odù*. We have the (a) form when the head noun comes before the numeral qualifier and the (b) form when the numeral qualifier comes before the head noun. Head noun is the name of the *Ifá* corpus in each case while numeral is the qualifier. However, whether the head noun comes first or last, the name of *Ifá* corpus remains unchanged. This is contrary to the structure or sequence established in the modern Yorùbá grammar where qualifier is said to always come after the noun it qualifies.

Similar to the current observation made in Yoruba numeral qualifiers in this study is also validated while contrasting numerals interactions with nouns in European with non-European languages “where the counting numeral is **suppletive** variant of the quantifying numeral (or vice versa), ...Outside Europe, in Chinese where there are also two quite different words for 2, depending on whether one is reciting the counting sequence or expressing a proposition about some collection of two objects” (J. R. Hurford 1998, p. 5). This is also occasionally the case in the grammar of Yoruba language where counting numerals are used in places of modifying numerals or vice versa (as earlier explained).

Numerals 2 is always used when referring to *Ifá* as a deity.²⁹ The two patterns of NNoun and NNum are expressed in *Ifá* corpus. The meaning remains unchanged when the numeral is vowel or consonant initial. The misery behind the *Ifá*'s association with 2 can be unraveled by having knowledge about twins' names and beliefs of the Yoruba about it. For example, *ÈjìOgbè* corpus says, *Èjèjèjì ni mo gbè, n ò gbènikan mọ́*. 'I favour two not a single person any longer' (O. Olatunji 2005, p. 137 and W. Abimbola 1977b, p. 5). When 2 is used in *Ifá*, there may be little or no difference where numeral 2 comes before or after head noun. The meaning variation in different realizations of 2 is also limited to context of use. *Oríkì* - panegyrics of *Ìbejì* further

²⁸ A chapter in *Ifá* contains up to eight verses. See W. Abimbola (1976).

²⁹ When *odù* is refers to as human-beings

sheds more light on the different realizations of 2 in relation to meaning and *Ifá*. It is stated in *Ìbejì* panegyrics that:

21. *Ọ̀kàn n`bá bí,*
 'I would have given birth to one child,'
Èjì ló wọ́lé tọ̀ mí
 'Two children were born to me at a time.' (O. Daramola and A. Jeje 1967, p. 282)

Èjì ló wọ́lé tọ̀ mí 'Two came in to me' has the same meaning in this context with *méjì ló wọ́lé tọ̀ mí*. 'Two came in to me.' The numerical use of *Èjì* and *méjì* 'two' are related. This is because, "relatedness of form is prior to relatedness of meaning in morphology" (M. Aronoff 1976, p. 33). Differences in the two forms are that, one is vowel initial with LL tone pattern while the other is consonants with HL tone pattern. However, these variations did not influence the relationship of meaning between the two numbers in this context. This observation is not limited to Yoruba alone (as being presently canvassed in this study), because, in some languages, J. R. Hurford (1998, p. 5) writes there are cases where a counting numeral is **Phonologically similar** to the qualifying form, but **not predictable** from it by a rule applying to other forms. For example, in German, the counting numeral *eins*, '1', is similar to, but not precisely predictable from any of the qualifying forms *ein, eine, einen, eines, einer, einem*. Sometimes, the counting numeral is the same as a pro-form numeral; German *eins* happens to be identical to one of the available pro-forms for an indefinite singular noun phrase.

The current observation made in Yoruba in this study unfolds that like in German, there are contexts where counting or modifying numeral may be used as inflecting the same meaning (depending on the context or situation). This is the case when the numeral 2 is expressed as: *èjì, eéjì, èjèèjì, méjì, méjìméjì* and *méjéèjì* - 'two, two, the two and two-two.' *Èjèèjì ni mo gbè* and *méjìméjì ni mo gbè* or *èjèèjì/méjìméjì/méjéèjì ni mo fẹ́ ràn*. 'It is two-two I love' can all be contextually interpreted to mean the same.

The use of *èjì* and *méjì* (vowel or consonant initial) as pre or post-qualifier can further be explained in forms of long and short.

