

Pronouns in Ọ̀hòrí

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Abstract

Sequel to the call made by (Awobuluyi 1998) that attention should be given to the study of Yorùbá dialects in order to increase our knowledge on the sounds and terminologies of the dialects, hence, the study of Ọ̀hòrí pronouns. This article examines pronouns in Ọ̀hòrí, a dialect spoken in West Yorùbá (Oyelaran 1976; Adeniyi 2000). In the course of the analysis, it is discovered that tone plays major roles in the pronouns of Ọ̀hòrí. The influence of the negative marker in negative constructions equally poses some differences in the pronouns of Ọ̀hòrí. The study, which employs descriptive approach, however, concludes that there are more to Yorùbá pronouns than what we know in the standard version.

Keyword: Ọ̀hòrí dialect, negative marker, pronouns, speech forms, tone

Introduction

The speech forms among the Yorùbá dialects differ. The way an item is called or pronounced in a dialect differs from the way another dialect would pronounce it, though there may be semantic similarities. This semantic similarity arises from the mutual intelligibility that exists among them. However, since there are variations among the Yorùbá dialects, there is need for each of them to be researched for the differences to be made clear. Dakuku (2005:5) attested to this difference among the dialects and indicated that there are variations at the phonological, lexical/functional and grammatical levels. In essence, these dialects are being studied in order to increase our knowledge on the sounds and terminologies of the dialects, to document and preserve the dialects for posterity (Awobuluyi 1998). One of the differences noticed in Ọ̀hòrí compared to the Standard variety is the pronouns. Generally, pronouns, which have phi-features have been classified under functional categories (Chomsky 1981, 1995; Radford 1997). It has been reported in the existing¹ linguistic literature that pronouns are of two types: short and long pronouns. These two types are going to be examined in Ọ̀hòrí and it is our hope that the outcome of the work would be an additional knowledge to the ones carried out so far on pronouns in Yorùbá dialects. The article has four sections. The first section deals with the

1 This work is not of the comparative type. It is an analysis that shows the operations and forms of pronouns in Ọ̀ h ọ̀ rí but for better understanding of readers, I provide here the standard version of the data.

introduction; section two considers the historical and linguistic background of Ọ̀hòrí; section three explains the pronouns in Ọ̀hòrí and section four rounds off the study.

Historical and Linguistic Background of Ọ̀hòrí

Ọ̀hòrí, a Yorùbá dialect spoken in Kétu area of Ogun State. Ọ̀hòrí is located in Kétu Community in Yewa North Local Government of Ọ̀gùn State. Other dialects spoken in Kétu alongside Ọ̀hòrí are Kénà, Ìbíyán and Ègùwá. Ọ̀hòrí people are sometimes called **Ìjé**. **Ìjé** is a local speech spoken among Ọ̀hòrí, which is known as **Èdè Ìjé** 'Ìjé language', which is mutually intelligible to speakers of other dialectal forms of Yorùbá. According to Ethnologue, **Èdè Ìjé** 'Ìjé Language' has a lexical similarity with **Èdè Nàgó** and similarity with the Yorùbá dialect spoken in **Àjàṣé/Port-Novo** geographically located in the Republic in Benin.

Furthermore, Ọ̀hòrí is a subgroup of the people of Yewa in Ọ̀gùn State. However, history has it that the local domain of Ọ̀hòrí is southeastern Benin North of Pobè town but expanded westward of Yorùbá. According to the Nigeria Population census (2013), the population of Ọ̀hòrí is about two hundred thousand (200,000).

In addition, the Ọ̀hòrí natural environment is a naturally swampy/marshy waterlogged depression with what could be described as adverse physical conditions; therefore, the area had historically been a safe haven for people fleeing persecution from the larger entities of Kétu, Ọ̀yó and others. Because of their relative inaccessibility during raining season, the Ọ̀hòrí were considered by their neighbours to be among the most conservative Yorùbá, and their speech is quite distinct.

Majority of the speakers of the dialect are farmers by profession. Some of them practice Christianity as religion while some are traditional worshippers and they worship a god called *Àtàrá*. The favourite food of Ọ̀hòrí is pap and that is why corn is a major local crop. It should be stated that the structure of the dialect has not enjoyed much scholarly research.

Pronouns in Ọ̀hòrí

Pronouns are [+functional, +referential, +nominal] words. These features of pronouns are what (Ilòri, 2010:308) referred to as non-contentive nominal words, which are generally referential in the grammar of natural language. Another feature of pronouns is that they belong to closed classes. In his own view, pronouns are polymorphemic nouns which take three forms when they function as subject, object and qualifier (Awobuluyi, 1978:78). What these scholars are driving out is that pronouns are referential elements and can function in the syntactic position of a noun.

