

ADJECTIVES AND ADJECTIVALIZATION PROCESSES IN EDO*

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Real adjectives are few in Niger-Congo languages. Welmers [1973] warns that we should be suspicious of what is traditionally called adjectives in these languages. In this article, an attempt is made to describe the processes of expressing adjectival concepts in Edo. Like many natural languages, Edo adjectives and verbs are hardly separable; areas of similarity are analyzed. Taking a critical look at some words which have been erroneously called adjectives, we discover that they are in fact relative clauses. An examination of their underlying structures reveals the sources of their singular and plural forms. Finally, we identify some real adjectives (some of which are derived from adjectival verbs) on the basis of their inability to occur alone without "qualifying" nouns.

1. Introductory Remarks

Traditionally, adjectives are defined as words which "qualify" nouns because they give the attributes of persons and objects. In this respect, adjectives are said to belong to a separate part of speech from nouns, verbs, prepositions, and so on. However, it has since been observed that the different parts of speech "not merely grade into each other but are to an astonishing degree actually convertible into each other" [Sapir 1921:118]. In most cases, verbs, adverbs and nouns are the recipient parts of speech. Sapir illustrates with Yana in which "the adjective is a verb" while "adverbs and prepositions are either nouns or merely derivative affixes in the verb". Faced with the

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problem of distinguishing between Yoruba verbs and adjectives, Madugu [1976] wonders whether they have merged or they are just emerging.

The syntactic behaviour and semantic interpretation of adjectives have been and will be, for a long time to come, topics for recurrent and intense debate. Ross [1969] argues strongly that adjectives are in fact noun phrases but Chafe [1970:96] analyzes the verbal characteristics of some of them from the viewpoint of the "centrality for the verb" and concludes that they are "stative verbs". With regard to the Yoruba language (a language genetically related to Edo), Afọlayan [1972] calls them "predicative adjectives" but Awobuluyi [1972] hastens to reject this designation and recommends the name "adjectivisable verbs". Omamor [1986] describes the same phenomenon in Okpe and Uvwie, both Edoid languages, employing the term "quality verbs". All these point to the inconclusiveness of previous approaches and the need for further analyses of fresh data from a variety of languages in order to understand their universal characteristics.

In the case of Niger-Congo languages, Welmers [1973:274] strongly warns analysts to "be suspicious of 'adjectives'; some of them are not". If it is the case that adjectives have merged with other syntactic categories in these languages, the question then is why have they merged and with what syntactic categories have they merged? Even more importantly, in the absence of real adjectives, how do speakers of these languages "qualify" nouns or give nouns attributes? A closer look at Edo verbal and relativization systems is likely to give a clue to these questions.

Our aim in this study is to investigate how adjectival concepts are expressed in Edo and how some real adjectives are derived from other syntactic categories through adjectivalization processes. We shall employ the term "adjectivalization" as a transformation process in the sense of Lyons [1977:396] "to refer to the process whereby attributive adjectives and adjectival phrases and clauses (including relative clauses) are derived from a variety of predicative structures".

Edo (also called Bini) is a member of the Edoid group of languages [Elugbe 1979] which belongs to the Kwa group within the Niger-Congo family of African

languages [Greenberg 1963]. It is the main language of the ancient Kingdom of Benin. Much has been said about the artistic sophistication of the kingdom especially in bronze casting, but few systematic studies of the language have been done.

We have drawn the data for this study from our intuitive native speaker competence in the language with the assistance of informants. We have also elicited data from *Ita Eḍagbõn Mweḅen* written by Jacob Egharevba, a renowned Edo writer and authority on Edo history.

2. Characteristics of Edo Verb System

Eḍo verbs can be divided broadly into action verbs and adjectival verbs. This division is not so clear-cut because syntactically, they behave alike in many respects. In fact, it can be argued that it is a hair-splitting exercise trying to make formal distinctions between them. We observe, however, that some adjectival verbs undergo some syntactic processes such as relativization and tonal changes which can transform them into attributive adjectives. Action verbs cannot undergo such transformations. We shall discuss the processes in section 4. Moreover, on semantic grounds, we observe that unlike Eḍo action verbs, adjectival verbs, which have been erroneously called adjectives, give the inherent qualities or attributes of persons and objects that co-occur with them. Consider the following examples:¹

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) | Òsàró khìán
Osaro go | 'Osaro is going' |
| (2) | Òsàró zùró
Osaro foolish/stupid | 'Osaro is foolish/stupid' |

