# AGREEMENT PATTERNS WITHIN THE EDO NP.

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## Abstract

This paper aims at describing the internal structure of the Ẹdo Noun Phrase (NP). It identifies the noun (eǹi) as the head of the NP and characterizes it in its various manifestations. The crux of the paper is on the agreement patterns within NP. Nominal items constantly interact with a variety of other items called modifiers within the NP. The occurrence of these items is usually controlled b a number of agreement features such as: Spec-head agreement relations or phi-features which help to prevent unacceptable and ungrammatical strings. In contemporary morphology every phrase has a head. The head of the Ẹdo NP occurs in both simple and complex forms. By Chomsky's (1986) category tetrachotomy features, the head noun is specified by the features [+N, -V]. This feature specification is in direct opposition to the category features of the verb. The noun is therefore understood to be exclusively nominal, void of any verbal trait, in the same way that the verb is unambiguously verbal without any nominal trait. Evidence from our data show that the feature specification of the Ẹdo noun does not fully conform to Chomsky's universal categorial distinction. We show in this paper that the Ẹdo noun is a complex component consisting of a combination of units with categorial and semantic features that complement themselves to represent a single semantic nominal element. Our computational analysis of such nominals with different features reveals that the derived nominals (DNS) contain units which represent the native speaker interpretation of the items named by the nouns. Thus, Chomsky's category tetrachotomy features are restricted in their application to Edo nouns.

**Keywords:** Edo language, Noun Phrase, Nominals, Semantic features, Category Tetrachotomy features.

## Introduction

Ẹdo is the generic name given to the group of people who have a common ancestor and a common language. It is the language of the Ancient Benin Kingdom spoken in seven out of the eighteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ẹdo State in Nigeria. The Ẹdo people refer to themselves as 'ivbi Ẹdo' (ivbiẹdo) which literally translate as 'children of Ẹdo' or 'Ẹdo indigenes' or 'Ẹdo people'. The land on which the language is spoken is described as

'Ẹdo ne ọba ye' which translates as 'Ẹdo, where the king resides' or   otọ Ẹdo (otẹdo) 'Ẹdo land'. The Ẹdo language belongs to the Kwa sub-group of the Niger-Congo phylum (Greenberg 1963). It is located in the North Central Edoid (NCE) branch of the genetically related languages and dialects referred to as the 'Edoid group of languages in Elugbe's (1986) classification.

Though attempts have been made to describe aspects of the Ẹdo grammar, including the NP, the language is yet to be fully described. There are still conflicting views on the structure of basic constituents of the sentence, phonological forms, tonal patterns as well as orthographic representations of some sounds. The present analysis recognizes relevant previous works on the Ẹdo NP constituent (Wescot 1962, Dunn 1968, Amayo 1976, Omoruyi 1986, Agheyisi 1990, Imasuen 1966, Ogie 2003, Omozuwa 2003). None of these works however describes the agreement pattern within the NP nor provides a proper description of the constituent in terms of its computation. This analysis attempts to describe the internal structure of the Ẹdo NP before examining the agreement relations that exist within the constituents. The NP is one of the three large constituents of the Ẹdo sentence. It is described here by ascertaining the computation of the smaller units that make it up. This leads us to ascertain the agreement patterns exhibited within the constituent.

## 1.   The Internal Structure of the Edo NP

As in many languages, the Ẹdo NP is made up of an obligatory head, noun (and pronoun) with [+N] feature and other optional items called modifiers and specifiers  which may occur before or after the head noun. The head noun may be inflected for number and there is usually morphological and phi-feature agreement between the noun and its associated constituent units. The data available to us leads to the assertion that Ẹdo nouns are morphologically either simple or complex. The simple nouns consist of only one indivisible form, while the complex nouns (ie DNs) can be made up of different structural forms which result from different derivational operations (ie prefixation, suffixation, reduplication etc.). Nominal qualifiers usually restrict the meaning of the modified noun in a given grammatical structure. The modifiers include determiners, adjectives, nominals and pronominals. By this description, typical NP constituents in Ẹdo may have the structural patterns listed in (1) below:

**1.**  (i) Determiner – Noun

(ii) Noun – Determiner

(iii) Determiner – Noun – Determiner

(iv) Noun – Adjective

(v) Noun – Pronominal

A computational analysis of these sequences reveals that the morphological forms of the modifiers greatly determine the type of noun they modify.

