The Challenge of Syntactic Categories: Focus on the Yorùbá Language

Ọlásopé Oyèláràn and Ọládiípọ̀ Ajíbóyè
Kalamazoo College and University of Lagos

1. Introduction

The Yorùbá language allows us to raise questions about the universal analytical validity of lexical categories, which the study of languages whose antecedent can be traced to an Indo-European origin, has given a canonical status for any explanatory account of languages, at all levels of analysis. Happily, the increasing appreciation of the role of the interfaces of levels of linguistic analysis appears to be coming to the rescue. In spite of this bold assertion, our present study, "The Challenge of Syntactic Categories," suggests no more than a footnote to more felicitous formal propositions about linguistic interfaces and, therefore to instructive formalizations and modus explicandi.

The data we have examined and exemplified in what follows lead us to assign a dominating status and scope to the Predicate in the syntactic analysis of the Yorùbá language. Our analysis argues for a diminished emphasis on traditional categories such as the verb, the noun, and, definitely, adnominals like adjectives, as well as the other deictics.

We by no means deny that adnominals and deictics have syntactic functions in languages; but our data suggests rather that such functions as they may be conventionally assigned are subordinated to Predication in the Yorùbá language. This makes Yorùbá an eminently process and event oriented language in which users generate, as a matter of course, and in full stream of speech, complex structures which function syntactically as Predicate. Nuclear lexical format formatives that may function syntactically as Predicate collocate into complex predicates and also function productively in the derivation of other formatives assignable to traditional or so-called "canonical lexical categories."

The data we examined suggest that it is futile and inadequate to seek, for Yorùbá, a taxonomic apprehension of atomic lexical units that may function as Predicate in the language. To insist on doing so would lead to the proposition that language emerges in humans as a result of memorization of an infinite array of linguistic units and, thereby, deny generative productivity of the faculty of language.

The data we present provide a bird's eye view of the characterization of elements that may function as predicate. It is obvious that that we draw heavily on meticulous analyses and studies by many scholars, including Ayọ̀ Bámgbósé, Ọládélé Awobuluyi, Yiwola Awoyale, Victor Manfredi as well as earlier scholars.[1] We have organized the data under three subheads, each bringing distinct

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[1] The late Chief Isaac O. Delano's invaluable two bound volumes of *Yoruba Monosyllabic Verbs,* which he put into the hands of Ọlásopé Oyèláràn soon after he joined him in the, then, Institute of African Studies, University of Ifẹ̀ in 1970 launched Oyèláràn in his inquiry about the Predicate in Yorùbá. Both volumes enumerated fewer than two-hundred lexical items purportedly as the exhaustive inventory of predicative types at the disposal of speakers of that language in its vaunted creative suppleness. What, Oyèláràn asked himself, happened in the language to the formal categories subsumed under tags such as Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, and the remaining unnamable remnants? Perhaps, advances in linguistics now offer us some comfort. Thanks to the audience at 2012 ACAL conference for their comments and useful suggestions. We hope that colleagues will continue to teach us to know better.

arguments to support the status of the Predicate in Yorùbá, an African language. The study is organized as follows: Section 2 takes a look at some "protean" predicative types in Yorùbá, which scholars have sought to pigeonhole into a variety of canonical lexical categories, while Section 3 focuses on the syntactic category Predicate. Section 3 demonstrates that the Predicate may be realized as a monomoraic, unanalyzable formative, a morphologically complex formative, or a collocation of such formatives. Furthermore, predicate names of persons and things, and derived substantives support this apprehension of predication in the language, and mark Yorùbá as a process prominent language in which "canonical" lexical categories play a minor role.

2. Some Protean Predicative Types in Yorùbá

By "protean predicative type" we refer to a number of mostly monomoraic formatives that appear to have variants with the potentiality of changing meaning depending on contexts of usage. Their apparent contextual change of meaning has led to a misapprehension of their plausible syntactic function. Consider the following illustrative examples.

(1)   **ti**[2][M] àtijọ́   **'of/from days past'**
        ti   'to strike/beat, as for kettle drum; strike heavily with the palm of the hand as in [ti ní àbàrá] "beat **him with palm"**'
        ti   'peel carefully and painstakingly'[3]
        ti   'ablative formative [from a conceptual temporal or spatial point of departure]:
               A-tinú-kẹ   'one cared for from the womb [inú]'
               à-tijọ́   **'of/from days past'**
        ti   (relational formative): ti ìrẹ; ti èmi 'that of you [your own]; that of me [my own]

(2)   **nì** [L]   Emi nì [L]?
                INTERROGATIVE [Sentential] FOCUS [ASSERTIVE]
                What is it? /What is the matter?
                Èyí un nì.
                that yonder/of reference [FOC] it is
                'It is that one'
                cf.:   bí [Interrogative]: Ìwọ ni bí? Could it be you?
                àbí [Interrogative: Àbí ìwọ ni? Is it in fact you?

