

From Folklore to Folk Script: Dramatizing the Legend for Today's Hindsight in Emmy Idegu's <i>The Legendary Inikpi</i> Andrew Aondofa Nyikyaa	208
Lexicalization of Pragmatic COVID-19 Lexemes in the Yorùbá Language Felix Abidemi Fabunmi & Jethro Akinyemi Adejumo	226
• Historiography, Theory and Methodology: Some Matters Arising in Central Nigeria's Print Media Studies, 1970 – 2017 Musa Mbalo Abdullahi & Fred Ekpe Ayokhai	251
Resourcefulness of Figurative Language in Selected Essay Discourses of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu Isaiah Aluya	281
Apartheid and Xenophobic Tendencies in South Africa: A Revisit of Dennis Brutus and Joseph Eureka's Poetries Nafiu Abdullahi	306
Rapport (Mis)management in Online Social Media Commentaries Fredrick Osaro Ojo & Felix Nwabeze Ogoanah	318
Ritual of 'Ìbálé' (Virginity) at the Footpath of Fate in Nigerian Films: Gender Issues in Tunde Kelani's Film <i>The Narrow Path</i> Victor 'Túnjì Táíwò & Nkemdirim Olubunmi Adedina	339
Violence and Vengeance in Richard Ali's <i>City of Memories</i> and John Elnathan's <i>Born on a Tuesday</i> Oluwakemi M. Emmanuel-Olowonubi & Chinaza Blessing Ogbonna	358

A Critical Stylistic Study of the Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Symbolism of *Òbò* (monkey) and *Orógbó* (bitter-cola): Insights from *Ifá* and Yorùbá Proverbs

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Abstract

It is generally believed that symbols, including linguistic symbols such as signified by names, are associated or influenced by different cultural and religious functions and the values invented on them. Therefore, this study investigates the cultural, linguistic and religious symbolisms of *Òbò* (monkey) and *Orógbó* (bitter cola) as mostly used in Yoruba metaphors, idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The choice of these symbolic words is informed by their prominence in various Yorùbá discourses. The critical stylistics approach, which focuses on the general functions that a text or word performs in representing reality in the society, is adopted in this study. The various cultural, linguistic and religious symbolisms of *Òbò* and *Orógbó* are investigated in *Ifá* corpora and proverbs, the springboards of the Yorùbá culture. This is done so as to identify, examine and establish their underlying cultural, linguistic and religious symbolisms. It is found out from this study that there are sociocultural shifts in the functional use of *Òbò* and *Orógbó*. The study concludes that some symbols are used outside or against their sociocultural symbolisms, thereby, creating a loss of cultural values and functions as a result of the cultural shifts on those symbols.

Key words: *Òbò*, *Orógbó*, *Ifá*, Symbolism, Culture, Religion, Critical Stylistics

Introduction

There are factors that determine the choice of language in discourse. Cultural context determines the appropriateness of a word or text in relation to meaning. The understanding or meanings associated with a word, text or discourse can be realised in two broad forms. The general

meaning and the specific meaning, which culture associate with the symbols, including linguistic symbols are necessary determinant functions performed by a symbol. It is observed in this study that some symbols or words are commonly used to perform a specific (narrow) role, that specific role has gained prominence than the general cultural (broad) meanings or functions invented on those symbols or words.

On one hand, the cultural meaning associated with *Òbò* (monkey) is examined against its cultural, linguistic and religious symbolism. For example, Yoruba do say that “*Òbò kò sí ní oko Ìdànrè, díẹ̀ tí ó sì kù ní ibẹ̀ tí gbòn*” (Ọlaoye 2012, pp. 159-150). That is, Monkeys are not many in the bush of Idanre, and even the remaining few there are very wise (in author’s translation). On the other hand, *Orógbó* is also used in the Album of Sunny Ade as:

Kí lánfààní Orógbó? / What is the benefit of Orógbó?
Kí lánfààní Orógbó? / What is the benefit of Orógbó?
Ohun tá a pa tí kó lówé / What we split and has no lobes
Ohun tá a jẹ, tó tún korò / What we eat and was bitter
Kí lánfààní Orógbó? / What is the benefit of Orógbó?

