

ARE YORUBA ADVERBS REALLY NOUNS?

Ayo Bangboje

In Yoruba sentence structure, the adverbial position is filled by a sentence, a phrase or a word. The sentence is generally referred to as an adverbial clause, the phrase as an adverbial or prepositional phrase, and the word as an adverb. Thus, in the following sentences:

- (1) a wọn á rà é tí wọn bá lówó
 they will buy it if/when they happen have-money
 'They will buy it if/when they have money'
- b wọn á rà é ní ojà
 they will buy it in market
 'They will buy it in the market'
- c wọn á rà é pátápátá
 they will buy it completely
 'They will buy it all up'

tí wọn bá lówó 'if/when they have money' in (1a) is an adverbial clause, ní ojà 'in the market' in (1b) is an adverbial or prepositional phrase, and pátápátá 'completely' in (1c) is an adverb.¹

Both traditional and modern grammars of Yoruba accepted the above view of the adverbial, until comparatively recently when a proposal was made that words such as pátápátá in (1c) should not really be considered as adverbs but nouns.² The purpose of this paper is to examine this proposal and its implications for Yoruba grammar.

The adverbial can easily be identified in sentence structure, particularly in contrast to the NP object, on the basis of the following characteristics:

- (i) A verb having a low tone retains its tone before an adverbial, whereas this tone is changed to mid before an NP object.

1 In this paper, all three are referred to as adverbials on account of their function in sentence structure. For a similar use of the term, see Bartsch (1976).

2 The proposal was made independently by Awobuluyi (1969, 1975) and Howlands (1970). Both writers had earlier subscribed to the widespread view that such words were adverbs. See in particular Awobuluyi (1967:219,288), Howlands (1969:145).

Thus in:

- (2) a. 6 gbà pátápátá
'He accepted completely'
b. 6 gbà ní ààfin
'He accepted in the palace'
c. 6 gba Ibáwí
'He accepted criticism'

the verb gbà 'accept' retains its lexical low tone before the adverbials in (2a) and (2b), but has a mid tone before the noun object in (2c).

(ii) Only an adverbial, but not an NP object, can occur directly after an NP object. Thus the sequence NP object-Adverbial in (3a) and (3b) is possible, but not the sequence NP object-NP object in (3c).

- (3) a. wón rã á kíákíá
'They bought it quickly'
b. wón rã á ní ọjã
'They bought it in the market'
c. *wón rã á ọjã
*'They bought it market'

(iii) Pronoun substitution is possible with a noun object but not with an adverbial. Thus, in the sentences in (3) above, the third person pronoun substitutes for a noun object. Such a substitution cannot be done in the case of the adverbials.

(iv) In the reduplicated nominalization of a sentence, the noun object can be inverted so as to precede the verb but the adverbial cannot be so inverted. Compare (4a) with (4b).

- (4) a. ra aṣọ ' ríra aṣọ ' aṣọ rírà
'buy cloth' 'buying cloth' 'cloth buying'
b. lọ kíákíá ' lílọ kíákíá ' *kíákíá lílọ
'go quickly' 'going quickly' 'quickly going'

(v) Noun objects are never questioned in the same way as adverbials. For example, a non-human noun object is questioned by kí 'what' while a manner adverbial is questioned by bá.wó 'how'.³ This difference in questioning is best illustrated by an identical word performing the two different functions. See for example, the questioning of the noun object and the adverbial wáàwáà 'rowdiness/rowdily' in (5b) and (5c), respectively:

3 A possible variant of questioning for the manner adverbial involves the substitution of kí for bá.wó, but the two types of questions are still kept apart by the preverb í which is obligatory in the questioning of the manner adverbial.

- (5) a. wọn fẹ wọdùwọdù kiri
they -ing do rowdiness/rowdily go-about
'They are behaving rowdily about'
- b. kí ní wọn fẹ kiri
what it-is they -ing do go-about
'What is it that they are doing about?'
- c. báwo ní wọn tí fẹ kiri
how it-is they () -ing do go-about
'How is it that they are behaving about?'

Judged by the above criteria, there can be no question as to the syntactic function of words like pátápátá 'completely' in (1c) and (2a) and kíákíá 'quickly' in (3a). They are adverbials. What has been called to question is their class membership. Are they adverbs functioning as adverbials, or nouns functioning as objects in adverbial phrases? Let us now examine the arguments adduced in support of the position that such words (from now on we shall refer to them as 'traditional adverbs') are nouns.