(3)   a.   **ni** [M] (v IMPACT)
                nilára [impact affectively/privatively"] make uncomfortable]
                cf.: *pa*lára   'to harm'
                *dá*lára   'deprive [in order to hurt]'
                *mó*lára   'become used to'
        b.   **ni**[M] [EQUATIVE/IDENTIFIER/FOCUS] Predicator
                i.   Ọ̀gá ni Fẹmuwe; 'Fẹmuwẹ̀ is Master;' but   Fẹmuwe ni ọgá 'Fẹmuwẹ̀ IS THE master/boss.'
                ii.   Ọ̀gá ni t$_i$ 'He is Master [trace]' where t may NOT be generic, as 'master;' *Fẹmuwe ni t$_i$ where t is generic.
                iii.   Ọ̀gá ni ín   'He is Master'   *Fẹmuwẹ̀ ni ín
                iv.   Ọ̀gá ni ọ́ 'You are a master' *Fẹmuwe ni ọ́
                v.   Ọ̀gá ni wọ́n   'They are master' *Fẹmuwe ni wọ́n
        c.   **ni** [M] (OWN EXLCUSIVELY)
                i.   Fẹmuwẹ̀ ní ó **ni** [M] ajá méjì.   It is F. who owns the two dogs DISTINCT FROM
                ii.   Fẹmuwẹ̀ ní ó **ní** [H] ajá méji   It is F. who has two dogs. See (4) and (5) below, adapted from Manfredi (2011)

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[2] In this study we will exclude much that undoubtedly bear on the discussion of the units and categories examined. One such excluded unit is *tí* that introduces the CP as In *Alàyé tí a ṣe*, "Explanation [CP which we make."
[3] cf.'te' Mọ̀bà according to Ọládiipọ̀ Ajíbóyè.

(4) a.   Ta ni [b] {ó ní [c]ajá}?   *talólájá* MHHH
          WH COP 3S.T have dog
          'Who has   a dog/is a   dog-owner?'
     b.   Ta ni [b] {ó ní [H] ẹsẹ̀}?   *talólẹ́sẹ́è* MHH**H**L
          WH COP 3S.T have leg '
          Who   has   a   leg?' (48)
(5) a.   Ta ni [b] {ón‹í›[H]ajá}?   *talólajá* MH**M**H
          WH COP 3S.T have dog
          'Who is the owner of the dog in question?'
     b   Ta ni [b] [ó n‹í› [H] ẹsẹ̀]?   *talólẹsè* MH**M**L
          WH COP 3S.T have le
          'Who is the owner of the leg in question?' (Manfredi 2011: 17, 72&73)

It is important that, with all the data above, we are dealing with Predication. Now consider (6) and (7) (a):

(6) **Predicate ní** [H]
               Predicate (enhance the efficacy of)
               nílóhùn [ní mi níLOC ohùn VOICE] Add to my voice/Support me
               nílọ́wọ́   [ní mi níLOC ọwọ́ HAND] Give me a hand
(7) **Predicate ní** [H]
     a.   (be in custody of; have as attribute; be identified with)
          Adé lọ́wọ̀ [Adé ní ọ̀wọ̀]
          Adè has awe/Adé is worthy of reverence.[4]
     b.   But cf. Manfredi (2011; 17)

According to him, the presumed underlying oní[H] in (9) (a) and (b) miraculously surface as olòsì[L], and olò[L]wò

(8) a.   oní-   ẹ̀pà
          possessor peanut   [ẹlẹ́pà MHL]
          'owner/seller of peanuts'
     b.   oní-   ọ̀wọ̀
          possessor respect   [olọ́wọ̀ MHL]
          'respected person'
(9) a.   on‹í›-   òsì
          possessor destitution   [olòsì   MLL]
          'pauper
     b.   on‹í›-   ọ̀wọ̀
          possessor respect   [olò̀wọ̀ MLL]
          'respected thing'
          (Manfredi 2011: 17, (74 & 75)
(10) **Predicate ní[H] (Assert)**
          Fẹmuwẹ̀ é ládé lọ́wọ̀[5]   <   Fẹmuwẹ̀ é ní adé ní ọ̀wọ̀
          'Fẹmuwẹ̀ says/claims Adé has awe.'
(11) **Ní[H] Means/Instrument/Respect**
     a.   Fẹmuwẹ̀ kàn mí **lẹ́sẹ̀è** [ní[H] èsẹ́]
          F. hit me by means of/with clenched fist

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[4] See (3(b(ii) above
[5] **Regional Variation, from Central , Eastern and Rẹmọ registers, respectively**
     (i)   a.   wí (hàn)   'to say (show)'
            b.   fọ̀   'to voice'
            c.   Empty phonetically, unrealized pre-complement predicate of assertion as in Odè
                 Rẹ́mọ (K. Noel Amherd 2010):
     (ii). Wọ́n __ kí wọn rúbọ "They said they should perform sacrifice" (143)
            Wọ́n __ Pòrògún máa rúbọ. "They said that Pòrògún 'botanical term' should offer sacrifice."
                 (127)

b.   Fẹmuwẹ̀ kàn mí **lẹ́sẹ̀**. [ní[H] ẹsẹ̀]
           F. hit me in the foot/hit my bad foot.

This usage gives rise to the so-called "double accusative" in many languages, as in the American English "My opponent threw me a curve ball."