This study therefore attempts to investigate the symbolisms of *Òbò* and *Orógbó* from the cultural, linguistic and religious perspectives to establish their “real” symbolisms as against other claims or opinions generally associated with them.

In this study despite the fact that, *Ifá* and proverbs are culture bound genres, data are translated into English for the benefit of a wider audience. The Yorùbá data are interpreted as possible; but in some cases uninterpreted in order to retain the *Couleur locale* of the original texts, especially *Ifá* corpus, “since the indigenous language is more conducive to the interpretation of an indigenous genre” (Ilésanmi, 2004, p. 111).

Critical Stylistics and Symbolism

According to Osisanwo and Adekunle (2018:527), critical stylistics was developed by Lesley Jefferies in 2007. The approach is interested in

bringing together the “main general functions that a text has in representing reality.” This notion is used to examine the general functions of *Òbò* and *Orógbó* in relation to their symbolisms in real sense. The central goal of critical stylistics is “basically lies in uncovering and revealing the hidden ideologies in texts and thus in discourses” (Osisanwo and Adekunle 2018:380). That is, unfolding unknown cultural ideologies is the central goal of critical stylistics.

As a result of this role, critical stylistics aids the analyst in answering “some significant CDA-Oriented questions such as: What world is structured in the text? “What ideologies are being presented through the text? Thus, there are basic textual conceptual functions that determines ideologies employed in texts, and these textual conceptual functions serve as basis for analytical insights in doing Critical Stylistics” (Osisanwo and Adekunle 2018:527). Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the Yorùbá world views on *Òbò* and *Orógbó* as against the ideologies in social discourse about *Òbò* and *Orógbó*. Since every symbol or discourse supplies information, it is imperatives for the information receiver to reconcile the information on a word, object or symbol, so that, the principle of informativity is upheld. Where there is/are misconception or misinformation about a word or symbol, “the receiver must be motivated to resolve discrepancies” (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:44). This means, there is a need for us to project into the content of and context of words, symbols or objects used in a text or discourse. That is, “the text receiver must do a Motivation Search – a special case of **problem-solving**– to find out what these concurrencies signify, why they were selected, and how they can be integrated back into the Continuity that is the basis of communication” (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:144). “Motivation search” is needful because the meaning of a symbol (including linguistic, object or art work) is revealed by the code of that symbol. In other words, “a symbol is a representation of a meaning or a value, an external sign or gesture which by association conveys an idea or stimulates a feeling. All communication, whether through language or otherwise, makes use of symbols” (Maciver and Page 1949:153). Some

African objects and symbols are ancient African system of writing because they are used to communicate ideas and different meanings. Symbolism has been the topic of several studies. It is indeed of the utmost importance because these symbols are in close relation to speech: they are produced within the speech communities and demand interpretation by these communities. They fulfill one of the essential functions of writing: recording information and enabling its retrieval... Some objects elicit a verbal response and this encapsulates a text. The systemic use of objects can function like writing (Alain 2009:9).

The identification, description and understanding the roles of symbols in thoughts and beliefs of people cannot be separated from each other. This is because the value of an object is proportional to its use in cultural expressions—symbolism. That is, “the essence of an object is that which finds expression in the concept which the object embodies, the concept under which it must be identified if it is to be or remain what it is” (Olaide, 2017:9).

One of the oral media of expressions among the Yorùbá is proverbs. For example, *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1992:749) opines that, proverbs are “succinct and pithy sayings in general use, expressing commonly held ideas and beliefs.” From this opinion, one can say that proverb encapsulates peoples’ ideal about something on one hand, and on the other hand, it relates to the beliefs of the people where their hope and thoughts rest. This means, some proverbs have religious connotations or affinities.