¹In the Edo orthography we adopted, nasalized vowels are marked by a following nasal consonant as follows: in = /ĩ/ , en = /ẽ/ , an = /ã/ , on = /õ/ , and un = /ũ/ . However, nasality is unmarked by /n/ if a nasal consonant precedes a nasalized vowel as in mìé 'see' in which the vowels are nasalized by the preceding nasal consonant. The seven oral vowels in Edo which are i , e , ẹ , a , ọ , o and u in the orthography approximate respectively to /i/ , /e/ , /ɛ/ , /a/ , /ɔ/ , /o/ , and /u/ . The double consonants are realized phonemically as follows: gb = /gb̃/ , gh = /ɣ/ , kh = /x/ , kp = /kp̃/ , mw = /m̃/ , rh = /r̃/ , rr = /r/ and vb = /ṽ/ (see Amayo and Elugbe [1983]).

The action verb *khíán* 'go' in (1) states an action performed by the subject NP but *zùró* 'foolish/stupid' in (2) qualifies or gives the inherent attribute of the subject NP. In transformational generative grammar terms, the verb in (1) only has the syntactic feature [+VB] but *zùró* in (2), in addition to the feature [+VB], also possesses the feature [+ADJ] because of its attributive function. It is this latter function that makes some analysts mistake it for a pure adjective. In order to function purely for epithetic purposes or as an attributive adjective, it must undergo some transformations. Such transformations include reduplication which results in *zùròzùrò* in the following sentence:

- (3) òkpìá òkpá zùròzùrò tótà yè ágá 'one foolish/lazy man sat on the
man one foolish/lazy sit on chair chair'

Relativization can also make *zùró* function as a pure adjective. First, it gives the structure *nè ò zùró* which glosses literally as 'that he foolish' but for purely attributive functions, it is reduced to *nézúrò* as in the following sentence. In its present form, the pronoun *ò* is deleted.

- (4) òkpìá nézúrò lèé fùá 'a foolish/lazy man ran away'
man foolish/lazy run away

Perhaps a more plausible underlying form for *nézúrò*, which will account for the tonal changes on *u* and *ò* is the occurrence of the relativizer *nè* 'that' and the derived nominal *èzúrò* 'foolish person'. Both approaches, however, have relativization underlying them. Even the reduplicated form can be relativized as follows:

- (5) òkpìá nézùròzùrò lèé fùá 'a foolish/lazy man ran away'
man that-foolish/lazy run away

It is important to note that attributive adjectives cannot be derived from action verbs through reduced relative clauses. Thus, (1) cannot be transformed into (6) as follows:

- (6) *Òsàró nèkhíán... 'Osaro that is going...'
Osaro that-go...

The foregoing discussion clearly shows that there are semantic and syntactic motivations for subdividing Edo verbs into action and adjectival verbs even though not all adjectival verbs can undergo these transformations. We prefer the designation "adjectival verbs" to Chafe's [1970:88-89] "stative verbs" because some of them will fail "the rule of thumb" test by answering the question "What happened?" or "What is happening?". For example, we can answer such questions by saying Òsàró ghòghòrè or Òsàró ghòghò which will translate literally as "Osaro happied" and "Osaro is happying" respectively. It would appear, therefore, that there is a cline from verbs which are inherently action to those which are inherently adjectival. Between these extreme cases are those verbs which are partly action and partly adjectival.

We shall now examine some of the similarities between action verbs and adjectival verbs with a view to showing that adjectival verbs which are often mistaken for adjectives are in fact verbs.

2.1. Occurrence in the predicate. Edo is basically an SVO language. Its sentence structure permits the occurrence of only an action verb or an adjectival verb to form the predicate of a simple sentence if the verb is intransitive, but whenever it is transitive, a noun phrase can occur after it. This means that an action verb or an adjectival verb can occur in the frame # NP - (NP) # where # represents sentence boundary. Here are some examples:

- (7) òkhùò nìí mòsé 'that woman is beautiful'
 woman that beautiful
- (8) Òsàró ghòghó ègiè vbè ègùàè 'Osaro was happy for his title in the
 Osaro happy title in palace palace'

Sentence (8) further illustrates the occurrence of a prepositional phrase after the object noun phrase.