Five major arguments have been advanced in support of the view that traditional adverbs are nouns:⁴

(a) Qualification by pronoun or determiner

Traditional adverbs can be qualified by a genitival pronoun or a determiner; and since only nouns can be so qualified, it follows that these adverbs are really nouns. For example, in the following sentences,

- (6) a. mo bá jé kó jé jé mí
I happen sit quietly my
'I thereupon sat down quietly'
- b. ọbẹ nàá dùn mírímírín kan bá yí
stew the be-sweet () one like-this
'The stew is sweet in a cloying sort of way'
- c. wọn fẹ wọdùwọdù wọn kiri
they -ing do rowdiness their go-about
'They are behaving about in their (usual) rowdy manner'

the traditional adverbs jéjé, mírímírín, and wọdùwọdù are supposed to be qualified by the pronoun mí, the determiner kan, and the pronoun wọn respectively.

⁴ The arguments are taken from Rowlands (1970) and Awobuluyi (1975) and summarized here. In a number of cases, some of their examples have been used to illustrate the arguments.

Let us now take the sentences in (6) one by one and examine the claim. In (6a) mi does not really qualify jéjé. Proof of that can be shown in the following sentences:

- (7) a. mo bá jé.kó mi jéjé
'I thereupon sat down quietly'
- b. mo bá jé.kó mi
'I thereupon sat down.'
- c. jé.kó é
sit-down your (sing)
'You (sing) just sit down'
- d. é jé.kó yín
you (plu.) sit down your (plu.)
'You (plu.) just sit down'

Sentences (6a) and (7a) are variants. If the two sentences are compared, it will be seen that the pronoun which is supposed to qualify jéjé now precedes it. Since pronoun qualifiers in Yoruba do not precede the nouns they qualify, it is obvious that mi does not qualify jéjé. Proof that this conclusion is correct is provided by (7b) where the traditional adverb supposed to be qualified no longer occurs. In fact, the pronoun mi now stands directly after the verb. Following the reasoning that makes mi qualify jéjé in (6a), one will now be forced to say that the same pronoun qualifies the verb je.kó 'sit down' in (7b); but, of course, such a conclusion will be absurd. By taking all the sentences in (7) as a whole, it is clear that the alleged pronoun qualifier in each sentence is a sort of reflexive or emphatic pronoun, having the same number and person as the subject. Thus mi occurs with the first person pronoun subject mo in (7a) and (7b), é with the subjectless singular imperative in (7c), and yín in (7d) with the plural imperative whose subject is the second person plural pronoun é. Sentences such as (6a) do not, therefore, provide any support for the view that traditional adverbs are nouns.

We now come to (6b) where the determiner kan is said to qualify the traditional adverb mírímáirín. Again, let us examine the following sentences:

- (8) a. qbé náà dùn kan bá.yí
'The stew is sweet in a certain kind of way'

- b. δ rẹ́ mí kan bá.yí tí ò dára⁵
 it tires me one like-this that not good
 'I am tired in a certain way that is not good' = 'I am dead beat'
- c. δ tẹ́ dũrũ kan bá.yí tí ò dára
 he play organ one like-this that not good
- (i) 'He played a certain organ that was bad'
 (ii) 'He played the organ in a fantastic manner'
- d. $\text{òbẹ́ nṣṣ} \text{ dũn ní dídũn mírímírín kan bá.yí}$
 stew the sweet in sweetness one like this
 'The stew is sweet in sweetness one like this'
 'The stew is sweet in a cloying sort of way'

In (8a) the word supposed to be qualified is no longer present, yet the determiner kan still remains, and there is no way in which the alleged noun head could have been said to be deleted, since any such deletion will not be recoverable. Besides, the meaning of the sentence will not justify any claim of deletion. Again, it will be absurd to claim that kan qualifies the verb dũn 'be sweet' immediately after which it stands. So it is obvious that we have to look elsewhere for the noun head which the determiner in question qualifies. Could it be that what it qualifies is an NP object? Sentence (8b) contains a transitive verb, and the object is a pronoun. The determiner cannot qualify this object since pronouns in Yoruba cannot take qualifiers. But what of (8c) where there is a noun object? Here, the determiner can qualify the noun; but when it does, the manner interpretation associated with the determiner is no longer present. However, (8c) has two interpretations. In the second interpretation (i.e. 8c(ii)), the manner meaning is preserved. This proves that even when the determiner kan occurs with a noun in sentences of this type, it does not necessarily qualify that noun.

What then does the determiner kan qualify? The answer, it would appear, lies in sentences such as (8d) from which (8b) is derived. The reduplicated nominalized form of the verb dídũn 'sweetness' is the obvious head of the noun phrase dídũn mírímírín kan bá.yí 'being sweet in a cloying sort of way'.

5 The relative clause tí ò dára 'that is not good' is used as an intensifier in this type of sentence. But note that in (8c) which is ambiguous, the literal meaning of the clause is also present in one of the two interpretations.

