

ÍGÁLÂ CONCORD SYSTEM

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Abstract

This paper on concord examines the complex system of grammatical agreement in Igala language as instantiating certain theoretical assumptions for a fairly comprehensive description of number agreements across nominal and verbal categories in the language. The paper establishes that Igala operates different specifications of plurality for animate and inanimate featured noun phrases (NPs) in constructions. Overt or covert, however, plural NPs and pronominal clitics in Igala are licensed only to occur with plural forms of verbs in sentences. In the context of complex predicates, modifying verb forms in separate verb and serial verb constructions also agrees with the main verbs in terms of grammatical number distinction which the language makes as singular or plural. The semantic specification of the Igala agreement system considers the idea of count-mass nouns. Furthermore, the concept of concord in certain constructions is demonstrated to be signaled in the modifying verb only by the initial consonantal element; a rarity that shows direct access of phonological elements to semantic properties in the grammar of Igala. Four types of concord relationships in the Igala minimal clause are subject-verb, object-verb, verb-modifying verb and verb-mass noun concord.

Keywords: Igala, concord system, subject-verb concord, object-verb concord, verb-modifying verb concord.

Àdàójí Òtákáda

Òtákáda lugbo ùjò òlâ yí gò álu kí ùtúchê ùjòálu òlâ éfù ìgirámà Ígálâ du íbe òché ójì ùjòálu òlâ éfù íchí ònè tẹ éjú gede éfù ùjòálu álukà kí ì dé éfù ójìlè ádóódú kpáyí áche é Ígálâ. Òtákáda yí du ñà pé kí ònà kí Ígálâ á kà òwò ùchê ádóódú ñéímí che ójójí nwú ònà kí íchí yí á kà òwò ùchê ádóódú mánéímí. Májá má májá, òwò ùchê ádóódú kpáyí álinéó bí ádóódú é Ígálâ á bá òwò áche jò álu éfù ùtúchê éyó íbe. Íchenwu kí ì bá ètè éyó íbe òwò lè, áche ùnwúlò éfù áche ènà kpaáyí áche èlò á bá áche ètè jò álu álukà kí ì che òké kpáyí òwò éfù íchí yí. Utéjúgede ichimátikichí ùtúchê ùjò álu Ígálâ nẹ énwu lugbo ádóódúkáálukà-ádóódúmákáálukà éfù nwu. Anúbì éyí gẹ, énwu lugbo ùjòálu òlâ ùchê òkà tẹjúgede lefù òké éyó òlâ éjúódúdu éfù áche ùnwúlò. Énwu égò kí á kà yí kí ì má tẹ òtè nwú íchí ònè hià ní yí du ñà kí énwu kwò éfù ifonólòjì lè kpàlâ rú énwu ichimátikichí éfù ìgirámà Ígálâ. Òtákáda yí jùwe ùtúchê ùjòálu òlâ éfù ìgirámà Ígálâ rú é ògbogágá mò èlè: éjójí éyó íbe-áche, èòkpù éyó íbe-áche, éáche-áche ùnwúlò kpáyí éádóódú kà álukà-ádóódú má kà álukà.

Òlâ ògbogágá: Ígálâ, ùtúchê ùjòálu òlâ, ùjòálu òlâ éyó òlâ éjójí éyó íbe-áche, ùjòálu òlâ éyó òlâ èòkpù éyó íbe-áche, ùjòálu òlâ éyó òlâ éáche-áche ùnwúlò.

1. Introduction¹

This paper is a description of Igala concord paradigms. Igala is a West Benue-Congo language spoken majorly in Kogi State, Nigeria by the Igala ethnic group. The language is closely related to Yoruba and Itsekiri languages; the three languages constituting the Yoruboid subgroup, according to Akinkugbe (1978) and Capo (1989). The co-variation of sentence constituents in terms of categories such as number, gender, and case is by no means simplistically applicable in terms of cross-linguistics. Different languages have different conditions and complexities of descriptions which makes the analysis of the manifestation of agreement in core grammars a desirable linguistic enterprise. The main focus of this paper will be to provide an analysis of the various types of agreement in Igala, describing the main tendencies of the language as far as concord or grammatical agreement relations of sentence constituents are concerned. Ejeba (2016) is a previous research that touches on the issue of concord in Igala. The focus of this literature is however not specifically on grammatical concord but on the general entire grammar of the language.

¹The research output contained in this work has gained directly from personal communications with my great teacher and our patriarch of the Port Harcourt School of Linguistics, Professor Emmanuel 'Nolue Emenanjo (1943 - 2016). We had discussions in 2007 after which he encouraged me to put down my observations on the concord system of Igala. He was the first to discuss the draft of the work which I submitted to him in longhand at the time. He was and still is such a great inspiration to generations of linguists and people interested in the grammar of the languages of Nigeria.

The discussion on the concord system in this literature falls specifically within the section on morphosyntactic properties of elements such as tones, clitics, and the secondary grammatical categories in the language. This previous literature enumerates some elements of the clause within which concord operates in Igala, such as subject-verb, verb-object, and main verb-modifying verb concord. A difference between Ejeba (2016) and the present work however is that whereas Ejeba (2016) focuses on a broad number of issues in the grammar of Igala and thus the treatment of grammatical concord is merely incidental, the present work is of more descriptive depth. The particular focus of the present description is on the analysis of the Igala concord system, situating the discussion in a universe of literature review on related phenomena in a manner that provides cross-linguistic insight on concordial relations beyond Ejeba (2016).

Furthermore, Ejeba (2016) identifies three classes of concord whereas the present paper identifies four. The most significant difference between the literature on the Igala concord system and the present paper however is the attention that the present work gives to the description of the rare case of the bound concordial elements which manifest as t-/r- for Igala in certain agreement imposed alternations.

1.1. Methodology

Language samples for this paper come from contact with Igala native speech in the natural environment of day-to-day social interactions and linguistic contact. Beyond this incidental sampling procedure, the researcher conducted unstructured elicitation interviews with several native speakers with a focus on the concord elements in Igala. Among these were three female native speakers aged 69, 45, and 32 years, and two male native speakers aged 82 and 40 years. All the language consultants were bilinguals proficient at least in Igala and English languages. They all use Igala in a wide number of domains for interpersonal communication. The standard methods of data collection were supplemented by the researcher's intuitive knowledge as a native speaker of the Dekina variety of Igala and archival evidence.

