

SOME ISSUES IN THE GRAMMAR OF MODERN YORUBA¹

A. AFOLAYAN

There is only one known grammar of modern Yoruba written within the coherent framework of a general linguistic theory, namely, Ayọ Bamgboṣe's *A GRAMMAR OF YORUBA*.² When the present writer embarked upon a study of the linguistic problems of Yoruba learners and users of English, he decided to assume Bamgboṣe's grammar as the basis of his own work. Consequently throughout his work he tried to apply Bamgboṣe's grammatical statements to explain relevant linguistic problems of the Yoruba users³ of English. In most cases Bamgboṣe's grammar provided adequate explanations for the bilingual problems arising from linguistic translation or transfer. But in certain instances it seemed that a different statement on Yoruba grammar will provide a more adequate explanation. Four such instances will form the subject of four articles, this being the first in the series. In effect all four articles in the series arise from a study which is bilingual in nature.

It seems that the linguistic description of a language based on a study that is bilingual in nature tends to face a greater danger of the 'transfer of categories' from one language to the other than the description based on a monolingual study. This means that there may be some uneasy feeling of scepticism that the grammatical statements on Yoruba may have been vitiated by the 'transfer of categories' from English. To avoid this pitfall of 'transfer of categories' in such a description the linguist may become too cautious. He may be too careful not to make similar grammatical statements for the two languages even where the similar statements are more adequate than different ones. The view taken here is that the adoption and the subsequent efficient application of an adequate general linguistic theory would protect the linguist from the twin dangers. It is even hoped that the efficient application of an adequate theory would make bilingual studies an asset to linguistics. This is because one could suggest that bilingual rather than monolingual studies provide a fruitful atmosphere for discovering potential candidates for linguistic universals. It is therefore considered necessary that there should be a clear statement on the theoretical basis of the statements to be found in the four articles in the series, particularly how the theory helps to prevent the description from succumbing to either or both dangers. Consequently the first part of this article is a brief general statement on theory which does not belong only to the article but to all four articles in the series. In a sense this present article begins at the second section.

¹ This is the first of what will be a series of four articles on some issues in modern Yoruba grammar. It is hoped that others will also appear in subsequent issues of this journal. All four papers arise from a recent study, *THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS OF YORUBA LEARNERS AND USERS OF ENGLISH* (London University Ph.D. thesis, 1968).

² This is one of the West African Language Monographs (no. 5) published by the Cambridge University Press in association with the West African Language Survey and the Institute of African Studies, Ibadan. It is a book based on Dr Bamgboṣe's Edinburgh doctoral thesis, *A STUDY OF STRUCTURES AND CLASSES IN THE GRAMMAR OF MODERN YORUBA* (1963).

³ Though the problems of learners are not necessarily the same as the problems of users, *USERS* will be used throughout the rest of this paper to subsume learners as well.

A. AFQLAYAN

The linguistic theory underlying the grammatical statements in the articles in the series is the Systemic Grammar of Halliday,⁴ a special case of Firth's System-Structure Model. Readers may at once recall that Bamgboṣe's work, parts of which the articles are seeking to revise, is also based on Halliday's theory. But it should be noted that Bamgboṣe's work is based on an earlier stage of Halliday's thinking.⁵

The purpose of this section is not to give a full description of Systemic Grammar, but to make minimal statements that can make the theoretical position of the article clear. And since familiarity with Bamgboṣe's theoretical viewpoint can be assumed for the readers, what is then felt to be necessary is a clear statement on how Halliday's later thinking (as expounded to form the basis of the papers in the series) is different from the earlier (expounded to form the basis of Bamgboṣe, 1966). For the purpose of this discussion, particularly for easy reference, the earlier state is henceforth referred to as version I and the later, version II.