As said in introductory part, the short pronouns, which are monosyllabic could also be referred to as unemphatic, while the long counterparts, which are bisyllabic could also be said as emphatic in the literature. The emphatic ones are also called pronominal, which is derived from *pro* ‘on behalf of’ and the nominal which is an adjective associated with the word noun (Ilọri, 2010:327). There is a view which regards short pronouns as basic, while long pronouns are derived from the short counterparts through affixation (Awobuluyi 2008; Olumuyiwa 2006).

Radford (2004:355) reported that the word pronoun is made up of two morphemes, *pro* ‘on behalf of’ and *noun*, hence, traditional definition of pronouns as words used in place of nouns.

3.1. Long pronouns in Ọhọrí

However, emphatic pronouns in Ọhọrí are six, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Long/Emphatic Pronouns in Ọhọrí.

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	Ọmin	Àwàa
2nd	Ìwẹ	Ọhin
3rd	Ọhọn	Àhọn

The occurrence of these emphatic pronouns is shown in the following expressions, (1).

Ọhọrí SY

1. a. Ọmin ní jó gọn-ọn. Èmi ní jó gan-an.
 1sg Prog-Hab dance very well 1sg Prog dance very well
 ‘I dance alot.’ ‘I dance alot.’
- b. Àwàa ní nọ sínọ́ íné. Àwà ní lọ sílé.
 1pl Prog-Hab go Loc-inside house 1pl Prog go LOC-house
 ‘We are going home.’ ‘We are going home.’
2. a. Ìwẹ mọ́ọ fọhọ́n. Ìwọ máa sọrọ́.
 2sg Fut talk 2sg Fut talk
 ‘You will talk.’ ‘You will talk.’

b. Ọhin tin ní kọrin. Èyin ti ní kọrin.

2pl Perf Prog-Hab sing-song 2pl Perf Prog sing-song

'You have been singing.' 'You have been singing.'

3. a. Ọhọn nọọ ni olórhúire òní. Ọun náà ni olóríire òní.

3sg Det Foc lucky-person today 3sg Det Foc lucky-person today

'S/he is the lucky people of today.' 'S/he is the lucky people of today.'

b. Àhọn nọọ ni mò ní pè. Àwọn náà ni mò ní pè.

3pl Det Foc 1sg Prog-Hab call 3pl Det Foc 1sg Prog call

'They are the people that am calling.' 'They are the people that am calling.'

The singular form *òmin*, *ìwẹ*, *òhọn* are the ones in (1a-3a), while the ones in (1b-3b), as in *àwàa*, *òhin*, *àhọn* are the plural counterparts. As shown in the examples, neither the tones nor the syllables of these pronouns were affected when they occur before the progressive and habitual aspects (1a, b & 2b), or before the future tense (2a) or before the determiner (3a&b) when compared with the ones in table 1.

To further buttress our views, these emphatic pronouns do not change their forms when they show up either in object or possessive/genitive positions.

Consider these token in (4).²

Ọhọrí SY

4. a. Àrẹ̀mù ní pe àhọn olórhúire. Àrẹ̀mù ní pe àwọn olóríire.

Àrẹ̀mù Prog-Hab call 3pl lucky-persons Àrẹ̀mù Prog call 3pl lucky-persons
'Arẹ̀mu is calling the lucky people.' 'Arẹ̀mu is calling the lucky people.'

b. Olú tin jẹ ọúnjẹ ìwẹ. Olú ti jẹ ọúnjẹ ìwọ.

Olú Perf eat food 2sg Olú Perf eat food 2sg

'Olu has eaten your food.' 'Olu has eaten your food.'

Evidence in support of our claim is shown in (4a), where the long pronoun there appears as the object of the verb *pe* 'to call' without changing its form, compared to the one in table 1. The emphatic pronoun in (4b), which shows up in genitive position, (i.e. it modifies *ọúnjẹ* 'food') does not as well change its form as we have it in table 1.

2 Akinwande (forthcoming) *ní* is used to express both progressive and habitual aspects in Ọhọrí.

Short pronouns in Òhòrí

Cross-linguistically, pronouns occur in three syntactic positions, namely subjective, objective and genitive. This claim is equally attested in Òhòrí. We shall buttress these syntactic functions in the following subsections.

Subjective Pronouns in Òhòrí

Subject pronouns are six in Òhòrí, though two of them have another form in Òhòrí, as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Subject Pronouns in Òhòrí

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	Mò/Hùn	À
2nd	Ọ	Ẹ
3rd	Ọ/Hún	Hón

As it appears that they are all monosyllabic; their manifestations in sentences are expressed in (5) and (6).