(12)   **Ní[H] Deictics**   [LOCATIVE]
        a.   SPACE: ní**[H]** Nàìjá "In Nigeria."
        b.   TIME: níjẹta [ní**[H]** ìjẹta] "two days ago" [Yoruba counts inclusive, with the day of speech as day one]

In summary, all of the instances of ti (**M**) in (1), and of ní (H) in (7) are not homonyms. In particular, the instances of **ní** (H) in (7) are NOT, collectively or individually, phonological variants of the **ni** (M) in (3.) Looking particularly at the case for "**ni** [M] (own exclusively)" (32c), there are grounds to show that the following, from Manfredi (2011: 17 (75(a)) same as (8) above, repeated here as (13), is fiction.

(13)   a.   on‹í›-òsì   >   *olòsì* MLL
                 possessor destitution
                 'pauper
    c.   on‹í›-ọ̀wọ̀   >   *ọlọ̀wọ̀* MLL
                 possessor respect
                 'respected thing'

As earlier mentioned, Manfredi invokes a "de-accenting" process, which appears to be insufficiently well motivated. To see this, consider instead (14), (15), and (16).

(14)   a.   ọni/ẹni (M) òsì >   *olòsì*
                 'pauper'

The output in the above results from normal deletion, dissimilation, and vowel harmony processes in the language, without fictional recourse to deaccenting.

        b.   ọni/ẹni (M) ọ̀tẹ̀ >   *ọlọ̀tẹ̀*
                 person   intrigue   'Intrigue maker/a mischievous person'
        c.   ẹni (M) Èṣù   >   *elÈṣù*
                 person Èṣù   'an evil doer'[6]
(15)   a.   ọní (H) ọ̀tẹ̀   *ọlọ́tẹ̀,*
                 one involved in a plot, even if not intrinsically mischievous
        b.   ọní (H) Èṣù   *elÉṣù*
                 one possessed of Èṣù; devotee(s) of Èṣù[7]

Also consider the following pairs, suggesting a somewhat productive process:

(16)   a.   Olùyà <   ọni-ùyà   'person prone to punishment'
        b.   Elèpè <   ẹni-èpè [elépè]   person susceptible to curses
        c.   Ẹlẹgẹ́ <   *ẹni-ẹgẹ́ *oní-gẹ́/ń-gẹ́ (?)
                 'person susceptible to adverse response; a thin skinned person'

Awobuluyi (2008: **#1.4.3 Oní**) appears to support our suggestion above that 3 (c.) **ni (M)** by no means commutes paradigmatically with any **ní (H)**. He writes:

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[6] This is strictly with Judaeo Christian connotation. Èṣù of the Yorùbá tradition is by no means evil (see Oyèláràn, forthcoming)

[7] Such is the family from the city of Ọ̀yọ́ that used to regal the Oyèláràn family when he was growing up. The devotees of Èṣù are also known for the divinatory system Ẹẹ́rìdínlógún, identified with the divinity. See William Bascom. *Sixteen Cowries* (Bloomington & Indianapolis. 1980)

#1.4.3 Oní

Oríṣí àfòmọ́wájú méjì ni ó máa ń ṣe pàsí-pààrọ̀ ara wọn níwájú **{ní}** nínú wúnrẹ̀n **yìí.** Àwọn ni {o-} àti {ò-}, bí wọ́n ṣe hàn nínú:

{o-} ni-ẹyẹ	>	ẹlẹyẹ
{ò-} ni-ilẹ̀	>	ònilẹ̀

Ìtúmọ̀ 'ẹni' ni **{o-} àti {ò-}** jọ ní, ṣùgbọn mọ́fíìmù ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀tọ̀ ni wọ́n, nítorí pé a ò rí àlàyé ṣe nípa ìrísí wọn tí ó yàtọ̀ síra. Ọ̀rọ̀-iṣe paraku ni **{ni}**. 'ìní' sì ni ìtúmọ̀ rẹ̀, bí a ṣe rí i nínú: Ta ló **ni** ọkọ náà?

Two types of prefixes commute before the initial consonant of {ni} in the following formatives. The affixes are {o-} and {ò-}, as they cocur in:

{o-} ni-ẹyẹ   >   ẹlẹyẹ
person own birds
{ò-} ni-ilẹ̀   >   ònilẹ̀
person [identified] with earth

The meaning/reference 'person' is what {o-} and {ò-} share/have in common; however, they are distinct morphemes, for the reason that we cannot find any explanation based on forms that make them different. [It stands to reason] therefore, that {**ni**} is without a doubt a verb, and 'ownership' is its meaning, as can see in:

(17)   Ta   ló   **ni**   ọkọ̀   náà?
           Who it is own vehicle [of reference]?

This same perceptive analysis, however, prevents Awobuluyi from seeing that "predication" by ni (M) does not account for formatives such as **ẹlẹyẹ,** and those in (4, 5, and 6) of this subsection. That explains why in Section #2.1.8 {O-}, he boxes himself impossibly into the position that:

Orísi àfòmọ́wájú yìí méjì ni ó jọ pé ó wà nínú èdè Yoruba bí a bá fi lé ti ìtúmọ̀ tí wọ́n ń fi hàn. Okan nínú wọn ni {o_1-}, ìkejì si ni {o_2-}.

