



A Discourse Analysis of Three Selected Urhobo Oral Poems

Emmanuel Avwarosuoghene Mede¹

This paper explores the discourse features of three selected Urhobo oral poems in English translation. The three texts – ‘Usio! Usio!’, ‘Saibolo’ and ‘Yayogho’ – are analyzed with the objective of identifying the discourse features shared by them and which may be assumed to typify the sub-genre to which the selected texts belong. Identified discourse features include *full* (lexical/syntactic) *repetition*, *partial* (i.e. structural) *repetition*, and *elision*. In addition to lexico-syntactic repetition, the three selected texts are characterized by simple language. These two features – lexico-syntactic reiteration and simple language – are dictated by the oral nature of the genre as well as the need to enhance recitability.

Keywords: oral poetry, discourse features, text.

This paper attempts to identify the discourse features of three selected Urhobo oral poems. Urhobo is a Nigerian South-Western-Edoid

¹ Emmanuel Avwarosuoghene Mede teaches language courses in the English Department of the Delta State College of Physical Education, Mosogar, Delta State, Nigeria. He is a doctoral research candidate in the Department of English and Literary Studies of the Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. His areas of specialization and research interests include *minimalist syntax*, *cross-linguistic studies* involving the study of *English* and *Urhobo* (the latter, a South-Western Edoid African tone language), *translation theory*, and English *phonology and syntax*.

African tone language spoken in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Urhobo oral poetry includes *ile-ekan* ('satirical songs'), *ile-ejiri* ('songs of praise'), and *ile-eha* ('play-songs'). The three selected poems – 'Usio! Usio!', 'Saibolo' and 'Yayogho' – belong to this last sub-genre, *ile-eha*.

Abbreviations

C= complementizer	Spec= specifier
CP= complementizer phrase	T= tense
INF= infinitive	TP= tense phrase
N= noun/nominal	V= verb
NEG= negation	VOC= vocative
P= preposition	VP= verb phrase
SL= source language (Urhobo, in this case)	

'Ile-eha' are oral forms which are performed traditionally and informally in village playgrounds, usually in the evenings, as a form of recreation. Due to the pervasive influence of the Western media – in particular, television and the cinema – this cultural performance has almost atrophied. The long-term objective of this study is to record the *texts* of (some of) these oral poems in order to preserve them; the immediate objective is to demonstrate that though primarily spoken/sung, these *oral* poems are *texts* – cohesive and coherent units of language – comparable to their conventionally *written* counterparts.

In this paper, we shall define a *text* as an instance of language use,

... a **cohesive** and **coherent** stretch of language which has a certain function in the context of situation. [In other words] a text is a semantic unit taking part in a social exchange of meanings and may be regarded as a product in the sense that it is an entity that has a certain organization and [which] can be recorded ... [as] a continuous process of semantic choices dependent on previous choices and conditioning subsequent ones (Halliday 1989:47; my emphasis).

Cohesive relations are those which make the text *hang together*, while relations of **coherence** are those which render the text meaningful to the reader/hearer. In analyzing the three selected texts, we shall collapse cohesion and coherence into *co-reference* – that is, forms which ‘make reference to something else for their interpretation’ (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:31) either **within** the text (*endophora*) or **outside** the text (*exophora*). We subsume coherence (*cf.* Brown and Yule, 1983:223–271) under exophora, and set up a taxonomy of the following endophoric relations adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Brown and Yule (1983): *anaphora* and *cataphora*, the former being sub-divided into (i) full repetition; (ii) partial repetition; (iii) lexical replacement; (iv) pronominal form; (v) substituted form, and (vi) elided form.

The way a text communicates is a function of a number of variables such as the background situation (*context*), the relationship between the participants in the speech event (*tenor*), the topic or *field of discourse*, the *mode* of discourse (spoken or written) and the *channel* (e.g. face to face, telephone). Each of these variables, as Finch (2000:190) remarked, ‘may divide into yet more variables; context, for instance, can mean social, cultural, or linguistic’.

