

INCORPORATION IN YORÙBÁ

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Various attempts have been made at a description of Yorùbá compounds, (Bámgbósé 1964, 1966, 1982, Awóbùlúyì 1978, Awóyalé 1988). This paper is an attempt to explain the composition of some complex words in Yorùbá through the Incorporation Theory. We intend to show that Incorporation Theory provides the most adequate means of explaining the majority of Yorùbá complex words. The compounds considered in this study as instances of incorporation are of the following compositions:

a) Noun Incorporation =	V + N	→	V
b) Verb Incorporation =	N + V	→	NP + Gerund
	NP + V	→	N
	V + V	→	V

It is claimed that incorporation in Yorùbá is a lexical process, which does not necessarily involve a change in the grammatical category.

Plusieurs linguistes ont essayé de décrire les mots composés en Yorùbá (Bámgbósé 1964, 1966, 1982; Awóbùlúyì 1978; Awóyalé 1988). Cette étude a pour but d'expliquer la composition de ces mots par la théorie de l'incorporation. Nous essayons de montrer que la théorie de l'incorporation est la théorie la plus efficace pour expliquer la plupart des mots composés en Yorùbá. Comme exemples de l'incorporation, on considère les mots complexes qui ont les compositions suivantes:

IN =	V + N	→	V
IV =	N + V	→	SN + Gérondif
	SN + V	→	N
	V + V	→	V

On constate dans cette étude que l'incorporation en Yorùbá est un processus lexical qui ne nécessite pas toujours un changement de catégorie grammaticale.

0. INTRODUCTION

Incorporation is a process involving "a movement of an X^0 from an independent base structure position to combine with another X^0 in the syntax", creating a grammatical changing process (Baker 1988:22). The grammatical category, which attaches itself to (or merges with) another, loses its own categorial status in the process. Incorporation thus creates, morphologically, a complex category of the X^0 level, and syntactically, a link between two positions in the phrase marker. This allows for both a morphological and a syntactic analysis of incorporation. According to Massam (2001:153), noun incorporation (NI) is a phenomenon whereby a noun bearing a semantic role canonically expressed as an internal argument or adjunct phrase, instead forms a single V^0 morphological unit along with its verb. The following example from Yorùbá illustrates this:

(1)	NI	V + N	→	V
		rán etí	→	rántí
		send ear		remember

In verb incorporation (VI), a verb is swallowed up by the noun or the verb, which is the first stem, resulting in an N, as in

(2) a. VI N + V \longrightarrow N
 ojú **mọ́** **ojúmọ́**
 eye clear daybreak

or as one verb semantically, though two verbs syntactically in a Serial Verb Construction:

b. V + V \longrightarrow V
 bẹ̀ **wò** **bèwò**
 beg see visit

That incorporation is a word-building process is clear. The question is whether incorporation is essentially a syntactic process or a lexical one. Baker (*ibid.*), Sadock (1985), Borer (1988), Uwalaka (1995) all argue for a syntactic analysis of incorporation because to them, incorporation constitutes a type of interface between morphology and syntax; but to Mithum (1984) and Rosen (1989), NI is devoid of syntactic interest, it is a lexical process. According to Mithum (1984), incorporation is a solidly morphological device that derives lexical items, not sentences. Her argument is for the autonomy of syntax and morphology because all languages, which exhibit such morphological structure (as NI), also have syntactic paraphrases. In such languages, the productive morphological constructions of this type always exist alongside their syntactic analogs. This indicates that the morphologisation itself must be functional.

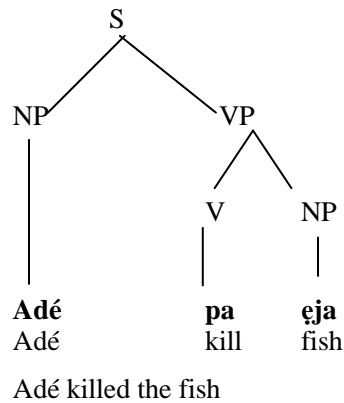
This implies that NI, though productive, is not free in the sense that syntactic operations can be. Since some languages (e.g. Mohawk, the object of Mithum's investigation), have no alternative to NI, NI cannot be less productive than the syntactic process whose function it obligatorily assumes. The strongest cases for incorporation have been made for languages such as West Greenlandic (Sadock 1980,1986), Mohawk, (Postal 1962, Mithum 1984), Chukchi, (Spencer 1995) as well as some other polysynthetic languages, (Sapir 1911).