(a)   {o_1-},

        Ìtúmọ̀ ẹni tàbí ti ohun ni àfòmọ́wáju yìí ní. Kìkì ìgbà tí ó bá bá **ní** rìn ni ó ṣeé lò fàlàlà-falala nínú èdè Yorùbá to òde-òní.

        [It appears that Yorùbá has two types of this prefix if we base it on the meaning they indicate. One of the prefixes is {o_1-}, the other is {o_2-}.

        [(a) {o_1-}: This prefix has reference to "person" or "thing." It has a productive/unconstrained use particularly when it occurs with **ní** .]

He accordingly has no way to account for items such as the following from his own illustrative examples as in (18).

(18)   a.   *elègbè* *(← o-ni-ègbè)*   person of support/response
       b.   *olùyà*   *(← o-ni-ìyà)*   person/sufferer of punishment
       c.   *olùṣe*   *(← o-ni-ìṣe)*   person/agent of action
       d.   *olùkọ́*   *(← o-ni-ìkọ́)*   person/agent of instruction

Then, surprisingly, referring to formatives in which /l/ follows the prefixes /e, ẹ, a, ọ, o/ yielding "words" for whose derivation he has no ready explanation, he includes the example in (19).

(19)   *ọnìyàn(← è-ni ì-yàn?* [sic. Oyelaran] (cf. ẹni, ọni, ònìyàn; ìyàn = ìpín)

We would like to suggest that, without prejudice to Awobuluyi's likely derivational proposal which would disintegrate **ẹni/ọni**, both of which we consider to be dialect forms of the same derivational formative, the "o-ni" of his illustrative series above, and similar formatives in the

language are derived with **ẹni/ọni,** as prefix. Furthermore, the "ù" initial, as in *olùyà (← ọ-ni-ùyà)* is the Central and Eastern Yorùbá widespread "u-" initial.

This suggestion dispenses with the need for a putative transmutation of **ni(H)** to **ni(M)** or for Manfredi's (2010) de-accenting gambit. It further strengthens the significant role of the phonological interface in making sense of, at least, the pragmatics of syntax and the lexicon in the language. Our analysis underscores it that more intensive field works across the region where the language is spoken will always yield a handsome harvest in support of the validity of the explanatory perspectives from that of linguistic interfaces.

3. The Lexical and Syntactic Interfaces: The Predicate
3.1. Non-complex Predicative Formatives

The illustration table provides copious examples of monomoraic/monosyllabic and multi-syllabic lexical formatives that may function independently as predicates in Yorùbá. The columns indicate the Tone Classes High, Low and Mid. Asterisks mark non-occurring or doubtful entries. The inventory is strictly illustrative only; it, by no means, suggests exhaustiveness in any sense (see Awobuluyi 2008, for extensive data). Even, in the present study, in spite of the large number of examples, we make no pretense for exhaustiveness, if for no other reason than that taxonomy provides minimal insight. Asterisks indicate gaps, which might be filled by neologisms, through borrowings, or supplied by materials from dialects of the language.

(20)   **Predicate (i) Monosyllabic**

H	L	M	H	L	M
bá hit/ overtake	bà 'perch'	ba 'crouch	bẹ́ 'burst/leap'	bẹ̀ 'plead'	bẹ 'be extroverted'
dá 'create/break'	dà 'changed into'	*da	dé 'arrive'	dè 'tie'	*de
			dú (dúdú) 'blacken'	dù ''contest'	*du
fẹ́ 'want/like'	fẹ̀ 'expand/ enlarge'	*fẹ	fún 'whiten'	fùn 'grow mucus'	fun (funfun) 'be white (white)'
gbá 'kick/ sweep'	gbà 'accept'	*gba	hú 'uproot'	hù 'germinate'	hu 'shout'
jẹ́ 'answer to'	ˀjè, as in (igbajè) calabash tray for communal/group meal.	jẹ 'eat'	jó 'dance'	jò 'leak'	*jo
			kó 'gather	**ko̱**	ˀko
kú 'become extinct'	kù 'remain/sift'	ku 'sound/ thud'	pá 'be bald'	*pà	pa (pupa)
pọ́n (pípọ́n) "[be] reddish'	pọ̀n 'back up'	pọn 'bail/brew'	rí 'see'	rì 'drown/rotten'	ri
rán 'send/sew'	ràn 'spread'	ran	ṣé 'question word'	*ṣè	ṣe 'do'
ṣẹ́ 'deny'	sẹ̀ 'orignate'	ṣẹ	sí 'to'	sì 'then'	si
tú 'untie'	tù (tùtù) 'abate'	tu 'uproot/ spit'	wó 'collapse'	wò 'to loo at'	wo

(21) **Predicate (ii) bimoraic/bisyllabic**

H	L	M
fẹ́rẹ̀ 'approach/come to'	kẹ̀rẹ̀ 'diminish'	tiro 'walk on toes of one foot'
jókòó 'take seat'	tòrò 'settle solution/ neater'	yoro 'become emaciated/
lóṣòó 'approximate the squat'	wìnkùn 'be grumpy'	
	yòrò 'dissolve into solution'	
	yòrọ̀	
	fòòró 'toss/ disturb rectitude'	

Unlike those in (20) the formatives in (21) are polysyllabic that are analytically opaque. The initial syllable is used to decide tone class in this and the next array.