## 1.1 The Head Noun

What is called noun in Ẹdo occurs in two basic forms: (i) Simple and (ii) Derived. The head noun (HN) could be any of these forms. In the sections that follow, we describe the internal computation of the two morphological forms.

### 1.1.1   The Simple Noun

We will describe the noun that comprises only a single morphological form as 'the simple noun'. In the data in example 2 below, we present the simple root nouns in their different syllabic shapes with a minimum VCV morpheme structure.

| 2.   Simple Noun | Gloss | Simple Noun | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| ugbó | 'farm' | `eníkhúkh̀u | 'pigeon' |
| `ẹ̀ki | 'market' | `áránmẁẹ | 'tongue' |
| `ọ̀mwá | 'person' | `aránmẁẹ | 'animal' |
| `ẹ̀tẹ | 'sore/ulcer' | `ugbolòko | 'bone' |
| ob̀i | 'poison' | `ekpámàku | 'plate' |
| izẹ̀ | 'rice' | `akp̀akp̀a | 'spider' |
| er̀e | 'beans' | | |
| atátáb̀ọ | 'palm' | | |
| ikórób̀a | 'bucket' | | |

The nouns in 2 cannot be further divided into small constituents to account for their form and meaning.

### 1.1.2   The Derived Noun

The noun forms that we refer to as complex consist of nouns which are derived by employing the derivational processes of (i) Prefixation (ii)u……mwẹ placement, (iii) Reduplication and (iv) Compounding. In each case, the component parts of the DNs are

shown. Knowledge of these parts is important in deciphering the derived meaning of each complex noun form. Syntactically, each part constitutes a distinct semantic unit whose combination translates to one simple semantic unit.

## D.N by Prefixation

Prefixation is the most productive derivational process for expanding the category of nouns in the language. This process involves putting a nominalizing prefix before an appropriate verb and other word classes that can undergo the process. The seven oral vowels in Edo function as nominalizing prefixes within derivation as we show in the data in example three below:

| 3. | Verb Stem | Prefix + Verb Stem | Derived Noun | Gloss |
|----|-----------|--------------------|--------------|-------|
|    | m̀u       | i + m̀u            | ímu          | arrest/bondage |
|    | ìelè      | i + ìelè           | `iléle       | follow/procedure |
|    | f̀e       | e + f̀e            | `ẹfe         | be rich/wealth |
|    | v̀ẹn      | e + v̀ẹn           | `evẹn        | wrestle/wrestling |
|    | d̀a       | e + d̀a            | eda          | the act of drinking |

| 3. | Verb Stem | Gloss | Pref+Verb Stem | Derived Nom. | Gloss |
|----|-----------|-------|----------------|--------------|-------|
|    | hió̩      | 'urinate'            | a + hió̩      | `ahió       | 'urine' |
|    | rhué      | 'aramase'            | a + rhué      | `arhuẹ      | 'circumcision' |
|    | v̀ẹn      | 'wrestle'            | e + v̀ẹn      | `evẹn       | ' wrestling' |
|    | d̀a       | 'drink(alcohol)'     | e + d̀a       | `edá        | 'drinking(alcohol) |
|    | m̀u       | 'carry'              | i + m̀u       | `imú        | 'arrest' |
|    | ìelè      | 'follow'             | i + ìelè      | `iléle      | 'procedure' |
|    | f̀e       | 'be rich'            | e + f̀e       | `ẹfe        | 'wealth' |
|    | rh̀u      | 'cover'              | e + rh̀u      | `erhú       | 'capable' |
|    | kh̀ián    | 'walk'               | o + kh̀ián    | ` okhián    | 'a walk' |
|    | gh̀ẹ́     | 'flirt/fornicate'    | o + gh̀ẹ́  '  | `oghẹ       | 'flirtation' |
|    | gh̀o̩gh̀o̩ | 'be happy'           | o + gh̀o̩gh̀o̩ | `oghọghọ    | 'joy/happiness' |
|    | ǹaá       | 'narrate'            | o+ ǹaá        | `oǹa        | 'narration' |
|    | r̀oó      | 'think'              | i + r̀oó      | ``ir̀o      | 'thought' |
|    | ẁu        | 'die'                | u + ẁu        | `uwú        | 'death |
|    | ìeé̩      | 'escape/run          | u + ìẹé̩      | `ulẹ̩       | 'race' |
|    | g̀ué      | 'cover'              | u + g̀ué      | `ugué       | 'a cover' |
|    | gbúgbó    | 'make farm'          | o̩ + gbúgbó   | `o̩gbugbo   | 'farmer' |

duẹ́k̀i          'do trade'          ọ + duẹ́k̀i          `ọdùeki          'trader'