The new proposal about long and short forms of numeral qualifiers between *méjì* and *èjì* is similar to situations observed in some other languages like in "Hungarian, 2 is either *ket* or *ketto*. The longer is used in counting and when no quantifying noun is present (i.e. as a pro – form for an indefinite noun phrase); the shorter form is used to quantify a noun. The least idiosyncratic case of a difference counting and quantifying numerals is where a **regular process** applies to one to yield the other. For Basque, Saltarelli (1988: 252) gives both *bi* and *biga* as forms for 2" (J. R. Hurford 1998, p. 5). Relating the shorter and longer forms of quantifiers in Hungarian with Yoruba, this study proposes that, shorter form of numeral in this case is *èjì* and *méjì* as longer form. However, in Yoruba, both qualifying and counting numerals may come before or after the nouns as indicated in examples 7 – 20 (above) and 23 – 29

(below). It is the linear of numeral in relation to noun that determines the applicable numeral qualifier. This suggestion is in line with other grammatical elements in Yoruba where similar suggestion was proposed. It was suggested that pronouns³⁰ realized in shorter forms are however realized as pronominal³¹ or polymorphic nouns³² in longer forms. The implication of this opinion is that two similar words or figures can function in two contexts- long and short, depending on choice.

Morphological structures of *Odù-Ifá* names above are related to *Ìbejì*- twins' name: *Ọmọ Méjì* 'Two Children' which follows the same pattern with the major *Ifá* corpora listed in (7a-20a) above. Culturally, in Yoruba, *Ọmọ Méjì* may be singularly implied as either of the twins- *Táyéwò*³³ or *Kẹ́ hìndé*³⁴ can sometimes be referred to as *Ọmọ Méjì*-³⁵ 'two children.' Implication of singular and plural (dual) in *Ìbejì* is similar to the Hungarian, where the "word meaning "1" to assign singular to its sister noun, and for words denoting higher values to assign (dual or) plural number" (J. R. Hurford, 1998, p. 29). This is the case in Yoruba belief about *Ìbejì*, where there is dual realization in meanings of *Ọmọ Méjì* referring to one of the twins as an individual in a context and, in another context, refers to both twins as 2 individuals.

Further cultural implication of twins' name(s) is realized in the circumstance around birth; which can be explained as: *ìbí èjì/méjì* 'two birth.' The 2 circumstances in *Ìbejì*'s birth is believed to evolve from *Ifá*, because, "each of the *Odù* has a dual nature, that is a male and a female" (A. McGEE 1983, p. 100). Yorùbá is known with the highest rate of dizygotic (a male and a female non-identical twins) twinning in the world. It is established in literature that "the Yorùbá are an important ethnic group occupying Southwestern Nigeria. Mainly for genetic reasons, this very large tribe happens to present the highest dizygotic twinning rate in the world (4.4% of all maternities)" (F. Leroy, T. Ọlálẹ́ yẹ-Oruene, Gesina, G. Koeppen-Schomerus and E. Bryan, 2004, p. 11). It is clear from the above statement that Yoruba is associated with dizygotic twins in the world. The relationship of *Ifá* and dizygotic form of *Ìbejì* is kith and kin. Yoruba believe that, "takọ tabo náà ni a dá ayé àti pé kò sí ẹ̀kẹta ọmọ." "The world is created in male and female and that there is no third human sex'; believing that,

22. *O ó bí obìnrin*
'You will give birth to a female'
O ó bí ọkùnrin

³⁰ See A. Bamgbose (1967, p. 11).

³¹ Ibid

³² O. Awobuluyi says most of these nouns "have three different forms that they take when functioning as subject, object, and genitival qualifiers. The six nouns in this class always function as subjects and objects without the help of qualifiers" (1978, p. 22).

³³ First born of the twins (male or female). It metaphorically means the first of the twins that taste the world.

³⁴ The second child of the twins (male or female). 'Kẹ́hinde' metaphorically means last to arrive. There are cultural symbolisms associated with the Yoruba beliefs on the twins' names which is beyond the purview of this study.

³⁵ Either of the twins or both of them can be called by "Ọmọ méjì" or "Èjìrẹ́." That is, numeral two- 2 function here can be in singular or plural.

'You will give birth to a male'
E`keta ọmọ kò sí
 'There is no third sex of human birth.'
 (C. L. Adeoye 1985, p..348).