Not much work has been done on the subject of incorporation in Yorùbá. There have been studies of Yorùbá complex words, especially compounding (Bámgbóşé 1964,1966,1982; Awóbùlúyí 1978; Rowlands 1969; Awóyalé 1975, 1981,1988), but to my knowledge, no linguist has tried to explain the nature of Yorùbá complex words through the theory of incorporation. Madugu's (1995) work, which is examined later on in this study, is an attempt to demonstrate the existence of incorporation in Yorùbá.

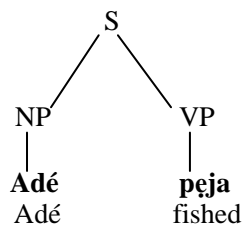
1. NOUN INCORPORATION IN YORÙBÁ

There are two basic approaches to NI, the syntactic approach (Baker 1988, Borer 1988, Sadock 1985,1986; Uwalaka 1995), and the lexical approach (Mithum 1984, 1986, Di Sciullo & Williams 1987, Rosen 1989). Baker, justifying the syntactic approach to incorporation, claims that NI involves the formation of a word consisting of the verb and the nominal head of one of that verb's arguments, constructed on the basis of the structure of a sentence, hence within the syntax. The head noun is moved out of its NP and adjoined to the verb as in the examples from Yorùbá below:

(3) a.



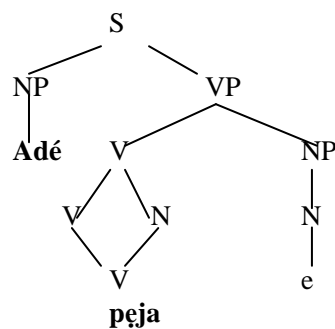
b.



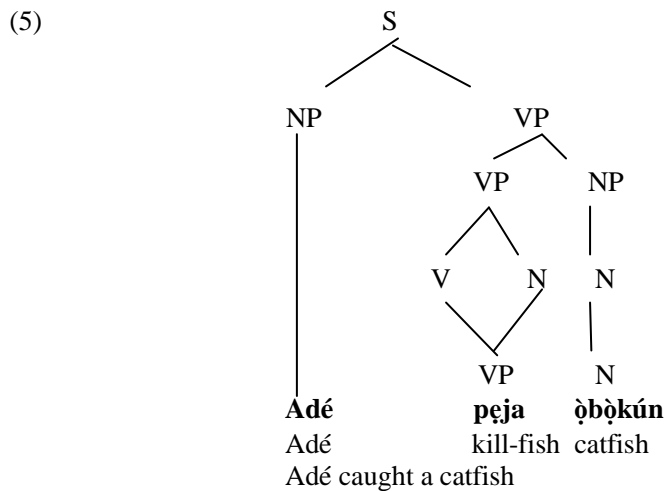
The analysis above shows that the complement of the V **pa** 'kill' in (a), which is **ẹja** 'fish', becomes a subpart of the word containing the verb.

Baker (1988) and Sadock (1986) claim that in incorporation, the noun, which enters into a compound with a verb, remains syntactically active. The example above in (3b) illustrates this point, where, as Sadock claims, the incorporated noun retains its referential properties. The incorporated noun also has the ability to strand other material in its syntactic phrase. This, according to Baker, means that in syntactic NI, it is possible to leave a copy of the incorporated N behind, as shown in (4) below:

(4)



e in the structure above represents the 'copy', which in morphological term is another lexical item, the same as the incorporated item. In (4), **ẹja** 'fish' is incorporated into the V **pa** 'kill', meaning 'to fish' and the copy is left behind as *e*. According to Di Sciullo & Williams, this copy may be another word entirely. Yorùbá data support this claim, as illustrated below:



In the above structure, **òbòkún** 'catfish', the copy left behind, is a kind of fish, which is not an exact copy of the incorporated noun. This shows that even if we agree that a copy of an incorporated noun can be left behind, in Yorùbá, this copy must be one that is compatible, semantically with the incorporated noun. This is why the following construction is ill formed:

- (6) ***Adé peja ajá**
 *Adé fished dog

A dog is not a kind of fish and so cannot be a copy of the incorporated noun.