It is this noun head which the determiner kan qualifies. This is why it is possible to omit mírínmírín from the noun phrase without affecting the status of kan as a qualifier. The conclusion from this is that the case for nominal status for traditional adverbs such as mírínmírín on the basis of ability to take a qualifier is simply not made.

Finally, let us turn to (6c) where the traditional adverb wòdùwòdù 'rowdiness/rowdily' is supposed to be qualified by the pronoun wọ́n. As has been demonstrated in (5a), this word can function either as an object or as an adverbial. In (6c), it is the object function that we are dealing with. Hence wòdùwòdù here is a noun, and nothing stops a noun from being qualified by a pronoun. Proof that the word is functioning as a noun object here is that only the object questioning is possible.

(6) c. wọ́n fẹ́ wòdùwòdù wọ́n kírí
 they -ing do rowdiness their go-about
 'They are behaving about in their (usual) rowdy manner'

(9) a. kí ní wọ́n fẹ́ kírí
 'What is it that they are doing about?'

b. *báwo ní wọ́n tí nẹ́ kírí
 'How is it that they are behaving about?'

(9a) is the appropriate questioning for a noun object and (9b) for an adverbial. Notice that only the former is permissible for questioning (6c). Therefore, what is involved in the sentence is not an adverb but a noun. The fact that it is qualified provides no support for the view that traditional adverbs are nouns.

(b) Relativization

Traditional adverbs may be relativized. Since relative clauses only have nouns as their antecedents, traditional adverbs must of necessity be nouns.

Thus in the following sentences:

(10) a. wọ́n gbà á kíákíá
 'They accepted it quickly'

b. kíákíá tí wọ́n gbà á dára
 quickly that they accept it be-good
 'The fact that they accepted it quickly is good'

c. pé wọ́n gbà á kíákíá dára
 that they accept it quickly be-good
 'The fact that they accepted it quickly is good'

(10b) is supposed to be derived from (10a) by a process of relativization, and kíákíá in (10b) is supposed to be a noun because it is "qualified" by the relative clause tí wǎn gbà á 'that they accepted it'. Suffice it to say that it has been made abundantly clear elsewhere (see in particular Bamgboṣe 1975a and 1975b) that (10b) is a case of factive nominalization and that no relative clause meaning can be imposed on it. It is interesting to note that (10b) has exactly the same meaning as (10c) which is an undisputed factive nominalization. And in either case, the whole nominalization behaves like a single nominal. This is quite different from a noun phrase having a head and a relative clause qualifier. Since (10b) does not have such a head and a qualifier, it cannot be used as evidence of nominal status for kíákíá and other similar traditional adverbs.⁶

(c) Object to fí

Traditional adverbs may be made to function as the object of the modifying verb fí. And since only nominals can function as objects, traditional adverbs must be nouns. Thus, in the following sentences,

- (11) a. ó gbà á tayǒtayǒ
 he accept it joy and joy
 'He accepted it gladly'
- b. ó fí tayǒtayǒ gbà á
 he with joy and joy accept it
 'He accepted it gladly'
- c. tayǒtayǒ ní ó fí gbà á
 joy and joy it is he with accept it
 'It was gladly that he accepted it'

(11a) and (11b) are variants; and the adverbial in (11a) now turns up as the object of fí in (11b) and (11c).

⁶ In a way, there seems to be tacit acceptance of the view that what we have in (10b) is not really a relative clause qualifier. One of the characteristics claimed for traditional adverbs is that they are severely restricted in their ability to take qualifiers (Awobuluyi 1975:43). If the clauses occurring with these traditional adverbs were really relative clause qualifiers, there would have been no need to talk of severe restriction in taking qualifiers, since such "qualifiers" occur rather freely with them. In this connection, it is interesting to note the earlier categorical statement in Awobuluyi (1967:220) that "adverbs are never qualified by relative clauses".

There is considerable merit in this argument.⁷ In fact, it could have been a useful criterion for separating certain adverbials which will be accepted as nouns from others which will be adverbs. For example, in:

- (12) a. *ó díde rúú*
 he get-up suddenly
 'He got up suddenly'
- b. **ó fi rúú díde*
 'He got up suddenly'
- c. **rúú ní ó fi díde*
 'It was suddenly that he got up'

the adverbial *rúú* 'suddenly' never occurs as object. One can say, therefore, that it is an adverb, while *ṣayòṣayò* 'gladly' in (11) is a noun.

