

# Variation in Èdó Personal Pronouns: Appraising the Assumptions

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## Abstract

*This paper re-examines Èdó personal pronouns with the aim of describing and explaining the plethora of forms. Using data from primary and secondary sources, the paper tries to accomplish two objectives. The first objective is to describe their internal structure; the second is to appraise assumptions about case distinctions and relatedness of these pronouns. The data analysed reveal that these pronouns inflect for number. There are no generalisable morphophonemic rules to account for variations in form; but the subtractive clipping process lends credence to the idea that Èdó personal pronouns have underlying long forms and shorter variants. On the issue of case, this study corroborates the role of case distinctions in the syntactic distribution of these pronouns. However, the study found multiple correspondences between pronoun forms and case values. Given the widespread syncretism, the study recommends further studies which will explore alternative explanations on how to distinguish personal pronouns in this language.*

Key Words: Case, Clipping, Èdó language, Morphophonemics, Pronouns

## 1. Introduction

Pronouns constitute a lexical category whose members have minimally specified meanings and function typically as noun phrases (Matthews, 2007:323). They can be broadly categorised into two: those with definite reference and those with indefinite reference. Pronouns are evident in every language, but the semantic distinctions they encode differ from language to language (Harbour, 2016). Commonly, pronouns distinguish meanings with reference to the role of participants in a discourse, number and gender. In some languages, pronouns indicate biological and social distinctions such as age and authority. Èdó distinguishes between singular and plural, and does not use pronouns to mark gender, biological or social distinctions. Yet, the literature shows the language has over thirty personal pronouns.

Extant studies suggest the reason for this multiplicity is “simplicity” (Omoruyi, 1986:82). This suggestion resonates in the assertion that “it is the *raison d’être* of the personal pronouns to be short, as there would be little point in personal pronouns being longer than the noun phrases they

substitute (Howe, 2009: 1). If it is agreed that short pronouns exist because of simplicity, one will have to explain why the language has so many of these simple forms.

Data shows Èdó personal pronouns differ not only in length but also in terms of their distribution and interpretation. Therefore, this paper re-examines Èdó pronouns with the aim of describing and explaining the plethora of personal pronouns. To achieve its aim, the study set two objectives.

- To describe the internal structure of Èdó personal pronouns
- To appraise assumptions about these pronouns

These objectives seek to explicate the morho-phonological forms of personal pronouns in a language where the sub-category appears to have characteristics which differ remarkably from those of well-studied languages. The discussions in this paper will prove useful to studies on pronouns in other under described languages.

In sections 1, 2 and 3, the paper introduces the topic and language, reviews related studies and discusses the methodology respectively. Section 4 describes the internal structure personal pronouns, reconsiders the issue of case and the relatedness of long and short pronouns. Section 5 presents the summary and conclusions.

## 2. Literature review

Previous studies on the Èdó language make two assumptions about personal pronouns. One is that the pronouns can be distinguished with the case feature. Two is that the syntactic distribution of these pronouns can be predicted using morpho-phonemic rules.

The first assumption comes from the description of pronouns in Omoregie (1983). The text distinguishes personal pronouns using three features: *inu* (number), *urho* (person), and *oru* (case). These features produce a binary number distinction (singular and plural), three categories of person (first, second and third) and four types of case (nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive). The classification offers an easy way of explaining the distribution of personal pronouns; but as one would find later in the paper, there is a one-to-many correspondence between the forms which realise the four types of case.

The distinctive role of case is also mentioned in Omoruyi (1986), an article which investigates four sub-categories of definite pronouns: personal, possessive, relative and reflexive. On the subject of personal pronouns, the paper states that “case roles largely determine the distribution of personal

pronouns in sentences (1986:83-84).” It points out short pronouns which do not occur independently; these clitic forms “are bound to items from other word classes and cannot be used solely as responses to content word questions.”

Omoruyi (1986) classifies personal pronouns into two types: “subjective” and “objective” case pronouns. When the constituents of a sentence split into two main parts, subjective case pronouns are those which function as subject of the sentence while the objective case pronouns are forms which occur anywhere in the predicate. The table below shows both types of pronouns.