The interrelationship between *Ifá* and proverbs cannot be overemphasized because proverbs are rooted in *Ifá*. The Yorùbá use and rely on proverbs so much and see those who can decipher them as truly wise. It is also true that the *Ifá* Corpus, the vehicle of Yorùbá divinities, is captured in an extensive body of poems capable of many interpretations and configurations. It is part of the same tradition that works to create dialogue and discourse through proverbs. It is the proverb that is used to guide the philosophical and intellectual exploration of issues and ideas. It creates shared meaning whilst leaving room for new revelation and exposition (Àjàdí 2012, pp. 67-8).

The Yorùbá proverbs are context-sensitive. Proper understandings of proverbs require different knowledge such as linguistic, non-linguistic, social, sociological, and cosmological among others.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Cultural, Religious Myths and Linguistic Analysis about *Ọbọ* (Monkey)

According to archeologists and anthropologists, the evolutionary line of descent leading to *Homo sapiens* diverged from that leading to Chimpanzees. Strayer (2011:6) reports that, “there are perhaps twenty or thirty different species that emerged.” Krantz (2012:23) reports that, “there is also dispute concerning many overlapping species.” For instance, there is overlap between *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*. They exist as one and the same species. So also do *Homo sapiens* archaic and *Homo sapiens*. In Yoruba communities, there are various types of monkeys- *Ìnàkí*, *Ìjímèrè*, *Èdun*, *Àáyá* all relating to *Ọbọ*. In Yoruba mythologies, relationship of these types of monkey is not in doubt. This is not peculiar to the Yoruba alone as the anthropologists believed that human beings have been found to relate to Apes. That is, “humans are really just peculiar African Ape” (Pickrell 2006:4). According to him, humans share DNA 98% closet living relation with monkeys. As a result of the human-animal relationship, Archeologist Schaefer was able to trace the evolution of man and establish that “our early ancestors, the hominids were primates that had characteristics of human beings” (1989, p. 65). The Yoruba relationship with monkeys can be evinced from *Ifá* mythologies to account for some cultural issues and events as “mythology tries to answer the most difficult and the most basic questions of human existence” (Mark 2018:3).

Scholars such as Finnegan (1970:361&2), Ilésanmí (2004:40-42), Ọ̀súndáre (2008:20-22) have established that myths are potent means of solving ancient cultural problems. Some historical problems are resolved by myths. Myths are rendered in oral narrative is keenly associated with *Ifá*. It is believed among the Yoruba that “*Ifá* divination protocols are the closest to an ‘oral’ society and could develop to fulfill

the requirement of genuinely divine writing and speaking" (Adeeko 2010:288). That is, *Ifá* mythical symbols are historical forms of writing for the understanding of values and functions performed by symbols.

In Yorùbá communities, some of the species of monkeys such as *Ọbọ*, *Ìnàkí*, *Ìjímèrè*, *Èdun*, *Àáyá* and *Èdun-àáyá* are used in Yoruba mythologies to solve some cultural problems. Each of these species is used in different cultural contexts. For instance, *Èdun* is believed by the Yorùbá to have cultural affinities with *Ìbejì* (twins). This is why it is forbidden for the twins and their parents to eat *Èdun* (Òkèwándé 2017). *Àáyá* is also used in relation to *Ọrúnmìlà*, the *Ifá* progenitor.

Ifá mo pè, - It is *Ifá* I called,
Ọrúnmìlà, mo pè... - It is *Ọrúnmìlà* I called,
È t'èti k'ẹ gbù're -Listen and be blessed
Àáyá Olúpè ùpè rẹ ire o- Àáyá Olúpè ùpè, let your call brings fortunes.
Àáyá Olúpè ùpè rẹ ire o- Àáyá Olúpè ùpè, let your call brings fortunes.
Àáyá Olúpè ùpè rẹ ire o- Àáyá Olúpè ùpè, let your call brings fortunes.
(Dáramólá and Jeje 1967:257).