There are however two problems with this use of *fi* as a criterion for nominal status. Firstly, many recognizable nouns do not exhibit the parallelism of (11). In other words, they behave rather like (12). For example, the noun *àsíké* 'time' in

- (13) a. *wón sùn ní àsíké*
 they sleep in time
 'They slept in time'
- b. **wón fi àsíké sùn*
 'They slept in time'
- c. **àsíké ní wón fi sùn*
 'It was in time that they slept'

Secondly, *fi* may occur in sentences analogous to (11c) where it would appear to take an adverbial phrase as its object. For example, 15

- (14) a. *wón fẹ́ ọmọ-òdò ní ịgbà yèn*
 they -ing do servant in time that
 'They were working as servants at that time'
- b. **wón fi (ní) ịgbà yèn fẹ́ ọmọ-òdò*
 'They were working as servants at that time'
- c. (ní) ịgbà yèn ní wón fi fẹ́ ọmọ-òdò
 'It was at that time that they were working as servants'

although neither the noun phrase *ịgbà yèn* 'that time' nor the adverbial phrase *ní ịgbà yèn* 'at that time' directly occurs as object to *fi* in (14b), the

7 As a matter of fact, considerations such as these as well as the morphemic structure of the words concerned led us to an earlier view that the type of traditional adverb in (11) was a nominal. See Bamgboye (1966:129).

occurrence of fi in (14c) implies such a relationship.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is that the occurrence of fi cannot be used as an unfailing indication of nominal status. In sentences of the type in (13), its occurrence seems to be determined by semantic considerations. For instance, if the noun in (13) had been íròlẹ́ 'dusk', or even if àṣíkò 'time' had been qualified to make it more specific, the sentences in question would have been acceptable. On the other hand, the occurrence of fi in sentences of the type in (14c) appears to be determined by both semantic and syntactic considerations. It is associated with adverbials of 'reason' and a few adverbials of 'time' in topicalized sentences and relative clauses.⁸

(d) Object to ní

Some traditional adverbs can occur either as object to ní in an adverbial phrase or as the sole adverbial. That being the case, it is valid to assume that the latter are reduced forms of adverbial phrases, and, by extension, that all other adverbials without adverbial phrase counterparts are adverbial phrases having the structure ní NP. Consequently, all traditional adverbs are nouns, since, by definition, they should occur as object to ní. Consider, for example, the following sentences.

(15) a. ǿ lọ kíákíá
he go quickly
'He went quickly'

b. ǿ lọ ní kíákíá
he go in quickly
'He went quickly'

(16) a. mo jẹ ẹ pátápátá
I eat it completely
'I ate it up'

b. *mo jẹ ẹ ní pátápátá
I eat it in completely
'I ate it up'

(15a) has the counterpart (15b). The traditional adverb kíákíá 'quickly' in (15a) turns up as the object to ní in (15b). Therefore it is a noun, and its occurrence in (15b) arises from a deletion of the preposition ní.

⁸ See Bangboje (1966:72-73) and Ọkẹ (1974).

Similarly, although (16b) never occurs, it can be postulated on the basis of (15b), and the same derivation can then be effected.

The above argument is based on two assumptions. One is that words have to belong to the same class irrespective of their function. Thus, the possibility of kíákíá being an adverb in (15a) and a noun in (15b) is specifically ruled out. Another assumption is that because there are pairs of sentences such as (15a) and (15b), there have to be pairs of sentences such as (16a) and (16b), irrespective of what happens in the language. Both assumptions are taken up later in this paper.

A close examination of sentences such as (15) shows that these sentences are not really identical in meaning (Note that the derivation is based on such identity). (15b) appears to be a more emphatic version of (15a). It is the sort of non-topicalized sentence one would use when one is drawing attention to the adverbial. This difference is reflected in the different possibilities of topicalization. The adverbial in (15a) can be topicalized only as (17a); but the one in (15b) can be topicalized as both (17b) and (17c). The latter sentence in particular brings out the intended emphasis.

- (17) a. kíákíá ní ǒ ló
'It was quickly that he went'
b. (ní) kíákíá ní ǒ ló
'It was quickly that he went'
c. kíákíá ní ǒ fí ló
'It was quickly that he went'

This type of difference may well point to the fact that kíákíá does not really belong to the same class in (15a) and (15b).

The weakest point of the ní derivation argument is that only a minority of traditional adverbs can occur as object to ní and, as we shall show later, even a majority of this minority of traditional adverbs are basic adjectives. The derivation of (16a) from (16b) involves postulating a ní, which does not occur in the sentence, in order to confer nominal status on pátápátá 'completely'. Once this has been achieved, the postulated ní is then promptly deleted. If this reveals anything at all, it is more the exigency of the chosen description

than an account of what actually happens in the language.

The rule of nf deletion presents a serious problem for sentences of the type in (15). If the rule is ordered such that it takes place before the topicalization rule,⁹ (15b) will produce (15a), and this will further produce the topicalized sentence (17a). Note, however, that in addition to (17a), sentences (17b) and (17c) exist as topicalizations of the adverbial. Once nf deletion has taken place, neither of these sentences can be derived. Suppose, however, the ordering is altered so that nf deletion takes place after topicalization, the sentences of (17) will be derived, but not (15a). Thus, the seemingly easy derivation turns out on closer examination to be fraught with problems. Besides, rather than support the case that traditional adverbs are nouns, it has introduced unnecessary complexities into the description.

