

# Pronouns in Arigidi: A Syntactic Analysis

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional grammarians classified lexical items into parts of speech and one of such classifications is the pronoun. According to Dineen (1967), a pronoun is a part of speech that can substitute for the proper name of anyone and that indicates a definite person. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a pronoun as any of a small set of words in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context word that can replace i.e. be used in place of a noun in a grammatical construction. This study examines pronouns in Arigidi (a little studied) speech form with the aim of gaining an insight into their forms, structure and function in line with the classification of traditional grammar. Arigidi and nine other speech forms classified under Arigidi Cluster, Lorena (Ethnologue 2012) are spoken in Àkókó region of Ondo state South-west Nigeria where Yorùbá is the major language. However, based on previous studies such as Greenberg (1963), Hoffman (1974), Bennet and Sterk (1977), Capo (1989), Ohiri-Anichie (2006), Oshodi (2011a), Lorena (Ethnologue 2012) and Olúwádorò (2014) their true linguistic status is still controversial and yet to be ascertained. This is what always makes any study on any of the speech forms interesting.

## 2. The Concept of Pronoun in Yorùbá

Prominent Yorùbá scholars such as Bámgbóṣé (1967, 1990), Awóbùlúyì (1978) and Yusuf (1995) all define a pronoun as the word used instead of a noun. Bámgbóṣé (1967) analyzes pronouns from the angle of syntactic position of occurrence. He defines a pronoun as a word that cannot have a qualifier in the nominal group. He observes further that pronouns have a system of number (singular and plural) and of person (1st, 2nd and 3rd person). Also, they have different forms for the different syntactic positions in which they occur. Awóbùlúyì (1978) and Bámgbóṣé (1990) grouped Yorùbá pronouns into three; subject and object pronouns, possessive pronouns (genitival qualifiers) and the third type which Bámgbóṣé (1990) tagged “noun-like pronouns” because they possess some attributes of nouns in the language. Awóbùlúyì (1978) tagged this third type of pronouns emphatic pronouns. The other pronouns were tagged short pronouns while the emphatic pronouns were tagged long pronouns. In later grammatical theories however, these short and long (emphatic) pronouns were changed to weak and strong pronouns (Manfredi 1987 and Sells 1987). Today, following Ajíbóyè (2004) and Adéṣolá (2004; 2005), the short/weak pronouns and the long/strong pronouns are also called antilogophor and logophor respectively.

Awóbùlúyì (1978) using a functional approach observed that in Yorùbá language, the part of speech traditionally referred to as pronouns is actually a subgroup of nouns. Awóbùlúyì's claim is based on some specific functions performed by some words referred to as pronouns in Yorùbá particularly their position of occurrence and their relationship with other words in sentences.

Though there is the principle of language universality, there are still language specific rules. Based on this, Awóbùlúyì's claim needs to be verified with facts from other African languages thus, the decision to examine pronouns in Arigidi. More so, since studies e.g. Awóbùlúyì (2008) and (Oshodi 2011; 2013; 2016a) have established a strong linguistic affinity between Arigidi and Yorùbá, it is hoped that findings from this study would help throw more light on the language subfamily to which Arigidi and the other speech forms belongs and in particular their true linguistic relationship with Yorùbá.

### 3. Pronouns in Arigidi

Following the concept of functional analysis, pronouns in Arigidi can be classified as subject and object as well as singular and plural. In addition to these, just like in Yorùbá, pronouns in Arigidi can be classified into two main types: short and long (emphatic) pronouns. There is also another type known as possessive pronouns (genitival qualifiers). Apart from the main function, which is to replace a noun in a sentence, pronouns in Arigidi perform other functions depending on their type and form. These functions shall be discussed under each type of pronoun.

#### 3.1 Short Pronouns in Arigidi

The short pronouns in Arigidi can be grouped in terms of function (i.e. subject or object) and in terms of number (i.e. singular and plural). Below are the forms of the short pronouns in Arigidi:

Subject position			Object position	
<i>first person singular</i>	<i>man</i>	“I”	<i>min</i>	“me”
<i>second person singular</i>	<i>ran</i>	“you (sg)”	<i>rin</i>	“you (sg)”
<i>third person singular</i>	( <i>á</i> )?	“he/she/it”	Ø	“him/her/it”
<i>First person plural</i>	<i>òà</i>	“we”	<i>ò</i>	“us”
<i>second person plural</i>	<i>mán</i>	“you (pl)”	<i>mén</i>	“you (pl)”
<i>third person plural</i>	<i>wá</i>	“they”	<i>wá</i>	“them”