The data presented for analysis use morpheme-by-morpheme mapping of object language to metalanguage structures followed by a translation, in keeping with the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (2015) Leipzig Convention for interlinear glossing (Available: <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resource/glossing-rules.php>). Representation of the object language utilizes orthographic valued symbols based on Miachi and Armstrong (1986) with some modifications, as represented in Ejeba (2016). Whereas all the works on Igala phonology seem to recognize the seven basic vowel systems of the language, /i, e, ε, a, ɔ, o, u/ (these are represented orthographically as <i, e, ε, a, ɔ, o, u> respectively), the disparity in opinions lie in the patterning of the vowels and the recognition or otherwise of distinctive vowel length. Considering consonants, Miachi and Armstrong (1986) recognize 25 including /p, b, t, d, k, g, kp, gb, k^w, g^w, f, h, tʃ, dʒ, m, n, ɲ, ŋ, ŋ^m, ŋ^w, ŋ^{wu}, r, l, j, w/. These were the consonants of the language approved in 1986 by the National Language Centre, Lagos, under the Nigeria Ministry of Education. Mason and Nordman (nd) recognize 24 of these, leaving out /ŋ^{wu}/, which is in an actual sense a syllable rather than a phoneme. Omachonu (2000) recognizes 23 of the approved number, discountenancing two: /ŋ^m, ŋ^{wu}/. Ejeba (2016) upholds Omachonu's 23 in addition to five others, /pⁱ, bⁱ, fⁱ, mⁱ, lⁱ/, bringing the total number of Igala consonants to 28. Ejeba (2016) notes that the labial velar nasal [ŋ^m] is an allophone of the bilabial nasal /m/, particularly occurring in the speech of some speakers of the Dekina variety of Igala in free variation with the phoneme, after an initial high vowel. The tone marking convention in the work follows the representation of the high on acute accent (´), the low tone on grave accent (`), and the mid-tone left unmarked. Table 1 following shows Igala consonant phonemes with orthographic representations, based on Ejeba (2016).

Table 1 *Igala Consonant Phonemes*

<i>Consonant Symbol</i>	<i>Lexical Illustration</i>	<i>Orthographic Symbol</i>	<i>Orthographic Transcription</i>
p	èpí 'penis'	p	èpí
p^j	ápíépíê 'African pied hornbill'	pi	ápíepiê
b	èbí 'spring(n)'	b	èbí
b^j	ábíá 'dog'	bi	ábíá
t	èjìtà 'rubbish heap'	t	èyità
d	èjìdà 'transfiguration'	d	èyìdà
k	íkâ 'garden egg'	k	íkâ
k^w	àk ^w ú 'a type of proverb'	kw	àkwú
g	ígâ 'shoot(n)'	g	ígâ
g^w	àg ^w ú 'mortar'	gw	àgwú
kp	g' 'g'	kp	ìkpà
gb	ìgbà 'horn(n)'	gb	ìgbà
f	òfé 'buttocks'	f	òfé
f^j	èfíá 'watery excrement'	fi	èfíá
h	éhî 'wild boar'	h	éhî
m	àmú 'incarceration'	m	àmú
m^j	ímíε 'dew on grass'	mi	ímíε
n	ónú 'king'	n	ónú
ɲ	àɲà 'bicycle/horse'	ny	ànyà
ŋ	ínɔ 'honey'	ñ	ínɔ
ŋ^w	ín ^w â 'bramble'	nw	ínwâ
r	òrɔ 'okra'	r	òrò
tʃ	ètʃá 'faded'	ch	èchá
dʒ	èdʒá 'rude speech'	j	èjá
l	élé 'python'	l	élé
l̥	ùl̥éna 'jealousy'	li	ùliéna
j	ìje 'mother'	y	ìye
w	ìwá 'dirt'	w	ìwá

This paper on Igala concord utilizes for analysis a descriptive paradigm with no particular recourse to a specific linguistic theory. The descriptive leaning of the paper owes much debt to Corbett's (2004) theoretical insight on a wide range of issues relating to grammatical numbers, which constitutes concordial relations cross-linguistically. Section 1 of this paper is the introductory part of the work dealing with basic information on Igala language, grammatical concord, and the methodology utilized in carrying out the study. Section 2 is the theoretical aspect of this paper; it discusses major ideas on grammatical

concord in human language as reflected in the literature with empirical bases in the study of some languages. Section 3 outlines the categories of sentence constituents on which grammatical number is marked in Igala. Section 4 discusses the paradigms of grammatical concord in Igala. Section 4 is the conclusion of the paper.

2. Grammatical Number and Concord in Language

Corbett (2004:1) opens with the desiderata for any meaningful intellectual engagement with grammatical numbers; “Number is the most underestimated of the grammatical categories. It is deceptively simple, and is much more interesting and varied than most linguists realize.” This position agrees with what Lyons (1968:283) unequivocally states, that “the analysis of number in particular languages may be a very complex matter”. Corbett (2004:1-2) identifies some ‘reasonable but incorrect assumptions about numbers’ which possibly account for the neglect of this aspect of grammar despite its significance. The ‘incorrect’ theoretical assumptions and the responses to these according to Corbett (2004) are as follows:

- a. Number is just an opposition of singular versus plural: Even though there are languages with the basic singular–plural distinction, there are also many languages with richer systems attesting to a dual for two real-world entities, a trial for three, a paucal for a small number and yet others with more exotic possibilities, with the richest systems having five number values.
- b. All relevant items (nouns, for instance) will mark number: We might expect that, say, all nouns would show number. The possible ranges of number marking are constrained in interesting ways as there are languages where the proportion of items for which a number is relevant is quite small and others where number marking is practically always available.
- c. Items that do mark numbers will behave the same: Suppose that we carefully specify how many number values a particular language has and which types of nouns mark number. Having avoided our first two false assumptions, we might assume that items would either fail to mark numbers or would show all the number values available. Once again, things are more interesting than that. In Maltese, for instance, just a few nouns have singular, dual, and plural, while the majority of nouns and pronouns have only singular and plural. In Bayso, pronouns have two number forms while typical nouns have four.
- d. If number forms are available, then surely, they must be expressed: This is an Anglocentric assumption and is quite false, as in certain instances the marking of numbers is optional, and there are languages like Bayso where there are special forms which allow the use of a noun without any commitment to the number of entities involved.
- e. Number is a nominal category (involves nouns and pronouns): There are languages where number is a verbal category, marking the number of events rather than the number of individuals.

Corbett (2004) counteracts the faulty premises with adequate theoretical assumptions compelled by the state-of-the-art knowledge cross-linguistically, which are relevant to the present paper. Particularly, the counterarguments in (b) to (e) fit the facts of Igala as I will present subsequently in this paper that the possible ranges of number marking are constrained in interesting ways in Igala, items which do mark number do not behave the same, available number forms are in some grammatical contexts not explicit and grammatical number is not strictly a nominal category. On the basis of these counterarguments advanced by Corbett therefore, the present paper shall proceed to establish insight into concord as manifested in Igala grammatical number marking.

Other observations in the literature indicate the close relationship between grammatical number and animacy as well as gender in human language. As Katamba and Stonham (2006) observe, animacy is a factor that influences the concordial matrix in some languages of the world. As such, in certain languages, the absence of number specification is especially common if a noun is inanimate, and nouns referring to animate, humans in particular, are likely to have explicit plural marking. Saeed (2003:170) attributes this ranking

to the semantics of conventional bias built into grammar of languages in stating that “human beings naturally view situations from the point of view of any human beings involved, and if there are none, of other living creatures. This preference, sometimes called an animacy hierarchy is coded into the lexical semantics of a language.” As Saeed (2003) and Katamba and Stonham (2006) rightly predict, Omachonu (2004) observes that Igala falls among languages in which animacy affects grammatical number distinction. Going beyond this observable fact, Corbett (2004: 267) conceives of the complexity of animacy in numbers in specific grammatical terms, theorizing that where animacy works through the pattern, there is “a clear prediction as to which nominals will be involved: number systems will develop at the top of the Animacy Hierarchy, and spread down to varying degrees”. It will be one of the tasks of the present paper to test this theoretical position against the specific details of the influence of animacy in the concord matrix of Igala.