(e) Similarity to a subclass of nouns

There is a subclass of nouns such as ɔ́jǐjǐ 'suddenness', mǎjǐmǎjǐ 'two each' ojoojómó 'everyday' which behave in exactly the same way as traditional adverbs.¹⁰ Like them, they occur as object to nf; they do not take qualifiers; they cannot occur as subject or object, and they can be topicalized.

This so-called subclass of nouns comprises basic nouns and basic adjectives. For instance, mǎjǐmǎjǐ is basically an adjective (being a reduplication of mǎjǐ 'two'), but as is well known, an adjective can be used as a noun in a context where the noun in question is taken as given. Thus, in the following sentences,

- (18) a. wǎn ra orónbó mǎjǐmǎjǐ
they buy orange two-two
'They bought two oranges each'
- b. wǎn ra mǎjǐmǎjǐ
'They bought two each'

9 This is the type of rule proposed by Awobuluyi (1975:35).

10 One of the words listed in this subclass as a noun is ogán 'suddenness'. Note that, unlike the other nouns, this word always occurs in combination with nf and even then, it is always fused with it phonetically as lógán. It is doubtful, therefore, if one can talk of the noun ogán, except in terms of the morphemic composition of the adverbial (adverb?) lógán. This situation is comparable to that of the complex verb pádé 'meet' where one can say that there is a noun ádé 'meeting' in the morphemic composition of the verb. Such a statement can never be used to justify the independent occurrence of this so-called noun.

the adjective méjinejĩ in (18a) turns up as the NP object in (18b), but the understanding in the latter is that it refers to a known noun head (i.e. oranges).

The argument that this subclass of nouns can occur with nĩ should in fact serve to differentiate it from traditional adverbs. For nouns such as òjĩjĩ 'suddenness', occurrence with nĩ is obligatory except when the adverbial is topicalized. Hence (19a) but not (19b) is the only form in which the adverbial can occur.

(19) a. wón lq nĩ òjĩjĩ
'They went suddenly'

b. *wón lq òjĩjĩ
'They went suddenly'

It is interesting to note that what is true of this particular noun is true of all nouns.¹¹ They have to be preceded by nĩ in order to occur as adverbials. For example, the noun qjã 'market' in (3b) as compared with the ungrammatical (3c). On the other hand, a traditional adverb either never requires nĩ at all, as is the case with pátápátá 'completely' in (16), or the occurrence of nĩ with it is entirely optional, as is the case with kíákíá 'quickly' in (15). The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the subclass of nouns to which traditional adverbs are supposed to be similar is in fact not different in this respect from the vast majority of nouns with which it is being contrasted.

We have already shown earlier that the so-called qualifiers supposedly associated with traditional adverbs are not in fact qualifiers. All that needs to be added is that the words in the subclass of nouns with which they are supposed to share the property of not taking qualifiers do in fact take qualifiers, as the following examples show:

(20) a. q mu méjinejĩ wón bõ
you-plu. take two-two them return
'Bring back two each of them'

11. The only exceptions to this statement are place nouns occurring after the verb gbé 'live' and the nouns tòótó 'of a truth' and stori 'reason' with which the occurrence of nĩ is optional. The former can be explained in terms of the semantic incorporation of the prepositional concept (in, at, etc.) in the verb, and the latter in terms of ellipsis (e.g. nítòótó > st3ótó > tòótó). The irregular noun bí 'like' also constitutes an exception for which a possible explanation may be that it is gradually being treated as a prepositional like páá 'with'.

- b. ojoojúmọ̀ ayé ni ẹ̀ ńkọ́rin
 everyday world it-is he-ing sing-song
 'It is every blessed day that she sings'
- c. ọ̀sọ̀ọ̀sẹ̀ níkan ni mọ̀ ńrí 1
 week-week alone it-is I -ing see him
 'It is only every week that I see him'

In (20a), the noun takes a genitival pronoun qualifier, in (20b), a genitival noun qualifier, and in (20c), a determiner. Again, in this respect, these nouns are no different from other nouns which take qualifiers freely.