Òhòrí	SY
5. ai. Mò ọ tin tẹ ẹbà nọ.	Mo ti tẹ ẹbà nàá.
1sg HTS Perf prepare ẹba	Det 1sg Perf prepare ẹbà Det
'I have prepared the ẹba.'	'I have prepared the ẹba.'
ii. Hún pè ẹ o.	N ó pè ẹ.
1sg call 2sg Emph	1sg HTS call 2sg
'I will call you.'	'I will call you.'
b. Ọ mọọ jẹùn. O máa jẹun.	
2sg Fut eat	2sg Fut eat
'You will eat.'	'You will eat.'
ci. Ọ tin dé.	Ó ti dé.
3sg Perf arrive	3sg Perf arrive
'S/he had arrived.'	'S/he had arrived.'
ii. Hún sù.	Ó sùn.
3sg sleep	3sg sleep
'S/he slept.'	'S/he slept.'
6 a. À mọọ jẹbà yẹ.	A máa jẹbà yẹ.
1pl Fut eat-ẹba Dem	1pl Fut eat-ẹba Dem
'We will eat the/that ẹba.'	'We will eat the/that ẹba.'
b. Ẹ mọọ sù sínọ́ ńné.	Ẹ máa sùn sílé.

Ọ̀họ̀rí	SY
2pl Fut sleep Loc-inside house	2pl Fut sleep LOC-house
'You will sleep at home.'	'You will sleep at home.'
c. HỌ̀n tin pẹ̀ Adé.	WỌ̀n ti pe Adé.
3pl Perf call Adé	3pl Perf call Adé
'They have called Ade.'	'They have called Ade.'

All the pronouns in (5a-c) are singular, the plural counterparts are the ones in (6a-c). The singular ones have low-tone (5ai-ii), mid-tone (5b) and high-tone (5ci-ii) respectively. The plural ones have low-tone (6a-b) and high-tone (6c) accordingly. The tone bears in the table is not affected by the tense, aspect and verb that select them as subjects. The first person singular has two forms in Ọ̀họ̀rí, *mọ̀/hùn* as seen in (5ai-ii). The forms are not connected to either phonological or syntactic condition, as Ọ̀họ̀rí people use the two alternatively. However, third person singular, *ọ̀/hùn* has two forms as well, as evident in (5ci-ii). This seems to have syntactic explanation. If the speakers of Ọ̀họ̀rí are to use third person singular in an expression that has either aspect or tense markers, they employ *ọ̀* as appeared in (5ci). In another development, if they are to use the same item in utterances that have no aspect or tense markers, they opt for *hùn*, as captured in (5aii&cii).

Objective pronouns in Ọ̀họ̀rí

Another function that pronouns in Ọ̀họ̀rí performs is to play the role of object of a verb, i.e. it appears in accusative position. This is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Object Pronouns in Ọ̀họ̀rí

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	Min	Ni
2nd	È	Ni
3rd	High-tone or low-tone	HỌ̀n

The occurrence of these monosyllabic object pronouns is exemplified in (7) and (8).

Ọ̀họ̀rí	SY
7 a. Àrẹ̀mú tin ń pẹ̀ min.	Àrẹ̀mú ti ń pẹ̀ mí.
Àrẹ̀mú Perf Prog-Hab call 1sg	Àrẹ̀mú Perf Prog call 1sg
'Arẹ̀mu has been calling me.'	'Arẹ̀mu has been calling me.'

Ọhòrí	SY
b. Ìyá áà pè ẹ.	Ìyá yóò pè ẹ/ó.
Mother Fut call 2sg	Mother Fut call 2sg
'The mother will call you.'	'The mother will call you.'
ci. Ọmọn ń pè ẹ.	Ọmọ ń pè ẹ.
Child Prog-Hab call 3sg	Child Prog call 3sg
'The child is calling him/her.'	'The child is calling him/her.'
ii. Olú kò jẹ ẹ.	Olú kò jẹ ẹ.
Olú Neg eat 3sg	Olú Neg eat 3sg
'Olu did not eat it.'	'Olu did not eat it.'
8 a. Olùkó tin rí ni.	Olùkó ti rí wa.
Teacher Perf see 1pl	Teacher Perf see 1pl
'The teacher had seen me.'	'The teacher had seen me.'
b. Olùkó tin ń pe ni.	Olùkó ti ń pè yín.
Teacher Perf Prog-Hab call 2pl	Teacher Perf Prog call 2pl
'The teacher has been calling you.'	'The teacher has been calling you.'
c. Ìṣọlá áà nọ họn.	Ìṣọlá yòò nà wọn.
Ìṣọlá Fut beat 3pl	Ìṣọlá Fut beat 3pl
'Ìṣọla will beat them.'	'Ìṣọla will beat them.'