The discussion in this section further focuses on concord, the grammatical alignment in the form of a constituent as a result of the exact form of another constituent in the same sentence. Some of the grammatical categories that are frequently marked for concord across languages are grammatical number, person, and gender. Just as is the case of grammatical number concepts themselves, concord features of number are not simplistic cross-linguistically but offer a variety of possible insights which is necessary both for the practical purpose of describing a specific language as is the aim of the present endeavour and for the more linguistic universal goal of comparing various systems. Concord features are observed in the literature to condition the category of verbs to that of their satellite NPs in languages such as English and Duka as singular or plural forms (Brown and Miller 1980 and Bendor-Samuel, Stich, and Cressman 1973). Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:11) note as one of the general rules of sentence construction in English that “the subject determines concord”. There is a local dependency of verb forms in the language on subject NPs. According to Brown and Miller (1980), the English BE verb that permits singular-plural distinction is made to change in response to the number value of the subject NP. The number value of the object NPs is as well conditioned to those of these verbs. This grammatical number correlation is so important to sentence grammaticality in the English language that without it ungrammaticality would be replete in a variety of constructions. This is illustrated based on Brown and Miller (1980:63) as in (1).

- 1
 - a. **He is a soldier**
 - b. **They are soldiers**
 - c. ***They are a soldier**
 - d. ***He is soldiers**

Welmers (1973:171) observes the pattern of concord in Swahili, a noun-class Bantu language, noting that nouns mostly have varieties of concord prefixes serving as specified singular/plural alternates. The singular form in (2) is distinguished from the plural pattern in (3) showing concord in the affixes.

- | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 | ki-kapu
basket | ki-kubwa
large | ki-moja
one | ki-lianguka
fell |
| | ‘One large basket fell’ | | | |
| 3 | vi-kapu
basket | vi-kubwa
large | vi-vatu
three | vi-lianguka
fell |
| | ‘Three large baskets fell’ | | | |

In similar fashion, Swahili marks number in peculiar terms in attributive, associative, and demonstrative constructions, as well as in relative clauses, and in subject and object positions of a sentence. The example of Swahili thus goes beyond a simplistic definition of number as ‘an inflectional feature of nouns, having to do with the number of items [to which] a noun refers’ (Haspelmath and Sims 2010) to involve other elements from a variety of word classes in showing concord relationship among them.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) identify, at least, five concordial relations in English: subject-verb concord, concord of grammatical person, subject-complement concord, subject-object concord, and pronoun concord. Several factors are noted in the literature to affect a

neat matrix in concord relation within a language. While Brown and Miller (1980) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) identify notional and proximity as contributing factors, Welmers (1973:175) notes that, in Swahili, “special rules must be stated for concord with some types of nouns indicating animates”. Nagaraya (1999:98) also notes for Kurku that “the verb will have number markers in agreement to the object of the same clause; provided the object is animate...” Brown and Miller (1980) note that in French, concord relationship is established between adjectives which vary in form to agree with the nouns they modify, in gender (masculine or feminine) as well as in the singular/plural distinction.

On the basis of the foregoing literature review, the discussion of the concord system in the present paper shall proceed with a better insight into the paradigms of concord in Igala and the discussion of specific concordial elements in the language. Prior to this, however, the following sections of the paper shall proceed to discuss grammatical number marking in Igala sentence constituents, specifically in nominal and verbal categories, as a necessary foundation. Insights from these shall enrich the observations and analysis of the concord paradigms in later sections.

3. Grammatical Number Marking in Igala Sentence Constituents

The major secondary grammatical categories in Igala are tense, aspect, and mood on one hand for verbs; and person, number, and case for nominals on the other for nouns (Ejeba, 2016). As in the literature on Igala grammar, person distinction manifests in personal, genitive and reciprocal pronouns in a three-way distinction of first-person being the speaker(s), the second person being the addressee(s), and the third person representing the non-participant referent; case is organized via a three-way distinction in personal pronouns: the subjective case for subject positions, objective case for object positions and genitive case for genitive positions reflected primarily in the forms of subject clitics, object clitics and genitive pronouns and clitics. The grammatical number is more widespread in the language as it manifests superficially in interrogative and indefinite pronouns and is well developed in the nouns and the personal pronominal subsystem.

Igala makes a two-way distinction between singular and plural forms generally; singular being for one entity and plural for more than one entity. Pluralizing nouns in the language is achieved differently for animate and inanimate featured entities (Omachonu 2004, 2008; Ejeba 2012, 2018). For instance, the plural form of **éwó** ‘goat’ is **àma-éwó** ‘goats’ but the plural form of **òkwúta** ‘stone’ is **òkwúta** ‘stones’. There are basically three ways through which Igala indicates plurality. The first and most widespread strategy involves changing the morphological form of the noun via the prefixation of the plural inflectional morpheme **àma-** or **àbó-** to animate nouns. The examples, **èluché** ‘farmer’ and **àma-èluché** ‘farmers’, **ókwno** ‘cow’ and **àma-ókwno** ‘cows’, **ìgbèlé** ‘young lady’ and **àbó-ìgbèlé** ‘young ladies’, **ímọto** ‘child’ and **àbó-ímọto** on Table 2 demonstrate this morphological organization of singular and plural forms of animate nouns.

Table 2 Grammatical Number in Nouns

	Singular		Plural	
a.	èluché	‘farmer’	àma-èluché	‘farmers’
	ókwno	‘cow’	àma-ókwno	‘cows’
	ìgbèlé	‘young lady’	àbó-ìgbèlé /àma-ìgbèlé	‘young ladies’
	ímọto	‘child’	àbó-ímọto /àma-ímọto	‘children’
b.	úwó	‘mountain’	úwó úwó	‘mountains’
	áji	‘river’	áji áji	‘rivers’
	àla	‘island’	àla àla	‘islands’
	ánê	‘land’	ánê ánê	‘lands’
c.	ólí	‘tree’	ólí	‘trees’
	ágbâ	‘basket’	ágbâ	‘baskets’
	ówó	‘hand’	ówó	‘hands’

érê 'leg' érê 'legs'