In twins' name: *Ìbejì*, there is also the use of numeral qualifer before the noun as in *ÈjìO`rẹ́`* 'two friends.' Twins are jointly called by the name *Èjìrẹ́`* 'two friendly.'³⁶ This also relates with the first major *Ifá* name: *ÈjìOgbè*, as indicated in 7b-20b examples above. One would expect, going by the modern Yoruba use of nominal qualifier to say *O`rẹ́` Méjì* 'two friends'; which semantically means the same. *Èjìrẹ́`* 'two friendly' and *O`rẹ́` Méjì* 'two friends' are related in meaning.³⁷ The numerals *èjì* 'two' and *méjì* 'two' are used as pre or post nominal in both *Ifá* and *Ìbejì* contexts (as earlier explained).

Morphological patterns and meaning relating to *Odù-Ifá* names, where, numeral qualifiers occur before the nouns in the examples in (7a-20a) above. Numeral qualifiers are commonly used after nouns having the same meaning with when the numeral qualifiers are used before nouns (different from *Ifá* context) as in the following examples:

23. (a) *Méjì Ọlọ́run kò sí*
 Two God NEG none
 'There are no two Gods.'
 (b) *Ọlọ́run Méjì kò sí*
 God Two NEG none
 'There are no two Gods.'
24. (a) *Mẹ́ta/Èta ọmọ kò sí*
 Three child NEG none
 'There is no Three/third sex.'
 (b) *Ọmọ Mẹ́ta kò sí*
 Child Three NEG none
 'There is no three Children.'
25. (a) *Méjì iṣu ni mo tà*
 Two yam FOC I sell
 'I sold two yams.'
 (b) *Iṣu méjì ni mo tà*
 Yam two FOC I sell
 'It is two yams I sold.'
26. (a) *Mẹ́rin ọmọ ni ó lọ*
 Four child FOC- that go
 'Two children went.'
 (b) *Ọmọ mẹ́rin ni ó lọ*
 Child four FOC that go
 'It is four children that went.'
27. (a) *O`kan obìnrin- ni mo fẹ́*

³⁶ *Ìbejì* are known as *Ejìrẹ́`*. This is established in their *oríkì* - panegyrics:

...*Èjìrẹ́` O`kín ará Ìṣokùn*
 '*Èjìrẹ́` O`kín* the native of *Ìṣokùn*...'
Bí Táyélolú ti nlo ní iwájú
 'As *Táyélolú* goes in front'
Bẹ́`ẹ̀ ní Kẹ́ hìndé ní pẹ̀ lẹ̀ pẹ̀ lẹ̀ bọ̀ lẹ̀ hìn
 'so *Kẹ́ hìndé* follows gently...'
Ọmọkẹ́ hìndé l'ẹ̀ gbọ́ n Èjìrẹ́`
 '*Ọmọkẹ́ hìndé* is the senior of *Èjìrẹ́`*'

(O. Daramọ́ lá and A. Jéjé 1967, p. 282)

³⁷ As established that two individuals cannot walk together, unless, they are friends (compatible).

- One woman FOC I marry
'I married one woman'
- (b) Obìnrin kan__ ni__ mo fẹ́.
Woman one__FOC__ I marry
'I married one woman.'
28. (a) Mẹ́ rin ilé__ ni mo kọ́
Four house FOC I build
'I built four houses.'
- (b) Mo kọ́__ Ilé__ mẹ́ rin.
I build house four
'I built four houses.'
29. (a) Méjì eyẹ__ kì í__ jẹ́__ àsá
Two bird NEG bear hawk
'No two birds bear the name of hawk'
- (b) Eyẹ méjì__ kì í__ jẹ́__ àsá
Bird two NEG bear hawk
'No two birds bear the name of hawk'

Grammaticality of NumN in syntactic layer of NP being proposed by this study are expressed in the examples above. Looking at the examples in 23b - 29b, one would notice that, it follows NounN which are commonly used forms in modern Yorùbá. One could also observe similarities in meanings in-between examples 23a and b - 29a and b above.