A predicative adjective can be derived from (7) through the process of reduplication and the occurrence of a form of copula as follows:

- (9) òkhùò nìí yè mòsèmòsè 'that woman is beautiful'
 woman that be beautiful

A reduced relative clause in which the pronoun of the antecedent noun does not

occur (see section 3) can result in a modifying adjective as follows:

- (10) òkhùò némòsèmòsè tótà 'a beautiful woman is sitting'
 woman that-beautiful sit

Reduplication in these cases also has implications for intensity. The final vowel of the adjectival verb *mòsé* in (7) can also be lengthened for the purposes of adjective formation and intensity. For example:

- (11) òkhùò níf yè mòsèè 'that woman is intensively beautiful'
 woman that be beautiful

The verb *ghòghó* 'happy' in (8) cannot undergo these transformations because it is partly an action verb and partly an adjectival verb. It combines the roles of describing the state of 'being happy' and what Osaro did. Other action verbs in Edo such as *gó* 'shout', *lé* 'cook', *mìèkué* 'admit' and so on, cannot undergo these transformations.

2.2. Consonant commencing. Like all Edo verbs, adjectival verbs begin with consonants and end with vowels. The common syllable structures are CV for the monosyllabic verbs and CVV and CVCV for the disyllabic verbs. For example:

(12)	<u>CV Structure</u>	<u>CVV Structure</u>	<u>CVCV Structure</u>
	kón 'foolish'	màá 'good'	kpòlò 'big'
	dín 'brave'	khùá 'heavy'	khèrhé 'small'
	tón 'hot'	bàá 'red'	dìmwí 'deep'
	tán 'long/tall'	sìé 'black'	hòghá 'light'
	yó 'high'	vbòó 'ripe'	pèrhé 'low'
	vón 'full'	fuá 'white'	fùrré 'cool'
	vbé 'wide'	tùá 'tight'	wènrèn 'slim'
	bún 'many/much'	khòó 'hostile'	mòsé 'beautiful'

2.3. Simple Past Tense inflection. Some adjectival verbs form their simple past tense or simple completive tense by taking the inflectional suffix which other verbs also take. The vowel that occurs in the verb stem largely determines the nature of the vowel that occurs in the suffix. For example:

(13) a. Adjectival verbs ending in oral vowels

<u>Adjectival Verb Stem</u>		<u>Simple Past Form</u>	
ghòghò	'happy'	ghòghò+rè	'happy+Past'
yó	'high'	yó+rò	'high+Past'
vbé	'wide'	vbé+rè	'wide+Past'
bàá	'difficult'	bàá+rè	'difficult+Past'
sìé	'black'	sìé+rè	'black+Past'
fú	'calm/quiet'	fú+rù	'calm/quiet+Past'
vbòó	'ripe'	vbòó+rò	'ripe+Past'

b. Adjectival verbs ending in nasalized vowels

<u>Adjectival Verb Stem</u>		<u>Simple Past Form</u>	
dìmwí	'deep'	dìmwí+rìn	'deep+Past'
kọn	'foolish'	kọn+rẹn	'foolish+Past'
tán	'tall/long'	tán+rẹn	'tall/long+Past'
màá	'good'	màá+rẹn	'good+Past'
vọn	'full'	vọn+rẹn	'full+Past'

The rule for the formation of the simple past tense suffix can be tabulated as follows:

(14) a. Oral Vowels

<u>Verb Stem</u>	<u>Past Tense</u>
<u>Vowel</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
i	-rí
e	-re
e	-re
a	-re
ọ	-re
o	-ro
u	-ru

b. Nasalized Vowels

<u>Verb Stem</u>	<u>Past Tense</u>
<u>Vowel</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
in	-rìn
ẹn	-rẹn
an	-rẹn
ọn	-rẹn
un	-run

On simple vowel charts, the system of vowel selection can be diagrammed as follows:



Using the Chomsky and Halle [1968] features, these vowel charts presuppose the following vowel features:

(16)	i	e	ɛ̃	a	ɔ̃	o	u	in	ɛ̃n	an	ɔ̃n	un
high	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+
back	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
low	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-
round	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
nasal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+

Considering the high frequency of occurrence of *-re* as a simple past tense suffix, we shall regard it as the underlying form (also see Amayo [1976]). If we now see the vowels in (15) in terms of high and low, we easily discover that all low vowels take the suffix *-re*. In the case of low nasalized vowels, a nasal lowering rule will first apply because /*en*/ does not occur in Edo. As regards the high vowels, they all assimilate the qualities or features of /*e*/ . These rules can be stated as follows:²

(17) a. Quality and Nasality Assimilation

$$e \rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{l} \alpha_{\text{high}} \\ \langle \beta_{\text{round}} \rangle \\ \langle \beta_{\text{back}} \rangle \\ \gamma_{\text{nasal}} \end{array} \right] / \left[\begin{array}{l} \alpha_{\text{high}} \\ \langle -\text{low} \rangle \\ \beta_{\text{back}} \\ \gamma_{\text{nasal}} \end{array} \right] r_{\text{---}} [\text{Past suffix}]$$

b. Nasal Vowel Lowering

$$V \rightarrow [+low] \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} -high \\ +nasal \end{array} \right]$$

²I am very grateful to Professor Russell G. Schuh who proposed these rules and also to Dr. B.O. Elugbe who helped to examine a large body of data and confirmed the suitability of the rules.