The DNs in 3 can be analyzed into their constituent parts unlike the morphologically simple nouns in 2 which cannot undergo such division. Some previous works on Edo nouns (Westermann and Bryan 1952 and Elugbe 1976) make the erroneous claim that the initial vowel in some simple nouns can indeed be separated from the other pact of the word which they called the base form. Their examples include such forms as *`o-xẁaé 'basket' – `i-xẁaé 'baskets', instead of`oxẁaé and ávbé`oxẁaé. The word for basket in Ẹdo does not belong to the group of DNs which can be analyzed into their constituents parts,`oxẁaé constitutes one word only. It is pluralized by attaching the plural morpheme 'ávbé' to it as in the example above. The pluralizations of nouns in Edo involve different strategies which debunk such previous erroneous claims about the structure of singular and plural nouns in the language as in( see Omoruyi 1986 for a more detailed discussion of pluralization of Edo nouns).

Other processes by which nominals are formed in the language include suffixation, u….mwẹ attachment reduplication and compounding. For the purpose of simplicity, we present the data illustrating all these processes in the examples below:

**4.     Constituent Parts                Derived Noun          Gloss**

(a) `ẹkó    rhìệnrhìẹn          `ẹkórhìệnrhìẹn-mẁẹ          'pleasure'
     Stomach  sweet

(b) `egbé  ̀balọ́                `egbebálọ́-mẁẹ               'hot-temperedness'
      Body  pain

(c) rhoó 'praise'                `u-rhoó-mẁẹ (urhómẁẹ)        'praise worship'

(d) gbe 'dance'                  `u-gbe-mẁẹ (ugbemẁẹ)         'dancing'

(e) `owá +`owá                  òwóẁa                       'houses'
     House  house

(f) `ukpó +`ukpó               `ukpókp̀o                    'yearly,annually'
     Year    year

(g) `uhúnmẁu (ọ́ghé) Ozó        `uhúnmẁozó                  'Ozo's head'
     Head       AM  Ozo

(h) `owá (ọ́ghé)`ebé            owebe                       'school'
      House AM  book

(i) `emwí  ̀ne  á kọ́re          evbakọre                    'seed'
     Thing that one plant+rv

4a-b illustrate the derived nouns formed by suffixing the morpheme –mwẹ to a simple clause. 4c-d illustrates the DNs formed by putting a simple noun within the discontinuous morpheme u….mwẹ. 4e-f shows the derivation of nouns by reduplicating two simple nouns. The surface realizations of the DNs in this category are made possible by the process of vowel elision in which the last vowel of the first noun is deleted while its tone absorbs and replaces the tone of the first vowel of the second noun. The DNs may encode multiplication or plurality, intensity, degree or emphasis.ˋOwóẁa andˋukpúkp̀o in 4e-f encode plurality and emphasis respectively. 4g-l illustrates the derivation of nouns by combining two simple nouns which are linked to each other with an associative morpheme (AM) ọ́ghé. The DNs in these examples show two different types of relations. 4g illustrates inalienable possession while 4h illustrate genitive relationship. The AM ọ́ghé is put in optional brackets in the data to show that it may be deleted in rapid or normal speech. The deletion does not affect the semantic interpretation of the DNs. The AM ọ́ghé in some previous works was deliberately omitted or at best replaced by a falling tone (Amayo 1976) or a high tone (Agheyisi 1990). Note that the order of the constituent words in these derivations is fixed as the word order contributes to the structural relationship of Head Noun + Modifier and their meanings, 4i illustrates another shape of compound noun which consists of a head noun and a clause in its internal structure. Its surface realization results in the deletion of the clause introducer 'né' and part of its head. Each of the DNs in 4a is capable of occurring in different nominal positions of the basic clause in Ẹdo.

One main feature of Ẹdo nouns which is worth mentioning here is the existence of vestiges of the noun class system. This feature is probably responsible for the erroneous claim of Westermann and Bryan (1952) and Elugbe (1976) identified above. In the section that follows, we present a summary of the manifestation of this feature in Ẹdo.