Indeed O. Awóbùlúyì had suspected (without research validation) that "àfàimọ̀ bí kò bá ñ ẹ iwájú ni gbogbo ọ̀ rọ̀ ̀ aṣon`kà máa ñ wà tẹ́ lẹ́` nínú èdè Yoruba." 'It is doubtful if the ancient Yoruba numerals are not confined to the front' (2001, p. 13). On the one hand, the suspicion that numerals precede nouns was only referenced from Okè-Agbè dialect³⁸ by Awóbùlúyì and not from standard Yoruba,³⁹ and on the other hand, his suspicion was too sacrosanct and general- that the ancient use of numeral might be confined to NumN without observing concurrent use with NNum. That is, he did not state or examine around modifying and counting contexts of Yoruba numerals on the one hand and on the other hand fails (as it wasn't within the scope of his study) to examine pre and post modifiers across the dialects of Yoruba and in other languages as undertaken by this study. He however, suggests that the idea be subjected to thorough future research to establish the acceptability or otherwise of such words in Yoruba.

³⁸ One of the Yoruba dialects in Ondo State of Nigeria.

³⁹

Òkèàgbè Dialect	Standard Yorùbá
<i>ikán ináirà</i>	<i>náirà kan</i>
'one naira'	'naira one' 'one naira'
<i>Ìyí ináirà</i>	<i>náirà méjì</i>
'two naira'	naira two 'two naira'
<i>ida ináirà</i>	<i>náirà mẹ́ ta</i>
Three naira	naira three 'three naira'
<i>Ugbọ̀ọ̀ ináirà</i>	<i>náirà ogún</i>
Twenty naira	naira ogún 'twenty naira'
<i>omgbà ináirà</i>	<i>náirà ogbọ̀`n</i>
thirty naira	<i>náirà ogbọ̀`n</i> 'thirty naira' (O. Awóbùlúyì 2001, p. 14)

The use of Yoruba numeral qualifiers in proverbs are suffices. Proverbs are linguistic trace elements, because, it is an indigenous “bank or ware house”, wherein cultural values are stored, accessed and explored for good living. That is, proverbs are societal and generational. The use of some numbers before the nouns they qualify can equally be referenced from Yorùbá proverbs, which are societal words or statements of wisdom by which some problems are resolved and also being used as guiding principles of life. That is, like *Ifá* corpora, proverbs preserve language use including NumN as coded in the definition of proverb by the Yoruba in relation to *Ifá* that:

30. *Òwe leṣin ọ̀ rọ̀`*
 ‘Proverb is horse for words,’
ọ̀ rọ̀` leṣin òwe
 ‘Words are horses for proverbs,’
Bí ọ̀ rọ̀` bá sọ̀nù
 ‘If words are lost’
òwe la fí wá a
 ‘Proverb is used to trace for it.’
Ọ̀ rọ̀` ló sọ̀nù mọ́ ọ̀lọ́ rọ̀` lọ́ wọ́`
 ‘It is when words are lost with the user,’
tó fí mú eéjì adìbò
 ‘that S/he takes along two for lots cast,’
kún eẹ́ ta itẹ́ ní, tó gboko awo lọ
 ‘With three for mart spreading, by consulting divination.’
 (O. Okewande 2017, p. 187).

Reliability and inseparability of *Ifá* corpus and proverb is demonstrated in the definition of proverb above. Occurrences of numeral modifiers: *eéjì adìbò*- ‘two for lots’ and *eẹ́ ta itẹ́ ní*⁴⁰- ‘three for mart spread’ are shown in the above *Ifá* corpus in relation to definition of proverb are fixed as NumN. This is why numerals: 2 and 3 as used above cannot be used as NNum with the same meaning with when used as NumN. Further use of NumN as preserved in proverbs are:

31. (a) *Ogún omọ́dẹ̀ kò lẹ̀ ṣeré fógún ọ́dún*
 ‘Twenty children cannot play for twenty years.’
 (b) *Òrìṣà jẹ́ n pé méjì obìnrin kò sí*

⁴⁰ See W. Abímọ́ lá (1968, p. 32), in *Ọ̀ yẹ́ kú Méjì*. The corpus explains these symbols as *Ifá* pre-divination fees as prescribed by the *Ifá* corpus that:

Eéjì: èrù tí ìbò ifá ó gbà.

‘Two: for lots is received from client by *Ifá* priest.’

Èyí jẹ́ ara owó tí babaláwo n gbà gẹ́ gẹ́ bí erù.