Table 1. Arigidi Short Pronouns

To substantiate the above claim and forms, the pronouns are used in sentences below:

(1a) **Man** da iyì ẹẹ  
 I buy two hen  
 “I bought two hens”

(1b) Òjọ́ á ri **min**  
 Òjọ́ HTS see me  
 “Òjọ́ saw me”

(2a) **Rán** jo ògòlòmàṣí  
 2SG eat pawpaw  
 “You(sg) ate pawpaw”

- (2b) Títí á rí **rin**  
 Títí HTS see 2SG  
 “Títí saw you”
- (3a) **Á(?)** fọ àlà  
 3SG wash cloth  
 “He/she washed some clothes”
- (3b) Òjọ á ri **Ø**  
 Òjọ HTS see NP  
 “Òjọ saw him/her/it”
- (4a) **Òa** ve oso  
 we go house  
 “We went home”
- (4b) Òjọ á bá ò  
 Òjọ HTS greet us  
 “Òjọ greeted us”
- (5a) **Mán** kọn okùba  
 2PL possess money  
 “You(pl) are rich”
- (5b) Títí á rọn **mẹn**  
 Títí HTS know 2PL  
 “Títí knows you(pl)”
- (6a) **Wá** bọ èjìn  
 they drink water  
 “They drank water”
- (6b) Òjọ á pún **wá**  
 Òjọ HTS abuse them  
 “Òjọ abused them”

However, facts from the speech form revealed that the forms in (1-6) attested at the surface structure in basic declarative sentences as short pronouns in subject positions were all derived. They were actually derived from their underlying forms through some phono-syntactic processes. These underlying forms always occur in specific subject positions in some constructions. The underlying and surface forms of the short subject pronouns are shown below:

	Underlying Form		Surface Form
first person singular	<i>min</i>	→	<i>man</i>
second person singular	<i>rin</i>	→	<i>rán</i>
third person singular	$\emptyset$	→	$\emptyset$
first person plural	<i>ò</i>	→	<i>òá</i>
second person plural	<i>mẹn</i>	→	<i>mán</i>
third person plural	<i>wẹ</i>	→	<i>wá</i>

Table 2. The Underlying and Surface Forms of Arigidi Short Pronouns

Consider the examples below which show the sequential processes of how the surface forms (i.e. those listed in table (1) as subject forms) were derived from their underlying forms:

	Underlying form		Assimilation/Merging		Surface form	Gloss
(7)	Min    á    vè I        HTS   go	→	Man    á    vè I        HTS   go	→	Man    vè I        go	“I went/have gone”
(8)	Rin    á    vè 2SG    HTS   go	→	Ran    á    vè 2SG    HTS   go	→	Rán    vè 2SG    go	“You went/have gone”
(9)	[ $\emptyset$ ]    á    vè NP        HTS   go	→	NA NA	→	Á        vè HTS    go	“3SG went/has gone”
(10)	Ò        á    vè we        HTS   go	→	Òá      vè we        go	→	Òá      vè we        go	“We went/have gone”
(11)	Mẹn    á    vè 2PL    HTS   go	→	Mán    á    vè 2SG    HTS   go	→	Mán    vè 2PL    go	“You went/ have gone”
(12)	Wẹ      á    vè they    HTS   go	→	á    Wá they    HTS   go	→	Wá      vè they    go	“They went/ have gone”

In examples (1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b and 7-12), we notice the occurrence of the morpheme *á* between the subject NP and the verb. This element has been tagged the high tone syllable HTS<sup>1</sup>. The HTS assimilates the last vowel of the pronouns. The HTS is then deleted and its tone gets transferred to the assimilated vowel of the preceding pronouns to produce the surface forms listed in table 1. In example (9), the pronoun is presumed to be covert and the first overt element is the HTS *á* thus, the processes of assimilation and deletion were not applicable. In example (7), the tone of the HTS was not transferred to the assimilated vowel of the pronoun for a good reason. This was to avoid metonymy with the second person plural pronoun *mán* “you(plural)”. If this had not been done, the two forms would have been realized as (*mán*). In (10), instead of assimilation it was merging that took place. The HTS did not assimilate the underlying form of the first person plural *ò* “we” in order to avoid metonymy again. If assimilation had taken place, the first person plural pronoun would have been realized as *á* and the construction in (10) would be realized as *Á*

<sup>1</sup>The HTS is an overt element which occurs between the subject NP and the verb in Arigidi declarative sentence. It is similar to the one found in Yorùbá and its dialects. Oshodi (2011a, 2011b, 2013 and 2016a) in corroboration with the claim of Awobuluyi (1992) refers to it as a preverbal element, a tense and aspectual marker.

vè the exact surface form in (9). The tone of the HTS was however deleted and the surface form was realized as *òá*. Also, in (11 and 12), there was no need to transfer the tone of the HTS since the underlying forms carry the same high tone on the HTS.