In the lexicalist camp, NI can be seen as an argument structure operation and therefore non-syntactic. Mithum (1984, 1986), Di Sciullo & Williams (1987) Rosen (1989) all view incorporation as a lexical process. In incorporation, a noun is associated with a verb that has an argument structure, which is satisfied, by the incorporated noun. In general, the semantic content of the incorporated noun is interpreted as specifying the relevant argument position. This is illustrated below:

- (7) **Olú jẹran**
 (**Olú jẹ + ẹran**)
 Olú eat meat
 Olú ate meat

Ẹran 'meat' satisfies the argument structure of **jẹ** 'eat' within the compound. The argument position can be further specified, as in (8):

- (8) **Olú jẹran ajá**
 Olú eat meat dog
 Olú ate dog meat

In this case, the semantic material supplied by the relevant argument position must be unified with the lexically specified semantic material; therefore, **ẹran ajá** 'dog meat' collocate well. Similarly, as in (5), **ẹja òbòkún** collate well, since **òbòkún** 'catfish' is

a kind of fish, therefore the unification succeeds. On the other hand, in (6) ***ẹja ajá** do not collocate since **ajá** ‘dog’ is not a kind of fish, so unification fails and the sentence in (6) is anomalous.

The claim by the lexicalists is that these compounds formed by incorporation are a typical lexical process formed by word structure rules, (a type of compounding) not visible to syntax. Therefore words like **peja** ‘to fish’ **rẹrínín** ‘to laugh’, **kọrin** ‘to sing’ etc. are formed directly in the lexicon (Sapir 1911). These are examples of inherent complement verbs, well-known cross-linguistically, especially among most languages of the Kwa family. Examples of such verbs in Yorùbá include the following:

(9)	rẹrínín	rín	ẹrín¹
		laugh	laughter
		to laugh	
	lálàá	lá	àlá
		dream	dream
		to dream	
	kọrin	kọ	orin
		sing	song
		to sing	
	jẹun	jẹ	ohun
		eat	something
		to eat/dine	

Yorùbá data support the claim by Rosen (1989) that there are two types of productive NI, both of which are lexical. They are as follows:

- A. The classifier NI which produces compound forms that continue to behave like transitive verbs, (in other words, the arguments are still syntactically active).
- B. The compound NI, which is a more truly lexical type of compounding in which a verb is detransitivised.

¹ When two words combine and the last syllable of the first word carries a high tone while the first syllable of the second word has a low tone followed by a high tone in the second syllable, the low tone is deleted, but a vestige of the low tone still remains in speech. There are two ways of representing the resultant structure in Yorùbá:

(i) In morphological studies, an apostrophe is inserted in between the words to indicate where the low tone has been elided, as shown below:

rín + ẹrín → **rẹ'рін**
lá + àlá → **lá'lá**

(ii) Orthographically, the final vowel of the second word is doubled and the deleted low tone is indicated on the first of the doubled vowel, as in

rín + ẹrín → **rẹrínín**
lá + àlá → **lálàá**

In this work, we have adopted the second convention. This is the orthography approved by the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on Education. (Bámgbóşé 1981).