The suggestion that both the subclass of nouns and traditional adverbs behave in the same way in that neither of them can function as subject or object of verbs overlooks such examples as (18b) and (20a) which prove the contrary. These examples however involve nouns which derive from basic adjectives. Words that are basically nouns in Yoruba can be identified by their ability to occur as subject or object to a verb or as a genitival or appositive qualifier in a noun phrase.¹² Basic nouns in this subclass of nouns are severely restricted in their occurrence as subject or object of verbs, such occurrence being limited to neutral contexts such as with the verbs jé 'be', dá 'become', se 'do'. But, even in spite of these restrictions, they still differ fundamentally from traditional adverbs which can hardly ever occur as subject or object to a verb and never as genitival or appositive qualifier in a noun phrase. In the following noun phrases,

- (21) a. ikú yọ̀yọ̀
 death ridicule
 'death of ridicule'
 'shameful death'
- b. owó omi
 money water
 'money for water'
 'water rate'
- (22) a. ikú ẹ̀jijì
 death suddenness
 'death of suddenness'
 'sudden death'

12 For a detailed study of genitival and appositive structures in Yoruba, see Owolabi (1976).

- b. owó ọ̀sọ̀ọ̀sọ̀
 money every week
 'money of every week'
 'weekly wages'
- (23) a. *ikú kíkíkí
 death quickly
 *'death of quickly'
 'quick death'
- b. *owó pátápátá
 money completely
 *'money of completely'
 'complete wages'

the nouns yáyé and omi, which are not restricted in their ability to function as subject or object of verbs, are shown in (21) occurring as genitival qualifiers. The nouns ḡiḡi and ọ̀sọ̀ọ̀sọ̀ also occur as genitival qualifiers in (22). In contrast to this, the traditional adverbs kíkíkí and pátápátá can never occur as genitival qualifiers as shown by (23). It follows that the nouns in (22) belong more to those in (21), which represent the vast majority of nouns, than to the traditional adverbs in (23).

Finally, on the point that topicalization of the subclass of nouns and that of traditional adverbs is the same, since such topicalization relates to their function as adverbials, and since topicalization of the adverbial takes the same basic pattern, it is not surprising that sentences such as (15) and (19a) as well as any other sentences containing an adverbial share this basic pattern.

The attempt to link traditional adverbs to a subclass of nouns has been shown above to be unsuccessful. If anything, the unity of the subclass in question with other nouns has been demonstrated. But even if the attempt had succeeded, it would have raised the bigger question of what this subclass of nouns and traditional adverbs have in common with the overwhelming majority of nouns, since the class "Noun" would of necessity comprise two disparate groups of words which differ radically in their syntactic behaviour.

An analysis which groups traditional adverbs with nouns raises two important issues, one typological, and the other theoretical. If Yoruba has only nouns, verbs and adjectives as its major word classes, then we would have to

say that it differs radically from other related African languages which have adverbs. This is the position taken by Rowlands (1970) who nevertheless recognizes that both nouns and adjectives can have adverbial function. On the other hand, Awobuluyi (1975) avoids this typological skewness by re-defining the class of adverbs so as to exclude traditional adverbs while only including certain other verb modifiers such as ri 'before'. But even this re-definition is fraught with problems, for while according to this view, both traditional adverbs and words like ri 'before' function as adverbials, for some curious reason, only the former can be topicalized. Thus while the sentences of (15) have the counterparts (17), there are no analogous counterparts for (24a).

(24) a. wɔn ti jɛ ɛ ri
 they have eat it before
 'They have eaten it before'

b. *ri ni wɔn ti jɛ ɛ
 before it-is they have eat it
 'It is previously that they have eaten it'

Since one of the characteristics of adverbials is that they can be topicalized¹³, the behaviour of (24) becomes a puzzle, and there is no way by which the puzzle can be explained under this view. When ri is compared with modifying verbs, however, it can be seen that, like them, it cannot be topicalized.¹⁴ Compare for instance (24) with (25).

(25) a. wɔn ti jɛ ɛ tán
 they have eat it finish
 'They have eaten it up'

b. *tán ni wɔn ti jɛ ɛ
 finish it-is they have eat it
 'It is completely that they have eaten it'

If ri is a modifying verb and not an adverb, the fact that it cannot be topicalized ceases to be a puzzle, since this is the case with all post-verbal modifying verbs.

The search for a unique syntactic position at which a particular word, in

13 On this, see Bangboye (1966:154) and Awobuluyi (1967:218, 221).

14 For the concept of 'modifying verbs' see Bangboye (1974a). Note that Rowlands (1970:296) also shares the view that such words are verbs.

all instances of its occurrence, can be identified as a member of a given word class does not appear to have any strong theoretical basis, except in so far as it is employed as a deep structure device (for instance, as in Chomsky's \bar{X} convention)¹⁵ where, of course, several surface word classes can still be generated from the deep structure one. Multiple class membership of lexical items appears to be a reality of languages in general. And Yoruba is no exception. The only constraint one would expect is that the membership of each word class should include a large set of words that do not occur in any other class.