The focus of our investigation, oral poetry, is subsumed under *oral literature* – a term which denotes utterances (spoken, sung or recited) that exhibit an appreciable degree of creative imagination and figurative or non-literal language. The major generic classifications of oral literature are oral narratives (e.g. folktales), short formulaic forms, and oral poetry. On the literary value/status of oral literature, we share with Finnegan (2012: 17) the view that the written medium ‘is unessential to either the composition or the preservation of literature. The two arts are wholly distinct’.

The paper is structured as follows: In 1.1, we examine the *background* situation of the texts; in 1.2.1, we focus on the *content* of the first text ‘Usio! Usio!’ and in 1.2.2, its *discourse features*. In 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, we examine (respectively) the *content* and *discourse features* of

the second text 'Saibolo', and in 1.4.1 and 1.4.2, the *content* and *discourse features* of 'Yayogho'. 1.5 summarizes the observed discourse features common to the three texts.

Two preliminary observations are necessary. The first of them is that the three texts are performed as songs in the Source Language/SL, Urhobo. The process of translation inevitably entails the loss (of most of) the performance features. As Finnegan noted,

[T]he printed words alone represent only a shadow of the full actualization of the poem as an aesthetic experience for the poet and audience. For, quite apart from the separate question of the overtones and symbolic associations of words and phrases, the actual enactment of the poem also involves the emotional situation... and... the musical setting of the poem (Finnegan 2012: 5-6).

The second observation is that, since the texts in the SL are oral rather than written, the lineation in the English translation is informed solely by observed performance features in the SL, particularly the *call-response* structure of the SL oral texts. As should be expected, certain items in the SL texts are untranslatable. An instance is ideophones – words which convey ideas in sounds and add emotional colour or vividness to the description. While ideophones are sometimes onomatopoeic, they also convey aspects of meaning which in English may not be associated with sound at all; e.g. manner, colour, smell, texture, and so on. Essentially, they are adverbial in function but seem more like interjections in form.

We shall commence the analysis by presenting the three texts in English translation. (The SL texts are presented in the appendix.)

Text I: 'Usio! Usio!'

[1] Starlight! Starlight!
Count them! Count them!
Starlight! Starlight!
Count them! Count them!

- [5] Girls of these days –
They are hasty,
They are flippant;
Àlèlè struck me *koi!*
- When I walk on *Aka* road,
[10] I walk so freely;
On my own Urhobo path,
Thistles impede my walk–*Qghrèkẹ!*

Text II: 'Saibolo'

- [1] The whole world went shopping. – *Saibolo!*
The whole world went shopping. – *Saibolo!*
I, myself, *Ukun* – *Saibolo!*
Resolved to go, too. – *Saibolo!*
- [5] *Qba* saw me; – *Saibolo!*
He burst into laughter. – *Saibolo!*
'*Qba*, swell up.' – *Saibolo!*
Qba has swollen up! – *Saibolo!*
'*Qba*, deflate.' – *Saibolo!*
- [10] *Qba* has deflated! – *Saibolo!*

Text III: 'Yayogho'

- [1] *Ko-ko-ko-ko!* Who's hewing wood over there?
It's me, Yayogho.
Ko-ko-ko-ko! Who's hewing wood over there?
It's me, Yayogho.
- [5] What do you need wood for?
Wood for me to carve a mortar.
What do you need mortar for?
Mortar for me to pound yam.

- What do you need pounded-yam for?
[10] *Pounded-yam for me to feed children.*
What do you need children for?
Children for me to live a good life.
What do you need life for?
Life for me not to die.

Background

Text I 'Usio! Usio!' is a *moonlight song* performed by children in the SL culture. The age of the participants (their being children rather than adults) is reflected in the thematic concern: admiration of the stars ('usio' = star), light taunt over perceived social vices of girls, and the (perceived) poor state of Urhobo roads. The second text 'Saibolo' is a *folktale*; in keeping with the tradition of folktales, we have such features as investing animal characters with human attributes; for instance, *Ukun* – the endophoric narrator – is, ordinarily, a shrimp. Text III 'Yayogho' is a *worksong* performed by adults; the nature or age of the participants is reflected in the dominant theme of the text, namely, the attainment of immortality.