1.1 THE CLASSIFIER NI

The complex verb resulting from this type of incorporation is seen as being transitive. This is equivalent to Baker's syntactic NI. Here in a construction, the head of the direct object noun phrase is adjoined to the verb root, leaving a trace of the category N^0 , which must be properly governed by the compounded noun. This is possible only if the NP from which incorporation occurs is a complement to the verb. This is essentially the implication of Rosen's (1989) lexical approach to NI. According to her, the complex verb retains the argument structure of a transitive verb, meaning that an argument can still appear after the complex verb, and this should be able to bear modification. This indeed is supported by data from Yorùbá showing what can be regarded as classifier NI, as the data in (9) above show. Some are repeated below:

(10) kọrin	(kọ + orin) sing song	to sing
peja	(pa + eja) kill fish	to fish
wakò	(wa + ọkò) drive car	to drive
sáré	(sá + aré) run running	to run
fójú	(fọ + ọjú) break eye	be blind , be ignorant, be uncivilised
jẹun	(jẹ + ohun) eat (some)thing	to eat
rẹrínín	(rín ẹrín) laugh laughter	to laugh
láláá	(lá + àlá) dream dream	to dream
sunkún	(sun + ẹkún) draw tears	to weep

Some linguists will argue that in the data above (9 and 10), we are actually dealing with assimilated forms rather than compounds formed by incorporation, especially since the nouns (or arguments of the verbs) remain syntactically transparent, and can be modified. Consider (11):

- (11) a. **Adé peja ọ̀bòkún**
Adé kill fish catfish Adé caught a catfish
- b. **Bísí wakò ofurufú**
Bísí drive vehicle sky Bísí flew an airplane

- c. **Olú sáré ìje**
Olú run running competition Olú ran a race
- d. **Sule fójú kan**
Sule break eye one Sule is blind in one eye
- e. **Kólá kọrin ayò**
Kólá sing song joy Kólá sang a happy song
- f. **Bólá rẹ̀rinín ako**
Bólá laugh laughter masculine Bólá gave a laughter of defiance

The data above show that the incorporated nouns are still syntactically active and can be modified as follows:

- (12) N – N
- a. **ẹja òbòkún**
fish catfish catfish
- b. **ọkò ofurufu**
vehicle sky aeroplane
- c. **aré ìje**
race competition competitive race
- d. **ọjú kan**
eye one one eye
- e. **orin ayò**
song joy song of joy`
- f. **ẹ̀rín ako**
laughter male laughter of defiance

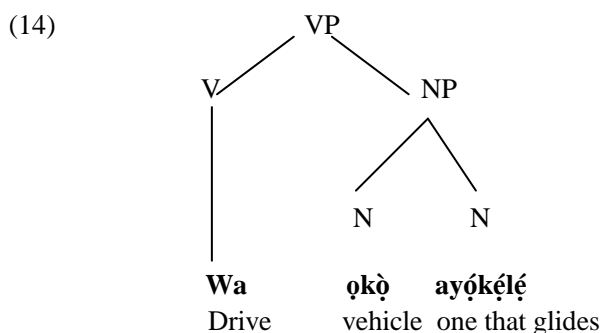
(12a-c) are endocentric, (also called a determinative) where there is a modifier (determinant) and a modified element (the determinatum). The determinatum, for example **ẹja** ‘fish’ names a set of denotata, while the determinant **òbòkún** restricts it to a subset. Therefore, **òbòkún** ‘catfish’ is a kind of fish; **ọkò ofurufu** ‘aeroplane’ is a kind of vehicle; **aré ìje** ‘competitive race’ is a kind of race. (12d) shows that a countable noun can be modified by a number. In (12e-f), the second N describes the nature of the first N. Unlike in (12a-c), the modifying nouns are not NP objects. They are instrumental, rather similar to the following:

- (13) **kọkọró ọ ilẹ̀kùn**
key (ass.) door door key
- ilé e Bísí**
house (ass.) Bísí Bísí’s house

The relationship between each of the N–N combinations above is genitival. The first noun is the possessed while the second is the possessor. In between the nouns is an associative marker, which is always the same vowel as the last vowel of the

preceding word. The associative marker has a mid tone, regardless of the tone of the preceding vowel. The associative marker can also appear in (12e-f), although it is often omitted in speech; but it is not omitted in a genitival /possessive relationship.