### 1.1.3   Noun Class Vestiges in  Ẹdo

Ẹdo has a vestigious noun class system which is a reflex of the Bantu noun class system. This vestigious noun class system (VNCS) is clearly observable in a small class of human – related nouns which form their plurals by employing the strategy of initial vowel substitution. This strategy is restricted to this group of nouns only. The data in the examples below show the use of this strategy:

| 5 | Singular  Nouns | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| (a) | ˋokpiá 'man' | ˋikpiá 'men' |

(b)   ˋokhuó 'woman'                      ˋikhuó 'women'

(c)   ólórí (oloi) 'queen'                ílórí 'queens'

(d)   ˋosùaràba 'rubber tapper'          ˋisùaràba 'rubber tappers'

(e)   ọ̀lavbodẹ 'passerby'               ˋilàvbodẹ 'passers-by'

(f)   ẹ́ghéˋle 'youth'                    íghéˋle 'youths'

(g)   ˋọtẹ́n 'relative'                   ˋetẹ́n 'relatives'

(h)   ˋọmọ́ 'child'                       ˋemọ́ 'children'

(i)   ˋọkhẹn 'buyer'                      ˋekhẹn 'buyers'

(j)   ˋọkhaẹ́mẁẹ 'chief'                  ˋekhaẹ́mẁẹ 'chiefs'

(k)   ˋọmuádà 'sceptre bearer'           ˋemuáda 'sceptre bearers'

(l)   ˋọmwá 'person'                      ˋemwá 'persons'

5a-i illustrate common nouns whose semantic content include human relationships. The initial vowels of the nouns contain correspondences in the order shown in data 6 below:

**6.   Singular                     Plural**

(a) o…………………………… o as in ˋokpiá – ˋikpiá

(b) ọ…………………………… ọ as in ˋọsùaràba – ˋisùaràba

(c) ẹ…………………………… ẹ as in ẹ́ghéˋle – íghéˋle

(d) ọ…………………………… e as in ˋọmwá – ˋemwá

6a-d show correspondences between the initial vowels in the singular forms of the nouns and the vowels they substitute for, to form their plurals. All other nouns in Edo are pluralized by a variety of other strategies which include the placement of the indefinite plural marker ávbé before a noun as in ˋowá 'a house', ávbé ˋowá 'houses', ẹ́kpo 'bag', ávbé ẹ́kpo 'bags'. Quantifiers are also used to form plurals by placing them after the nouns as shown in data 7 below:

**7   Singular Nouns                       Plural Nouns**

(a) ˋowá 'house'                          ˋowá ˋehá

                                          House three  'three houses'

(b) ˋebé 'book'                           ˋebé ǹibún

                                          Book many    'many books'

(c) ˋọmwá 'person'-ˋemwá 'persons'        ˋemwá ˋibozẹghẹ

                                          Persons few   'few people'

Note the example in 7c in which the human-related noun ˋomwá undergoes double pluralization involving (i) initial vowel substitution and (ii) post-positioning of the

quantifier,`ibozègh̩è. This shows that the already pluralized human-related nouns can also be pluralized by the other strategies mentioned above. Only their plural forms (eg`emwá) are selected and merged with the appropriate quantifiers. The example *o̩mwá `ibozègh̩è 'few persons' crashes because there is no number agreement between the noun and the quantifier. Other construction types in the language also show relics of the noun class system. In all these instances singular/plural alternation occurs between the oral vowels o and I in addition to the correspondences identified in 6.

## 2.2.  Nominal Modifiers

The second major constituent part of the Edo NP involves nominal modifiers. In this section, we examine the interaction between the HN and its varying modifiers. This interaction results in the structural patterns illustrated in the data in example1. The HN and the modifiers stand in some kind of agreement relation which we discuss in section 3. The modifiers include determiners, adjectives, nominals and pronominals. Consider examples 8-12 below:

### 2.2.1   The Determiner Category

The determiner refers to a class of items which co-occur with a noun to express a wide range of semantic contrasts such as quantity or number. The determiner group in E̩do includes: the (i) article (ii) demonstratives and (iii) quantifiers. These can occur before or after a noun in E̩do as we show in the data below:

| Noun | Determiner + Noun | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8.  (a) ágá | né  ágá | (nágá) | 'the chair' |
|      Chair | +Def chair | | |
|   (b)`okhuó | né `okhuó | (nókhùo) | 'the woman' |
|      Woman | +Def  woman | | |
|   (c) `o̩gbugbo | né `ogbugbo | (nó̩gbugbo) | 'the farmer' |
|      Farmer | +Def  farmer | | |
|   (d)`okpiá | `okpiá  ǹa | | 'this man' |
|       Man | man Dem-this | | |
|   (e) `o̩mó̩ | `omó̩  níí | | 'that child' |
|      Child | child  Dem-that | | |
|   (f)`okpiá | `okpiá `o̩kpá | | 'one/a man' |

|  | Man | man   Q-one | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (g) | ˋebé | ˋebé  ˋesó | 'some book(s)/some' |
|  | Book | book  Q-some | certain book(s) |
| (h) | ˋamẹ | ˋamẹ  ǹọbún | 'much/plenty |
|  | Water | water Q-much | |
| (i) | ˋowá | ˋowá  ǹibûn | 'many houses' |
|  | House | house  Q-many | |
| (j) | ˋẹkpó | né ˋẹkpó níí | 'that (particular) large |
|  | 'bag' | +Def  bag Dem-that | |

8a-c show the modification of nouns with the definite article ne. This article pre-modifies nouns and encodes the notion of definiteness which is commonly characterized in semantic terms involving inclusiveness, uniqueness, accessibility or identifiability (Lyons 2000). The forms within the optional brackets represent the actual pronunciations of the NPs in rapid speech.

8d-e illustrate the modification of nouns with the demonstratives ǹa 'this' and níí 'that'. These demonstratives (dem) also have definite references like the definite article (def. art). Unlike the def. art, the dems post-modify nouns and signal the location of the nouns relative to the speakers' position which is either 'far' or 'near'.

8f-j shows the modification of noun by quantifiers. These include numeral and non-numeral quantifiers which also post-modify nouns like the dems. In 8d-e.  While the numerals have definite reference like the def. arts. and dems., the non-numeral quantifiers have indefinite references. The examples in 8a-j show that the modification of Ẹdo nouns by determiners results in the realization of three different NP-Constructions: (i) Det-NP, (ii) NP-Det and (iii) Det-NP-Det construction.

## 2.2.2. The Adjectival Category

Adjectives are words which describe nouns. Only a few real adjectives are attested in Ẹdo (Omoruyi 1986). Many of the adjectives are derived and ideophonic. The data in example 9 illustrate the modification of nouns with the different adjectives.

| Noun | Noun + Adjective | |
|---|---|---|
| 9.  (a) ẹ̀wu | ẹ̀wu  ógbọn | 'a new shirt' |
|  Shirt | shirt  new-Adj | |
| (b) ˋokpiá | ˋokpiá  kpatáki | 'an important man' |

|       | Man     | man    | important-Adj |
|-------|---------|--------|---------------|

(c) `ọmọ́      `ọmó     némòsè/nómòsè   'a beautiful child'

     Child     child    that –be –beautiful

(d) `inyá      `inyá     ǹe   léúléú          'large tubers of yams'

     Yam       yam      that  be- large

The different adjectives in 9a-d post-modify nouns like the demonstratives and quantifiers in 8d-j. Notice that the internal structure of the derived adjectives in 9c-d show that they are reduced relative clauses which are introduced by ne. This morpheme is homophonous with the definite article ne in 8a-c.

The Nominal categories in this study include nouns and pronominals. Each of these post-modifies a noun. The modification of nouns by nouns result in the kind of NP referred to as 'associative construction' or Noun-Noun Construction' as in Amfani (2006:831). A typical N-N construction in Ẹdo consists of two nouns linked by the associative marker (AM) oghe as in our examples 4g-h in section 2.1.2. The pronominals occur as nominal modifiers in this section are possessive pronouns as the data in example 10a-c below show:

10(a) ágá      ágá  mẁẹ          'my chair'

       Chair    chair my

  (b)`egbé     `egbé  ìruẹ́         'your body'

       Body      body   your

  (c)`obọ̣      `obọ̣  ẹ́ìre          'his/her hand'