Worthy of mention is the observation that the plural prefixes **àma-** and **àbó-** code further distinction beyond number marking as the **àbó-** form is reserved for use with entities that denote human beings whereas the **àma-** form is used generally for other animate entities. This is some sort of semantic class agreement of the plural prefix to the noun discussed in Ejeba (2012). The other two strategies used for pluralization are complete reduplication of stem and implicit or zero marking. As Ejeba (2012) observes, plural indication through complete reduplication as shown on Table 2 is exclusive in the plural forms of large spatial entities such as **úwó úwó** 'hills/mountains', **áji áji** 'rivers', **àla àla** 'islands' and **ánê ánê** 'lands', which are plural forms of **úwó** 'hill/mountain', **áji** 'river', **àla** 'island' and **ánê** 'land'. All other inanimate nouns are pluralized with no morphological marking involved. For instance, the words **ólí** 'tree(s)/stick(s)', **ágbâ** 'basket(s)', **ówó** 'hand(s)' and **érê** 'leg(s)' as shown on Table 2 could be singular or plural depending on the context in which any of these words appears. These points have also been buttressed in Ejeba (2018). What remains to add here is the empirical validation of Corbett's (2004:267) prediction that 'number systems will develop at the top of the Animacy Hierarchy, and spread down to varying degrees'. This is true of the reflection of animacy in Igala number marking, with the higher ranking nouns making more grammatical (morphological) distinctions of number and the non-animate ones making the least, as schematized as follows:

Human → Animate → Non-animate

3.1. Number in Igala Noun Phrases (NPs) and Pronominal Clitics

NPs are generally nouns, pronouns, or constituents containing these word classes as heads. Pronominal clitics on the other hand are those clitics that are generally morphologically derived from fully-fledged pronouns, which occur with identical grammatical features and in approximately the same syntactic positions as these pronouns/NPs in Igala. The clitics are in complementary distribution with the pronouns.

3.1.1. Number Distinction in Igala Nouns

As I have stated already in the previous section, animate nouns mark plurality by the prefixation of the plural morpheme, **àma-** or **àbó-** whereas inanimate nouns are pluralized by a zero morpheme. Specifically, this in-built bias in the language marks a sharp division between animate and non-animate nouns whereby the plural morpheme, **àbó-** is used exclusively for nouns denoting human beings, which comes first on the conventional scale. This is followed by nouns denoting animals generally which take the plural morpheme, **àma-**, and finally by nouns denoting non-living things implicitly marked for plural or marked by reduplication in some instances.

Table 3 illustrates the two plural strategies in animate nouns using **àma-** or **àbó-** in the instances of human denoting nouns. The fact of Igala number marking is that for all the human-denoting nouns that take the **àbó-** plural marker, the general marker for animate nouns, **àma-** could also be used for their pluralisation, as illustrated on Table 2. This is the case as a human denoting noun is equally animate whereas an animate noun is not necessarily human. This fact is grammatically relevant to the pluralising strategy of the Igala language. Table 4 illustrates the implicit plural forms of Igala nouns, generally signaled by zero morphemes and the plural by reduplication, specifically for large spatial entities.

Table 3 Grammatical Number in [+ANMATE] Nouns

Singular		Plural	
éwó	'goat'	àma-éwó	'goats'
ónè	'person'	àma-ónè	'persons'
ímọtọ	'child'	àbó-ímọtọ/àma-ímọtọ	'children'
ìgbèlẹ	'young lady'	àbó-ìgbèlẹ/àma-ìgbèlẹ	'young ladies'

Table 4 Grammatical Number in [-ANIMATE] Nouns

Singular		Plural	
ólí	‘tree /stick’	ólí	‘trees /sticks’
éjú	‘eye’	éjú	‘eyes’
òbàta	‘suffering’	òbàta	‘sufferings’
úwó	‘mountain’	úwó úwó	‘mountains’
áji	‘river’	áji áji	‘rivers’

3.1.2. Number Distinction in Pronouns and Pronominal Clitics

Pronouns are anaphoric expressions typically associated with antecedent nouns/noun phrases (NPs) just as they are themselves NPs. Whereas nouns do not alter their forms to mark number, pronouns do, showing a singular-plural distinction throughout the system, particularly true of personal and genitive forms. This is besides other grammatical features attested in the pronominal system. Igala pronouns in isolation are not distinguished for subjective-objective case. However, pronominal clitics make this distinction (cf. Ejeba 2016).

Table 5 presents Igala personal pronouns and their corresponding clitic forms. Whereas the pronouns are VCV syllable structures, the cliticized forms are V/CV structures. The clitics are used in discourse reference whereas the non-clitic alternants are reserved for emphasis, for coordinative constructions, and when the pronouns must stand alone as answers to questions (Zwicky 1977 and Kari 2003). These observations apply to pronominal expressions generally as represented for personal forms in Table 5 and for genitive forms in Table 6.

Table 5 Forms of Personal Pronouns, Subject and Object Clitics²

Number	Person	Personal Pronoun	Subject Clitic	Gloss	Object Clitic	Gloss
Singular	1 st	òmi	<i>u</i>	I	<i>mi</i>	me
	2 nd	ùwẹ	<i>ẹ</i>	you	<i>ẹ</i>	you (sg)
	3 rd	ònwu	<i>i</i>	s(he)/ it	<i>U</i> ³	her/him/it
Plural	1 st	àwa	<i>a</i>	we	<i>wa</i>	us
	2 nd	àmẹ	<i>mẹ</i>	you	<i>mẹ</i>	you (pl)
	3 rd	àma	<i>ma</i>	they	<i>ma</i>	them
			<i>V</i> ⁴			

3.2. Number in Igala Verb Categories

Considering the verb as a process or as the expression of an action, event, or state; the range of elements for the category is wide and varied. There are simple verbs that consist of simple morphemic elements as well as complex verb forms. The nature of Igala complex verbs is similar to that of Yoruba, a related language in that, according to Ogunwale (2005:320), “more often than not the discrete internal constructions of a host of the so-called complex verbs are hard to demarcate”. One of the complex verb forms of interest in this paper is the splitting verb which Parrish and Feldscher (2019:538) define in Yoruba as “a class of disyllabic verbs that obligatorily split around the direct object”.

²The italicised type face of subject clitics in Table 5 - 6 indicates tonal underspecification, as tone is not part of the morphology of clitics in Igala.

³*U* is an archiphoneme realized as /u, o, ɔ/, orthographically <u, o, ɔ> after high, high mid, and low vowels respectively.

⁴This segmentally underspecified clitic is a *global subject clitic*, following the term used in Ejeba (2016), as it is a non-person, non-number clitic copy in second position to NPs.

Whereas the arguments surrounding the demarcation between various complex verb forms may be beyond the realm of this work, it is important to note that the splitting verb bears such a close resemblance to the serial verbs that analysts have many times taken the one for the other.

Whereas Bamgbose (1966) holds that splitting verbs are analysable in terms of serial verbs which share one object, Awobuluyi (1967), Parrish, and Feldscher (2019) following him, hold that due to the lack of morphological compositionality and the semantic restrictions on the second part of some splitting verbs in not equally controlling the object as the first, splitting verbs should not be analysed in the exact same way that serial verbs are. Bamgbose (1972:38) is a later work that recognizes this distinction between a splitting verb and a serial verb by identifying the second part of a splitting verb as a ‘modifying verb’ which only has a modifying function and does not select an object, “does not express a separate action” and thus “cannot be traced to two underlying sentences”.