The *Ifá* corpus establishes that *Àáyá Olúpè* is related to *Ifá* divinity. The power of authority words is known with *Ọrúnmìlà* and *Ifá*. *Àwìṣe ni t'Ifá, àfoṣe ni t'Ọrúnmìlà*. That is, whatever *Ifá* or *Ọrúnmìlà* says comes to reality. This is why the *Ifá* corpus above requests for *Àáyá Olúpè*'s blessings.

In addition, *Ìjímèrè* is known for authoritative words among animals as indicated in the Yorùbá philosophical statement that "*Àṣe ijímèrè ní ṣe l'áwùjọ ẹranko*." That is, the authority of *Ìjímèrè* comes to reality among animals. The mythic ability of the changing nature of monkey to change into different forms of animals, including human beings, makes its links within human evolution to be relevant to *Ifá* mythology. This is buttressed by the opinion that *Ìjímèrè* is "regarded with superstitious reverence, the power of walking erect and talking being ascribed to it is esteemed a clever physician. Some professed 'medicines men' usually tame and keep one of these creatures, and pretend to receive instructions and inscriptions from it"(Johnson

1921:37). *Ìjímèrè* is known to be a professional herbalist, which is a major specialization in *Ifá*. Apart from human relationship with monkeys in general, *Ifá* profession is related to monkey in particular.

The consciousness of the supernatural power possessed by *Ìjímèrè* is expressed by literary writers. For instance, in *Ìrìnkèrindò nínú Igbó Elégbèje*, Fágúnwà demonstrates the supernatural power by *Ìjímèrè*, to Ewédaiyépò that: "*lẹyin èyí ni ó jókòó sínú igbó fún odidi ọdún kan, níbẹ ni ó sì tí rí abàmi ijímèrè kan tí ó fí onírúurú ewé hàn-án tí ó sì kọ ní ilò wọn*" (1954:20). Meaning that after this, he sat in the bush for a whole year, there he met a strange *Ìjímèrè* that showed him different leaves and thought him the use of those leaves. Yorùbá myth also accounts for the supernatural power of the *Ìjímèrè* as an animal valued by the herbalists in their profession.

A specie of monkey called *Ìnàkí* also has philosophical discourse evinced from *Ifá*. For example, *Ìnàkí* plays a vital role in the links of a proverb that says, "*bá ọpó lọ ilé olóròó*." Literarily it means that without perambulating around a particular issue. This metaphorical expression is referenced in *Ifá* in relation to *Ìnàkí* as in *Ọsẹ Méjì* corpus:

Ọdà dá, Obìnrin hòdì kùè kùè,
A dífá fún Ìnàkí,
Tí ń sáwo re'lé Elédùmarè...
Ìnàkí bá ní ọ̀un ọ̀ wulẹ̀ bá Ọpó lọ sí ilé Olóròó mọ.
Ijọ náà ni wọn tí ń pa á lówe pé "Má sẹ̀sẹ̀ b'Ọpó lọ
ilé Olóròó mọ", ni Ìnàkí bá jókòó" (Agboolá 1978:239).

Ọdà dá, Obìnrin hòdì kùè kùè,
Cast a divination for *Ìnàkí*,
That was making divination in the home of *Elédùmarè*...
Ìnàkí then says it will not follow *Ọpó* to the house of *Olóròó* any longer,
Since then, it has become an adage which says "you don't follow *Ọpó* to the house of *Olóròó* any longer." Then, *Ìnàkí* sat down.

The *Ifá* corpus above shows that *Ìnàkí* was the first protagonist to be used in relation to the statement. The Metaphorical statement *bá òpó ló ilé olóròó* is commonly in used in various cultural contexts among the Yorùbá people.