There are three fundamental differences. First, in place of the one plane of linguistic description operative in version I, there are two in version II. So instead of just talking of, for example, one grammar (as in version I), reference is made to two grammars—'surface' and 'deep' in version II. Thus, while there is definitely much raw material therein for deep grammatical formulations, it seems fair to say that most of Bamgboṣe's grammatical statements will, if made within version II, be regarded as surface grammatical ones. Secondly, consequent upon 'the deep-surface' distinction, or perhaps more correctly accompanying the distinction, two important general theoretical categories, SYSTEM and STRUCTURE, originally formulated (along with two others, CLASS and UNIT) in version I for only one plane of grammar (version II surface grammar), are now separated. SYSTEM is in version II a property of deep grammar while STRUCTURE is a property of surface grammar. Thirdly, the concept of the relationship between grammar and semantics has changed. For example, following version I, Bamgboṣe wrote in his introduction (among other things): 'The criteria used in establishing or distinguishing grammatical categories are structural; and the categories set up for the grammar are based on the internal structure of the language.' Whereas, according to version II grammar being 'semantically significant grammar', the most 'semantic' is the starting-point of the grammar, the deep grammar that is. Again, Bamgboṣe's formulation would apply only to surface grammar.

These three differences, particularly the third one, make the question of 'transfer of grammatical categories from one language to the other' a more complex one. On the other hand, actual 'transfer of categories from other languages' is not more acceptable under version II than under version I, and at the same time the mere adoption of version II is

⁴ For statements on the theory see in particular M. A. K. Halliday, 'Categories of the Theory of Grammar', *WORD*, vol. xvii (1961); 'Some notes on deep grammar', *JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS*, vol. II, no. 1 (1966); 'Syntax for the consumer', *LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE STUDY* (15th Round Table Meeting), Monograph no. 17, 1964 (ed. C. I. J. M. Stuart); 'The concept of rank; a reply', *JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS*, vol. II, no. 1 (1966); 'Some aspects of the thematic organization of the English clause', *RAND Memorandum* (1966); *GRAMMAR, SOCIETY AND THE NOUN* (an inaugural lecture delivered at University College London), 24 Nov. 1966; 'Notes on transitivity and theme in English, Parts I and II', *JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS*, vol. III, nos. 1 and 2 (1967); R. D. Huddleston, 'Rank and depth', *LANGUAGE*, vol. IV, no. 4 (1965); and R. A. Hudson, 'Constituency in a systemic description of the English clause', *LINGUA*, vol. xviii (1967).

⁵ The earlier version has been referred to as 'the scale-and-category theory of grammar' (Bamgboṣe, 1966, p. 14), while the later version is referred to as 'systemic grammar'.

SOME ISSUES IN THE GRAMMAR OF MODERN YORUBA

no guarantee that the resulting grammar is free from the fault of 'transfer of categories from other languages'. On the other hand, wholesale condemnation of 'categories based on notional criteria', which is the basis of much alleged 'transfer of categories', is no longer valid. In fact in version II, whereby grammar is 'semantically significant grammar', 'notional criteria', in so far as they can be equated with criteria of 'semantic features', are not only admitted but also made the starting-point, the 'deep grammar'. What is required of the grammar is explicitness. Once the 'semantic features' are explicitly organized into 'systemic features' for each language on its own evidence, it is perfectly reasonable and valid if certain deep grammatical features are found to be similar for two different languages, say Yoruba and English. In the opinion of the present writer, the notion of 'explicit deep grammar' provides the basis for overcoming the twin problems⁶ attendant on bilingual work (contrastive work in general and, in the widest sense, descriptive linguistics of individual languages); namely, the proneness of the linguist to being unnecessarily novel in his description of a language in order to avoid being accused of 'transfer of categories from other languages' and his proneness to the actual 'transfer of categories'.

On page 31, paragraph B. 1, entitled 'Elements of the Free Clause Structures', Bamgboṣe writes:

Elements of the free clause structure may be classified into two: Basic, and Subsidiary. Basic elements of structure are those elements which can occur in a clause structure of only one element. They are: Subject (S), Predicator (P), and Adjunct (A).

Subsidiary elements of structures are those elements which cannot occur in a clause structure of only one element. They are: Clause Initiator (i), Thematic element (T), Post-thematic element (x) and Emphatic element (o).

Our main concern here is with Bamgboṣe's 'basic'⁷ elements of structure, particularly the 'Predicator (P)' element. For the subsidiary elements, it is enough to say that within version II they are all to be accounted for within the theme system of the Yoruba clause⁸ and that they are not regarded as separate elements of clause structure, independent of the basic elements which are inserted by the mood and transitivity systems. A suggested treatment of the theme system of the Yoruba clause will form the subject of a later paper. But to illustrate and make clear for the moment our theoretical viewpoint on this issue of elements of structure we should like to quote here rather at length a relevant section of

⁶ It would seem that these twin problems are not peculiar to linguistics. Compare Professor E. B. Idowu's comment on the field of religion: 'This is a question about which we cannot be too careful, for there is no point at all in creating distinctions where they do not exist merely because we fear that we may be accused falsely of employing foreign categories where they do not apply. If we find that the Yoruba have religious doctrines and practices similar to, or identical with, doctrines and practices among the Hebrews or the Etruscans, it should be legitimate to employ in reference to the former such terminologies as have been used in describing the latter, provided they are found appropriate' (OLODUMARE, p. 4).