Text I: 'Usio! Usio!'

Content and Form

Text I is structured into three stanzas, each of which comprises four lines and addresses a specific theme. The thread which interweaves the three stanzas is the presence of Speaker 2. In the first stanza, s/he shares the excitement of the first Speaker over the starry sky and suggests that they count the stars; in the second stanza, Speaker 2 taunts his/her young female contemporaries over their impetuosity and flippancy, and in the third stanza s/he presents an

unflattering assessment of Urhobo roads. Speaker 2 is possibly male; the linguistic clue is the association of this speaker with the lexical item *àlèlè* in Line 8: *Àlèlè* is a bright-coloured feather which adorns the cap of Urhobo men during festive occasions. In the third stanza, we perceive this young male speaker as an objective critic. That he is proud of his origins is evident from his affectionate use of the genitive determiner *my* in the phrase '*my* own Urhobo path' (Line 11). In spite of his being endeared to his origins, he still notes objectively that, in comparison to *Aka* roads which are smooth, Urhobo pathways are choked with thorns; these thistles impede pedestrian traffic, an impediment suggested by the ideophone '*oghreke!*' (Line 12) which (in the SL) denotes the sudden arrest of pedestrian movement.

Discourse Features

The text commences with the repeated exophoric item 'starlight'. The occurrence of the exophora 'starlight' (Lines 1 and 3) at the beginning of the poem serves at least two functions: It establishes the temporal context of the performance (evening) and suggests the age of the performers (their being children rather than adults). The anaphor '*them*' (in Lines 2 and 4) refers to the endophoric 'starlight' in the preceding lines and thus contributes to the cohesion of the stanza. At the same time, it is also a *deictic* item because it 'points' at the exophoric 'starlight' in the sky.

Cohesion in Lines 5–7 is achieved via the use of *anaphora* as well as *structural repetition*. The antecedent of the anaphor '*they*' at the beginning of Lines 6 and 7 is the noun phrase/NP '*Girls of these days*' (Line 5). Lines 6 and 7 cohere because both lines share the same structure, represented as (1A/B) below:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|----------|
| (1) | (A) | [_{Spec-TP} They [_T are [_A hasty]]] | (LINE 6) |
| | (B) | [_{Spec-TP} They [_T are [_A flippant]]] | (LINE 7) |

Syntactically, Lines 9–12 constitute one sentence (enjambment). Line 11 is a partial repetition of Line 9 because of the elision of the adverbial phrase *'when I walk'*, as shown in (2A/B) below:

- (2) (A) *When I walk* on Aka road (LINE 9)
 (B) (*When I walk*) on my own Urhobo path (LINE 11)

Lines 10 and 12 are structurally linked with Lines 9 and 11 respectively, because 10 expresses the outcome of the activity in 9, just Line 12 states the outcome of the activity in Line 11. Semantically, Lines 10 and 12 cohere on account of the meaning opposition between them: 'I walk so freely' (Line 10) and 'Thistles impede my walk' (Line 12); the former may be glossed as *free movement*, and the latter as *impeded movement*.

We mentioned (in 1.0) that the primary objective of this paper is to demonstrate that though primarily spoken/sung, Urhobo *oral* poems are *texts* – cohesive and coherent units of language – comparable to their conventionally *written* counterparts. In this brief analysis of Text I, identified discourse (i.e. text-forming) features include *full repetition* (cf. Lines 1 and 3; 2 and 4); *partial* (i.e. structural) *repetition* (e.g. Lines 6 and 7); *elision* (cf. Lines 9 and 11), and *semantic contrast* or 'meaning opposition' (Lines 10 and 12).