**Table 1: Èdó Personal pronouns (Source: Omoruyi 1986:83 - 84)**

PERSON & NUMBER		BASE FORMS	SUBJECT VARIANTS	GLOSS	OBJECT VARIANTS	GLOSS
1	SG	<i>ìmèmwè</i>	mèmwè, ìmè, mè, ì	I	<i>ìmè, mwè</i>	Me
1	PL	<i>ìàmàwà</i>	màmàwà, ìmà, mà	We	<i>ìmà, mwà</i>	Us
2	SG	<i>ùwè</i>	wè, ù	You	<i>rùé, = ùé</i>	You
2	PL	<i>ùwà</i>	wà	You	<i>rùá, = ùá</i>	You
3	SG	<i>ìrèdò</i>	<i>ìrèn, rèn, ò</i>	He/ She/It	<i>ìrèn, rèn, éré, é</i>	Him/Her/ It
3	PL	<i>ìrán</i>		They		Them

Explaining the data on table one, the article points out that the pronouns have identical underlying forms but the variants are subject to strict distributional rules. Omoruyi (1986) illustrates this strict distribution with examples (1) and (2).

1. *ìrèdò/ò táamá ìmèmwè/\*mè*  
3SG tell 1SG  
He/She tells me.
2. *ìrèdò/ rèn tíè ùwà/\*wá*  
3SG call 2PL  
He/She calls you.

The unacceptability of *irẹ̀n/ò támbà \* mẹ* and *irẹ̀n/ rẹ̀n tiẹ \*wá* is due to the fact that *mẹ* and *wá* cannot occur in the predicate of a sentence. Omoruyi (1986:85) remarks that “if we are right in proposing *imẹmwẹ* and *ùwà* as the underlying forms for *mẹ* and *wá* respectively, we shall either need powerful constraints to block the occurrence of *mẹ* and *wá* in objective case or in the alternative propose some morphophonemic rules that will account for the surface realisations”. Subsequent studies have tried to explain the distribution of these pronouns with other examples. These studies show the aberrant pronoun *mẹ* can occur in predicate positions.

3. *Wẹẹ èmwá hiá dọ́ mẹ.*  
 Say people QNTF hello 1SG  
 Say hello to everyone for me.

Examples like (3) rule out the possibility of constraining personal pronouns on the basis of structural case positions. In addition to illustrating the acceptability of *mẹ* in the predicate, Imasuen (1993, 1996 and 1998) discusses some variants that are not in table 1. These additional forms include ‘à’ – a variant for first person plural; *rùẹ̀n*, *rùán*, *wùẹ̀n*, *á* and *ó* – variants for the second person; as well as *ọ̀rẹ*, *ẹ̀nrẹ̀n* and *ọ̀nrẹ̀n* variants for third person singular. Imasuen (1993, 1996 and 1998) shows that some variants can only be realized as part of other lexical items, typically verbs and prepositions. If these forms and others from fields notes are added to those in table one, the language would have over thirty forms of personal pronouns.

### 3. Methodology

The study collected data through participant observation and interviews which were guided by the Ibadan Syntactic Paradigm. This was supplemented with content analyses of secondary data from published texts (Omorie 1983, Omoruyi 1986a & b, Agheyisi 1986 and Imasuen 1996 & 1998) as well as audio-visual media (Edionwe 2016, Amowe & Ogbomo 2010 and Agoba & Ikpomwonsa 2009). Data analysis did not adopt any specific theoretical framework. The study addressed its objectives using concepts which are common knowledge in language studies

### 4. The internal structure of Èdó personal pronouns

The internal structure of Èdó personal pronouns shows they inflect for number and the method of inflection is internal change. Inflection has been defined as “an operation which adapts a word to given syntactic contexts manipulating properties like number, gender, case, aspect, tense, or mood”

(Fabregas and Scalise, 2012:66). Inflection is considered a maximally productive process, which affects all words in a category whose members inflect for any of these properties. This definition hold true for number inflection in Èdó pronouns as shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Number inflection in personal pronouns**

[1]				<i>ì</i>	mẹ		<i>ìmẹ</i>	mwẹ	mẹmwẹ	<i>ìmẹmwẹ</i>
[1, PL]				<i>à</i>	mà		<i>ìma</i>	mwà	màmwà	<i>ìmàmwà</i>
[2]	á	ó	ùẹ	ù	wẹ		rùẹ	rùẹn	wùẹn	ùwẹ
[2, PL]			ùá		wà		rùá			ùwà
[3]	ẹ	ọ	ẹn	ẹrẹ	órẹ	ẹnrèn	ónrèn	rèn	<i>ìrèn</i>	<i>ìrẹn</i>
[3, PL]									<i>ìrán</i>	

The table above shows that long pronouns (in the last column) and short forms can be pluralised using the morpheme {à}. For first person, there are equal numbers of singular and plural forms; but for second and third person, the plural forms are fewer. Observe that the singular and plural forms are near identical; for third person, one finds that only one form resembles the plural. This is not peculiar to pronouns. Omoruyi (1986b:63) notes that nouns which denote humans also employ apophony; like the third person pronouns, not all singular/plural pairs share identical forms. Beyond number distinctions, there seems to be nothing else one can infer from personal pronoun inflections. However, Omoregie (1983) ascribes the variation in forms of Èdó personal pronouns to case-marking. In the following sub-section, this paper re-examines the idea and others from previous works.