‘This is part of offering that *babalawo* receives as gift.’

Eẹta itẹ́ ní ni owó tí babaláwo ó gbà, kó tóó tẹ́ ní láti dá Ifá

‘Three: for mart spreading is money that *babalawo* receives before he spreads mat to perform divination.’

The sum total of these symbols is five (5).

'There is no woman that pleads to have a rival by a deity.'

(c) *Ogún poro, ogbò `n akùdé, ojú kan náà niǵá sí*

'twenty full ridges, thirty half ridges, they all end on the same lines of ridges.'

(d) *Ìṣonu ogbò `n ààwẹ `*

'a controversial thirty fasting.

(e) *Ọ `kan (ṣoṣo) Àràbà tí í migbó kìjìkìjì*

'Only one Elephant that shakes forest mightily.'

In proverbs a - m above, numeral qualifiers come before their nouns. That is, numerals are used as modifiers. This is also the case in *Ifá's Òdí Ìrẹtẹ `* corpus (in author's translation) states that:

32. *Irinwó efo `n; egbẹ `rin ìwo*

'Four hundred buffalo; eight hundred horns.'

Ogún Filani; ojù kùmọ `

'Twenty Fúlàní tribesman, Forty clubs.'

Ọ `kànlénú tápà; igba bààmú

'Two hundred and one Tapa tribesman two hundred *baamu* facial marks'

Ọ̀jì ìmọ `le; ọ `riin bàtà

'Fourty Muslims; eighty shoes' (A. Sàlámi 2002, p. 199).

Numerals modifiers in *Ifá* corpus as used in examples 32 are in vowel initials. Even if the numerals are used after their nouns, their meanings remain unchanged with when used before the nouns. In addition, numeral qualifiers and counting numerals can co-occur in the same discourse as expressed in *Ifá* corpus (in 33a) below that:

33. (a) *wọ `n ní kó rú igba ataare kó lè ba à pé igba ọdún*

'he was asked to sacrifice 200 alligator pepper so that he can live for 200 years'

Ọ `rúnmilà rú igba ataare, ó sì pé igba ọdún.

'He did and lived for 200 years...'

Ọ `rúnmilà wá wípé `ẹ ò rípé, IGBA ỌDÚN, ỌDÚN KAN NI...

'Ọ `rúnmilà said 'don't you see that 200 YEARS IS EQUAL TO ONE YEAR'

(Ògúndá Méjì in author's translation, A. Agboolá 2012, p. 59).

In *Ifá* corpus, both pre and post-numeral qualifiers are grammatically permissible with or without meaning variations as in examples 33. Examples of NumN are expressed in *ÈjìOgbè* corpus in 34 that:

34 (a) *Mo digba òrìṣà*

'I became two hundred òrìṣà'

Ng ò kú mọ `

'I cannot die again'

Mo digba òkè

'I became 200 mountains'

Mo le gboingboin

'I am immovable' (W. Abímbo `lá 1977b, p. 101)

(b) *fifẹ ` Ọlọ `run ju igba èniyàn lọ*

'The love of God transcends that of hundreds human beings'

(in author's translation, Ọ `wọ `nrín Ògúndá, A. Salami 2002, p. 300).

(c) *Ọ `kàn-lé-ní-rinwó irúnmọlẹ `*

'401 Divinities'

(d) *E `n `dínlógún Oródù*

'16 Oródù' (C. L. Adéoyè 1985, p. 31).

Furthermore, it is observed in this study that, *Ifá* oracular divination symbols are exclusively expressed as pre-modifiers in examples 35, numerals are modifiers before nouns' heads.⁴¹

- 35 (a) *Oókan ìfidan*
'One ìfidan'
(b) *Èjì rete*
'Two rete'
(c) *È ta Ògúndá*
'Three Ògúndá'
(d) *È rin Ọ ra*
'Four Ọ ra'
(e) *Àrún Ọ `sìn*
'Five Ọ `sìn' (O. Akanmu 2017a, p. 157).

Examples in 35, numerals are rarely used after their nouns, contrary to this will result to meaning shift or meaningless expressions. This is informed by the fact that the numerals are modifiers rather than counting numerals.