Text II: 'Saibolo'

Content and Form

Text II is an oral narrative. This is evident from the *tense* of the verbs – 'went' (Lines 1 and 2); 'resolved' (Line 4); 'saw' (Line 5); 'burst' (Line 6) – all of which are in the (simple) past tense since they refer to events which occurred prior to the moment of speech. The narrator is *Ukun* (=ENGLISH 'shrimp'). In the text, *Ukun* is invested with

human attributes: He speaks (he *narrates* the encounter between himself and *Qba*); possesses volition (he *resolves*, i.e. desires to go shopping); experiences emotion (he is evidently hurt by *Qba's* scornful laughter), and so on. The endowment of non-human entities with human attributes is characteristic of the genre (folktales) to which this text belongs.

The lexical item '*saibolo*' at the end of each line is an untranslatable term; it is a performance feature – more specifically, the repeated verbal response of the participatory audience to the narrative. It should be noted that while the endophoric narrator is *Ukun*, there is an intermediate narrator, namely the exophoric human narrator who (empathetically) assumes the role of the endophoric narrator. It is this intermediate narrator who verbally interacts with the addressee-audience which regularly responds '*saibolo*' at measured intervals.

In the text, the endophoric narrator, *Ukun*, resolves to go shopping because everyone else (Lines 1 and 2) has done so. On his way to market, *Qba* (a term which in Urhobo folklores invariably refers to a powerful *Bini* monarch) sees *Ukun* and bursts into derisive laughter. Incensed by *Qba's* scorn, *Ukun* orders him to swell up; the monarch swells up. Satisfied that he has taught *Qba* a lesson in humility, *Ukun* restores the monarch to his pre-confrontation size. The moral implicit in the *Ukun-Qba* confrontation is that no one should be scorned on account of their perceived social deficiencies because such scorn could incite an unpleasant reaction from the victim.

Discourse Features

Foregrounded Deviation in Tense and Mood

The tense in Lines 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 (as noted earlier) is the simple *past* tense. Also, the mood is *indicative*. In Lines 7 and 9, there is a sudden shift in mood from *indicative* to *imperative*, while in Lines 8 and 10, the tense shifts from the *past simple* tense to the *present perfect* tense. This shift in tense and mood is significant because it is foreground-

ed. One possible explanation for the shift is that because of the totally unexpected humiliation of the powerful monarch (*Ọba*) by the presumably socially insignificant *Ukun*, the endophoric narrator desires the audience to witness the encounter first-hand; the audience is (as it were) transported via empathetic imagination to the very moment of the encounter. Since the event is witnessed by the audience at the very moment of its occurrence, it is appropriately expressed in the present (perfect) tense.

Like the preceding text, this text commences with a full repetition '*The whole world went shopping*' (Lines 1 and 2). Cohesion in this text is achieved via a temporal or chronological ordering of the events which constitute the text: Persuaded that everyone else has gone shopping (Lines 1 and 2), *Ukun* resolves also to go to market (Lines 3 and 4); on the way, he encounters *Ọba* derides him, ostensibly on account of his diminutive size (Lines 5 and 6); incensed by *Ọba*'s derisive laughter, *Ukun* proceeds to teach *Ọba* a lesson in humility (Lines 7–10). Apart from the temporal, linear ordering of the events, anaphors also contribute to the cohesion of the text; in Line 6, for instance, the pronominal '*he*' at the beginning of the line refers back to its antecedent, '*Ọba*', in Line 5. Similarly, the repeated lexical item '*Ọba*' at the beginning of each of the last four lines of the text (Lines 7–10) enhances the cohesive structure of the lines.

Generally then, this text shares with the preceding one the discourse features of lexical, exact verbal (or full), and structural (or partial) repetition, as the instances (3)–(5) below show:

Lexical Repetition

3. 'Saibolo' (Lines 1–10)

Verbal Repetition

4. 'The whole world went shopping' (Lines 1 and 2)

Structural Repetition

5. [_{VOC} Qba [_{VP} swell up/deflate]] (Lines 7 and 9)
6. [_{Spec-TP} Qba [_T has [_{VP} swollen up/deflated]]] (Lines 8 and 10)

Text III: 'Yayogho'

Content and Form

Text III comprises a set of speech acts between two participants: an unnamed addresser who requests a series of information (Lines 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13), and a self-identified addressee, *Yayogho* (Lines 2 and 4), who responds appropriately to the addresser's questions. The appropriateness of Yayogho's responses is contingent on the fact that they conform to the cooperative principle of conversation which entails making one's 'contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged' (Malmkjaer 1995:355).