A splitting verb form may only exist morphologically as a unit, and where each unit may occur elsewhere their independent meanings do not compose their unit meanings in the splitting verb. By reason of its morphological and semantic behaviours, a splitting verb forms a unit of a distinct verb form, and this verb form should not be confused with serial verbs which are a sequence of two independent verbs coming together in the syntax of complex predication in SVCs which have independent morphological occurrence and their meanings are compositional in the context of the complex predicate. In fact, Aikhenvald (2006:1) states that “each component of an SVC must be able to occur on its own.”

The forms of the splitting verb in Igala are important in the discussion of concord in the language as a unit of the splitting verb shows agreement phenomena with the nominal categories in object position. The description of Igala splitting verbs fits the Yoruba instances such as **bà...jẹ** ‘spoil’, **gbà...gbọ** ‘accept’ (Awobuluyi 1972) where the combination of verb elements bear close semantic features that are more lexical than compositional in nature.

The second element in Igala splitting verbs further fits Bamgbose’s (1972) description of these elements as modifying verbs. Following the insight from Yoruba in the literature, this paper classifies Igala verbs in sentence structure broadly into main verbs and modifying verbs. Generally, the structural frame #NP-(NP)(-NP)# which Bamgbose (1972:56) suggests for verbs in Yoruba is also appropriate for Igala verbs that embrace simple verbs in transitive and intransitive minimal sentences as well as complex verbs. These similarities of Igala to Yoruba are far from being accidental, as Yoruba is historically coordinated with Igala alongside Itsekiri (Akinkugbe 1978). The frame #CL-(CL)(-CL)# in Igala follows, as pronominal clitics may substitute for NPs in the various syntactic positions. Examples of the intransitive frame #NP-# is in (4a), the monotransitive is #NP-NP-# frame for splitting verbs in (5a), and #NP-NP# frame for simple verbs in (6a). The ditransitive frame #NP-NP-NP# is in (7a). Examples (4b) – (7b) show the corresponding clitic forms in the specified structures.

4. a. **Òmálê** **é** **é** **lè-nyò**
 Omale SCL.PERF AUX pass-away
 ‘Omale is lost’

b. **í** **í** **lè-nyò**
 3SgSCL.PERF AUX pass-away
 ‘S(he)/it is lost’

5. a. **Òmálê** **gbà** **úkpô** **lé** **nyò**
 Omale take- cloth DE.DIST -away
 ‘Omale shook off the cloth’

b. **ì** **gbà-nyò**
 3SgSCL.IND take-away
 ‘S(he) shook it’

6. a. **Òmálê du ikpà lẹ**
 Omale carry.SG bag DE.DIST
 ‘Omale took the bag’
- a'. **Òmálê kó ikpà lẹ**
 Omale carry.SG bag DE.DIST
 ‘Omale took the bags’
- b. **ì du**
 3SgSCL.IND carry.SG
 ‘S(he)/it took it’
- b'. **ì kó**
 3SgSCL.IND carry.PL
 ‘S(he)/it took them’
- 7
- a. **Òmálê du éne lẹ ñà Àmădê**
 Omale.SCL.IND carry.SG someone DE.DIST show Amade
 ‘Omale showed Amade the person’
- a'. **Òmálê kó àbó lẹ ñà Àmădê**
 Omale.SCL.IND carry.PL some_people DE.DIST show Amade
 ‘Omale showed Amade the people’
- b. **ì du ú ñà ọ**
 3SgSCL.IND carry.SG 3SgOCL show 3SgOCL
 ‘S(he) showed her/ him to her/ him’
- b'. **ì kó má ñà ọ**
 3SgSCL.IND carry.SG 3PIOCL show 3SgOCL
 ‘S(he) showed them to her/ him’

It is observable in (6) – (7) that the singular/plural forms of the transitive verb, **du/kó** which means ‘carry’ in Igala are distributed appropriately in agreement with the objects of sentences. Thus, in (6a & a') as well as in (7a & a'), the singulative and pluractional verb forms bear corresponding singular and plural object NPs. Where the object NP is an inanimate entity, as in (6a & a'), the number distinction is recovered in the form of the verb. However, for the animate entity as in (7a & a'), the number is overtly marked on the object NPs. Further complexity occurs in the context of the pronominal clitics, as in (6b & b') as well as in (7b & b'); whereas the singulative/pluractional forms of the transitive verb, **du/kó** license objects in the sentences, pro-drop occurs particularly in grammatical contexts where object clitics are expected for non-animate entities, as in (6b & b'). The nature of the object is thus only recoverable by grammatical inference from the transitive verb in such a context where the number of features remains marked on the verb. This obligatory pro-drop for non-animate entities in grammatical object position is blocked for human entities as the object pronominal clitics have to be grammatically expressed for animate entities, as in (7b & b').

The paper shall now proceed to discuss the implication of number marking in Igala verb categories.

3.2.1. Igala Verbs

Igala verbs are overwhelmingly monosyllabic, consonant-initial, and open-ended. The examples in Table 7 for our purpose are some of Igala verbs that express action.

Table 7 Sample Igala Monosyllabic Verbs

kpa	‘kill’	du	‘carry(sg)’
bà	‘scoop’	kó	‘carry(pl)’
tẹ	‘arrange, dress (bed)’	tẹ	‘keep(sg), settle(sg)’
gbá	‘pack, sweep’	gwùgwú	‘sit(sg)’

já	‘cut (grass)’	jọ	‘keep(pl), sit(pl), settle(pl)’
che	‘fetch’	nyú	‘put(sg)’
tu	‘spew’	tọ	‘put(sg)’
gwà	‘dig, swim’	rú	‘put(pl)’
gwẹ̀	‘wash’		

3.2.2. Igala Modifying Verbs

The modifying verbs, according to Bamgbose (1972:38, 39), are verbs that may occur in verbal strings with the following features,

- i. They only have a modifying function, since they do not express a separate action.
- ii. They have characteristic positions of occurrence in relation to the verb they modify.
- iii. They do not generally select their subjects.
- iv. They do not generally select their objects.
- v. They cannot be topicalized, and
- vi. They may be preceded or followed by the verb if they are preverbal.