⁷ The two elements 'Subject (S)' and 'Adjunct (A)' are not under dispute in this regard. So they will not be further discussed in this paper but will be taken for granted.

⁸ The theme system does not insert elements of clause structure: it 'specifies the order of elements in the clause where this is not already fully determined by the transitivity and mood dimensions' (Huddleston, Hudson, Winter and Henrici, SENTENCE AND CLAUSE IN SCIENTIFIC ENGLISH, Report of the Research Project, 'The Linguistic Properties of Scientific English'; Communications Research Centre, Department of Linguistics, University College, London, March 1968, p. 271).

A. AFOLAYAN

Halliday (1967, pp. 215-16), which is formulated for English from a theoretical viewpoint similar to ours adopted for Yoruba:

It has been said that, as here defined, the subject is that element which is introduced in the realization of certain features in the system network of mood. . . In transitivity, the subject may be actor, goal, beneficiary or range. . . In information focus, the subject may be [included within] given or new; in the unmarked case it is within the given. In thematization, the subject may be [included within] theme or rheme; what is unmarked here depends on the mood, but if we restrict the discussion to declarative clauses the unmarked option has the subject as theme.

Let us consider that each of these sets of options specifies its own constituent structures, each with its own set of structural roles. Then for example

// 1. John's / seen the / PLAY //

has four simultaneous constituent structures:

- (1) transitivity: actor JOHN, process HAS SEEN, goal THE PLAY
- (2) mood: subject JOHN, predicate HAS SEEN THE PLAY (actually, rather, modal constituent John's residual constituent SEEN THE PLAY)
- (3) information focus: given JOHN'S SEEN, new THE PLAY (alternatively, since the focus is unmarked, new JOHN'S SEEN THE PLAY)
- (4) thematization: theme JOHN, rheme HAS SEEN THE PLAY

These roles are mapped on to one another to form complex structural roles. Certain options specify the presence of a particular role in the structure: in transitivity, for example, the feature 'effective' specifies the (potential) presence of the roles of actor and goal. Others have a mapping function, and these include those of 'voice': 'operative' specifies the mapping of actor on to subject and of goal on to complement (that is, on to a nominal in the residual constituent in mood structure; subject and complement are modally defined roles of nominals having the potentiality of participant roles in transitivity).

Now in place of Bamgboṣe's 'SPA', we propose 'SPCA' as the elements of Yoruba clause structure. This means in effect that in place of Bamgboṣe's element 'P' we propose 'PC', where 'P' is 'Predicator' and 'C' is 'Complement'. This suggestion is based on both empirical and theoretical grounds. It should be noted, however, that Bamgboṣe's formulation does not deny that complements are found in Yoruba clauses; the questionable point is that such complements are not elements of clause structures but elements within the 'Predicator' (more precisely as an element of structure of the verbal group). The empirical argument given in support of our suggestion is therefore a general one for recognizing complements in Yoruba and it is the theoretical argument that seeks to revise relevant aspects of Bamgboṣe's general formulation.

The empirical argument for recognizing the 'Complement' in Yoruba depends on the fact that the Yoruba users' English, no matter at what point on the scale of bilingualism the user may be, is not generally characterized with deviant clauses suggesting that there is a basic clause structural difference between English and Yoruba. Whereas if the Yoruba clause structure were 'SPA' and the English clause structure were 'SPCA', then there would be a basic clause structural difference between the two languages and, as is true of other areas of basic structural differences, there should have been deviant clauses in Yoruba users' English reflecting the basic structural difference. It is true that we have certain deviations involving the omission of the 'goal'⁹ such as are found in 'when I saw §¹⁰ [=saw it] I can't bare [=bear] it' (from a secondary pupil's English) and 'he took a sword and he was about to kill himself when Paul commanded § [=commanded him] not

⁹ Transitivity terms such as 'goal', 'actor', 'attribuant' are as found in Halliday's 'Notes on transitivity and theme in English, Part I', JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS, vol. 1 (1967).