It should be noted that the simple past tense suffix is only manifest when the verb occurs sentence finally. There are no obvious phonological reasons for the deletion of the suffix so we believe that it is a grammatical rule that *-re* and its variants are deleted before object noun phrases. Transitive verbs do not take the *-re* suffix except when they are used intransitively. Thus (18) is grammatical but (19) is not.

(18) Ọ̀sàrọ̀ ghòghòrè 'Osaro was happy'

(19) * Ọ̀sàrọ̀ ghòghòrè ègiè 'Osaro was happy for a title'

See the first part of sentence (18) for the grammatical form of (19). We should add, however, that time adverbials, prepositional phrases and embedded sentences tend to violate this rule by occurring after the suffix. For example:

(20) àlímóí vbórò nóḍẹ 'an orange became ripe yesterday'
orange ripe+Past yesterday

(21) àlímóí vbórò vbè òkhuàè 'an orange became ripe in the
orange ripe+Past in basket basket'

(22) àlímóí ná vbórò àḍéghẹ̀ ù hòó 'this orange is ripe if you want'
orange this ripe+Past if you want

2.4. Comparative construction formation. Edo action and adjectival verbs can be employed in comparative constructions. The comparison of persons and objects is done through a verb serialization process in which *sẹ̀ẹ̀* 'pass' or 'more than' serves as a post modification of the preceding verb. On the other hand, *sẹ̀ẹ̀* can occur alone as the main verb of a sentence and still perform a comparative function. Here are some examples. In (23), it serializes with an action verb and in (24) with an adjectival verb.

(23) Ọ̀sàsẹ̀rẹ̀ gbé sẹ̀ẹ̀ Ọ̀sàgié kẹ̀vbè ìviè 'Osasere dances better than
Osasere dance pass Osagie and Ivie Osagie and Ivie'

(24) Ọ̀sàsẹ̀rẹ̀ tán sẹ̀ẹ̀ Ọ̀sàgié kẹ̀vbè ìviè 'Osasere is taller than Osagie
Osasere tall pass Osagie and Ivie and Ivie'

Omoregie [1983:57] identifies the use of *sẹ̀hiá* 'more than all' or 'pass

all' for the superlative constructions. There are no number restrictions on the use of *sèḗ* in Edo so we believe that positing *séhiá* for the superlative construction is unnecessary.

2.5. Occurrence with auxiliaries. Adjectival verbs can be preceded by auxiliaries and such auxiliaries help or modify these adjectival verbs as well as mark tense in the same manner they modify and mark tense in action verbs. For example:

- (25) *íràn ghá ghòghò* 'they will be happy'
 they Aux-Fut. happy
- (26) *Òsàró rá vbè ùvún nìí* 'Osaro is going to widen that hole'
 Osaro Aux+Fut widen hole that

Ghá and *rá* in (25) and (26) respectively are variants of Edo future tense auxiliaries. However, *rá* is commonly used to indicate that the action of the verb it modifies is about to commence. Amayo [1980] makes a distinction between *rá* as a future tense marker and as a marker of an action that is about to commence by positing a downstepped tone before the verb it modifies as follows:

- (27) a. *ò rá !kpòló* 'he will sweep'
 b. *ò rá kpòló* 'he is about to sweep'

The downstepped tone is represented by the exclamation mark in (27a). Therefore, (27a) is a more distant future than (27b).