Ifá's myths relating to monkeys are relevant to the explanation of the mythical connections of *Ifá* with monkeys. For example, human being is believed to be the highest product of evolution with descended from non-human ancestors' (Roy 2003). Monkeys are one of the animals connected with human evolution. For example, the change from human to animal (monkey) is expressed in *ÈjìOgbè* verse four shown in Abimbola (1977b:28) thus:

...*Àṣẹ̀yìnwá, Àṣẹ̀yìnḃò*, - In the long run,
Taraèmílójù wògbé, - Taraèmílójù entered the bush,
Wón n ́ se bí ajáko kiri, - He was behaving like an animal;
Àfàimò, k'ò tóo mó jẹ pé Taraèmílójù ni ìnàkí, - It is likely that Taraèmílójù is the Gorilla,
Àfàimò, k'ò tóo mó jẹ pé Taraèmílójù ni Ọbọ - It is likely that Taraèmílójù is the Monkey.

The Yorùbá people believe that animals can take off their skin and go about as human. Taraèmílójù was a human being before he became a monkey. This change from human to animal form is however believed to be as result of punishment. Noting that human being is a higher animal; and monkey as a lower animal. The change of Taraèmílójù from (human) higher animal to (monkey) lower animal is realized as a demotion as expressed in the above *Ifá* corpus. In another related human-animal relationship, monkeys have existed in human form in the past. Abimbola (1977b, p. 116) clarifies this opinion further that, "Àwùgbó l'ó sọ Ọbọ di ẹranko tí n gbé inú igbó." That is, disobedience makes Monkey to be living in the bush. Furthermore, the opinion that humans and animals are related is that also contained that:

Ẹranko n dèniyàn, èniyàn n ẹranko.
Ọpọ ẹdà ló wà láàrinjà,

tí wọn n ́ se bí adáríhunrun (Ilésanmí 1998:30).

Animals do turn to human, human do turn to an animal. Many creatures are in the markets that are behaving like human beings.

The above opinions reveal that there is no demarcating line between human nature and animal's. In other words, human nature is not constant, rigid or restricted to human alone, but sometimes shared between animals and human beings.

Relationship can also be established in Yorùbá Onomastics. This is because animals and plants share some names. Some families that share names are related in the observing the same rules. *Alápà's* ancestral lineage or family among the Yoruba will never eat snakes because snakes are their totems. Relationships are traced to families that share the same history in names. The plant can also share this attribute with human-being. "This belief centres on the awareness that man, animals and plants coexists in the universe and share such attributes as power, vivacity and health" (Ògúndòwólé 2005:8). This opinion influences why *Ìrókò* (mahogany), may refer to a plant or human-beings among the Yoruba. Even though, *Ọbọ* in a direct form does not exist in Yorùbá names, but it does in an indirect form because there is a situation where human-beings bears names such as *Ẹdun-* in *Ẹdúnjóbí*, *Ẹdúngbolá* and *Alààáyá*. Some individuals are simply called. All the types of monkeys are related with *Ọbọ*

Human ancestors are linked to different types of monkeys which are said to be "wise in many things" (Stratton 1994:5). This is why the Yorùbá often say that, "ẹni tí yóò mú ọbọ yóò se bí ọbọ." Meaning that whosoever wants to catch a monkey must have to behave like a monkey. The wisdom possessed by the monkey is not easy to defeat by the unwise. However, the story or event behind the association of *Ọbọ* with foolishness is confusing and misleading, especially, with the myths and stories above that present monkey otherwise. Monkey is mostly used in abusive and derogatory language

such as *Òbò ni ó*- you are a monkey, *Òbò*- monkey or in idiomatic expressions such as *mú èniyàn lóbò*- take one to be a monkey or *sò èniyàn dóbò* - taken someone to be monkey or a fool. However, *Ifá* mythologies about *Òbò* cited above suggest that, on the one hand, *Òbò* is related to human-beings. On the other hand, *Òbò* is wise.