¹⁰ '§' is used to mark where an item has been omitted.

to do himself any harm because they were there' (from a London University General Certificate of Education candidate's English). But it is equally true that in comparable texts we have clause structural deviations involving the omission of the verb TO BE (P)—as in 'every one must present in the assembly hall' and 'Ananias first afraid. . . God told him not afraid'—or the omission of the 'actor/attribuant' (S)—as in 'my father don't know the meaning of scholarship because § [= because he] is uneducated' and 'if there was any man in their midst having any of these things in mind § [= he] should say'. And the deviations involving the omission of the verb TO BE far outnumber those involving the omission of the 'goal' (C). And it seems certain that no one will ever use the omission of the verb TO BE and that of 'actor/attribuant' in Yoruba English to suggest that there are no 'S' and 'P' elements of structure in the Yoruba clause. Similarly, we consider it unsatisfactory to use the occasional omission of 'goal' in Yoruba English to suggest that there is no 'C' element of structure in the Yoruba clause. This position of refusing to use the deviant omission of 'goal' in Yoruba English to suggest that there is no clause structural element 'C' in the Yoruba clause is the more convincing if an adequate explanation for the deviations can be provided. We think that we have got an adequate explanation to offer. We suggest that all of the omissions—be they those of 'actor/attribuant' or of the predicator TO BE or of 'goal'—can be seen as errors reflecting a complex translation of Yoruba clauses. A model of the complex process is as follows. In each case the surface grammar of the Yoruba clause is first given a misconceived deep grammatical description or analysis by the Yoruba user of English. Then he proceeds to translate his Yoruba clause to which an inadequate grammatical description has been attached into English. And because of his observation of a close similarity in the clause structures of Yoruba and English he bases his translation on the assumption that English and Yoruba clauses are in one to one correspondence. For example, the Yoruba clause translated to reflect lack of the feature 'goal' indeed has the feature. Generally all 'effective/operative' clauses in Yoruba obligatorily have goal complements. What looks like the 'effective/operative: goal intransitive' clause in Yoruba is no more than a cohesive feature resulting from some deletions (ellipsis). For instance, we have (where the shorter alternative question can be found only in a situation of the questioner's desperation—for example, over prevarication or time-wasting)

○ gé tàbí ɔ^{LC11} gé?
 (You cut or you-not cut = did you cut or not?)

as a highly restricted shorter variant of

○ gé igi tàbí ɔ^{LC} gé^{MC}? / ○ gé^{MC} tàbí ɔ^{LC} gé^{MC}.
 (You cut tree or you-not cut-it = did you cut the tree or not?)

However, structurally clauses with singular, third person pronominal objects constitute a special case. Unlike other cases, the complement is realized in normal colloquial Yoruba, not with a grammatico-lexical formative, but with the intonemic system.¹² So the errors

¹¹ 'LC' stands for 'low-compounding junction'. 'MC' stands for 'mid-compounding junction' which may be realized in the most deliberate, emphatic speech by two level pitches (high + mid) on the final vowel of the verb or more commonly in normal colloquial speech by only one complex pitch resulting from the super-imposition of a middle pitch on a high pitch. Both are categories in the intonemic system of tone in Yoruba referred to in footnote 12 below.

¹² The description of the two systems of tones in Yoruba, the tonemic and the intonemic, can be found in A. Afọlayan, THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS OF YORUBA LEARNERS AND USERS

A. AFOLAYAN

reflect an imperfect phonological interpretation of the phonetic facts of Yoruba by the Yoruba user of English and a subsequent transference of such an imperfect interpretation into English. The intonemic system (the compound junction) is thus mistakenly regarded by the Yoruba user of English as the tonemic system simply because the verb and its singular pronominal objects do not always have to be realized by two pitches but may often be realized by only one pitch, albeit a new type other than the usual three level ones used for lexical distinctions. In other words some (phonological) 'compound junctions' may be realized by a single (phonetic) pitch. Consequently two grammatical features, the 'process' and the 'goal', realized by a verb having a single phonological tone are regarded as only one feature 'process'.

EXAMPLES:

mo rí	ɔ̄mɔ̄	(I see child)
mo rí ^{MC}		(I see him)
mo rí		(I see)

NOTE. A single pitch realizes the tone on rí (see) in all three cases in normal colloquial style but the second is different from the other two, which are similar.