The initial exchange by the unnamed addresser is triggered by the sound of the continuous impact of a cutting implement (perhaps an axe) on wood; the persistent sound, represented by the ideophone 'ko-ko-ko-ko' (Lines 1 and 3), prompts the addresser to inquire who is hewing wood; Yayogho gives the required information (Lines 2 and 4). Having ascertained the identity of the wood cutter, the inquisitive addresser asks what he needs the wood for; Yayogho's response that he needs the wood for a mortar (Line 6) prompts the addresser to ask Yayogho what he needs the mortar for (Line 8). Again, the addressee responds; the response, in turn, serves as input to the addresser's next question, and so on.

The inquisitiveness of the addresser suggests that s/he is very likely a child. The addressee, on the other hand, is evidently an adult: s/he engages in adult tasks such as hewing wood (Lines 2 and 4), carving mortars (Line 6), and pounding yam (Line 8); in addi-

tion, s/he has children whose welfare engages his/her attention (Line 10), and so on. The gender of the addressee is difficult to determine; while tasks such as wood-hewing and mortar-carving are usually associated with males in the SL culture, others like yam-pounding and feeding children are domestic tasks normally associated with (adult) females. However (as we shall show later), the addressee's concern with the attainment of immortality (Line 14) is an SL cultural theme almost exclusively associated with adult males. The weight of evidence, therefore, tilts slightly in favour of identifying the addressee as an adult male participant.

Yayogho's activities are evidently goal-driven: He *needs* the **wood** for *carving* a **mortar** that he will use to *pound* yam; with the **pounded-yam**, he will *feed* his **children** so that he will *live* a **good life** which, in turn, is a prerequisite for the *attainment* of **immortality**. The goal-oriented nature of Yayogho's activities informs his choice of verbs. As shown in (7) below, all the verbs in Lines 6, 8, 10, and 12 are of the dynamic/transitive type.

(7)	VERB	OBJECT	LINE
	carve	mortar	6
	pound	yam	8
	feed	children	10
	live	a good life	12

To understand Yayogho's preoccupation with catering for the welfare of his children, recourse must be made to the SL culture in which this instance of language-use (Text III) is implicated. In the SL culture, immortality – that is, entrance into the world of the ancestors – is attained via the performance of the appropriate funeral rites by the deceased's children: A departed member of the family is welcomed into the fold of the ancestors if, and only if, his children accord him the appropriate burial rites. If a man fails to cater for his children, they may be too poor or (where they have the means) elect to exact

vengeance on their father by refusing to accord him a befitting burial when he dies. Such a neglected soul is banished from the circle of the departed elders and is thus condemned to a life of perpetual ostracism comparable to the Judeo-Christian concept of a cursed existence in the afterlife (*cf.* Matthew 25:41–46). Yayogho evidently does not want to face the chilling prospect of such a cursed existence, hence he takes pains to ensure that his children are well catered for.

Discourse Features

This text shares with the preceding two the discourse features of lexical repetition and full verbal repetition as well as structural or partial repetition, as shown in (8) – 9(13) below:

Lexical Repetition

8. 'Ko-ko-ko-ko' (Lines 1 and 3)
9. 'Yayogho' (Lines 2 and 4)

Verbal Repetition

10. 'Who's hewing wood over there' (Lines 1 and 3)

Structural Repetition

11. [_{CP} What [_C do [_{Spec-TP} you [_V need [_N X [_P for?]]]]]] (Lines 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13);

Where the nominal variable X = 'wood', 'mortar', 'pounded-yam', 'children' and 'life' (in Lines 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13), respectively.