There are two ways we propose to treat the V + N combinations as those of 11. They can be treated either as classifier NI, as in the sense proposed by Rosen (1989), or they can be treated as syntactic phrases, in which case, they are not instances of incorporation. Consider the structure below:



In the above structure, **wa okò** is not a compound. The argument of **wà** 'drive' is an N – N construction, **okò ayókélé** 'a car'. It is an endocentric compound with **ayókélé** as the specifier and **okò** as the head. The above construction is therefore a syntactic phrase. Another word like **òfurufú** 'air', or **ojú-irin** 'rail' can replace **ayókélé** to derive the following:

- (15) **okò òfurufú**
 vehicle sky an aeroplane
- okò ojú-irin**
 vehicle eye steel a train

Now, examine the following sentence:

- (16) **Olú lè wakò**
 Olú can drive-vehicle Olú can drive

In the above data, the verb, **wà** 'drive' incorporates **okò** 'vehicle'. A car in 14 is specific, while in (16) it is general. In other words, **wakò** in (16) describes a skill, the ability to drive any vehicle, which may include an aeroplane, a train or anything that can be described as **okò**, 'a vehicle'. The VP **wakò** can be modified an adverb, like **jéjéjé** 'gently' as shown in (17a) below:

- (17) a. **wakò jéjéjé**
 drive gently
- b. **wà á jéjéjé**
 drive it gently

In (16) the VP **wakò** is regarded as NI. As shown in 17a, it can be modified by **jéjé** ‘gently’ an adverb. However, (14) (as illustrated in (17b)) does not reflect NI because **òkò** in **wakò** is pronominalised and is therefore referentially transparent. Data such as those in (10) are examples of inherent complement verbs. It is therefore not a surprise that they are treated as Classifier Noun Incorporation. This means that the many of the NPs can be fronted or focused, leaving the verb behind, as shown below:

- (18)
- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| a. | Adé kòrin. | Adé sang |
| b. | Orin ni Adé kò.
Song it is Adé sing. | It is a song that Adé sang |
| c. | Orin ni Adé kò bí?
Song it is Adé sing | Is it a song that Adé sang? |
| d. | Orin ayò ni Adé kò
Song joy it is Adé sing. | It is a happy song that Adé sang |
| e. | Adé kòrin kíkankíkan
Adé sing song (ideophone) | Adé sang heartily |
| f. | Adé kòrin dárádára
Adé sing song good | Adé sang a beautiful song /
Adé sang beautifully |
| g. | Adé kòrin dárádára dárádára
Adé sing song good well | Adé sang a beautiful song /well /
beautifully |

This favours Rosen’s analysis of such compound forms as classifier Noun Incorporation whose complements remain syntactically active, and can be modified by an NP as in (18d). However, in (18e), it is not the complement but the whole VP, which is modified, expectedly, by an adverbial phrase. (18f) is ambiguous as to whether it is the complement that is modified, *a beautiful song*, or the whole VP is modified, ‘sings beautifully’. (18g) shows that **dárádára** can be an adjective or an adverb, depending on the context, but **kíkankíkan** can only be an adverb.

1.2 THE COMPOUND NI

In the compound NI, the incorporated noun satisfies the argument structure of the verb. There can therefore be no stranded material or lexical NP in object position. This is the case with complex verbs, which have idiomatic meanings in Yorùbá. Consider the following data:

- (19)
- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------|
| a. | bínú (bí + ínú)
deliver stomach | be angry |
| | gbésè (gbé ẹ̀sẹ̀)
carry leg | die |
| | yíwọ́ (yí + ọwọ́)
turn hand | be out of control |

kánjú (kán + ojú)	drop eye	hurry
yọnu (yọ + enu)	pick mouth	give trouble
lawó (la + owó)	open hand	be generous
fójú (fó + ojú)	break eye	be ignorant / uncivilized / blind
lajú (la + ojú)	open eye	be civilized / be wise
tijú (tì + ojú)	push eye	be timid / ashamed
féwó (fé + owó)	want hand	steal
wàjà (wọ + àjà)	enter loft	die
kéran (kó + eran)	gather meat	be in trouble
b. jéwó (jé + owó)	answer hand	confess
fèràn (fé + oràn)	want affair	love
rántí (rán + etí)	send ear	remember