There are two theoretical points to advance in support of our suggestion concerning the elements of clause structure in Yoruba. The first is an issue of internal adequacy with respect to Bamgboṣe's formulation concerning the transitive verb. His formulation seems to have two important features: namely, that both the verb and the complement constitute the 'Predicator' (P): thus 'the complement is expounded by a rankshifted nominal group' (p. 84) and that the complement may/may not be separable from the verb. Now let us examine four Yoruba sentences:

- (1) mo rí bàbá
(I see father)
- (2) mo rí bàbá^{MC} òjò
(I see father of Ojo)
- (3) bàbá tí mo rí p'òwe kan
(Father that I see say proverb a)
- (4) bàbá^{MC} òjò tí mo rí p'òwe kan
(Father of Ojo that I see say proverb a)

According to Bamgboṣe's formulation under discussion, rí bàbá (see father) in sentence number 1 will be regarded as the predicator of the clause and bàbá (father) is the complement which is also 'rank-shifted nominal group'. There are two questions to be asked. The first concerns whether there is any similarity in the clause feature realized by bàbá (father) in relation to rí (see) in sentence (1) and (3), for example.¹³ To say there is no

OF ENGLISH, chapter 1, particularly pp. 92-126. It is hoped that the description will later appear in a series of articles on Yoruba phonology. Briefly, the tonemic system functions within the word (lexical distinction) and the intonemic system functions outside the word (grammatical relations).

¹³ In Transformational-Generative terms, this question amounts to asking whether there is any similarity in the deep structural relationship between 'rí' (see) and 'bàbá' (father) in the two sentences. It should be remembered that in Systemic Grammar 'features' means 'Systemic features' which belong to 'deep grammar', comparable to Transformational-Generative 'deep structure'.

similarity is to make one's grammar rather questionable, perhaps trivial. But to say that they are similar is to throw a great doubt on the validity of seeing *rí bàbá* in sentence (1) as the 'P' to which *bàbá* is rankshifted. This is particularly the case since it seems that the 'P' of the formulations is not to be seen as an equivalent of 'VP' or 'Predicate Phrase' in Transformational-Generative grammar. The formulation is based on Halliday's model and the proposal of 'SPA' as the structure of the Yoruba clause is to be seen against the background of Halliday's proposal of 'SPCA' for English.

Perhaps the whole question turns upon the concept 'rankshifted nominal group', which is our second question. It would seem that we would all agree that *òjò* in both sentences (2) and (4) is a rankshifted nominal group, rankshifted into the nominal group *bàbá^{MC} òjò* (to simplify a little). It is difficult to see how *bàbá* in sentence (3) can be regarded as being comparably rankshifted into the 'P' of the clause.¹⁴ Such a view would also contend that *bàbá^{MC} òjò* in sentence (4) is rankshifted into a 'P' and that *òjò* in turn is rankshifted into the nominal group-complex *bàbá^{MC} òjò*. A pertinent question is: 'Where is the 'P'?' and it would seem that for (4), *rí bàbá^{MC} òjò* as an answer would be rather unconvincing. Besides, the view that recognizes as an element of clause structure (complement) an element which occurs only as a structural element rankshifted into another element of clause structure (Predicator) robs either the concept 'rankshift' or the element of structure (Complement) of any usefulness. It seems that, if in fact the elements 'P' and 'C' are inseparable in Yoruba, it is useful to consider the resulting element as a portmanteau¹⁵ element rather than as an element involving 'rankshift'.¹⁶

But perhaps the more important theoretical point is our second one. In relation to the 'deep grammar', both 'P' and 'C', which are properties of 'surface grammar', are realizations of participants in the 'process'.¹⁷ Consequently, 'P' and 'C' will be inserted as independent elements of clause structure by the mood and transitivity systems. Thus, returning to the four sentences above, we would recognize *bàbá* in sentence (1) as the 'goal' to which we assign the clause structural element 'C' and it is only *òjò*, and not *bàbá*, that we would regard as a rankshifted nominal group in sentences (2) and (4). Thus the 'C' element will be recognized within the more general context of 'deep' and 'surface' grammar: and, following Halliday, intensive complements in Yoruba will also be assigned to the structural element 'C' in surface grammar. (Transitivity in the Yoruba clause will be further discussed in the second paper of the series.) Further examples of complements in Yoruba are:

¹⁴ Bamgboṣe does not explicitly say into what the complement which 'is expounded by a rankshifted nominal group' is rankshifted. But according to the formulation it can only be rankshifted into the 'P' or, alternatively, the verbal group.