Also, it was observed that the third person singular pronoun in the object position is covert. It has no form and it is not realized at all in Arigidi. This is why it is represented with the null sign ( $\emptyset$ ) in example (3b).

Another very important observation has to do with the actual form of the 3SG subject pronoun. The morpheme *á* which appeared in that position in (3a) has a question mark in front of it. This was purposely done to draw attention to its controversial form. Oshodi (2011b, 2013) claim that the form *á* is not the 3SG short subject pronoun in Arigidi but the same HTS which assimilates or merges with the underlying forms to produce the surface forms as shown in (7-12). He (Oshodi) also failed to propose a form for the 3SG short subject pronoun.

In this study, the vowel [í] with a high tone is proposed as the underlying form of the 3SG subject pronoun in Arigidi based on its occurrence in some positions where the 3SG subject pronoun usually occurs in Arigidi constructions. Consider the examples below:

(13) **Í** sí oso  
3SG be house  
“He/she is at home”

(14) **Í** yàá bọ èjin?  
3SG QM drink water  
“Has he/she drunk water?”

Example (13) is a simple sentence while (14) is a question. Also, the form *wé* is proposed as the underlying form of the third person plural subject pronoun in Arigidi based on its position of occurrence in constructions where the third person plural subject pronoun normally occurs. Consider examples (21 and 22) below:

(15) **Rin** sí oso  
2SG be house  
“You(sg) are at home”

(16) **Rin** yàá bọ èjin?  
2SG QM drink water  
“Have you(sg) drunk water?”

(17) **Ò** sí oso  
we be home  
“We are at home”

(18) **Ò** yàá bọ èjin?  
we QM drink water  
“Have we drunk water?”

- (19) **Mén** sí oso  
2PL be house  
“You are at home”
- (20) **Mén** yàá bọ èjin?  
2PL QM drink water  
“Have you(pl) drunk water?”
- (21) **Wé** sí oso  
they be house  
“They are at home”
- (22) **Wé** yàá bọ èjin?  
they QM drink water  
“Have they drunk water?”

Proposing *wé* as the underlying form of the third person plural subject pronoun can be substantiated by the fact that it is the only form that can occur in the position of the third person plural subject (21 and 22) in constructions where the other underlying forms can occur as shown in examples (13-20).

As shown in examples (1-22), the major function of the short pronouns in Arigidi both in subject and object positions is to replace a noun or a noun phrase in a sentence. For example, (14, 22, 3b and 6b) above can be rendered as (23, 24, 25 and 26) below:

- (23) **Ginrin ukọnrẹn** yàá bọ èjin?  
This man QM drink water  
“Has this man drunk water?”
- (24) **Ọjó wọnrin Títí** yàá bọ èjin?  
Ọjó and Títí QM drink water  
“Have Ọjó and Títí drunk water?”
- (25) Ọjó á rí **Títí**  
Ọjó HTS see 3SG  
“Ọjó saw Títí”
- (26) Ọjó á pún **àkùku** **ìgbẹ̀ẹ̀ji** **àwọ́rín**  
Ọjó HTS abuse all the children  
“Ọjó abused all the children”

In (23), the NP subject *ginrin ukọnrẹn* “this man” was replaced with the 3SG subject pronoun *í* in (14) while in (24) the NP subjects *Ọjó* and *Títí* were replaced with the pronoun *wé* in (22). Also, in (25), the NP object *Títí* was replaced with the 3SG object pronoun represented with  $\emptyset$  because it is always covert in Arigidi in (3b) while in (26) the NP object *àkùkù ìgbẹ̀ẹ̀ji àwọ́rín* “all the children” was replaced with the pronoun *wá* in (6b).