Characteristically, the initial vowel of the incorporated noun is assimilated into the verb with which it forms a compound, even though there are no hard and fast rules of vowel deletion yet. Sometimes the meanings of the units in the derived word can be identified, other times, they cannot. Semantically, the forms are used as unit verbs and since they are collocations with idiomatic meanings, it means that the meanings of each of the forms are not the combined meanings of the units making up the forms, as shown in (19) above. The complex verbs in 19a are intransitive while those in (19b) have a transitive meaning; that means that they can occur with NP objects as illustrated below:

- (20) a. **Olú jéwó èsè rẹ.**
 Olú answer-hand sin his Olú confesses his sin
- b. **Ojó fèràn oúnjẹ**
 Ojó like food Ojó likes food

- c. **Mo rántí orúkọ rẹ**
 I send-ear name his I remember his/her/its name

A construction can be ambiguous as to whether it is a phrase or a compound; for example, in (21) below, the complex verb **lawó** is nominalised as a gerund:

- (21) a. **lílawó ti Baba lawó ...**,
 ing.open hand that Father open hand... or
 b. **lílà ti Baba lawó ...**
 ing. open that Father open hand...

In (21) above, either the whole complex verb, as in (21a), or only the verb, as in (21b), undergoes gerundive reduplication. Therefore, (21) will be interpreted as (22a) or (22b) below:

- (22) a. The fact that Father is generous
 b. The fact that father opens his hand ...

(21a) or (21b)b with the idiomatic meaning as in (22a) is therefore a case of incorporation. It is a form of compounding requiring no movement rules as suggested by Baker (1988), and others. The noun then loses its categorial status to the verb that incorporates it. This is what has occurred in the data of (19). The nouns no longer play their prototypic function (Madugu 1995). That means that they do not point physically to the physical object they suggest. By failing to play their prototypic role, they lose their status to the incorporating verbs. These constructions are therefore generated in the lexicon.

The VP compounds such as those in (19) can be further nominalised, by using two strategies: first, the morpheme **i-**, a nominalising prefix, can be prefixed to the VP, yielding the following:

- (23) **fójú** be blind/ignorant
ìfójú blindness/ignorance
tijú be shy/ashamed
ìtijú shyness/shame
féwó pilfer/steal
ìféwó pilferage/theft

The second strategy is the process of partial reduplication. In this type of reduplication, a CV prefix is attached to the verb. The consonant of the CV prefix is identical with the consonant of the base. The vowel is invariably **í-** with a high tone. This process gives rise to the gerund, as illustrated below:

- (24) **rántí** remember
rírántí remembering
fẹrà̀n love
fífẹ̀rà̀n loving
wàjà die
wíwàjà dying

Almost all verbs in Yorùbá can undergo gerundive reduplication. This process is crucial to our analysis of Verb incorporation in the next section.

2. VERB INCORPORATION (VI)

VI is an instance of a verb being swallowed up by a noun or verb. (25) represents the simple rule of VI:

- (25) a. $N + V \longrightarrow N$
 b. $V + V \longrightarrow V$

(25a) states that a noun incorporates a verb and yields a noun. When a verb is incorporated into another verb, as in the case of (25b), the result is another verb.

We have stated that many of the NPs in the examples of (10) can be focused. The compounds are regarded as classifier Noun Incorporation. Focusing involves the movement of an NP object from its base position. This reversal of word order is significant in Yorùbá and can result in Verb incorporation. Consider the following:

- (26) a. **bínú** be angry
ìbínú anger
bíbínú (the act of) being angry
inú bíbí (the act/state of) being angry
kánjú hurry(V)
ìkánjú hurry/haste(N)
kíkánjú (the act of) hurrying
ojú kíkán (the act of) hurrying
lílajú (the act/state of) opening eyes/being civilized
ojú lílà opening (one's) eyes/ being civilized
- b. **jíjéwó** (the act of) confessing
***owó jíjé** *answering hand/ confessing.
yíyọnu (the act of) giving trouble
***enu yíyọ** giving trouble

Many of the compounds that can permit a reversal of word order are those that are regarded as classifier NI and those whose NP can be focused. Hence the unacceptability of the examples in 26b.