¹⁵ Cf. S. M. Lamb, *OUTLINE OF STRATIFICATIONAL GRAMMAR* (Georgetown, 1966), p. 17.

¹⁶ It indeed seems that such a concept of 'rankshift' is theoretically invalid. Cf. R. Hasan, *COHESION IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH: MANUAL OF ANALYSIS* (Nuffield Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching): 'It is said to be rank-shifted because unlike non-rankshifted nominal groups, it does not act as a direct participant in the clause, that is, it realizes an element normally realized by a certain class of words, e.g. HIS. Thus compare HIS BEHAVIOUR with THIS APPLICANT'S BEHAVIOUR; HIS belongs to the class of words called possessive determiner and realizes the possessive deictic; THIS APPLICANT is a nominal group rankshifted to realize the possessive deictic, hence THIS APPLICANT'S.

¹⁷ As said earlier in the Introduction, this is a point where we have to differ from Bamgboṣe simply because we are working with a more advanced stage of the Systemic Grammar than he did. No one can reasonably question him for not taking note of theoretical points which were unknown when he wrote his work.

A. AFOLAYAN

EXTENSIVE COMPLEMENT:

mo rí ewúré méjì

Extensive

S P C

(I see goat two = I see/saw two goats)

òjó gé igi

Extensive

S P C

(Ojo cut tree = Ojo cuts/cut a tree)

INTENSIVE COMPLEMENT:

òjó jé ọlọgbọ̀n

Intensive

S P C

(Ojo is wise-person = Ojo is wise or

Ojo is a wise person)

ìwé nà: jẹ́ dúdú

Intensive

S P C

(Book the is black = the book is black)

Turning to the question of clause structural differences between Yoruba and English, we would say that both languages have similar clause structures. The only difference between them lies in one surface grammatical point, namely that whereas in Yoruba 'P' and 'C' may sometimes appear to be non-separable, English ones are always separable and separate.¹⁸

Finally, Bamgboṣe's related concept of 'verb-nominal collocation'¹⁹ deserves some comments. Our view is that the 'non-separableness' of the 'P' and 'C' in Yoruba is apparent rather than real; the 'separable verb-nominal collocation' consists of 'P' and 'C' in the language; and the 'fixed verb-nominal collocation' is not a realization of 'P' and 'C'. And it should be noted that 'P' and 'C' (the 'separable verb-nominal collocation') may be written either as two separate morphemes or together as a single morpheme in traditional orthography; the only difference between the two forms can be fully explained in morpho-phonemic terms:

EXAMPLES:

(a) Separate

pe olówó (call the owner of the money or rich man)

bo orí (cover head)

(b) Separable but not separate

p'olówó (= call the owner of the money or rich man)

b'orí (= cover head)

¹⁸ Compare 'separable' and 'non-separable' 'verb-negative elements' such as DO NOT and DON'T or SHALL NOT and SHAN'T in English with corresponding ones in Yoruba, which are always separable, for example, kì yó SHALL NOT or SHAN'T.

¹⁹ Throughout the terminology of Bamgboṣe is kept in order to make our point easy to follow. Otherwise we might have dropped the term 'verb-nominal collocation' entirely because 'collocation' looks rather unsatisfactory as a term referring to a grammatical construction. It seems that 'colligation', not 'collocation' is usually used for grammatical discussions.

SOME ISSUES IN THE GRAMMAR OF MODERN YORUBA

The separable 'verb-nominal collocation' is to be distinguished from the 'fixed verb-nominal collocation' from the point of view of the elements of Yoruba clause structure. Whereas the former realizes two transitivity features, the latter realizes only one. Compare the examples given above with the following 'fixed verb-nominal collocation' counterparts:

polówó (=hawk)
borí (=to be victorious).

In each case the separable (or separate) 'verb-nominal collocation' realizes the features 'process' and 'goal' while the fixed 'verb-nominal collocation' realizes only the feature 'process'. Thus we would like to assign the 'fixed verb-nominal collocation' to the verb class within the verbal group that realizes the 'predicator' element of clause structure.