On the other hand, the predicates in (22) are analytically transparent. We would not like to claim, however, that all components of analysis of these items will be necessarily found to occur in any and all registers and dialects of the language.

(22) **Predicate (iii): multimoraic/bisyllabic**

H	L	M
dáràn 'contrive crisis/ untoward event'	dìmú[8] 'strive for/ hold tight	jowú 'contest with envy'
dúró 'stand or make to strand erect'	fòòró	pamọ́ (pa mọ́) 'make secret/ hide'
gúnwà	gbìyànjú (gba ìyànjú) 'try'	parẹ́ (pa rẹ́)'efface'
Ṣẹ́kù 'remain'	gbòrègèjigè	patì (pa tì)'leave off doing'
Ṣígbọnlẹ̀ 'be stout'	hùnnì 'insist exasperatingly in bargaining/haggling'	runtẹ́ (rùn itẹ́) 'grind of decay'
	nàró[9] 'straightened'	talólobó (ta ní olobó) 'give heads-up'
	pòrúruu (pa lòrúrurù) 'confine'	

3.2. Complex Predicates

In contradistinction to the Simple Predicate, a Complex Predicate, is a collocation in which more than one mono-lexical formatives such as those exemplified in(20) , (21) or (22)) co-occur and function as Predicate and may be selected by elements of the functional category as in (23) (b). Theoretically, in that role, presumably a Complex Predicate may have definable internal argument and assign theta role, in a manner **we do** not quite understand. At this time, we do not know of any systematic constraint on the generation of the Complex Predicate in the Yorùbá language. It is so

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[8] Like **nàró**, below, **dìmú** is two-way analytically ambiguous. We suspect that this is to differing phrasal sources: **dì + mú;** and **dù+Ìmú**

[9] **nàró** is analytically ambiguous, judging from its behavior with complement: (a) Sopé nàró o agà yẹn "Sopé straightened up that ladder," arguably from **nà+òòró;** (b) Sopé nàró o agà yẹn ró, "Sopé stood that ladder up;" from **nà + ró**, each capable of functioning as predicate. (a) categorizes with complex predicate type **tójú**, "take care of," which takes the so-called GENitive marker before its complement; while (b) categorizes with **pamọ́,** "put away," without GEN.

productive that scholars have had and continue to have a field day proposing semantic typing of the Complex Predicate. (24) presents examples of sets that may function as Predicates combining items from (23) (a).

(23)
  a. **Simplex Predicative Formatives:**
      tètè "hurry"; *wá* "come;" *wò* "watch;" *wo* "doze off/nap;" *pè* "call/summon"
  b. **Simple Predicates with only one Predicative formative**
      Ó **wá**; s̀ugbón kò **tètè**
      'He/She **came**; however, (he/she) not **quick**'
      Ọláníkẹ̀ẹ́ **pe** ọ̀rẹ́ ẹ rẹ̀
      'Ọláníkẹ̀e **calls/called** her friend'
(24) a. **Two lexical items in a set**:
      tètè 'hurry'; *wá* 'come'; *tètè pè* 'hurry call';
      tètè wò iwé yẹn 'hurry up (and) look at the book'
  b. **Three lexical items**:
      tètè pè wá 'hurry call come; *tètè pè wò* 'hurry call watch';
      Sopé *tètè pè* Ọládiipọ̀ *wá* ibi i iṣẹ́
      Sope hurry call O. (to) come to place of work
  c. Four items**:**
      tètè pè wá á wò
      'hurry call come ( ) behold'/ call to come in a hurry to see'
  d. Four lexical items*:*
      mọ̀ọ́mọ̀ *tètè pè wá* á wò
      'intentionally hurry call come

3.2.1. Complex Predicate Syntactically selected

As in (25), functional category such as NEG may not select individual predicative formatives within the complex Predicate. This argues in favor of the syntactic integrity of the Predicate in the language.

(25) a. Alága kò (NEG) **rán** akọ̀wé **bẹ** ọ̀wẹ̀ **de** ìpàdé oṣù tí ó ń bọ̀.
          Chairperson NEG **sent** secretary **arrange** held **await** meeting month that is coming
          'The Chairman did not **send** secretary **to arrange** labor hand **ahead** of monthly
              meeting coming '
  b. Ajàyí kò [NEG] ***mọ̀ọ́mọ̀*** *tètè* **pe** Sopé **wá**́ **w**o itú ti Ọláníkẹ̀ẹ́ ń pa.
          Ajàyí NEG **knowingl**y **hurry call** Sopé **come** H **watch** wonder REL Ọlaníkẹe
              PROG effect
          'Ajàyí did not intentionally hurry to summon Sope to see the feat Ọlaníkẹe is
              performing.'

We wish to observe that from the point of meaning, what is negated may be the entire predicate or part thereof. For example, (25) (a) may be understood in any of the senses in (26):

(26) (a) The chairman sent someone, but not the secretary
  (b) The chairman sent the secretary, but not to arrange work hands
  (c) the chairman sent the secretary to arrange for labor, but not ahead of the next monthly meeting

Consider also the complex predicates in Oyèláràn (1980), p. 37, with five putative Predicative formatives in *italics*

(27)   Bí a ***bá wá*** á ***bojú wẹ̀hìn wo*** àpẹrẹ tí a tò sí (23), …tí a ***bá fi*** ojú [ìtumọ̀ tí a là sílẹ̀] **wò** wọ́n**.**
          If we cast our sight back look at [the] examples which we set out in (23),…if we happen apply eyes of [meaning we lay down] examine them.