It has been canvassed that "language determines thought" (Yule 1985:247). The use of language in relation to cultural symbols suggests the belief of the people about the meanings associated with the symbols. Therefore, language components- the morphological features of *Òbò* will give us further insights into this analysis. For example, using the morphological word formation to analyse *Òbò* (monkey), one can say that, the word is formed from *bò* (worship). *Ò + bò = Òbò* (monkey). This can be morphologically categorized with the words listed below:

ò + lẹ = òlẹ (lazy person)

ò + dẹ = òdẹ (a foolish person)

à + jọ = àjọ (collection of money)

ì + jọ = ìjọ (gathering of people).

ì + bò = ìbò (worship, as in *ojú-ìbò*: place of worship or sacrifice/shrine).

à + rọ = àrọ (funnel)

In the above examples, one can observe the meaning relation between the verbs *lẹ*, *dẹ*, *jọ*, *jọ*, *bò* and *rọ* and the associated prefixes: *ò*, *à*, *ì*, *ì* and *à*. The same word class and morphological process is observed which suggest the possible mythico-religious links of *Òbò* (monkey) with Yorùbá *Ifá*'s belief on monkey with the power of worship. For example, Monkey is believed to possess supernatural power of divination which informs the animal's (monkey's) relationship with humans generally and *Òrúnmìlà* (Ifá Priest) in particular. One can also observe sound relations between *bò* in *ìbò* and *òbò*, suggesting word or morphological class relations between the two words. Despite the various importance of monkeys among the Yoruba, some Yorùbá

proverbs associated with *Òbò* are rendered in "bad faith" as against its symbolisms. Among such proverbs are:

A ní ajá n lósòó, a tajá, a fowó è ròbò, kí ni tun n lósòó tó j'òbò lọ?

We sell off a dog because it squats, then buy a monkey with the proceeds; what (animal) squats more than a monkey?

Òbò ni ó para è, ẹnikan kí.ó pòbò.

No one will kill a monkey, monkey will kill itself.

Òbò kò pò mó ní oko Idánrè, diẹ tí ó sì kù ní ibẹ̀ tí gbón. Qláoyè: (2012:149).

Monkeys are not many in Idanre farm any longer the few that are left are now wise (in author's translation).

From the above analysis, one is convinced that, *Òbò* is not used in or along good character image among the Yorùbá, even though, evolution of human-being is associated with *Òbò*, even though, its supernatural power is recognized and benefited by the *Ifá* priests, even though, *Òbò* is claimed to be a wise animal among other contrary images and opinions against *Òbò*. The above expressions on *Òbò* are outside its cultural symbolisms. It has been canvassed that "language comes closest to all the visual representation and especially when the vehicle is loaded with an emotional or spiritual significance, this reification makes a symbol. The commonest symbols carry a culturally validated, agreed-on meaning" (Matterson and Jones, 2000:43).

The opinion that some events and stories believed to be unreal (as sometimes being used or canvassed against myths) in the present time have been addressed by scholars and theorists that some myths look unbelievable in the present time is occasioned by our "partial knowledge of things" (Valbuena 2005:37). Lack of knowledge or "partial knowledge" as a result of absence of written records that account for some historical events however, there are oral pieces of evidence through myths that provide historical accounts in the past. It is believed that without the past there is no present and there is limited knowledge to probe some past events.

Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Symbolism of *Orógbó* (bitter cola)

The historical background on bitter cola is rendered as "Garcinia kola or in simple terms, bitter kola originated from West and Central Africa. Signifying the importance of this second largest continent, it produces many healing wonders for us. Garcinia kola belongs to the species of a tropical flowering plant. It produces brown, nut like seeds, similar looking to kidney beans" (Ejiofor 2017:3).