2.6. Nominalization processes. Adjectival verbs can be nominalized following the same process of nominalizing other verbs in Edo. All Edo nouns commence with vowels and end with vowels while all verbs commence with consonants and end with vowels. Therefore, in order to nominalize verbs, vowels are obligatorily prefixed to them. Here are some examples of nominalized action verbs:

- | (28) <u>Action Verb Stem</u> | <u>Derived Nominal</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>gié</i> 'laugh' | <i>ògié</i> 'act of laughing' |
| <i>dá</i> 'drink' | <i>èdá</i> 'act of drinking' |
| <i>tótà</i> 'sit down' | <i>ìtótà</i> 'act of sitting down' |

tué	'greet'	òtué	'act of greeting'
vén	'wrestle'	èvén	'act of wrestling'

Nominals are similarly derived from adjectival verbs as follows:

(29)	<u>Adjectival Verb Stem</u>		<u>Derived Nominal</u>	
	ghòghò	'happy'	òghòghò	'happiness'
	mòsé	'beautiful'	ìmòsè (òsé)	'beauty'
	sìkán	'tough/stringy'	ìsìkán	'something tough/stringy'
	lòghò	'difficult'	òlòghò	'difficulty'
	zùrò	'stupid/lazy'	èzùrò	'stupidity/laziness'

In some cases, nominals are derived through a process of simultaneous prefixation and suffixation. The prefix in such cases is *u-* while the suffix is *-mwè*. Here are some examples:

(30)	<u>Adjectival Verb Stem</u>		<u>Derived Nominal</u>	
	wènrèn	'slim'	ùwènrèmwè	'slimness'
	khuèrhé	'soft'	ùkhuèrhèmwè	'softness'
	tìnnié	'small'	ùtìnnièmwè	'smallness'
	kpòlò	'fat'	ùkpòlòm̀wè	'fatness'
	dìmwí	'deep'	ùdìmwímwè	'depth'

Some action verbs also derive their nominals through this process of prefixation and suffixation. For example:

(31)	<u>Action Verb Stem</u>		<u>Derived Nominal</u>	
	lé	'cook'	ùlémwè	'act of cooking'
	hú	'foam'	ùhúmwè	'act of foaming'
	kpé	'wash'	ùkèmwè	'act of washing'
	rhòó	'praise'	ùrhóm̀wè	'act of praising'
	rhùó	'boast'	ùrhùóm̀wè	'act of boasting'

From the foregoing discussion, there is no doubt that in many respects Edo action verbs and adjectival verbs must be identical in their syntactic behaviours. However, in the absence of many true adjectives in Edo, adjectival verbs help to give the attributes of nouns that co-occur with them. As we

shall discover in sections 3 and 4, many modifying or real adjectives are derived from adjectival verbs.

3. Relative Clause as an Adjectival Construction

Relativization is a highly productive process of expressing adjectival concepts in Edo. This involves sentence embedding and reduction of the embedded sentence by elision processes. Elision is so prevalent in Edo that Welmers [1973:42-43] says "an investigator may well be tempted to wonder how even a native speaker of Edo knows what the final vowel of a given verb actually is." In this study we have analyzed unelided structures in order to be able to account for all the transformations.

There are competing approaches to relativization which we do not wish to analyze here. We, however, favour the NP-S analysis as discussed in Chomsky [1965:137-138] because it can adequately account for the relativization processes in Edo. In this approach, relativization is only possible when there is an identity condition between an NP in the matrix sentence and an NP in the constituent sentence. Consider the following examples in which action verbs occur in the relative clauses:

(32) òkhùò nọ lẹ̀rẹ̀ ọ̀nà khín 'this is the woman who ran away'

(33) ìkhùò ní lẹ̀rẹ̀ ènà khín 'these are the women who ran away'

The deep to surface derivational stages for (32) will be as follows:

- | | | | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|---|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| (32) a. | S ₁ [òkhùò
woman] | S ₂ [òkhùò lẹ̀rẹ̀]
woman run+Past | ọ̀nà
this-one | khín]
be | Base |
| b. | S ₁ [òkhùùc
woman] | S ₂ [ọ̀ lẹ̀rẹ̀]
she run+Past | ọ̀nà
this-one | khín]
be | Pronominalization |
| c. | S ₁ [òkhùò
woman] | S ₂ [nẹ̀ ọ̀ lẹ̀rẹ̀]
that she run+Past | ọ̀nà
this-one | khín]
be | Relativizer insertion |
| d. | S ₁ [òkhùò
woman] | S ₂ [nọ lẹ̀rẹ̀]
that-she run+Past | ọ̀nà
this-one | khín]
be | Elision |

In the case of (33), the derivational stages will be as follows:

- (33) a. [ìkhùò [ìkhùò lẹ̀rè] ènà khín] Base
 S₁ women S₂ women run+Past these-ones be
- b. [ìkhùò [íràn lẹ̀rè] ènà khín] Pronominalization
 S₁ women S₂ they run+Past these-ones be
- c. [ìkhùò [nè íràn lẹ̀rè] ènà khín] Relativizer inser-
 S₁ women S₂ that they run+Past these-ones be tion
- d. [ìkhùò [ní lẹ̀rè] ènà khín] Elision
 S₁ women S₂ that-they run+Past these-ones be