Each item in **bold** and *italics* may serve as a predicate by itself, with the possible exception of **fi**, in the second clause, which may be glossed as "applicative" in the sense that it gives the complex predicate it initiates that connotation.

Cross linguistically, Yorùbá does not have a monopoly on complex predicates, including the serial verb construction. But (25) and (26 suggest that, unlike some languages such as the Akan languages, for example, NEG and other elements of the functional category select the entire Predicate in Yorùbá, and does not reiterative predicate internally, in the case of complex predicates. Also, as we will see below **(in (4) under Substantives),** de-predicativizing formatives in the language select the entire predicate, and do not re-iterate, in part or "in whole," within the predicate.

3.2.2. Verbs and the Derivation of the Verb in Yorùba

It is clear from the foregoing that we do not subscribe to the view that the Yorùbá language is impoverished and handicapped by the putative absence of derivational formatives for generating new verbs. The expectation that all languages must provide morphologically for "verbal" derivation must have led scholars to consider the Yoruba language as a defective language. This probably also encourage scholars to embrace the taxonomy of verbs in the language, and to exclusively focus on monomoraic/monosyllabic, predicative elements as in Delano (1969), Adewọle (2005) and Awobuluyi (2008) supporting the view that the language must be defective since it lacks morphological processes for deriving "verbs."

Thus, Awobuluyi (2008) writes:

(28)   #7.1.0: Àwọn Àbùdá Ọ̀rọ̀-Ìṣe
Meji ni o pọn dandan láti mẹnu bà lára àwọn àbùdá ọ̀rọ̀-ìṣe nínú irú iṣẹ́ bá yìí. Èkíní ni pé kọ́nsónáǹtì ni ó máa ń bẹ̀rẹ̀ gbogbo wọn, láìku ẹyọ kan. Èkejì sì ni pé ìwọ̀n sílébù kan ṣoṣo ni gbogbo wọ́n máa n̄ ṣe, láìku ẹyọ kan bá kan náà.

…Ṣùgbọ́n ó ṣe'ni láàánú pé kò sí àfòmọ́ ẹyọ kan fún iṣẹ̀dá ọ̀rọ̀-ìṣe - … Torí pé kò sí àfòmọ́ kànkan fún iṣẹ̀dá ọ̀rọ̀-ìṣe inú èdè Yorùbá òde-òní, kìkì ọ̀nà tí ó sí sílẹ̀ ní bá yìí láti fi kún iye wọn – a sì ní láti fi kún wọn burúkú- burúkú - ni kí á yá àwọn wúnrẹn lò láti inü èdè míràn – bí Gẹ̀ẹ́sì, Haúsá, abbl.

 [#7.1.0: Structure/Constitutive Features of the Verb
[Two must be mentioned out of the constitutive features of verbs in a study of this sort. The first is that all of them, without exception, have consonant initial. The second is that all of them measure up to only one syllable.

[…But it is sad that there does not exist a single affix for deriving verbs. -..Because there is no affix whatsoever for deriving verbs in the Yorùbá language of today, all the ways that is open now to add to their number – and it is absolutely necessary to increase their inventory – is to borrow formatives for the purpose from other language – such as English, Hausa, etc.]

We would like to suggest that the valorization of categories such as Noun, Verb, Adjective, and Proposition, as tools for an explanatory account of the Yorùbá language, for one, is inadequate. Taxonomies of these traditional categories certainly have tremendous heuristic values, and provide some useful observational adequacy, because they are expected to be observable and demonstrate that Yoruba, too, is an optimal human language. We, however, take the position that existing taxonomies of these categories for Yorùbá, even if they are exhaustive, which is doubtful, say nothing about possibilities offered by systematic gaps of their occurrence at all levels of linguistic analysis. More importantly, insistence on their indispensability underplays the interface between syntax and the lexicon in overarching role of the Predicate in the language.

4. Complex Predicates in Names and Substantives

Lexical codification of substantives as objects of consciousness is conceptually infinitely enumerable. Trivially, one can always think of a new number. More importantly, however, new objects keep emerging into human consciousness no end. To that extent, it is plausible to suggest that

the language category "substantives" is infinite. When it comes to the Yorùbá language, however, names and naming of objects of consciousness are perceptually process and event oriented. They provide a confirmatory argument for the central, perhaps critical role of the Predicate in the language. And, the Predicate is essentially process and event based in the language.

Indeed, left to Awobuluyi (2007), for one, virtually all vowel initial formatives that name objects of consciousness in the language can be shown to be derived from predicate bases. Such formatives constitute the overwhelming bulk of the lexicon of the language that *name* any and all objects of consciousness, physical and metaphysical, including ideas and symbols. Lexical items that name substantives and function syntactically as substantives in the language are notoriously derived from predicative formatives such as those exemplified above. Unanalyzable loanwords naming substantives such as *pẹ̀ẹ̀nì*, *kóòtù* (English: **pen; coat)** and *páàdì* (Portuguese: **padre**) by no means weaken our proposal in this study.