There are some Yorùbá proverbs in relation to **Orógbó* on which the belief of the people can be established. The appropriate use of proverb is contextual. If proverb is context sensitive, then one may examine the consumption, use and functional contexts the Yorùbá associate with *Orógbó*. The popular Yorùbá proverbs on *Orógbó* call for attention. For example, the Yorùbá (in author's translation) do say that "Kinni ànfàní orógbó? A pa a kò ní awé, a jẹ é, ó tún korò, a figi rẹ dáná Sàngó tún n bínú. What is the benefit of bitter cola? It is not designed to be splitted into pieces easily; and it is bitter to eat; even when we used its dried wood to make fire, ti (sic) [it] makes Sàngó the god of iron (sic) [thunder] to be angry (Oláoyè 2012, p. 121). Sometimes, the derogatory use of with *Orógbó* can be added *ewé rẹ kò tún se é pónkọ*- its leaves are not useful to cover palp as a philosophical cultural extension. The literary writers are not left out to show the valuelss nature of *orógbó*. For example, Òkédijí says "kín tilẹ wáá ni ànfààní orógbó ọ jàrẹ? A bó o kò léèpo a pa á kò lówé, a gé e jẹ, ó korò. Èyí igi rẹ tún rée, kò sée dáná, ewé rẹ ò sée pónkọ." Meaning that, what is the usefulness of bitter-kola? We peel it, it has no skin, we break it, it has no lobes, we take a bite from it, it tastes bitter. Even, its wood cannot be used to make fire, neither can its leaves be used to wrap cold palp (1973, p. 272). Not only that this statement is only based on the taste of bitter cola and not what is spiritually symbolizes in Yorùbá culture, but the statement "upturn" or "overruled" the symbolism of *Orógbó*.

The etymology of *Orógbó* falls within Onomatopoeia, which are words "that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to" (Chomsky 2007, p. 7). There is likely sound relation

between the word and its meaning. There are also the combination of two verbs *ró* (sound) and *gbó* (mature), with the "o" as prefix. The meaning is demonstrated in the marketing discourse of *awùsá* (wall-nut) in relation with *orógbó* (bitter cola).

Awùsá gbó ke-ke bí obì, Wall-nut is riped like cola-nut
ó dá gbò-ò-là, It sounds when cut
ó dá gbòún bí orógbó. It beaks just as a wall-nut.

The religious symbolism of *Orógbó* is evinced from Yorùbá naming discourse. For example, in the blessing of a new born baby during the naming, the Yorùbá do bless the child after mentioning the child's name that: "gba orógbó jẹ, kí o sì-gbó nínú ayé. Bí orógbó ni kí o gbó" Dáramólá àti Jéjé (1967, p. 63). That is, the acceptance of the bitter cola should make the child to grow old in life, just as the echo of the sound of the word- *gbó* (old). The morphological process in *Orógbó* can as well be related to its symbolism of longevity. This may also suggest the morphology of the word. For example, *o-r(i)-ogbó* = *orógbó* (you have experienced longevity). The vowel "i" is deleted, just like in a similar word to *Orógbó*- *arúgbó*, which means, *a-ri-ogbó* "a very old person." Literarily meaning that, "a-(we) rí-(seen)-ogbó-(old)", *arúgbó*. The "u" is a product of "i+ó" through a phonological process of coalescence.

In addition, the religious symbolism of *Orógbó* with old age is accounted for in naming discourse for a new born baby that:

Orógbó – Orógbó niyí. O ó gbò-ò, o ó tò-ó
Orógbó ni í gbó 'ni s'áyé,
'K'ó o gbó, k'ó o tò o ...

This is *Orógbó* – that you will grow old and agile,

The natural endowment in *Orógbó* makes one to be old on earth
 That you will grow old and agile (Ládélé, T. A. A., Mustapha, O., Awórinde, I. A., Oyèrindé O., and Oládàpò, O. 1986, p. 142).