Relativization takes place in these examples because there are co-referential relations between the NP in the matrix sentence and the NP of the embedded sentence. Adjectival relative clauses which are erroneously called adjectives in Edo [Omoregie 1983:49-58] follow the same derivational processes. For example:

- (34) Òsàró rhié òkhùò nòmòsé 'Osaro married a beautiful woman'
 Osaro marry woman beautiful

The derivational stages for (34) will be as follows:

- (34) a. [Òsàró rhié òkhùò] [òkhùò mòsé] Base
 S₁ Osaro marry woman S₂ woman beautiful
- b. [Òsàró rhié òkhùò] [ò mòsé] Pronominalization
 S₁ Osaro marry woman S₂ she beautiful
- c. [Òsàró rhié òkhùò] [nè ò mòsé] Relativizer inser-
 S₁ Osaro marry woman S₂ that she beautiful tion
- d. [Òsàró rhié òkhùò] [nòmòsé] Elision
 S₁ S₂

The singular or plural form of the antecedent NP in the matrix sentence determines the singularity or plurality of the adjectival relative clause. For example, if ìkhùò 'women' had occurred in S₁ of (34), the subsequent relativization of S₂ could have produced nìmòsé 'beautiful'. What changes ò in nòmòsé to ì in nìmòsé in the surface realization must be the pluralization and pronominalization of the NP in the relative clause which is in identity with the antecedent NP. A plausible underlying form of nìmòsé will be nè íràn mòsé in which íràn 'they', a third person pronoun, is the plural counterpart of ò 'he/she/it', a third person singular pronoun. Elision deletes è from nè (as in nè ò mòsé) and also -ràn is elided from íràn

'they'. This explains the source of their singular and plural forms as in the following surface realizations:

(35) <u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
nọyó	níyó	'high/tall'
nọhuánrèn	níhuánrèn	'holy'
nọfuá	nífúá	'white'
nọwánrèn	níwánrèn	'elder'
nọbàá	nìbàá	'red'
nọkhòrhiòn	nìkhòrhiòn	'ugly'
nọkhuá	níkhuá	'grand/big'
nọbíógó	níbíológó	'bent'
nọtánrèn	nítánrèn	'tall/long'
nọkhiómaèn	níkhiómaèn	'old'

The simple past tense suffix *-rèn* (see 2.3 above) obligatorily occurs in *nọhuánrèn* 'holy', *nọwánrèn* 'elder' and *nọtánrèn* 'tall/long' as a part of the derivational process. Thus, the sentence *èmwá níhuánrèn tótà* will translate as 'holy people are sitting'. It does not in any way mean that the people were formerly holy. In a sense, it is similar to the participial use of 'delighted' in the English sentence 'I am delighted to see you'. In the case of the occurrence of *-ló* in *níbíológó* 'bent', it is to mark the plural or iterative form of the verb stem *bí* 'push' which becomes *bìló* 'push repeatedly' while *gó* 'curve' which occurs after it gives the direction.

There are some adjectival relative clauses that fail to follow the derivational processes we described above. For example, consider the ordinal numbers such as *nókàrò* 'first', *nógiévà*, and so on. Whereas *nókàrò* and its plural *níkàrò* can be derived from *nè ọ kàrò* and *nè írán kàrò* respectively, *nógiévà* cannot be derived from **nè ọ giévà* because **giévà* does not occur as a lexical item in Edo. Only *ógiévà* 'second' occurs as an alternative way of saying *nógiévà*. A probable source of *nógiévà* will be *nè ọ rẹ ógiévà* which glosses literally as 'that it be second'. Elision deletes *e* from *nè* and also *ọ rẹ* 'it be'. The plural form should have come from *nè*

íràn rẹ̀ ógiéwà 'that they be second' but elision reduces it to nógiéwà which is the same as the singular form. We believe that this derivation will account for all cardinal numbers.