12. [_N X [_P for [_N me [_{INF} to [_{VP} Y]]]]] (Lines 6, 8, 10 and 12);

Where the VP variable **Y** = ‘carve a mortar’, ‘make pounded-yam’, ‘feed (my) children’ and ‘live (a good) life’ (in Lines 6, 8, 10, 12), respectively, and **X** is the same nominal variable as in (11) above.

There is, however, a slight variation on this pattern in Line 14, as shown in the structural representation (13) below.

13. [_N Life [_P for [_N me [_{NEG} not [_{INF} to [_{VP} die]]]]]]

Given the preceding pattern in (12), the structural variation in Line 14 – represented as (13) above – is foregrounded, and hence significant. Semantically speaking, Structures (12) and (13) are *resultative clauses* in the sense that they express the intended goals of the endophoric subject, Yayogho (e.g. He needs the wood to carve a mortar; he needs the mortar to pound yam, etc.). With the exception of Line 14, these goals are intermediate. By contrast, Line 14 expresses the ultimate objective, which is to attain immortality. This difference in the nature of the goals/objectives (i.e. intermediate versus ultimate) is paralleled in the slight but nonetheless significant structural difference between (12) and (13).

We also note that Yayogho’s responses, as shown in (14) below, exhibit a structural pattern of reiteration which may be represented as (*a ... b*) (*b ... c*) (*c...d*); that is, the lexical item which ends a line begins the subsequent line (anadiplosis).

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------|
| (14) | Wood for me to carve a mortar . | (Line 6) |
| | Mortar for me to pound yam . | (Line 8) |
| | Pounded-yam for me to feed (my) children . | (Line 10) |
| | Children for me to live (a good) life . | (Line 12) |
| | Life for me not to die. | (Line 14) |

Summary and Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to cite linguistic evidence for our interpretation of the texts. In some instances, recourse has been made to the cultural context to recover certain aspects of the language users' meaning. This measure is justified in view of the fact that in communication, certain aspects of meaning inherent in the context of communication (in this case, the SL culture of the language users) are 'understood' (between the participants) without being overtly stated.

At the beginning of the study, we mentioned that the objective is to identify discourse (i.e. lexico-syntactic) features which are shared by the three texts. While the texts vary in terms of structure and theme, they share two common features. One, the language is simple, an expected feature given that the texts are oral. Unlike written communication where the addressee can go back to a part of the text s/he does not fully understand, in oral communication, the opportunity for such regression to an earlier part of the text is hardly available, hence the need to keep the language simple for easy comprehension.

The second shared feature is lexico-syntactic reiteration. In the texts, the reiterated units (lexical and syntactic) enhance the recitability of the text, a prime requirement/feature of this type (genre) of the creative use of language. Recitability aside, the reiterated items and structures also serve a textual function: They contribute to the cohesion (the 'hanging together') of the text.

We noted at the beginning of this paper that oral literature is by no means inferior to written literature in literary value. That the texts analyzed here, even though shorn of associated performance features, could still yield identifiable discourse (i.e. text-forming) features testifies to the literary worth of Urhobo oral literature.

References

- Brown, Gillian and George Yule (1983). *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Finch, Geoffrey (2000). *Linguistic Terms and Concepts*. New York: Macmillan.
- Finnegan, Ruth (2012). *Oral Literature in Africa*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
- Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood (1989). *Spoken and Written Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____ and R. Hasan (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Malmkjaer, Kirsten (2010). *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*. London: Routledge.

Appendix

'Usio! Usio!'