Likewise, some Yoruba *ọfọ`*- incantations exhibit pre-numerals qualifiers. The syntactic layers of NP don't permit an interchange⁴² as indicated in:

36. (a) *Igba eșinsin kì í dènà dowọ`*
'two hundred house flies cannot overcome broom'
(b) *...Igba ataare níjẹ*
it eats 200 alligator pepper
(c) *Igba obì níjẹ*
'it eats 200 cola-nut' (M. A. Fábùnmi 1972, p. 27)
(d) *ọwọ` kan⁴³ ní Adán fì ì rọgba igi*
'A bat with one wing can clip to two hundred trees.'
(e) *Ìyàmi Ọ̀sòròn` gá*
'Ìyàmi Ọ̀sòròn` gá,'
arógba așọ mọ` balẹ`
'One with 200 wrapped cloths that did not cover the body'
(M. A. Fábùnmi 1972, p. 1).

Examples in 36, if the numerals are used after their nouns there is no difference when numerals are used before their nouns: *igba eșinsin* or *eșinsin igba* '200 house fliers', *igba obì* or *obì igba* '200 cola-nuts', *igba igi* or *igi igba* '200 trees' and *igba așọ* or *așọ igba* '200 cloths.' However, eventhough, post numeral qualifiers are meaningful, they are rarely used outside of pre-nominal context.

⁴¹ See 30 for the divisions and functions of these symbols.

⁴² *Ọfọ`* is, "like applying a tested true principle of science and effecting the same result year in year out" (T. M. Ilésanmí: 2004, pp. 38-9). Therefore, the language elements, including the linear arrangements must not be varied in Yoruba incantation discourse. This is why *ọfọ`* is described as statements "loaded with *ni-* and *kii-* constructions...we suggest that the link has to do with the exceptionless nature of the *ni-* and *kii-* constructions" (B. Ajayi 1995, p. 302).

⁴³ *Ọwọ` kan* + × is used in various Yoruba contexts encoding various meanings according to the context as exemplified in 6a and b. For example, *ọwọ` kan ibò*, *ọwọ` kan ișu*, *ọwọ` kan obì*, all have different numbers associated with it in that context of use.

Yorùbá counting system can further validate the validity of pre and post numeral modifiers with examples below:

37. a (i) *Ọ̀kẹ́ kan*
 Ọ̀kẹ́ one
 'Twenty thousand'
 (ii) *Ọ̀kẹ́ méjì*
 Ọ̀kẹ́ two
 'Forty thousand'

The numerical qualifiers in 37a are counting numerals that mostly occur after their nouns. For example, B. Adekeye notes in Yoruba counting system that “*ọ̀kẹ́* counts continue like this in Yorùbá. Nevertheless, when the counting gets to multiplication by twenty (*ogún*), the pronunciation changes such that the multiplier is pronounced first to make the pronunciation euphonic or sweet and smooth” (2017, p. 739). In the opinion of Adekeye, reasons behind change from pre to post numeral (or vice versa) in counting system is to create smoothness and produce sweet pronunciation.

Contrary to this suggestion it is observed by this study that change arise as a result of numerals performing modifiers functions rather than counting as in examples 37b below:

- b (i) *Ogún ọ̀kẹ́*
 Twenty ọ̀kẹ́
 'Four hundred thousand'
 (ii) *Ogbọ̀ n ọ̀kẹ́*
 Thirty ọ̀kẹ́
 'Six hundred thousand'

Form of Yorùbá counting system where numerals are realized as modifying numbers come before their nouns as in examples 37b. Likewise, the counting numerals are realized as numerals occurring after the nouns as indicated in examples 37c below:

- c (i) *Ọ̀dún kan*
 Year one
 'One year'
 (ii) *Ọ̀dún méjì*
 Year two
 'Two years'

What we have in the examples above is NNum. That is, the numerals occur as post-nominal items. Again, opposite is the case in examples 37d because, numerals are qualifiers rather than counting numerals.