But there is still the problem of the phonological features of the 'verb-nominal collocations'. In his article on the subject²⁰ Bamgboṣe shows that the type of junction between the 'verb-nominal collocation' and a following nominal is similar to that between a nominal and another following nominal rather than that between a verb and a following nominal. Bamgboṣe is right in seeing this as 'a problem of syntactic analysis' in that no wholly neat and regular syntactic statement can be made on this area of Yoruba grammar. However, we would like to suggest that even here our formulation appears to be preferable to his. It must be remembered that the counter phonological evidence does not apply to all types of 'verb-nominal collocation': it is irrelevant to the 'separable verb-nominal collocation', the second element of which is a nominal in any case. Of the two types of 'verb-nominal collocation' the 'separable' constitutes the major and productive set; the 'fixed' constitutes a comparatively smaller and unproductive set. This means that it is because of the unproductive, minor set that we, accepting Bamgboṣe's formulation, are forced to recognize all complements as 'rankshifted nominal groups' within verbal groups and all cases of verbs and their complements as verbal groups (a position being questioned by the body of this paper). Yet, despite the claim to the contrary, the formulation does not lead to any economy or simplicity. If as a result of adopting the formulation the total number of items to be classified as verbs 'will be considerably reduced', as claimed by Bamgboṣe, this will be done only at the expense of increasing the number and complexity of the category 'verb-nominal collocation'. Besides the fact that the 'verb-nominal collocation' is a new additional category not necessary for an adequate grammar of Yoruba, it does not lead to simpler or fewer grammatical rules. For example, if in fact there is a reduction in the number of verbs through the formulation, the same economy can be achieved within the concept of 'verb + object' (predicator plus its complement). All examples cited (Bamgboṣe 1964, p. 29) involve the verb 'ṣe' (do) and its object. But perhaps the more serious objection is that the introduction of the new symbol (the category 'verb-nominal collocation') does not reduce or simplify the overall grammatical rules. If one adopts the formulation one's grammar will still have to distinguish in delicacy between a verb and its object on the one hand and the two types of 'verb-nominal collocation' on the other. More seriously it would have to distinguish between monosyllabic and disyllabic verbs, otherwise how will the syntactic differences between 'fixed verb-nominal collocations' and 'separable verb-nominal collocations' (our verb + objects) be accounted for? It seems that there is no way of accounting for the syntactic functions of 'fixed verb-nominal collocations' without recognizing them as disyllabic

²⁰ See A. Bamgboṣe, 'Verb nominal collocation in Yoruba: a problem of syntactic analysis', J.W.A.L. vol. 1, no. 2 (1964), pp. 27-8.

A. AFOLAYAN

verbs and, if this is so, it means that contrary to the claim the formulation does not do away with disyllabic verbs: all it does is to push the description of disyllabic verbs from the primary degree of delicacy to the secondary.

Thus, although the phonological features of the 'fixed verb-nominal collocations' noted by Bamgboṣe are true and may be used for suggesting that the second element of the 'collocation' is a noun, it is our view that the so-called 'fixed verb-nominal collocation' (and by no means all of them) are best not seen as being derived from a 'verb-nominal collocation' in synchronic linguistics. The phonological evidence, however, may be used to suggest the possibility that in diachronic linguistics each member of this special class of verb (Bamgboṣe's 'fixed verb-nominal collocation') may be shown to have derived from a 'verb-nominal collocation'. In synchronic linguistics each may be analysed into its lexical or grammatical morphemes, just as BLACKBOARD or ENLIGHTEN may be analysed in English. But just as one does not need to assign the morphemes BLACK and BOARD in BLACKBOARD or EN-, LIGHT- and -EN in ENLIGHTEN respectively to grammatical word classes, one does not need to assign the morphemes in words such as *polówó* (hawk) and *borí* (to be victorious) to grammatical classes, to yield 'verb-nominal collocations'.

It would seem that the elements of Yoruba clause structure are best seen as 'SPCA' rather than 'SPA', that 'C' is best seen as an independent element of clause structure and not as an element rankshifted into the 'P' and that the two elements 'PC' may be realized by either two separate grammatical forms or a single portmanteau grammatical form morpho-phonemically related to the two-separate-grammatical-form variant.

I should like to thank Ayọ Bamgboṣe for his very useful comments on the earlier draft of this paper.