4. Adjectival Qualifiers

Real adjectives which function as noun qualifiers can be derived from some adjectival verbs through a process of tonal change and in some cases through reduplication. These derived adjectives can also take the relative clause marker *ne* but the pronoun of the antecedent NP does not occur in them. As a result, they cannot be pluralized as we observed in the case of adjectival relative clauses in 3. Here are some examples:

(36)	<u>Adjectival Verb</u>	<u>Derived Adjective</u>	<u>Adjectival Relative Clause</u>	<u>Derived Adjective</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
	khùìkhùì	-	nọkhùìkhùì	nékhùì	'black'
	pẹ̀rhẹ̀	pẹ̀rhẹ̀	nọpẹ̀rhẹ̀	népẹ̀rhẹ̀	'low'
	wẹ̀nrẹ̀n	wẹ̀nrẹ̀n	nọwẹ̀nrẹ̀n	nẹ̀wẹ̀nrẹ̀n	'slim'
	khẹ̀rhẹ̀	khẹ̀rhẹ̀	nọkhẹ̀rhẹ̀	nékhẹ̀rhẹ̀	'small'
	khuẹ̀rhẹ̀	khuẹ̀rhẹ̀	nọkhuẹ̀rhẹ̀	nékhuẹ̀rhẹ̀	'soft'
	mòsẹ̀	mòsẹ̀mòsẹ̀	nọmòsẹ̀	nẹ̀mòsẹ̀mòsẹ̀	'beautiful'
	muẹ̀muẹ̀	muẹ̀muẹ̀	nọmuẹ̀muẹ̀	nẹ̀muẹ̀muẹ̀	'weak/idle'
	pìrhí	pìrhìpìrhì	nọpìrhí	nẹ̀pìrhìpìrhì	'clumsy'
	sìkán	sìkànsìkàn	nọsìkán	nẹ̀sìkànsìkàn	'stringy'
	túnẹ̀	túnẹ̀	nọtúnẹ̀	nétúnẹ̀	'small'
	sùkú	sùkùsùkù	nọsùkú	nẹ̀sùkùsùkù	'confused'
	hòghá	hòghá	nọhòghá	néhòghá	'light'
	zìghí	zìghìzìghì	nọzìghí	nẹ̀zìghìzìghì	'disorderly'
	tìnniẹ̀	tìnniẹ̀	nọtìnniẹ̀	nétìnniẹ̀	'tiny'
	lùghú	lùghùlùghù	nọlùghú	nẹ̀lùghùlùghù	'disturb, e.g. dirty water'

All the adjectival verbs tabulated above possess the characteristics of verbs discussed in section 2. However, in the nominalization process, khùìkhùì becomes ẹ̀khùì 'blackness' even though *khùì does not occur as a lexical item.

My informants agree that *sùkú*, and *lùghú* can possibly be nominalized but this is not frequently done. Their nominals have probably gone into disuse with time. All the other adjectival verbs can be nominalized by prefixing vowels to them. As regards the adjectival relative clauses, they can be pluralized as *nìkhùìkhùì*, *nìpèrhè*, *nìwènrèn*, and so on. The adjectival verbs that occur in them retain their verbal characteristics. In fact, *nòzìghírì* and *nòlùghúrù* obligatorily take the simple past suffix in their derivation.

The derived adjectives on the other hand, cannot occur alone in the sentence except in the environment of the nouns they qualify. They are postposed to such nouns as it is commonly the case in Niger-Congo languages [Welmers 1973:262]. They do not possess the characteristics of verbs discussed in section 2. The only exception is that they commence with consonants and end with vowels. The adjectives derived from adjectival verbs and those derived from adjectival relative clauses can be used interchangeably to qualify nouns without any difference in their semantic interpretation. For examples:

- | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------|
| (37) | <i>èvbàré khèrhè</i> | = | <i>èvbàré nékhèrhè</i> | 'small food' |
| | <i>ìrrí wènrèn</i> | = | <i>ìrrí nówènrèn</i> | 'tiny rope' |
| | <i>ódó pèrhè</i> | = | <i>ódó népèrhè</i> | 'low mortar' |
| | <i>òkhùò mòsèmòsè</i> | = | <i>òkhùò némòsèmòsè</i> | 'beautiful woman' |
| | <i>èmwá muèmuè</i> | = | <i>èmwá nèmuèmuè</i> | 'weak people' |

There are a few Edo adjectives which are not derived from adjectival verbs. Consequently, they cannot occur in adjectival relative clauses. Examples include the second elements in the following structures:

- | | | |
|------|----------------------|--------------------|
| (38) | <i>ùkpó ọ̀gbọ̀n</i> | 'new year' |
| | <i>èvbàré èsì</i> | 'good food' |
| | <i>ọ̀mwá dán</i> | 'bad person' |
| | <i>èmwá kpàtàkì</i> | 'important people' |
| | <i>ímọ̀tò wọ̀rọ̀</i> | 'long car' |
| | <i>èrhán túkpúru</i> | 'short tree' |

All these adjectives cannot occur alone in a sentence without the noun they qualify preceding them.