### 3.2 The Long (Emphatic) Pronouns in Arigidi

There is another set of pronouns in Arigidi known as long or emphatic pronouns. Apart from the fact that they are differentiated for number and person, pronouns in this class function and behave just like the ordinary nouns in the language. Awóbùlúyì (1978) referred to them as a sub-class of nouns in standard Yorùbá. This set of pronouns in Arigidi behave exactly like those in Standard Yorùbá. The long (emphatic) pronouns are attested only in the subject position and they are shown below:

<i>first person singular</i>	amèn	“I”
<i>second person singular</i>	aròn	“you (sg)”
<i>third person singular</i>	úwòn/ẹrèn	“he/she/it”
<i>first person plural</i>	aò	“we”
<i>second person plural</i>	ámèn	“you (pl)”
<i>third person plural</i>	áwá	“they”

Table 3. Forms of the Long (Emphatic) Pronouns in Arigidi

The long (emphatic) pronouns in Arigidi perform some specific grammatical functions. One of such functions is that they (long or emphatic pronouns) are the only types of pronouns that can be focused just like nouns in Arigidi. Consider the examples below:

(27) **Amèn** wòn bọ èjin  
 I FOC drink water  
 “It was I who drank water”

(28) **Arọ** wòn bọ èjin  
 you(sg) FOC drink water  
 “It was you(sg) who drank water”

(29) **Úwòn** wòn bọ èjin  
 3SG FOC drink water  
 “It was he/she who drank water”

(30) **Aò** wòn bọ èjin  
 we FOC drink water  
 “It was we who drank water”

(31) **Ámèn** wòn bọ èjin  
 you(pl) FOC drink water  
 “It was you(pl) who drank water”

(32) **Áwá** wòn bọ èjin  
 they FOC drink water  
 “It was they who drank water”

In examples (27-32), the long (emphatic) pronouns all in bold form were the focused items which were immediately followed by the focus marker *wón* which is italicized. The interesting thing about focusing in relation to pronouns in Arigidi is that it is only nouns and verbs that can be focused in the speech form. In actual fact, it is only nouns that can be focused in their basic form. Verbs must first be nominalized through partial reduplication just like in Standard Yorùbá and then moved to the initial part of the sentence before they can be focused (see Oshodi 2011a, 2016a). Also, the long (emphatic) pronouns in Arigidi can take modifiers. Consider the examples below:

(33) **aò** *gòn-òn*  
we particular  
“We in particular”

(34) **úwón** *gòn-òn*  
3SG particular  
“He/she/it in particular”

(35) *ègédi* **ámén**  
only me  
“Only me”

(36) *ègédi* **arón**  
only 2SG  
“Only you(sg)”

In (33-36), the long (emphatic) pronouns in bold form took the modifiers which were italicized. Furthermore, the long (emphatic) pronouns can also be questioned by the interrogative word *şiré* “what”, a feature which is only possible with nouns in Arigidi. Consider the examples below:

(37) **Amén** *şiré*  
I QM  
“What about me?”

(38) **Aò** *şiré?*  
we QM  
“What about us?”

(39) **Úwón** *şiré?*  
3SG QM  
“What about him/her/it?”

(40) **Áwá** *şiré?*  
they QM  
“What about them?”

- (41) **Ámẹ̀n**    *şìré?*  
 2PL        QM  
 “What about you (pl)?”

As shown in examples (37-41), the long (emphatic) pronouns in Arigidi were all questioned by the interrogative word *şìré* “what” just like nouns. Based on the fact that the long (emphatic) pronouns in Arigidi can be focused, can equally take some qualifiers and also be questioned by the interrogative word *şìré* “what” just like nouns in the speech form (see Oshodi 2011a), it would actually be correct to put them in the class of nouns in Arigidi as suggested for Standard Yorùbá (Awóbùlúyì 1978).

Also, notice that the 3SG long (emphatic) pronoun in Arigidi has two forms *úwọ̀n* and *ẹ̀rẹ̀n*. These two forms perform different syntactic functions. As shown in (27-32), *úwọ̀n* is used in focusing, it is also the form that can take modifiers as shown in (33-36) and the form that can be questioned with the interrogative word *şìré* “what” as shown in (37-41). However, in logophoric construction which requires that a particular pronoun be used when someone’s perspective is being reported, it is *ẹ̀rẹ̀n* that must be used in such context. Consider the example below:

- (42) **Kọ́lá**    *á*        *hẹ̀n*    *péní*    **ẹ̀rẹ̀n**        *á*        *wọ̀n*  
 Kọ́lá    HTS    say    that    himself    HTS    laugh  
 “Kọ́lá said that he (Kọ́lá) laughed”

In example (42), which involves the third person singular long (emphatic) pronoun, it is *ẹ̀rẹ̀n* that is used as the perspective of *Kọ́lá* is being reported. This is because the pronoun here must refer to *Kọ́lá*. Thus, (43) below is not acceptable in the language.