As it appears, the singular object pronouns are the ones in (7a-c), while the plural counterparts are those in (8a-c). The first and second persons singular object have mid-tone (7a-b). The occurrence of the third person singular is phonologically conditional. If the tone of the verb that selects it as object is low-tone, the third person singular takes the form of high-tone (7ci) but maintains the vowel of the verb, which makes it look like vowel lengthening. In another way round, if the vowel of the verb that selects it as object is mid-tone, the third person singular takes the form of low-tone (7cii) and as well adopts the feature of the vowel of the verb. The first person plural object and second persons plural object are identical (8a&b) in tone and in form. This implies that Ọhòrí does not use separate pronouns for first person plural object and second persons plural object. The difference between the ẹ in second person plural subject and second person singular object is the tone. While the former is low-tone, the latter is mid-tone.

Genitive pronouns in Ọ̀họ̀rí

Pronouns in Ọ̀họ̀rí equally appear in possessive/genitive positions. This is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Genitive Pronouns in Ọ̀họ̀rí

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	Mín	Ni/Ini
2nd	È	Hín/Ihín
3rd	È	Hón/Ihón

As shown below, all the pronouns directly qualify the nouns they follow.³

Ọ̀họ̀rí	SY
9. a. Nné mín áà dáá.	Ilé mi yóò dáá.
House 1sg-Gen Fut good	House 1sg-Gen Fut good
'My house/home will be fine/good.'	'My house/home will be fine/good.'
b. Aşọ ẹ nọọ gùn.	Aşọ rẹ/ẹ náà gùn.
Cloth 2sg-Gen Det long	Cloth 2sg-Gen Det long
Your cloth is also long.	'Your cloth is also long.'
c. Ọ̀bẹ̀ẹ̀ ẹ̀ dọ̀n.	Ọ̀bẹ̀ rẹ̀/ẹ̀ dùn.
Soup 3sg-Gen sweet	Soup 3sg-Gen sweet
His/er soup is sweet.	'His/er soup is sweet.'

Ọ̀họ̀rí	SY
10 a. Nné ni/ini tín wó.	Ilé wa tí wó.
House 1pl-Gen Perf collapse	House 1pl-Gen Perf collapse
'My house has collapsed.'	'My house has collapsed.'
b. Ọ̀mọ̀n hín/ihín áà kọ̀rìn.	Ọ̀mọ̀ yín yóò kọ̀rìn.
Child 2pl-Gen Fut sing-song	Child 2pl-Gen Fut sing-song
'Your child will sing.'	'Your child will sing.'
c. Ọ̀mọ̀n hón/ihón n ta aşọ.	Ọ̀mọ̀ wọ̀n n ta aşọ.
Child 3pl-Gen Prog-Hab sell cloth	Child 3pl-Gen Prog sell cloth
'Their child is selling cloth(es).'	'Their child is selling cloth(es).'

Apparently, (9a-c) are singular genitive pronouns, which directly followed the nouns they qualified and labelled them the interpretation of possession. Examples in (10a-c) are plural genitive pronouns that interpreted the nouns

³ Ọ̀họ̀rí regularly elide the voiced post-alveolar or approximant /r/ in genitive pronouns (9b&c).

they followed as possession. The tense, aspect and verb that they preceded do not in any way affect their tones when compared with the ones in table 4. However, (10a-c) has another form. The second form is the one that has the mid-tone i-initial. It is possible for one to argue that the syntactic function of the vowel /i/ there is emphatic, i.e. it emphasizes on the nouns that the pronouns qualified. The difference that exists between the first person singular object and the first person singular genitive is tone. While the former has mid-tone, the latter has low-tone.

Pronouns in negative constructions in Ọhọrí

All the examples considered so far in (5-10) are affirmative constructions but due to the data obtained, it appears that some of the examined pronouns in affirmative constructions have other forms in negative expressions. Negative construction is a statement of denial. It is a way of remarking that a proposition does not hold. The elements that mark negative constructions in Ọhọrí are **kọ**, **kọ**. To avoid repetition of tables, token of the other forms observed in our data shall be shown below.