2.1 $N + V \longrightarrow NP + Gerund$

Madugu (1995) demonstrates the existence of VI in Yorùbá by giving the following examples:

- (27) a. **otí mu otí mímu**
 wine drink wine drinking
- b. **aşo hun aşo híhun**
 cloth weave cloth weaving

Madugu's explanation is that the verb (**mu** 'drink' / **hun** 'weave'), which is incorporated, is partially reduplicated. As already demonstrated above (24, 26), most

verbs in Yorùbá can be partially reduplicated, giving rise to the gerund, in other words, gerunds are derived from the verb root through a process of partial reduplication. The following are further examples illustrating this phenomenon:

	N	V	NP	Gerund
(28)	aṣọ	fọ	aṣọ	fiṣọ
	cloth	wash	cloth	washing
	omi	mu	omi	mímu
	water	drink	water	drinking
	orin	kọ	orin	kíkọ
	song	sing	singing	
	oorun	sùn	oorun	sísùn
	sleep(N)	sleep (V)	sleeping	
	óúnjẹ	sẹ	óúnjẹ	sísẹ
	food	cook	cooking	
	ẹrín	rín	ẹrín	rírín
	laughter	laugh	laughing	
	ọkọ	wà	ọkọ	wíwà
	vehicle	drive	driving	

In the data above, the verbs are transitive verbs and the nouns are their direct objects (see example 10). The incorporation constructions are derived from the syntactic structure; for example, **aṣọ fiṣọ** ‘cloth washing’ is derived from the structure **fọ aṣọ** ‘wash clothes’. This is true of all the constructions in (28). VI of the type of (28) is not fused in the lexicon, and to a large extent, the features of each unit of the VI contribute to meaning of the whole constructions. It is also possible for the constructions to be ambiguous, for example, the sentence in (27) can be interpreted as either (a) or (b) as shown below:

- (29) **Mo fẹràn aṣọ híhun**
 I like cloth weaving
 a. I like the act of weaving cloth
 b. I like cloth that is woven

However, data such as those below, as cases of VI, will have only one interpretation:

	N	V	NP	Gerund
(30)	iwé	kọ	iwé kíkọ	
	book	write	(the act of) writing	
	ilé	kọ	ilé kíkọ	
	house	build	(the act of) building (a house)	
	ilé	lọ	ilé lílọ	
	house	go	(the act of) going home	

ojà	tà	ojà tíà
market	sell	(the act of) selling

Secondly, the explanation for the N + V combinations which act as NP + Gerund, lies in the reversal of word order, which is a common phenomenon across languages. To explain the relationship between the noun and the verb, the noun acquires an associative or possessive function, which may manifest in a change of tone. Consider the following:

- (31) a. **mólẹ̀** **mọ́ + ilẹ̀**
 light ground give light
- ìmólẹ̀** **ì + mọ́ + ilẹ̀**
 Prefix light ground (a) light
- mímólẹ̀** **mí + mọ́ + ilẹ̀**
 ing. light ground giving light
- ilẹ̀ mímọ́** giving light (reversal of word order)
- ilẹ̀mọ́** **ilẹ̀ + mọ́**
 ground is-light/clear dawn (lexicalised)

This process will account for the structure of the following lexicalised expressions, which we consider are a result of VI:

- (32) NP + V
- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| ilẹ̀ | mọ́ | ilẹ̀mọ́ |
| ground | is light/clear | dawn |
| ilẹ̀ | şú | ileşú |
| ground | darkens | night fall |
| ojú | mọ́ | ojúmọ́ |
| eye | is light/clear | day (time) |
| okùn | fà | okùnfà |
| rope | pull | ?pulley |
| ojú | tì | ojútì |
| eye | push | shame |

The data above are examples of intransitive verb constructions, where the categories NPs + V = N are fused in lexicon. They are lexicalised and have idiosyncratic meanings.