For the purpose of this work, the present research effort shall not proceed with a cross-linguistic assessment of all these claims. However, it should be noted that when certain Igala verbs occur in modifying position, as the second verbs in complex verbs of serialized structures, they perform modifying functions fitting the first five descriptions by Bamgbose, albeit with the caveat that there is no syntactic restriction on the so-called modifying verbs from their occurring elsewhere in a verbal simplex within non-serialised syntactic constructions where they are imbued to function conversely to the syntactic restrictions of similar verbs in serialised constructions. In a verbal complex however, they have only a modifying function, as they do not express a separate action; they have characteristic positions of occurrence in relation to the verbs they modify; they do not generally select their subjects or objects and cannot be topicalized, in conformity to the classification outlined in Bamgbose (1972). Table 8 outlines seven Igala verbs which may function in this manner as modifying verbs in verbal complexes:

Table 8 Sample Igala Modifying Verbs

tẹ̀	‘keep(sg)’
jọ	‘keep(pl), sit(pl)’
nyú	‘put(pl/sg)’
tọ	‘put(sg)’
rú	‘put(pl)’
tínyô	‘throw (something) away’
rínyô	‘throw (several things) away’

Example (8) following illustrates modifying verbs on Table 8 functioning in modifying positions. As already established in Section 3.2, Igala attests to singulative and pluractional verb forms in the transitive verbs, **du**, and **kó** respectively, with the meaning ‘carry’. The modifying verbs in Table 8 are also classifiable into singulative forms, **tẹ̀** ‘keep(sg)’, **tọ** ‘put(sg)’ and **tínyô** ‘throw (something) away’ with corresponding pluractional forms, **jọ** ‘keep(pl), sit(pl)’, **rú** ‘put(pl)’ and **rínyô** ‘throw (several things) away’. Igala further attests to a singulative pluractional form, **nyú** ‘put(pl/sg)’, which is used in an adpositional context where the object NP is plural and the adpositional NP is singular, as in (8 d & d’).

- 8 a. **tẹ̀** ‘keep(sg)’
 a'. **du** **owó** **wẹ** **tẹ̀**
 carry.SG hand 1SgGCL keep.SG
 ‘keep your hand’
 b. **jọ** ‘keep(pl), sit(pl)’

- b'. **kó** **ówọ́** **wẹ** **jọ**
 carry.PL hand 1SgGCL keep.PL
 'keep your hands'
- c. **tọ́** 'put(sg)'
 c'. **du** **ówọ́** **tọ́** **ùchà**
 carry.SG hand keep.SG pot
 'put your hand in a pot'
- d. **nyú** 'put(pl/sg)'
 d'. **kó** **ówọ́** **nyú** **ùchà**
 carry.PL hand keep.PL/SG pot
 'put your hands in a pot'
- e. **ru** 'put(pl)'
- e'. **kó** **ówọ́** **ru** **ùchà**
 carry.PL hand keep.PL pot
 'put your hands in two or more pots'
- f. **tínyô** 'throw (something) away'
 f'. **du** **ùchà** **tínyô**
 carry.SG pot throw.SG-away
 'throw the pot away'
- g. **rínyô** 'throw (several things) away'
 g'. **kó** **ùchà** **rínyô**
 carry.SG pot throw.PL-away
 'throw the pots away'

A comprehensive description of modifying verbs may be taken up in further studies for a robust discussion of their morphosyntactic categories. In this paper, however, it suffices that five characteristics of the Igala modifying verbs are delineated, the first four of which are obvious from the instances of the modifying verbs in syntactic constructions in (8) as follows:

- i. Igala modifying verbs only have a modifying function, since they do not express a separate action from the basic verbs in the verbal string,
- ii. They are verbal adpositional markers to the basic verb,
- iii. In relation to the verb they modify, they are post-modifiers,
- iv. They do not generally select their subjects,
- v. They do not generally select their objects, and
- v. They cannot be topicalized.

Having provided basic acquaintance with the Igala nominal and verbal categories generally, this paper will now proceed with the main concern of the present study which is the discussion of the concord paradigms established in the syntactic relations of the nominal and verbal categories in the language.

4. Paradigms of Concord in Igala

Considering Igala expressions beyond the word, in phrases, this paper notes that NPs, pronominal clitics, and verbs agree in grammatical numbers in certain ways with other constituents of the minimal clause in their local vicinity. Whether NPs and pronominal clitics are overt or covert in their number expression, the verbs that co-occur with them agree with them in their intrinsic number distinction. This is also true of the agreement between two verbal constituents. The specific nature of the stated patterns of concord shall be described with examples in the following sections.

4.1. Subject-Verb Concord

An NP at subject position or subject pronominal clitic agrees with a verb in grammatical number.

9. a. **óma** **lẹ** **gwùgwú** **yì**
 child DE.DIST sit.SG FE.PROX
 'Here is the child/The child is seated here'
- b. **àma-óma** **lẹ** **jọ** **yí**

PL-child DE.DIST sit.PL FE.PROX
 ‘Here are the children/The children are seated here’

10 a. **ì** **kpó** **gwùgwú** **ánê**
 3SgSCL.IND INC sit.SG ground
 ‘S(he)/it sat down’

b. **mà** **kpó** **jọ** **ánê**
 3SgSCL.IND INC sit.PL ground
 ‘They sat down’

11 a. **ùchà** **mi** **tẹ** **yì**
 pot 1SgGCL keep.SG FE.PROX
 ‘Here is my pot’

b. **ùchà** **mi** **jọ** **yì**
 pot 1SgGCL keep.PL FE.PROX
 ‘Here are my pots’

Examples (9) – (11) show subject-verb concord. Whereas (9a) – (10a) have singular subjects and singular verb forms, (9b) – (10b) have plural subjects and plural verb forms. Number distinction is covert for the subjects in (11a) & (11b) as [-ANIMATE] nouns are generally not morphologically marked for a distinct number category. However, grammatical number is marked implicitly as these latter examples demonstrate; the form of the subject notwithstanding, the singular verb form *tẹ* ‘keep(SG)’ in (11a) and the plural verb form *jọ* ‘keep(PL)’ in (11b) show that the subjects are singular and plural subjects respectively. More examples of subject-verb concord in [-ANIMATE] implicit singular or plural subjects occurring with distinct number-marked verbs are as in (12).

12 a. **éyọ** **ókọ** **mi** **kpó** **tí-nyô**
 seed money 1GCL INC throw.SG-away
 ‘My coin is missing’

b. **éyọ** **ókọ** **mi** **kpó** **rí-nyô**
 seed money 1GCL INC throw.PL-away
 ‘My coins are missing’

In (12a) & (12b), the singular verb form, **tí-nyô** ‘throw away(SG)’ and the plural form of the same verb, **rí-nyô** ‘throw away(PL)’ indicate that the subjects are singular and plural respectively. Concordial contexts are therefore structurally disambiguating as far as the semantic features of singular or plural values of inanimate nouns specifically are concerned.

4.2. Object-Verb Concord

An NP at object position or an object pronominal clitic agrees with the verb of the sentence in grammatical number. Examples (13) – (16) illustrate this agreement phenomenon between the splitting verb forms, **du...wá/kó...wá** ‘bring(SG)/bring(PL)’. In (13a), the singular object NP, **óma lé** ‘the child’ agrees with the singular splitting verb form **du...wá** ‘bring(SG)’ whereas the plural object NP **àma-ómalé** ‘the children’ agrees with the plural splitting verb form **kó...wá** ‘bring(PL)’ in (13b).