Ọhọrí	SY
11a. Òn kọ níí/lèè fọọ ka owó yẹ.	N kọ níí fọwọ kan owó yẹn.
1sg Neg Fut to-hand touch money Dem 1sg	Neg Fut to-hand touch money Dem
'I will not touch the money.'	'I will not touch the money.'
b. Òn kọ níí/lèè lọ ńné.	O kọ níí lọ ilé.
2sg Neg Fut go house 2sg	Neg Fut go house
'You will not go home.'	'You will not go home.'
c. Ihọn kọ tin rí Olú.	Wọn kọ tí rí Olú.
3pl Neg Perf see Olu	3pl Neg Perf see Olú
'They have not seen Olu.'	'They have not seen Olú.'

A careful examination of (11a-c), it appears that the pronouns there functioned as nominative case; they are **òn** (first person singular subject (11a)), **òn** (second person singular subject (11b)) and **ihọn** (third person plural subject (11c)). The negative marker **kọ** that they preceded changed their forms when placed side-by-side with others in (5ai-ii), (6a) and (6c). This implies that Ọhọrí has separate pronouns used for the first and second persons singular subject in negative constructions and that is **òn**. In other words, Ọhọrí employs **òn** for first person singular subject and second person singular subject in negative constructions. What differentiates the third person plural subject position in affirmative construction (6c) and the one in negative construction (11c) is the initial vowel /i/

that begins the one in negative construction. In a related development, three of the pronouns in accusative case have another form in negative constructions, as expressed in (12).

Ọhòrí	SY
12a. Olùkò kò pè ni	Olùkò kò pè mí.
Teacher Neg call 1sg	Teacher Neg call 1sg
'The teacher did not call me.'	'The teacher did not call me.'
b. I kò gbó ihun tí Arẹ̀mú fòhòn.	E (k)ò gbó ohun tí Arẹ̀mú sọ.
2sg Neg hear thing Rel Arẹ̀mú say 2sg	Neg hear thing Rel Arẹ̀mú say
'You did not hear what Arẹ̀mú said.'	'You did not hear what Arẹ̀mú said.'
c. Iṣòlá kò rí ni.	Iṣòlá kò rí wòn.
Iṣòlá Neg see 3pl	Iṣòlá Neg see 3pl
'Iṣòlá did not see them.'	'Iṣòlá did not see them.'

Evidently in (12a-c), the negative marker *kò* has serious effect on the objective pronouns by changing their forms. For instance, the forms in (7a), (7b) and (8c) are quite different from the forms in (12a-c).

Ọhòrí	SY
13. Akin kò mú aṣọ̀ ini.	Akin kò mú aṣọ̀ mí.
Akin Neg take cloth 1sg-Gen	Akin Neg take cloth 1sg-Gen
'Akin did not take my cloth(es).'	'Akin did not take my cloth(es).'

Our data also show that one of the pronouns in genitive position also has another form in negative construction, as exemplified in (13).

The form of the first person singular in genitive position in affirmative construction as shown in (9a) is different from the one in (13). While the one in (9a) is *mìn*, the one in (13) is *ini*. The negative marker *kò* masterminded this difference in form.

Akinwande (2020) claimed that Ọhòrí lacks honorific pronoun, e.g.

Ọ tin dé. (Ọhòrí) Ẹ̀ tí dé. (SY)

2sg Perf arrive 2sg(Hon Pro) Perf arrive

You have arrived. You have arrived.

This implies that 'ọ' (second person singular in Ọhòrí) is used for both elderly and age group in Ọhòrí but in Standard Yoruba, 'ẹ̀' is used for elderly person, while 'o' is employed for age mate.

⁵'Ẹ̀' is also employed as plural pronoun in Standard Yoruba.

⁶To avoid repetition, the study only brought out where differences occurred between subject, object and genitive pronouns in affirmative and negative constructions.

⁷Our data do not show differences between long pronouns in affirmative and negative constructions.

Conclusion

This article has carefully described both long and short pronouns and the roles of tone in Òhòrí pronouns. We presented the table of the long pronouns in Òhòrí, as well as their syntactic occurrences. We claimed that these long pronouns do not have another form whether they occur in nominative or accusative position. Even in negative constructions, their forms are maintained. We equally presented the tables of the short pronouns in subjective, objective and genitive in Òhòrí, as well as their syntactic manifestations in affirmative constructions. Where their forms changed in negative constructions were also examined. We employed both phonological and syntactic descriptions in our analysis.

Abbreviations

- 1SG First person singular
- 2SG Second person singular
- 3SG Third person singular
- 1PL First person plural
- 2PL Second person plural
- 3PL Third person plural
- DET Determiner
- EMPH Emphatic
- FOC Focus
- FUT Future tense
- HAB Habitual marker
- HTS High tone syllable
- LOC Locative
- NEG Negative marker
- PERF Perfective marker
- PROG Progressive aspect
- REL Relative marker

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