In the light of the above, we can now re-examine the traditional adverbs. Some of them that have been called nouns on the basis of optional occurrence with ni are in fact basic adjectives.¹⁶ For example, words identified as adjectives in (26) turn up as adverbials in (27).

- (26) a. *igi pelebe*
wood flat
'a flat piece of wood'
- b. *ḡrḡ ḡḡki*
word brief
'a brief word/statement'
- c. *aḡḡ pelebe*
dress short
'a short dress'
- (27) a. *wḡn ḡbḡ igi (ni) peḡḡbe*
they carve wood (in) flat
'They carved wood in a flat shape'
- b. *ḡ sḡ ḡrḡ tirḡ (ni) ḡḡki*
he say word his (in) brief
'He made his own statement brief'
- c. *wḡn dḡ aḡḡ (ni) pelebe*
they make dress (in) short
'They made the dress in a short style'

Since it is accepted that the object of ni is a noun, it follows that the adjectives in (26) function as nouns in (27) when they are preceded by ni.

Even in those sentences where ni cannot occur, many of the traditional

15 See Chomsky (1970:210-211).

16 For some curious reason, this fact is nowhere mentioned in Awobuluyi (1975). If it had been, it would have saved the trouble of proving that such words could be nouns. The point at issue is not whether adjectives could be used as nouns, but whether adverbs could be so used.

adverbs are basic adjectives. Consider the following sentences:

- (28) a. $\acute{6}$ rí pẹ̀lẹ̀bẹ̀
it appear flat
'It is flat'
- b. * $\acute{6}$ rí ní pẹ̀lẹ̀bẹ̀
'It is flat'
- (29) a. $\acute{6}$ rí pelebe
'It is short'
- b. * $\acute{6}$ rí ní pelebe
'It is short'

Both pẹ̀lẹ̀bẹ̀ 'flat' and pelebe 'short' have already been identified in (26a) and (26c) as adjectives. These adjectives are now adverbials in (28a) and (29a). We cannot say they are nouns, since they cannot occur as object to ní in (28b) and (29a). It follows then that they have to be accepted as adverbs. In other words, adjectives can also function as adverbs.

Going back to the case of kíákíá in (15), we can now conclude that this word is basically an adverb and that it can also function as a noun when it occurs as the object of ní.

As shown above, multi-class membership of words is not peculiar to nouns and adverbs. Words that are basic adjectives can occur as nouns and they can also occur as adverbs. In extreme cases, a word can even belong to more than two classes. For example, pẹ̀lẹ̀ which occurs as a verb in (30a), a noun in (30b), and an-adjective in (30c)

- (30) a. ẹ̀ pẹ̀lẹ̀
you be-gentle
'Take care'
(a form of greeting)
- b. ayé gba pẹ̀lẹ̀
world take gentleness
'Life demands care'
- c. $\acute{6}$ ní ìwà pẹ̀lẹ̀
she has character gentle
'She has a gentle character'

The ideophonic nature of Yoruba adverbs has often been noticed and commented upon in the literature.¹⁷ There are two aspects of it that are particularly

17 See in particular Courtenay (1968:138-154) and Rowlands (1970). Of particular significance is Awoyale (1974) which seeks to prove that ideophones constitute a lexical class which originate in deep structure as higher

relevant for the distinction between them and nouns. Firstly, the untranslatability of a majority of them arising from the specificity of collocation with particular verbs or sets of verbs. Unlike these adverbs, nouns are generally translatable. Secondly, many adverbs involve reduplication without change of meaning. This type of reduplication differs from the one associated with adjectives and a handful of nouns. Compare the following groups of words.¹⁸

- | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (31) a. | kíá | 'quickly' | kíákíá | 'quickly' |
| | wéré | 'quickly' | wéréwéré | 'quickly' |
| | pátá | 'completely' | pátápátá | 'completely' |
| | láú | (adverb for describing whiteness) | láúláú | (adverb for describing whiteness) |
| | hẹ́lẹ́ | (adverb for describing breathing) | hẹ́lẹ́hẹ́lẹ́ | (adverb for describing breathing) |
| b. | pelebe | 'flat' | pelebe-pelebe | 'flat' (for more than one object) |
| | rọ́bọ́tọ́ | 'fat' | rọ́bọ́tọ́-rọ́bọ́tọ́ | 'very fat' |
| | mẹ́ta | 'three' | mẹ́ta-mẹ́ta | 'three each' |
| c. | alẹ́ | 'evening' | alaaalẹ́ | 'every evening' |
| | ọ́sẹ́ | 'week' | ọ́sẹ́ọ́sẹ́ | 'every week' |

The words in (31a) are adverbs, and both their simple and reduplicated forms have an identical meaning. The words in (31b) and (31c) are adjectives and nouns respectively, and their reduplicated forms differ in meaning from their simple forms.