2.2 V + V → V

The second type of VI is when a verb incorporates another verb to produce a compound verb. What used to be called splitting verbs (Bámgbóşé 1966,1982; Awóbùlúyì 1978) are examples of V-V compounds where incorporation has taken place at a semantic level. V₂ incorporates into V₁ and the meaning of the resulting

derivation is idiosyncratic, and is not easily predictable from the meaning of each verb. However at the syntactic level, the two verbs remain separate as V_1 and V_2 of a type of Serial Verb Construction. Typically, serial verbs are a succession of two or more verbs with one syntactic subject and one aspect/tense value shown on V_1 whilst V_2 is realised as a root only. However, examples in the literature from other languages have shown that even that statement holds in many cases only where the Tense/Aspect of V_1 is Past/Completive.

The following examples illustrate splitting serial verbs in Yorùbá:

- (33) a. **gbà gbọ**
 receive hear believe
- Adé gba Jídé gbọ**
 Adé receive Jidé hear Adé believes Jidé
- Jídé ni Adé gbàgbọ.**
 Jidé it is Adé receive-hear It is Jidé that Adé believes
- b. **bà jẹ**
 touch answer spoil
- Adé ba ọkọ jẹ**
 Adé spoiled the car
- Ọkọ ti Adé bájẹ...**
 The car that Adé spoiled
- c. **bẹ wò**
 beg see visit
- Olú bẹ mí wo**
 Olú visited me
- Emi ni Olú bẹwò**
 It was I that Olú visited

Other examples include the following:

- (34) **tàn jẹ**
 trick eat deceive
- rẹ jẹ**
 cut eat cheat
- bá wí**
 meet say scold
- tú ká**
 loose spread scatter
- pa pọ**
 rub together combine
- ṣe tì**
 do fail fail to accomplish

Splitting serial verbs are fixed collocations of verbs because both verbs must be present for the sentence in which they appear to be meaningful, for example.

- (35) a. **Olú bẹ mí wo** Olú visited me
 b. **Olú bẹ mí** Olú begged me
 c. **Olú wò mí** Olú looked at me

The sentences in (35) show that the meaning of the SVC in (a) is different from the meaning of each unit in the simplex sentences of (b) and (c). Moreover, the components of some serial verbs are meaningless in minimal sentences as (36) shows.

- (36) a. **Adé ba ọkọ jé** Adé spoiled the car
 b. ***Adé ba ọkọ** *Adé landed the car
 c. ***Adé jẹ ọkọ** *Adé ate the car

So called Splitting serial verbs are therefore cases of collocations of verbs with a meaning in isolation or no obvious separate meaning at all, resulting in a semantic compound with its own idiosyncratic meaning. Traditionally they have been listed as single units in the lexicon, rather than derived by any rules, morphological or syntactic. Splitting verbs were referred to as ‘splitting’ because when used with an object, the compound verb appears to split into two halves and the object is inserted between them; as in (35a) and (36a), otherwise, they are used as a unit, as in (37):

- (37) a. **Ilẹkun padé**
 door close The door closed
 b. **Bàbá ni mo bẹwò**
 Father it is I visit It was father I visited
 c. **Ọkọ kò ẹ é túnṣe**
 Car not do repair The car cannot be repaired

Compound verbs such as those above are best formed directly in the lexicon because there are no transformational rules that can explain their derivations from meaningful units. We are claiming here that so-called splitting verbs are verbs with lexical integrity and that the incorporation that has taken place in these compounds is a lexical process. However at the syntactic level, that is, on the surface, if they can be split by inserting a noun phrase object, they should be considered as two separate verbs in a kind of Serial Verb Construction. This type has been given various names in the literature, for example, Essential Combination (Christaller 1875), Idiomatic SVCs, or Complex SVCs (Bamgbósé 1982)

3. CONCLUSION

Our investigation of the Yorùbá language shows that noun incorporation and verb incorporation exist in the language, although they cannot be claimed to be always obligatory. This paper has argued for a lexical analysis of incorporation in Yorùbá. NI and VI in Yorùbá have been shown to be a form of compounding, sometimes involving a reversal of word order, as in VI and it is not always possible to gloss the different units making up the compound word. The lexical items derived by incorporation are shown to have either achieved morphological entity and semantic

isolation (as in **ojúù** 'eye push 'shame'), or they are in the process of doing so, in which case, they may constitute an ambiguity, (as in **lawó** 'open one's hand' or 'be generous').

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