       Hand      hand  his/her
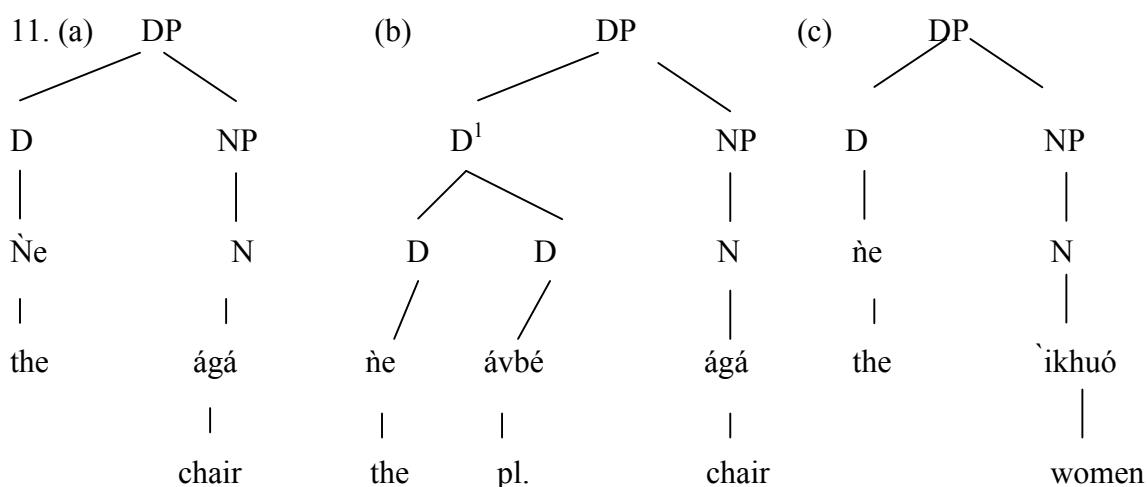
## 3.    Agreement Patterns  in the Ẹdo  NP

Agreement refers to a formal relationship between elements whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another. Chomsky (1992, 1995) identifies two clausal agreement relations: (i) subject agreement relation and (ii) object agreement relations. Agreement relations are however, not confined to clauses but extend also to phrasal constructions (Amfani 2003:831) like the NP construction in Ẹdo. In this section, we discuss the agreement pattern in the Ẹdo NP. The basic assumption about the structure of the Edo NP that has been maintained over the years is that the NP comprises an obligatory noun head and a variety of optional modifiers which occur pre-nominally or post-nominally. These modifiers occur in the NP structures identified in (1) in section 2. In each of the constructions, agreement relations hold between the HN and the modifiers.

Agreement may be morphological, feature, semantic or even syntactic. The morphological or feature agreement is that a given segment is introduced onto an adjoining lexical item because of the introduction of some parameter. The two lexical items, then exhibit that common feature which otherwise will not be there in its base forms. The agreements in the Ẹdo NP do not present themselves clearly in these forms, but in a variety of other forms which we will discuss in the sections that follow.

### 3.1    Det – N Constructions

The Det-N structure of the Ẹdo NP is illustrated in 8a-c. The phi-feature, number agreement is considered in the agreement relations between the determiner and the nouns in the construction. The constructions in this group involve the definite articles.

Ordinarily, agreement is not morphologically marked in the NPs whose reference is specified by definite articles. The Def. art. Selects both singular and plural head nouns. Number agreement is usually marked on the HN which can be pluralized by the different strategies identified in section 2.1.3. The phrase markers in 11a-b show the manifestation of this number agreement in the Det-N NP.

11. (a)    DP           (b)           DP           (c)           DP

D            NP            D$^1$            NP            D            NP

Ǹe            N            D       D            N            ǹe            N

the            ágá            ǹe       ávbé            ágá            the            `ikhuó

            chair            the       pl.            chair                        women

The co-occurrence of the elements in this NP construction is governed by the agreement relationship. In 11a, the HN occurs in the singular form. In 11b, the plural morpheme 'ávbé' marks number. In both cases, the definite article 'ǹe' maintains its morphological shape. In 11c, number is also marked on the HN in its initial position.

### 3.2    Noun – Determiner Constructions

The Noun – Determiner constructions in Ẹdo have been illustrated in our examples 8d-e which show the use of the two demonstratives: ǹa and níí. Like the definite article, agreement is not also marked on the demonstratives. They do not encode agreement features of the noun. Their forms are not changed to conform with singular and plural HNs as in ágá ǹa – ávbé ágá ǹa 'this chair – these chairs';`okhuó níí – `ikhuó níí 'this woman – these women'. Plurality is base generated in the demonstratives. These examples show some kind of morphological agreement between the HNs and their qualifiers. Here also agreement is controlled by the HN. Number agreement is clearly marked on the initial vowels of the nominalized form of the demonstrative (ie ǹa,`ọ̀na,`eǹa, 'this, this one, these ones, etc.) and their reduplicated forms (ie`ọ̀na,`ọ̀na +`ọ̀na (ọ́nọ́ǹa) 'this one, this one – this one. These nominalized forms are capable of occurring alone as the subject or object NP in sentences.