13 a. **mẹ** **du** **óma lé** **wá**
 2PISCL.IMP carry.SG child DE.DIST come
 ‘(You) bring the child’

b. **mẹ** **kó** **àma-óma** **lé** **wá**
 2PISCL.IMP carry.PL PL-child DE.DIST come
 ‘(You) bring the children’

Similar to the instances of object-verb agreement in (13), the object pronominal clitics in (14) show agreement with the verb. Whereas in (14a), the singular object pronominal

clitic, **ú** agrees with the singular splitting verb form **du...wá** ‘bring(SG)’ in a singular concord arrangement, in (14b) the plural object pronominal clitic, **má** agrees with the plural splitting verb form **kó...wá** ‘bring(PL)’ in a plural concord arrangement.

14 a.	mẹ	du	ú	wá
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	3SgOCL	come
	‘(You) bring her/him’			
b.	mẹ	kó	má	wá
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	3PIOCL	come
	‘(You) bring them’			

The number distinctions of the objects correspond to the grammatical number marked on the verb in a neat matrix. The morphological implicitness of numbers in inanimate nouns does not impinge on the recoverability of number marking on the verb in such a way that guarantees a neat matrix in overt syntax.

15 a.	mẹ	du	úgbá	lẹ	wá
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	plate	DE.DIST	come
	‘(You) bring the plate’				
b.	mẹ	kó	úgbá	lẹ	wá
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	plate	DE.DIST	come
	‘(You) bring the plates’				
16 a.	mẹ	du	wá		
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	come		
	‘(You) bring it’				
a'.	mẹ	du	ú	wá	
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	3SgOCL	come	
	‘(You) bring her/him’				
b.	mẹ	kó	wá		
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	come		
	‘(You) bring them’/ ‘bring it’				
b'.	mẹ	kó	má	wá	
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	3PIOCL	come	
	‘(You) bring them’				

As (15) and (16) illustrate, inanimate nouns and pronominal elements in object positions are normally not marked for number. In spite of this lack of obvious morphological marking however, the number distinction of inanimate nominals becomes obvious in the concordial context with singular or plural verb forms, as in (15 a-16 a) and (15 b-16 b) respectively.

However, as the interpretation of (16 b) shows, plural verbs may occur with singular nominals (specifically the inanimate pronominal form) but only where the pronominal has a collective or mass noun as referent. This is the only source of extra complexity in the verb-object concord which is otherwise straightforward.

4.3. Verb-Modifying Verb Concord

In certain constructions, modifying verbs agree with their basic verbs in number, as (17) – (19) demonstrate.

17 a.	mẹ	du	tí-nyô
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	SG-throw_away
	‘Throw it away’		
a'.	*mẹ	du	rí-nyô
	2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	SG-throw_away

b. mẹ	kó	rí-nyô
2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	PL-throw_away
‘Throw them away’/ ‘Throw it away’		
b'. *mẹ	kó	tí-nyô
2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	SG-throw_away

The concord matrix between singular/plural verbs and modifying verbs in (17 a & b) is fairly straightforward. This is also the case in (18) –(19).

18 a. du	ú	tẹ	ánẹ
carry.SG	3SgOCL	SG.keep	ground
‘Put him/her down’			
b. du	tẹ	ánẹ	
carry.SG	SG.keep	ground	
‘Put it down’			
c. kó	má	jọ	ánẹ
carry.SG	3SgOCL	PL.keep	ground
‘Put them down’			
d. kó		jọ	ánẹ
carry.SG		PL.keep	ground
‘Put them down’/‘Put it down’			
e. kó	má	rú	ánẹ
carry.SG	3SgOCL	PL.enter	ground
‘Set them down’			
f. kó	rú	ánẹ	
carry.SG	PL.enter	ground	
‘Put them down’/‘Pour it down’			
19 a. du	ọwọ	tọ	ùchà
carry.SG	hand	SG.enter	pot
‘Put a hand in a pot’			
b. kó	ọwọ	nyú	ùchà
carry.PL	hand	PL/SG.enter	pot
‘Put two or more hands into a pot’			
c. kó	ọwọ	rú	ùchà
carry.SG	hand	PL.enter	pot
‘Put two or more hands into two or more pots’			

The modifying verbs take on very dynamic roles in the semantics of mass nouns, as examples (18 d & f) illustrate. As previously observed, therefore, there is a greater level of complexity in the concord of mass nouns with verbal elements in their vicinity. This paper provides more instances in the following section of the fine distinctions made on mass nouns in the vicinity of verbs and modifying verbs in Igala.

4.4. Verb-Mass Noun Concord

When the nominal element in a clausal expression is a noun that is not countable such as **ómi** ‘water’, **ékétẹ** ‘sand’, **égbé** ‘grass’ and **óbó** ‘soup’ which cannot be numbered, they occur with typical verbs such as **dà** ‘pour (entirely)’, **bà** ‘scoop (only some)’, **gbá** ‘fetch (grain)/pour (water)’, **gwó** ‘clear (grass)’, **já** ‘cut (grass, hair)’, **che** ‘fetch (water, fluid)’ and **tẹ** ‘arrange (cloth)/dress (bed)’. These verbs occur mostly with plural verbs and modifying

verbs, and in some cases with specific singular modifying verbs to signal certain fine distinctions.

- 20 a. **gbá** **ómi** **jọ** **ánê**
 pack water PL.keep ground
 ‘Pour water on the ground’
 a'. ***gbá** **ómi** **tẹ** **ánê**
 pack water SG.keep ground
- 21 a. **gbá** **ómi** **nyú** **ùjógò**
 pack water SG.enter bottle
 ‘Pour water in a bottle’
 b. **gbá** **ómi** **rú** **ùjógò**
 pack water PL.enter bottle
 ‘Pour water in two or more bottles’/ ‘Pour water on a bottle’

4.5. The Nature of the Igala Bound Concordial Elements t-/r-

As I have demonstrated in the previous examples, particularly the example of modifying verbs in (17), the modifying verbs, **tí-nyô** ‘throw (something) away’ and **rí-nyô** ‘throw (several things) away’ is much the same but for the initial consonant elements of each of these words which share the meaning ‘throw-away’. This initial consonant element can thus be isolated as critical for marking numbers on the modifying verb forms. Whereas the singular form manifests with the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ at the word initial position, the alveolar trill /r/ at the same position indicates the plural form. Example (17) is repeated as (22) here with (23) as an additional example.