4.1. Whole Sentence Names of Persons

Names given to a child at birth record peculiar and idiosyncratic circumstances that mark the birth of the child. These include presentation through the birth canal, physical peculiarities of the child and a myriad of existential conditions of the family and, indeed, of the community. Most such names are full propositions/sentences or, at the minimum, complex predicates. When a personal name is a full sentence, a person's familiar name (sobriquet) within the family is most often the Predicate or presumed Predicate of the sentence as (29).

(29)   Whole Sentence Names of Persons
  a.   Adébóyè   A+**dé**+**bá**+òyè   (Adé; Débóyè; Bóyè)
          Nom+arrive+meet+chieftaincy
  b.   Adéfẹ́mi   A+**dé**+**fẹ́**+èmi   (Fẹ́mi)
          Nom+**arrive**+**love**+me
  c.   Adémúwàgún   A+**dé**+**mú**+ìwà+**gún**   (Adé; Démúwàgún; Múwàgún)
          Nom+arrive+make+character+right
  d.   Babariǹdé   Baba+**rìn**+**dé**   (Rìndé)
          Father+**walk**+**arriv**e
  e.   Níhìínlọlá   ní+ìhín+nị+ọlá   (Níhìín, Lọlá)
          Here, in these premises Ọlá resides/is located
  f.   Ọlásopé   Ọlá+**so**+**pé**   (Sopé)
          Ọlá+**bear fruit**+**complete**
  g.   Ọmọ́sùnọ́lá   Ọmọ+**sùn**+**sí**+ọlá   (Mọ́sùnọ́lá, *Sùnọ́lá)
          Child **sleep/rest** in Ọlá

In (29), predicates are in **bold**, and Complex Predicate "sobriquets" within the parentheses, following each name. Thus, "Adémúẁgún," which is two-way ambiguous could be derived from (a) or (b) in (30):

(30)   a.   complete sentence with only two nuclear predicates
              Adé +**mú** + ìwà + **gún** [Where Adé, too, derives from **a+dé** "that which crowns"]
              Crown makes essence/existence (be) wholesome
      b.   Depredicativized nominals with three nuclear predicates
              A + **dé** + **mú** + ìwà + **gún**
              One (who) **arrives make**s essence/existence **(be) wholesome**

4.1.1. Complex Predicate in Non-Affixal Names of Persons or Things

(31)   Jussive/Hortatory Proposition as Names: Positive
  a.   Bamidélé   **B**á+mi+**dé**+ilé   (Délé)
          Accompany+me+**reach**+home
  b.   Dúrótoyé   **Dúró**+***tì***+oyè   (Dúró)
          Stand+**lean on**+chieftaincy

	c.	Jẹ́mibẹ̀wón	**Jẹ́**+mi+**bẹ̀**+wọ́n (?Jẹ́mi)
			Let+me+**beg**+them
	d.	Jókòósòfófó	**Jókòó**+**ṣe**+òfófó [ò+fófó]
			Sit-down+**do**+gossip
			(household portable stool)
	e.	Rẹ̀mílẹ́kún	**Rẹ̀**+mí+***ní***+ẹkún (Rẹ̀mí)
			Diminish + me + **with respect to** + weeping
			(Wipe away my sorrow)

The items in **bold** may function independently as predicate. Those ***italics*** belong to the protean predicative type in Section (I) of this presentation. As is to be expected, jussive/hortatory propositions do not show overt NP subjects.

4.1.2. NEG + Complex Predicate in Personal Names

Ironically, hortatory constructions as names that caution restraint, introduced by NEG, or forms of it, as in (32), produce names that connote some kind of expectation of positive outcomes in the fortune of the bearers, whether persons or mere objects .

(32)	a.	Máàlọmo	Máà+ **lọ** +mọ́ (ABSOLUTE)
			NEG+**go**+again [Name given to discourage an "àbíkṹ" from dying to go and join his/her spirit world companions]
	b.	Máàdámidọ́lá	Máà+**dá**+mi+**dá**+ọlá
			NEG+**leave**+me+**leave**+honor. [Leave me not alone with Ọlá]
	c.	Kòṣeémáàní	Kò+**ṣe** é+máa+***ní***
			NEG+**do**+…+NEG+**have**. [Indispensable]
	d.	Kòsọ́kọ́	Kò + **sí** +ọkọ́
			NEG + **exist** + hoe. [Also an "àbíkṹ" name: "no hoe to dig a grave!"]
	e.	Kòtó-ǹkan	Kò + **tó** +nǹkan
			NEG + **amount to**/**reach** + something. [Amount to nothing.]
	f.	Méfowórádé	Mé+**fi**+owó+**rà**+adé (a-dé)
			NEG+**apply**+money+**buy**+crown. [(I) do not acquire (m) crown/recognition with money.]

Names of persons and objects derived with prefixes from Predicates are copiously exemplified in Awobuluyi (2008), which offers an exhaustive treatment of substantives, and thus underscores the generative capacity of this process in Yorùbá poetics, both in everyday speech and in all literary genres. In (33) the affix is in *italics*, the predicate nuclear type in **bold**.