The N – Det constructions also include NPs in which a HN is modified by a quantifier as illustrated in 8f-j. Number agreement is marked on quantifiers in Ẹdo both morphologically and semantically. All the cardinal numerals except the form for 'one' (def) have references. In the NPs involving such numerals, number agreement is marked on both the modifiers and the HNs as the examples in 12 shows:

### Noun + Quantifier

12. (a)`okpiá ọ̀kpá          (c)`emwá    `urí

    Man   one                persons two-hundred

    'one Man'              'two-hundred persons'

  (b)`ebé `evá           (d) *`ọmwá   `urí

    Book  two                person  two-hundred

    'Two books'           'two-hundred person'

In 12(a) ọ̀kpá is clearly marked for singular number. It selects singular HNs only. The higher numerals in 12b-c select both singular and plural HNs depending on the type of HN involved. These numerals select the plural forms of human – related nouns pluralized by the strategy of initial vowel substitution and not their singular forms as shown by the ungrammaticality of 12(d).

Agreement is also marked on the non-numerals. In example 8g the quantifier ʿesó' has the phi-features of both singular and plural number agreement. Its interpretation is based on the user's knowledge of its context of utterance. The two quantifiers in 8h-j ǹọbún and ǹibún have distinct morphological markers of number agreement. The value features that trigger

agreement in these items are located within them and can be correctly spelt out in the data below:

13(a) ǹe  `ọ bún  -  ṅọbún        'plentiful/much'

    That it  be-plenty

  (b) ǹe  `i  bún        ṅibún        'plentiful/many'

    That  they be-plenty

  (c) `amẹ́  ǹe  `ọ  bún        `amẹ́ ṅọbún 'plentiful/much water'

    Water  that  it    be-plenty

  (d) `owá  ǹe  `i  bún        `owá  ṅibún   'many houses'

    House   that  they be-plenty

  (e)*`amẹ́  ǹe  `i  bún        *amẹ́  ṅibúń       *many water

    Water  that   they be-many

    In these examples, the vowel o in ṅọbún selects plentiful non-count or mass nouns while i in ṅibún selects plentiful count nouns. 13(g) crashes because of the violation of this agreement rule.

### 3.3    Det – N – Det  Constructions

In this structural type of the Ẹdo NP, a HN is both pre- and –post modified by the definite article ne and a demonstrative or quantifier as shown in example 8j and the data below:

14. (a) ǹe   ágá níí                (b)  ǹe    ágá  `evá

    The  chair that                    the    chair  two

    'that (particular) chair'           'the (particular) chair'

  (c) ǹe  `amẹ́  ṅọbún        (d)*níí   ágá   ǹe

    The  water  much                    that   chair  the

    'the (particular) much water

    Number agreement in 14b-c is marked on the quantifiers. The forms in bracket give an indication of a previous definite mention with the use of ǹe. Its reduplicated and emphatic form nene (as in néné ágá `evá) may also be used. 14d crashes because the order of occurrence of the modifiers has been altered.


### 3.4    N – Adj  Constructions

    Another type of the Ẹdo NP is one in which a HN is post-modified by an adjective as exemplified in 9a-d. Here agreement is not marked between the noun and some of the

adjectives. Both singular and plural HNs can be modified by the adjectives as in 9a-d and the data below:

15(a) ávbé   ẹ̀wu  ọ́gbọn              (b) ̀ikpiá  kpàtàki

    Pl.m    shirt   new                     men  important

    'new shirts'                            'important men'

  (c) ̀emọ́  némòsè/nímòsè/némòsèmòsè     (d) ávbé  ̀inyá  ne ́leúleú

    Children beautiful/beautiful            Pl.m  yam that be-large-large

    'beautiful/very beautiful children'     'very large tubers of yams'

Number agreement is not marked between the Ns and the real adjectives ọ́gbọn and kpàtàki in 15a-b. However, notice the number agreement between the plural nouns and the reduplicated forms of the derived adjectives in 15c-d.