The religious role of *Orógbó* is used as a symbol for *Ẹ̀ngó* diety. For example, “*Orógbó ni obì Ẹ̀ngó*” (Dáramólá and Jéjé 1967, p. 287 and Adéoyè 1985, p. 294-6). *Orógbó* is a cola-nut for *Ẹ̀ngó*.

The spiritual and health benefits of bitter cola make Ejiofor say that “bitter kola is not actually bitter and has a sweet side which is healthy for us” (2017, p. 2). This opinion on bitter cola is against some negative expressions about it. Those negative expressions create cultural shift showing that bitter cola is valueless and useless based on the taste. It is observed that, the same bitter taste associated with *Ewúro*- bitter leaf, is the same with *Orógbó*, despite its bitterness in taste, some cultural expressions indicate that its values. This informs why the Yorùbá says that, *adùn ní gbẹ̀yìn Ewúro*. Meaning that one derives many benefits in the bitterness of *Ewúro*. This is also the case with *Awùsá*- wall-nut, that is also bitter in taste, but resulted in joy and happiness after the consumption. The bitterness in *Awùsá* is experienced after taking water after consumption. Despite the bitter taste in both *Ewúro* and *Awùsá*, it is discovered in this study that their cultural values and functions are still preserved and expressed in various cultural contexts. One would have expected *Orógbó*’s bitter taste to be appreciated in various contexts of expressions like *Ewúro* and *Awùsá*. However, this is not the case with *Orógbó*, which its spiritual (religious) symbolism is more valued than either *Ewúro* or *Awùsá*, the challenge that this study sheds light on.

The health benefits of bitter colar cannot be overemphasized. The education and orientation of the eating of bitter cola is so popular that the benefits of bitter cola are being canvassed in the national dailies by the health and medical practitioners. Bartholomew Brai, a Nutritional Biochemist at the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research advised “Nigerians to regularly eat bitter kola, as it is a potent antibiotic, which could be effective in the treatment of many ailments and infections” (Daily Times of September 13, 2012). It will be wrong to say that, *Orógbó* is valueless, just on the judgement of taste. Various benefits including economic, religious and medicinal are associated with *Orógbó*.

The recent findings show that no any part of *Orógbó* plant product is useful for human-beings may not be true in reality. For example, even though, the planks or woods of *Orógbó* may not be used for cooking or roofing, “the stems, branches and roots are commonly used in the production of chew sticks” (Adebisi 2012, p. 2). In addition, if this is so, it is not *Orógbó*’s plank that is not useful as firewood or for roofing. **It will be recalled that the opinion that *Orógbó* has no benefit has been overtaken by the numerous benefits associated with it as undertaken in this study.**

Conclusion

This study concludes that there are some words, texts or utterances used in association with some objects and symbols in Yoruba cultural contexts require investigation. Such investigation is as demonstrated with critical stylistic knowledge to show the etymology of those objects and symbols in addition to their socio-cultural and religious symbolisms in real sense. Instances such as in *Ọ̀bọ* and *Orógbó*, where some cultural values are “hidden” are explained. For example, the derogatory use of *Ọ̀bọ* and *Orógbó* as indicated in this study has made the cultural values and functional use to be different from the derogatory expressions about them. One of the agitating questions to be asked is: why is negative expressions about *Ọ̀bọ* and *Orógbó* not implied in their cultural functions since there is no known Yorùbá ideology or myth to support or suggest such expressions? If the meaning of symbols, including linguistic symbols, is not implied in physical and spiritual functions of *Ọ̀bọ* and *Orógbó* symbolisms, then, there is need for “motivation search” requiring further cultural reorientation. It has been suggested that “the appropriateness in the traditional use of symbols must not be against the cultural use” (Kennedy and Gioia, 2007, p. 25). The reason why some Yorùbá expressions about *Ọ̀bọ* and *Orógbó* are used against their cultural symbolisms is hazy.

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