- d (i) *Ogún ọ̀dún*
 Twenty years
 'Twenty years'
 (ii) *Ogbọ̀ n ọ̀dún*
 Thirty year
 'Thirty year'

Furthermore, ancient Yoruba monthly counting system is strictly restricted to the use of NumN as stated in C. L. Adeoye (1979, pp. 69-70). Yoruba monthly counting system follow NumN as in:

- e (i) *E`tàlá Ọdún* ‘December’
‘thirteenth year’
- (ii) *Èjílá Ọdún* ‘January’
‘Twelfth year’
- (iii) *Ọ`kànlá Ọdún* ‘February’
‘Eleventh year’
- (iv) *È`wá/È`kọ Ọdún* ‘March’
‘Tenth year’
- (v) *È`sán Ọdún/Àlémú Agà* ‘April’
‘Ninth year’
- (vi) *E`jọ Ọdún* ‘May’
‘Eighth year’
- (vii) *Èje Ọdún* ‘June’
‘Seventh year’
- (viii) *E`fà Ọdún* ‘July’
‘Sixth year’
- (ix) *Àrún Ọdún* ‘August’
‘Fifth year’
- (x) *È`rindún Ọdún* ‘September’
‘Fourth year’
- (xi) *È`ta Ọdún* ‘October’
‘Third year’
- (xii) *Èjì Ọdún* ‘November’
‘Second year’

T. A. A. Ladélé, O. Mustapha, I. Aworinde, O. Oyerinde and O. Ọladapọ (1986, p. 312).

In the 37e examples, the linear nominal items positions are fixed. The modifiers always come before the nouns they modify. Linear change in the above examples result to change in meaning. For example, *E`tàlá Ọdún* ‘December’ to *Ọdún E`tàlá* ‘thirteen years’ results to meaning shift: from month to year’s contexts. Fixed form of NumN is not limited to monthly calendar alone but are expressed in other contexts. For example, triplet is referred to as *ẹ`ta òkò*. In this situation, number is never expressed post-nominally. That is, a change in the linear of NumN to NNum results to inappropriate or meaningless expression.

With different realizations of NNum and NumN presented above, there is need to examine non-numeral modifiers to buttress proposal of this study with situations where “numeral-noun order is directly compared with adjective-noun order” (J. R. Hurford 1998, p. 15) as in the examples below:

38. (a) *Ahẹrẹrẹ iná ní jógbó*
‘An inferno consumes bush’
Ahẹrẹrẹ òjò nítú ìlú
‘A heavy rain with storm renders a town desolate’
(Irosun corpus: I. O. Ọdẹgbola 2014, p. 252)
- (b) *Ọgbó ịsu ní í múyán*
‘Very ripped yam is good for pounded yam’
Ọgbó ojú ọ`nà ní jin kòtò
‘Very old road is known by pot holes’
(Ìwòrì corpus, verse 1: I. O. Ọdẹgbola 2014, p. 164).

(Ògúndá corpus: I. O. Ọ̀dẹ̀gbola 2014, p. 409).

One can also have *bèbè idí* - edge of the bottom, *bèbè omi/odò* - bank of a river. This is close with:

- (c) *Bèbè ihín, bèbè ọ̀ hún,*
 ‘Edge here, edge there.’
A dífá ún Olóbùró
 ‘Cast divination for Olóbùró’
 (Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀ corpus: I. O. Ọ̀dẹ̀gbola 2014, p. 657).
- (d) *Gbòn gbò ọ̀ nà jẹ́ kí ẹ̀lẹ́ sẹ́ ọ̀ rìn*
 ‘Open root of a tree along the way, let the one that treks walks’
Gbogbo ayé kọ́ ló rówó rẹ̀şin.
 ‘Not everybody has money to buy a Horse.’
 (Òtúá corpus: I. O. Ọ̀dẹ̀gbola 2014, p. 613).
- (e) *Ajádù Ìgèrè, Agbọ̀ n jádù ọ̀ dì aláa*
 ‘Bottomless net, a basket without bottom becomes compromised’
 (Ògúndá corpus: I. O. Ọ̀dẹ̀gbola 2014, P. 416).