## 3.5    Noun – Noun Constructions

Two basic types of N-N constructions are recognized in Ẹdo: (i) possessive construction (as in 4g) and (ii) genitive constructions (as in 4h). Both constructions involve NPs which comprise two nouns linked by the AM ọ́ghé. In (i), oghe marks inalienable possession while in (ii) it functions as a genitive marker which assigns genitive case to $N_2$ in the construction. The directionality of possession in 4a is from $N_2$ to $N_1$ If this ordering is violated, the NP constructions will crash.

The N-pronominal constructions in 10a-c illustrate another set of alienable and inalienable possessions. Number agreement is marked between the nouns and the possessive pronouns as the data in example 16 show:

16 (a) ágá   ím̀a/mwá          (b) ávbé   ágá   ím̀a/mwá

      Chair  our                  Pl.m  chair  our

      'Our  chair'                'Our chairs'

(c) ávbé  ̀egbé  ̀ruá/uẁa      (d) ávbé    ̀obọ́  íràn

    Pl.m body   your(pl)          Pl.m    hand  they

    'your bodies'                 'their hands'


## 3.6    Multiple Modifier NP Constructions

The Ẹdo NP in this category comprises a HN and two or more modifiers. The examples below show that multiple spec-sequences are also possible in Ẹdo. While some of

such sequences result in syntactic ill-formedness (Radford 1988:171), other sequences are perfectly grammatical and natural in the language as the data in example 17 reveals:

17 (a) ávbé  `ikhuó níí  h̀iá         (b)*ávbé    `okhuó níí    h̀iá

    Pl.m    women that all            Pl.m    woman  that  all

    'All those women'               'All that woman'

  (c) ávbé  `ẹwé  níí  h̀iá nọ́mos̀e    (d)*ágá   `ehá  ǹibún némos̀e

    Pl.m   goat   that all beautiful        chair  three many beautiful

    'All those beautiful goats'

  (e) ǹe ávbé  `inyá  ǹa  h̀iá  ǹe   leúleú

    The Pl.m  yam  this all  that be-large-large

    'All thses very large tubers of yams'

  (f) `owá  ọ́gbọn  níí  ǹọkp̀ọlọ  némos̀e  ọ́ghé  `Òsàz̀ẹ́ẹ́

    House  new    that big     beautiful AM  Osazee

    'That big new beautiful house belonging to Osazee'

     17a-f show possible multiple NP constructions in Ẹdo which involve three modifiers and above in their respective positions of occurrence. Some kind of agreement relations hold between the HN and the different modifiers in each example in terms of ordering, positions of occurrence and number. 17b crashes because there is no number agreement between the HN`okhuó and its pre-modifier ávbé and the post-modifier, h̀iá. 17d also crashes because the modifiers`ehá and ǹibún 'many' cannot co-occur with one HN as they lack agreement in reference. Other such restrictions abound in the language. The data in example 17 above reveals that the longer and more complex the NP constructions are, the more cumbersome and clumsy they become in usage and comprehension. Such constructions do not occur often in the speech of the native speakers. Based on the examples in data 14 and 17, it can be established that NP constructions which lack number and other agreements between the HN and the modifiers and between the modifiers themselves are bound to crash.

     Most of the modifiers in the NP constructions tend to complement one another. They do not represent a compositional unitary meaning which corresponds to a construction expressed by a single modifier. Also, each of the modifiers in the NP constructions can modify a noun independently of the others. In this way, both simple and complex NP constructions are accounted for adequately.

**4.        Conclusion**

An attempt has been made in this paper to examine the internal composition of the Ẹdo NP bearing in mind the two basic parts: (i) the head Noun and (ii) nominal modifiers. The paper identifies six structural types of NP constructions in Ẹdo.

Focus has been on the pattern of agreement relation between the various elements found in the NP constructions. The head noun was characterized as constituting both simple and derived forms.

The paper reveals that different agreement relations hold between the HN and the modifiers in Ẹdo. It also maintains that to avoid crashing of constructions, there must of necessity exist an identity of features between the noun and its quantifiers. This identity is revealed mainly by the phi-feature number which manifests in different ways in the language. The operations of selecting and merging the appropriate units help to prevent crashing at the interface levels. Some of the NP constructions crashed because of lack of agreement between the units.

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