- 22 a. **mẹ** **du** **tí-nyô**
 2PISCL.IMP carry.SG SG-throw_away
 ‘Throw it away’
 b. **mẹ** **kó** **rí-nyô**
 2PISCL.IMP carry.PL PL-throw_away
 ‘Throw them away’
23. a. **rọ** **ikpóló** **tí-nyô**
 throw throwing-stone SG-throw_away
 ‘Throw away the stone’
 b. **rọ** **ikpóló** **rí-nyô**
 throw throwing-stone PL-throw_away
 ‘Throw away the stones’

An investigation of the morphemic content of singularity or plurality in this pair of modifying verbs that forms a neat concord matrix is a difficult one. The modifying verb forms, **tí-nyô** ‘throw (something) away’ and **rí-nyô** ‘throw (several things) away’ has a bound base lexeme, **-nyô**, represented as ‘away’. This interpretation is evident through several words with which the modifying verb forms share this bound root in the language; **gbé-nyô** ‘forget’ as in the splitting verb **gbé- mi -nyô** ‘forget me’, **gbà-nyô** ‘shake off’, **lè-nyô** ‘go missing’, **dà-nyô** ‘pour away’. The meaning of the concord prefix **tí-/rí-** is not so clear but it can be deduced as ‘throw’ from all the contexts where the modifying verb forms occur. It may be a safe assumption that the consonantal element of the prefix remains underspecified prior to the semantic specification of number as singular or plural. This observation makes it elegant to postulate a consonantally underspecified form, **Cí-nyô** ‘throw-away’ with

phonological features thereafter specified as singular or plural in appropriate contexts, as in (24). The segment assignment rule for the underspecified element is, in the terminology of Spencer (1991) ‘structure-building’ rather than ‘structure-changing’ since the singular form of the modifying verb specifies the **t-** form just as the plural context specifies the **r-** form⁵.

This is what Katamba (1989:181) refers to as “‘ghost segments’ which do not appear in the phonetic representation [that] may affect the way in which phonological rules apply”. Therefore, according to Katamba (1989:146), “the abstract segment cannot surface phonetically (i.e. be uttered)” without the much fuller phonetic specification required before pronunciation is possible.

In the instance of the concord prefix **tí-/rí-**, the much fuller phonetic specification is only realized relative to the grammatical context of singulative vs pluractional features of the modifying verb in concord with the singulative/pluractional features of the basic verb.

24 a. mẹ	du	tí-nyô
2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	SG-throw_away
‘Throw it away’		
a'. * mẹ	du	rí-nyô
2PISCL.IMP	carry.SG	SG-throw_away
b. mẹ	kó	rí-nyô
2PISCL.IMP	carry.PL	PL-throw_away
‘Throw them away’		

With the demonstration of the visibility of phonological features to semantic properties in Igala number and concord system as in (24), it is clear that the concept of concord in certain constructions is signaled in the modifying verb only by the initial consonantal element; showing direct access of phonological element to semantic features in grammar. This case of singular/plural alternation may not be considered a case of partial suppletion as, unlike suppletive elements, the initial consonantal element is clearly isolatable as a number marker for singular and plural elements. This informs the identification of the initial consonants of the modifying verb prefix as bound concordial elements, a sort of vestige of a grammatical class system in the verbal forms. Commenting on the distinctive characteristics of these concordial elements, Ejeba (2016:114) states that these elements are ablative extensional prefixes (AEP) which are,

- i. attached to the bound verb root, **nyô** ‘-put away’
- ii. syntactic but non-inflectional lexical modifiers
- iii. class- maintaining
- iv. not productive in Igala morphology, and
- v. obligatory morphosyntactically

The AEP forms are not treated as inflectional because, as Stump (1998) asserts, for an inflectional paradigm, an arbitrarily chosen inflectional form should permit uniform

⁵There are no other instances of the /t/ and /r/ dichotomy to report or support this claim beyond the instances in context. However, the author sees the **tínyô/rínyô** dichotomy as a unique occurrence in the grammar of Igala which is however not productive in the language across a wide range of lexical items. The closest example of anything that looks like this dichotomy is found in the **tô** ‘keep(sg)/**rú** ‘keep(PL) alternation reported in example (8 c’&e’): **du ówô tô ùchà** ‘put your hands in a pot’ versus **kó ówô rú ùchà** ‘put your hands in two or more pots’. Here the modifying verbs **tô** and **rú** alternate to mark singular vs plural contexts, and the singular form has the phoneme /t/ just as the plural context has the phoneme /r/. This could easily be observed as another modifying verb aligning to the concord prefix, **tí-/rí-**. Unlike the concord prefix, however, the alternating consonants are not the only differences, as the vowels also differ in the **tô** and **rú** alternants. It is for this reason that the author presents, for now, the only clear case of a dichotomy in the concord system, **tínyô/rínyô**, and hopes that some other human languages would have similar forms that would be subsequently reported as a basis for a better understanding of what is happening in a more comprehensible account.

syntactically relevant modifications within the class that share the same word class. The fact that the Igala verbal prefixes that indicate number have a defective paradigm warrants their analysis as extensional elements. The Igala data aligns with Hyman's (2007:150) observation, particularly in Niger-Congo languages, that "derivative verbal extensions as semantic and/or syntactic modifiers of basic verbs are very typical".

Whereas there is ample evidence in the literature on Niger-Congo languages to suggest that singular and plural marking prefixes are widespread (Elugbe and Schubert 1976, Masagbor 1989, Corbet 2004, Achiri-Taboh 2014), the bound concordial element attested for a class of verbal elements in this work on Igala is peculiar in the sense that concord is signaled, not by the whole affix but by consonantal elements whose occurrence is specifically dedicated to marking number. This rarity calls for further investigation of more languages of Africa to determine the cross-linguistic implication.

5. Conclusion

Of all the secondary grammatical categories in Igala, this paper has established specific agreement phenomena in the language between constituents in the local domain of basic clauses. The theoretical elucidations of this paper are based on the five 'reasonable but incorrect assumptions' on a cross-linguistic range of number distinction as Corbett (2004) outlines. This paper uses these as indicative tests of number and concord in Igala. Going by these cross-linguistic assessments, the paper reveals the following on Igala concord system by showing that:

- a. Igala manifests the basic singular-plural opposition of number values.
- b. Not all nouns and verbs are morphologically (or even lexically) marked for number; all items for which number is relevant are however distinguished for number at least in their syntactic context.
- c. Nouns, pronouns, and verbs which mark number in Igala behave the same as they follow the two-way distinction of singular and plural forms.
- d. The marking of number in Igala (whether morphological, lexical, or syntactic) is obligatory as failure to mark number in appropriate contexts results in ungrammaticality. Whereas some Igala inanimate nouns have implicit number marking, generally the grammatical distinction of number in such nouns is recoverable in syntactic contexts where they occur in concord relationship with singular or plural forms of verbs and modifying verbs.
- e. Number in Igala is both a nominal and a verbal category, marking the forms of entities as well as events. Although grammatical number may not be a basic category of verbs in many languages of the world, it is in Igala that some verbs appear in singular and plural forms.

Igala has at least four important types of concord relationships among specific constituents of a minimal clause, being *subject-verb*, *object-verb*, and *verb-modifying verb concord as shown in Section 4*. The language further attests to *verb-mass noun concord*. The rules of concord force two verb forms that make number distinctions to agree in number discrimination when they appear together, thereby contributing to the concord matrix in this language. Besides the influence of animacy in the overt or covert expression of number, count-mass forms of nouns also affect a neat matrix of concord in determining the co-occurrence of the nominal elements with an appropriate verb and modifying verb forms. This shows a close relationship between lexis and semantics. Isolating the bound concord prefix on verbal elements in the language is a significant contribution of this research work to descriptive studies of the languages of Africa with probable theoretical ramifications in the context of better comparison of a greater number of languages.

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