(33)	a.	*a*gbọ́ladé	*a*+**gbé**+ọlá+**dé** [Gbọ́ládé]
			Nom+**carry**+honor+**arrive**
	b	ajẹlójúońle	*a*+**jẹ**+***ní***+ojú+onílé
			Nom+**eat**+**in**+presence+house-owner. [a mouse]
	c.	*à*tọwọ́da	*à*+**ti**+ọwọ́+**dá**
			Nom+**from/by**+hand+**create.**
	d.	Àtúnbí	*à*+**tún**+**bí**
			Nom+**repeat/renew**+**(be)born**
	e.	Ẹsẹ̀jìògbọ̀nà,	ẹsẹ̀+èjì+ò+**gbà**+ọ̀nà
			foot+two+NEG+**occupy/fill**+path. [path too narrow for two feet!]
	f.	Ìlàlẹ̀hù	*ì*+**là**+ilẹ̀+**hù**
			Nom+**split**+earth/ground+**germinate.** [a seedling not sown, that appears in an unexpected terrain]

4.2. Complex Predicate and the Knowledge of Language

Many scholars have addressed and continue to address meaning and reference in complex predicates in Yorùbá, under the rubric of "serial verbs," "splitting verbs," and more. Again, characteristically, a majority of existing studies have approached meaning in complex predicates in the language by providing meticulous inventories of semantic types, from purpose, to consequence and consecutive nature of events. Much of these have struck us as being unsatisfactory, partly because, taxonomy, again, hardly ever provides an explanation. More importantly taxonomies of semantic types provide no insight into what the child internalizes as language emerges through the maturational process. Certainly, memorization of the semantic inventory, like the inventory of the lexical categories, provides no answer. It, by no means, accounts for the mesmerizing productivity with which speakers of the language generate complex predicates (as (27), repeated as (34)) in a way that challenges real time proposition.

(34)   Oyèláràn (1980: 37
         Bí a **bá wá á bojú wẹ̀hìn wo** àpẹrẹ tí a tò sí (23), …tí a **bá fi** ojú [ìtumọ̀ tí a là sílẹ̀] **wò** wọ́n.
         [Tr.: If we cast our sight back look at [the] examples which we set out in (23), …if we happen apply eyes of [meaning we lay down] examine them.]

This is why, for now, we would prefer to follow Ahmerd (2010: 138) to explore the implication of Olabiyi Yai 's (1994) notion of **metonymy** and extend it to making semantic sense of the complex predicate in Yorùbá. Ahmerd writes [**emphasis** and *italics* added]:

> Jakcobson's famous combination and selection axes model still has something to teach us. **Metaphor** asserts a semantic and sometimes epistemological parity of function and meaning between two units. **Metonymy** asserts a semantic and sometimes epistemological *contiguity* between two units. Privileging metaphor overlooks the crucial element of local logic. *The social use of signs occurs in the conventional practices of individuals where meaning and understanding arise. **Meaning** is the centrifugal signification of signs; meaning is latent possibilities. **Understanding** is the apprehension of meaning and individually created by sign receivers who reference the new sign with those already known.* It is unique and ephemeral, always in production. The conventions at work in social intercourse (logic) will determine the tropoic functions to a large extent.

5. Conclusion

This study allows us to raise the question and make at least one proposal:

> (i) Do the current proposals on Lexical Structure and its implication for analysis stand on the presupposition that the lexical categories V, N, A, and P are valid, and demand invariable treatment, with the same implications for syntax and other levels of analysis, for all languages?" If "yes," then,
> (ii) The Yoruba language, at the minimum, calls on linguists to propose how to accommodate the Predicate, with its overarching scope for syntax and implications for all levels of analysis in Yoruba, and, perhaps, in other languages in which the Predicate presents similar status and syntactic scope. Here in lies "The Challenge of Syntactic Categories," the title of this study and, without a doubt, of any future inquiry into the scope of the Predicate.

To the extent that Hale and Keyser's (1993) proposal remains paradigmatic, to that extent will the data presented in this study call for a reconsideration of the position that

> There is a limit on recursion in LRS representation. Empirically, the LRS representation for a verb generally has at most one VP embedding. [80]

The argument which the Yorùbá data make for an overarching syntactic role for complex predicate also compels a reconsideration of Hale and Keyser's (96)

Guess that most, probably all, superficially monomorphemic verbs are lexically phrasal, possessing a structure that is syntactic, satisfying the requirements of Unambiguous Projection and Full Interpretation… (our conservative position holds) that lexical entry of an item consists in the syntactic structure that expresses the full system of lexical grammatical relations inherent in the item.

The data in this study argue that monomorphemic "verbs" are minimal predicative formatives in Yorùbá. From Hale and Keyser's "guess," therefore, they "are lexically phrasal, possessing a structure that is syntactic, satisfying the requirements of Unambiguous Projection and Full Interpretation." Current theory, however, suggests that the Predicate does not qualify as lexical entry. Since the data presented in the present study argues stubbornly that, for an explanatory grammar of the Yorùbá language, for one, the theory must define a syntactic structure that expresses and accounts for the full set of grammatical relations contracted by the Predicate in the language, simplex or complex. And, a mere taxonomy of relations will not move us closer to such a desirable grammar.

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