We can see the need to take Welmers' warning about adjectives seriously when we consider the fact that *ógbòṅ* 'new' in (39) is an adjective because occurring alone in the sentence makes it ungrammatical but its antonym *òwièyí* 'old' in (40) is not an adjective because it can occur alone.

(39) **ógbòṅ èré Òsàró dèrè* 'it is a new one Osaro bought'
new it-is Osaro buy+Past

(40) *òwièyí èré Òsàró dèrè* 'it is an old one Osaro bought'
old it-is Osaro buy+Past

Òwièyí 'old' as used in (40) is a nominal but it can also be used as an adjective as in :

(41) *ímótò òwièyí èré Òsàró dèrè* 'it is an old car Osaro bought'
car old it-is Osaro buy+Past

4.1. Ideophonic adjectival qualifiers. Another group of adjectives we would like to examine is the ideophonic adjectival qualifier. A great deal has been said about the syntax of ideophones as qualifiers of nouns, adjectives, verbs and even complex sentences. Ideophonic adjectival qualifiers are particularly productive in Edo for expressing adjectival concepts. Their use is very suitable for free expressions of a speaker's idiosyncratic feelings about persons and objects. For example, one speaker can describe a person's lazy and clumsy movement as *gùkògùkò* while another speaker can describe it as *zùròzùrò*. Innovations and borrowings from other languages are common occurrences in their usage.

The derivational process of reduplication, and sometimes obligatory triplification, is employed in the formation of ideophonic adjectival qualifiers. Some of the derived adjectives we identified in (36) such as *pìrhìpìrhì* 'clumsy', *sìkàn-sìkàn* 'stringy', *zìghìzìghì* 'disorderly' and *lùghùlùghù* 'disturb' are in fact ideophonic adjectival qualifiers but we included them there because they are derived from adjectival verbs. The ones we shall discuss below do not commonly have verbal forms. They include:

(42) *sìlòsìlò* 'entangled'
lìkpàlìkpà 'rough surface'

wẹlẹwẹlẹ	'easy'
bùyẹbùyẹ	'weak'
gúlúgúlú	'deep'
yàmàyàmà	'ill-mannered'
gbàkàgbàkà	'strong/healthy'
dúdúdú	'quite dark'
sẹsẹsẹ	'spotless/immaculate white'
kánkánkán	'strong/hard'

The last three examples are obligatorily triplicated. Thus, we cannot say *dudu, *sẹsẹ or *kánkán. In a sentence, an ideophonic adjectival qualifier occurs as follows:

- (43) òkplà yàmàyàmà èré Òzó khín 'Ozo is an ill-mannered man'
 man ill-mannered it-is Ozo be

Like other Èdo adjectives, ideophonic adjectival qualifiers follow the nouns they qualify. They also cannot occur alone in a sentence. The reduplication of some ideophonic adjectival qualifiers is for the purpose of number agreement with the nouns they qualify. For example:

- (44) Òsàró biẹlẹ èmọ gbàkàgbàkà 'Osaro gave birth to strong/
 Osaro give-birth children strong/healthy healthy children'

Reduplication takes place in (44) because of the occurrence of the plural noun èmọ 'children'. The verb biẹ 'give birth' also takes the suffix -lẹ for the same purpose. The singular counterpart of (44) will be:

- (45) Òsàró biẹ ọmọ gbàkà 'Osaro gave birth to a strong/
 Osaro give-birth child strong/healthy healthy child'

5. Conclusion

This study cannot be said to be exhaustive but our description has been detailed enough to show that although real adjectives are few in Èdo, as it is the case in Niger-Congo languages, there are other effective systems of expressing adjectival concepts. We examined what we call adjectival verbs, adjectival relative clauses, and adjectival qualifiers. It is observed that what is expressed by adjectives in some languages is expressed by a class of

verbs in Edo. These verbs differ from other verbs because they perform some qualificative functions in the sentence. Real adjectives can be derived from some of these adjectival verbs.

We also examined the underlying forms of relative clauses and accounted for their number agreement with their antecedent noun phrases. Finally, we identified some real adjectives whose sole function in the sentence is to "qualify" nouns. We have deliberately ignored the use of associative constructions, determiners, numerals, and quantifiers even though they perform qualificative functions. These will be topics for future investigations.

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