Another commonly overlooked characteristic of adverbs is that some of them can modify adjectives. Since such modification takes place in a noun phrase, the fiction of a putative occurrence of ni can simply not be invoked. Besides, such a syntactic context makes it easy to contrast adverbs with nouns. Compare, for example, (31a) and (31b).

predicates. As we have pointed out elsewhere (See Bangboje (1974b)), the arguments used in support of deriving adverbs from higher predicates could equally well have been used to derive noun objects from such predicates. In any case, if ideophones are derived from higher predicates, the implication is that they are deep structure verbs. This will have to be reconciled with the desire to make them a separate lexical class distinct from nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs. Besides, even within this analysis, there does not seem to be any way of avoiding identifying ideophones, in surface structure at least, as nouns, verbs, etc., since the criterion for such identification is syntactic function.

18 For more examples, see Bangboje (1966:151-153), Courtenay (1968:138-154).

- (32) a. δ fi iwà burúkú pátápátá ba ilé nàá jé
 he with character bad completely spoil house the
 'He spoilt the house with very bad character'
- b. δ fi iwà burúkú bábá wọn ẹ ẹpẹẹ
 he with character bad father their do example
 'He made an illustration of their father's bad character'

In (32a) the adverb pátápátá modifies the adjective burúkú. We know that this is the case because this adverb cannot occur as a qualifier to the noun head iwà. In (32b), the noun báá occurs as a qualifier to the noun phrase iwà burúkú 'bad character'. We know this to be the case because of the lengthening of the final vowel of burúkú, a lengthening which takes place before consonant initial nominal qualifiers. Now, if pátápátá were a noun, it would have made this same nominal junction with burúkú. The fact that it does not make such a junction shows that it is not a noun.

In the wake of advances in structural and poststructural linguistics, it has become fashionable to castigate traditional grammars for a variety of shortcomings, real or imagined, and to try to revise the categories set up in such grammars. Some proposed revisions are entirely justified, but quite a few are not. In the latter category falls the proposal that there are no adverbs in Yoruba or that what traditional Yoruba grammars regard as adverbs are truly nouns. Our detailed examination of either proposal and its implications has led us to the irresistible conclusion that Yoruba, like many other languages, has a class of adverbs which is distinct from the class of nouns.

References

- Awobuluyi, O. 1967 Studies in the Syntax of the Standard Yoruba Verb.
 Columbia University Ph.D Dissertation.
- Awobuluyi, O. 1969 "The Yoruba Verb Phrase" (mimeographed).
- Awobuluyi, O. 1975 "Some Traditional 'Adverbs' in true perspective", Journal of West African Languages, Vol. X no.1, pp.28-54.
- Awoyale, Y. 1974 Studies in the Syntax and Semantics of Yoruba Nominalizations.
 University of Illinois Urbana Ph.D Dissertation.
- Bangboje, Ayọ 1966 A Grammar of Yoruba. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bangboje, Ayọ 1974a "On Serial Verbs and Verbal Status". Journal of West African Languages, Vol. IX, no.1, pp.17-48.

- Bangboye, Ayo 1974b "On the derivation of Adverbs from Higher Sentences" in L. Heilmann (ed.) Proceedings of the Eleventh International Congress of Linguists, Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino Bologna, pp.507-519.
- Bangboye, Ayo 1975a "Relative Clauses and Nominalized Sentences in Yoruba" in R. K. Herbert (ed.) Proceedings of the Sixth Conference on African Linguistics, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, Department of Linguistics, pp.202-209.
- Bangboye, Ayo 1975b "Relativization or Nominalization? - A case of structure versus meaning", University of Ibadan, Department of Linguistics Seminar Paper (mimeographed).
- Bartsch, Renate 1976 The Grammar of Adverbials. Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company.
- Chomsky, N. 1970 "Remarks on Nominalization" in R. A. Jacobs and P. S. Rosenbaum (eds.) Readings in English Transformational Grammar, Waltham, Massachusetts: Ginn and Company, pp.184-221.
- Courtenay, Karen R. 1968 A Generative Phonology of Yoruba, University of California Los Angeles Ph.D Dissertation.
- Owolabi, D.K.O. 1976 Noun-Noun Constructions in Yoruba: A Syntactic and Semantic Analysis, University of Ibadan Ph.D Thesis.
- Oke, D. O. 1974 "Syntactic Correlates of Notionally Defined Adverbial Types in Yoruba", Studies in African Linguistics Supplement 5, pp.233-252.
- Rowlands, E. C. 1969 Teach Yourself Yoruba. London: English Universities Press Ltd.
- Rowlands, E. C. 1970 "Ideophones in Yoruba" African Language Studies, Vol. XI.