In addition, there are some NP_s that qualifiers come before their nouns as in:

- 39 (a) *kàinkànìn işu*
 ‘dried yam rope’
 (b) *è yìn òkú*
 ‘period after death of deceased.’
 (c) *apó ọ̀dẹ̀*
 ‘hunter’s sheath’
 (d) *ipa odò*
 ‘river path-way’
 (e) *ẹ̀gbọ̀ rọ̀ Màálù*
 ‘big Cow’
 (f) *àgbá àgùntàn*
 ‘big sheep’

It is observed from the pre-nominal qualifiers from above examples in 38 and 39 above that, positions of pre-modifier nouns are fixed to produce any cultural meaning. In a similar situation, O. Awobuluyi is of the opinion that one can also account for cases of non-numeral pre-nominal qualifiers to establish that, the possibility of NumN is extended beyond numeral qualifiers in Yoruba. Among the common words he exemplified is “gbígboná àkàrà” ‘hot àkàrà’⁴⁴ (2001, p. 14). This is in addition to his suggestion earlier examined on the possibility of pre modifiers in Yoruba.

In examples 31, some nominal (numeral) quantifiers have been used in proverbs. This section gives some examples of non-numeral qualifiers to establish that Yoruba gives preference to the use of pre-nominal qualifiers. Yorùbá proverbs are philosophical statements rendered orally from one generation to another.

Non-numeral pre-modifiers are rendered within the syntactic layers of NP in Yoruba as in examples below:

- 40 (a) *ẹ̀ tẹ́ awo ni ẹ̀ tẹ́ ọ̀ gbẹ̀ rì*

⁴⁴ Yoruba indigenous cake.

- ‘The disgrace of *Ifá* priest is the disgrace of *Ifá* client’
 (b) *àtárí Ajànakú kì í şerù omòdé*
 ‘An Elephant’s head is beyond what a child can carry.’
 (c) *ẹ̀ yìn Ìgbín làá fikarahun hò ikòkò*
 ‘It is after the death of a snail the shell can be used to clean a pot’
 (d) *È má gbingi oró nítorí ẹ̀ yìn ọ̀ la*
 ‘Do not do evil because of tomorrow’s repercussion.’
 (e) *È`gbin omi kì í pààyàn*
 ‘Contaminated water can’t kill one’
 (J. S. Olaoye 2012, pp. 71-2).

Sometimes, numeral qualifiers may be in form of metaphor. For example, *ibi omò* ‘placenta’ can be metaphorically expressed as *ikejì/èkeji omò* ‘second to the child.’ Likewise, in this situation the linear order of NumN cannot be varied without meaning variation. Meaning that, unlike in other contexts, genres or texts where the nouns as qualifiers can be heads and sometimes nouns head can be qualifiers, the linear of qualifiers and nouns in proverbs, just like *ọfọ̀*, may sometimes not be varied or interchangeably used; even when they are meaningful when used otherwise. In proverbs or incantation context, where the use of numeral modifier is sacrosanct, it is because “the connotations of proverbs are ‘fixed’, a manner of encoding them different from original denotations may alter their importance or significance somewhat- either by increasing it or by detracting from it” (T. Olorunṭoba-Oju 1998, p. 82). Connotations of qualifiers are sometimes fixed in proverbs and incantation contexts. Modifiers before or after the nouns head sometimes cannot be varied in proverbs and incantations, an attempt to do otherwise may result to a rape of culture and meaning deviation or variation.

Conclusion

This study on the one hand establishes that, like OV and VO languages, Yoruba operates pre and post numeral qualifiers within the syntactic structure of NP. The study demonstrates cases, where numerals are never used after nouns contrary to the claims in the literature that nominal qualifiers must always occur as post nominal items within the syntactic layer of the NP. This is validated by instances where the linear forms of pre-nominal numerals are fixed. That is, there are cases where, linear of NumN are fixed; in those cases, if NNum are used, they result to inflectional or shift in meaning or meaningless expressions. On the other hand, meanings remain unchanged in some cases where numerals occur before or after nouns as indicated and evinced from names of principal *Ifá* corpora, *Ìbejì* compound names and in other contexts.

Likewise, there are instances where there is no inflectional meaning or variation when the numeral is used as head or vice-versa. This study concludes that the rule and meaning guiding numeral qualifiers in Yoruba is not static. This reflection is influenced and guided by *Ifá* where, “the language of *ẹsẹ Ifá* is therefore not static at all” (W. Abimbọla 1976, p. 63). The

non-static nature of *Ifá* language is inflected on numeral qualifiers; where the language permits concurrent and/or exclusive use of NumN and NNum across various discourse or contexts.

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