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Usio! Usio! | 1. Starlight! Starlight! |
| 2. <i>Kere, kere.</i> | 2. <i>Count them, count them.</i> |
| 3. Usio! Usio! | 3. Starlight! Starlight! |
| 4. <i>Kere, kere.</i> | 4. <i>Count them, count them.</i> |
| 5. Emetẹ ọke na, | 5. Girls of these days |
| 6. Ovwravwra a'e vwọ yan, | 6. They are impetuous, |
| 7. Ugborhi a'e vwọ yan; | 7. They are gossips; |
| 8. Àlèlè shevwe kọi! | 8. Àlèlè struck me kọi! |
| 9. Me da y'idjerhe r'Aka, | 9. When I walk on Aka road, |
| 10. Mi me yan vwo-vwo; | 10. I walk so freely; |
| 11. Mi de t'ọr' Urhobo mẹ, | 11. On my own Urhobo path, |
| 12. Odjigbẹ djẹvw' oyan-Ọghrẹkẹ! | 12. Thistles impede my walk-
Ọghrẹkẹ! |

'Saibolo!'

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. 'Kp'eje kp'eki. – Saibolo! | 1. The whole world went shopping. –
Saibolo! |
| 2. 'Kp'eje kp'eki. – Saibolo! | 2. The whole world went shopping. –
Saibolo! |

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3. Omẹvwe r'Ukun – Saibolo! | 3. I, myself, <i>Ukun</i> – Saibolo! |
| 4. Menẹ me je ra. – Saibolo! | 4. Resolved to go, too. – Saibolo! |
| 5. Qba mre vwe; – Saibolo! | 5. <i>Qba</i> saw me; – Saibolo! |
| 6. O frako r'ehwe. – Saibolo! | 6. He burst into laughter. – Saibolo! |
| 7. 'Qba gba vwọ.' – Saibolo! | 7. 'Qba, swell up.' – Saibolo! |
| 8. Qba vwọ re! – Saibolo! | 8. Qba has swollen up! – Saibolo! |
| 9. 'Qba gba kpọ.' – Saibolo! | 9. 'Qba, deflate.' – Saibolo! |
| 10. Qba kpọ re! – Saibolo! | 10. Qba has deflated! – Saibolo! |

'Yayogho'

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Ko-ko-ko-ko!</i> Amono sh'urhe vw'oboyi? | 1. <i>Ko-ko-ko-ko!</i> Who's hewing wood over there? |
| 2. <i>Mẹvwe</i> , Yayogho. | 2. <i>It's me</i> , Yayogho. |
| 3. <i>Ko-ko-ko-ko!</i> Amono sh'urhe vw'oboyi? | 3. <i>Ko-ko-ko-ko!</i> Who's hewing wood over there? |
| 4. <i>Mẹvwe</i> , Yayogho. | 4. <i>It's me</i> , Yayogho. |
| 7. Diemu wọ vw'urhe ru? | 7. What do you need wood for? |
| 8. <i>Urhe me wọ kar'odo</i> . | 8. <i>Wood</i> for me to carve a mortar . |
| 9. Diemu wọ vw'odo ru? | 9. What do you need a mortar for? |
| 10. <i>Odo mi vwo duvw'egu</i> . | 10. <i>Mortar</i> for me to pound yam |
| 11. Diemu wọ vw'egu ru? | 11. What do you need pounded-yam for? |
| 12. <i>Egu me vwọ gher'emọ</i> .
<i>dren</i> . | 12. <i>Pounded-yam</i> for me to feed (my) children . |
| 13. Diemu wọ vw' emọ ru? | 13. What do you need children for? |
| 14. <i>Emọ mi vwo yer'akpọ</i> . | 14. <i>Children</i> for me to live (a good) life |
| 15. Diemu wọ vw' akpọ ru? | 15. What do you need life for? |
| 16. <i>Akpọ mi vwo j'eghwo</i> . | 16. <i>Life</i> for me not to die. |
| 17. Kona, kona edje ; | |
| 18. Edje , edj' akaran ; | |
| 19. Akaran , akar' uwẹ ; | |
| 20. Uwẹ , uwẹ n' obo ; | |
| 21. Obo , obo r' umẹ ; | |
| 22. Umẹ , umẹ rere. | |
| 23. Sabobo me rare, Sabobo, | |
| 24. Sabobo– <i>gbaun!</i> | |