- (43) \***Kọ́lá**    *á*        *hẹ̀n*    *péní*    *úwọ̀n*        *á*        *wọ̀n*  
 Kọ́lá    HTS    say    that    he/she    HTS    laugh

However, (43) above can be rendered as (44) below:

- (44) **Kọ́lá**    *á*        *hẹ̀n*    *péní*    **úwọ̀n**        *gọ̀n-ọ̀n*    *á*        *wọ̀n*  
 Kọ́lá    HTS    say    that    he/she    MOD    HTS    laugh  
 “Kọ́lá said that he (another entity) in particular laughed”

The example in (44) becomes grammatical because the 3SG long (emphatic) pronoun *úwọ̀n* in this context took a modifier *gọ̀n-ọ̀n* which made it clear that the person in reference is not *Kọ́lá*.

### 3.3 Possessive Pronouns (Genitival Qualifiers) in Arigidi

Just like in Standard Yorùbá, there is another type of pronouns in Arigidi tagged possessive pronouns also called genitival qualifiers. As the name implies, pronouns in this class are used solely to indicate ownership or possession when used with nouns. Consider the sentences below where these pronouns are attested in Arigidi.

- (45) **Okùba**    **rọ̀n**  
 money    my  
 “My money”

- (46) Okùba **rìn**  
 money your(sg)  
 “Your(sg) money”
- (47) Okùba **àá**  
 money 3SG.POSS  
 “His/her money”
- (48) Àyù **ùú**  
 ress 3SG.POSS  
 “His/her dress”
- (49) Èhaàjo **òó**  
 food 3SG.POSS  
 “His/her/its food”
- (50) Ègírí **íí**  
 head 3SG.POSS  
 “His/her/its head”
- (51) Okùba **ò**  
 money our  
 “Our money”
- (52) Okùba **wa**  
 money their  
 “Their money”
- (53) Okùba **mẹn**  
 money your(pl)  
 “Your(pl) money”

From the examples in (45-53), we can identify the forms of the possessive pronouns in Arigidi. The forms are shown in table 4 below:

first person singular possessive pronoun	<i>rọn</i>
second person singular possessive pronoun	<i>rìn</i>
third person singular possessive pronoun	<i>ùú</i>
first person plural possessive pronoun	<i>ò</i>
second person plural possessive pronoun	<i>wa</i>
third person plural possessive pronoun	<i>mẹn</i>

Table 4. Forms of the Possessive Pronouns in Arigidi

Possessive pronouns in Arigidi can be classified as short pronouns because they do not possess any attributes of the long (emphatic) pronouns. Also, the third person singular possessive pronoun in Arigidi has no definite form. In examples (45-48) where the third person singular possessive

pronoun occurs, it was observed that the last vowel of the noun (i.e. the possessor) is always reduplicated with a low [̀] and high [́] tone respectively to indicate possession or ownership. It is the reduplicated vowel that functions as the 3SG possessive pronoun in Arigidi.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study presented a functional analysis of pronouns in Arigidi with focus on their forms and functions. It was revealed that just like Standard Yorùbá, Arigidi attests three types of pronouns; short pronouns, long (emphatic) pronouns and possessive pronouns. Findings revealed that the forms attested as the short subject pronouns were derived from their underlying forms through some phono-syntactic processes. It was also discovered that *á* the first element in the position of the 3SG subject pronoun in certain constructions in Arigidi is not a pronoun but a preverbal element similar to the Yorùbá HTS which marks tense and aspect (Awóbùlúyì 1992, Oshodi 2011b, 2013). Furthermore, the 3SG short object pronoun in Arigidi has no definite form and it is always covert. The same thing goes for the 3SG possessive (genitival) pronoun which also has no definite form. It usually reduplicates the last vowel of the noun (i.e. possessor) which precedes it to express possession or ownership. Pronouns in Arigidi were also discovered to perform similar functions like those in Standard Yorùbá and act more like nouns in their relationship with other lexical items in sentences. These findings further confirm the strong linguistic affinity between Arigidi and Standard Yorùbá. Finally, it was revealed that the lexical items tagged pronouns in Arigidi perform more functions beyond the main function assigned to them in traditional grammar unlike what happens in European languages like English and French. This further confirms that language specific rules are needed to affirm the functional role of lexical items based on their relationship with other lexical items in individual language.

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