#### 4.1. Appraising assumptions about Èdó personal pronouns

The literature suggests that pronouns either function as subjects or they are restricted to positions within the predicate. This assertion is based on the notion of case, which is also an inflectional category like number. Another assumption about personal pronouns is that long forms are morpho-phonologically related to the shorter ones. This paper appraises both issues in turn using notions from contemporary linguistic research.

#### 4.1.1. On the issue of case

Case is a relation between an argument and its syntactic surrounding (Sigurdsson 2003:226). There are two main types of case: structural (or abstract) and non-structural (or concrete). Structural case is associated grammatical functions like subject, object and possessor. So, when the structure changes the case of an argument can change even though the lexical items remain the same. Consider English pronouns in these examples.

4. (a) He insulted her

(b) She was insulted by him

Observe that the form of the pronouns differ depending on its function in the clause. Example (4(b)) is a passive form of (4(a)); the change in position of both arguments results in the change from he and her in (a) to she and him in (b). The other type of case has nothing to do with the structure of a clause or the function of its constituents; it depends on the thematic roles of the arguments and properties of lexical items which select such arguments as shown in this Icelandic example from Woolford (2006:3).

5. (a) Koningunum voru gefnar ambáttir  
the.king.DAT were given.F.PL slaves.NOM.F

The king was given maidservants.

(b) Ambáttin var gefin koningunum  
slave.NOM was given the.king.DAT

The slave was given to the king.

In example (5), the case for ‘slave’ and ‘king’ remains unchanged. This constancy despite the change in structure is one way of determining whether a language has structural or non-structural case. Another way languages differ with respect to case is the alignment of case-marking (Comrie 2013). In terms of alignment, languages fall into three main types: nominative-accusative, ergative-absolutive and case neutral languages.

Following the discussion of case terms in Haspelmath (2009) **nominative** can be described as the case which encodes the single argument (S) of an intransitive clause and the most agent-like argument (A) of a transitive clause. The term **accusative** refers to the most patient-like argument (P) of a transitive clause. In the second type of language, the case of S and P is **absolutive**, while the case of A is **ergative**. In case neutral languages, all three arguments are marked in the same way. There are two other

terms relevant to this paper: dative and genitive. The **genitive** case is for possessors, while **dative** is for arguments which are marked differently from P. These arguments serve as beneficiaries or locatives and are usually introduced by prepositions. Another term which is relevant to this discussion is the **affective** case; it is for the sole arguments of psych verbs.

The Èdó language has a structural, nominative-accusative case system. It is not a case rich language, as the category is only evident in pronouns. Notwithstanding, earlier works distinguish personal pronoun in terms of this feature. The distinction aptly describes some short forms; but, the other forms (long and short) occur in all argument positions. Consider third person singular pronouns in the following sentences.

6. *ìrẹ̀dọ̀n táamá ìmẹ̀mwẹ̀*

3SG tell 1SG

He/She tells me.

7. *ìrẹ̀n / rẹ̀n / ọ ghá yó*

3SG will go

He/She will go.

8. *ẹ́ í khián yó*

3SG NEG will go

He/She will not go.

9. *ọ̀rẹ̀ / ẹ̀rẹ̀ nà khún*

3SG DEM be

This is it ( or 'here it is').

10. *ẹ̀gbé mwẹ́ í rrọ́ọ́ ọ̀rẹ̀*

Body 1SG NEG pick 3SG

I cannot endure it.

11. *wà rràá ẹ̀rẹ̀*

2PL catch 3SG

You catch it (Take up the chorus)

(Ediọ̀nwe 2016)

12. *tọ̀n ọ̀nrẹ̀n*

roast 3SG

Roast it.

13. *ẹ̀zó nà má kàán ẹ̀nrẹ̀n*

- matter DEM NEG concern 3SG  
This matter does not concern him/her.
14. *ì rhié-Ø èbé mwè nè rèn*  
1SG give-PST book 1SG to 3SG  
I gave my book to him/her.
15. *ọ fián èrhán lègàá ẹ̀rè* (Omoregie 1983:86)  
3SG cut wood around 3SG  
He/she cut wood around it (he/she fenced it with wood).
16. *ọ sí ágá síkẹ́ ọ̀rè* (Omoregie 1983:87)  
3SG pull chair near 3SG  
He/she pulled a chair close to him/her/it.
17. *òvbé hún = ẹ̀n*  
Sleep be\_sleepy = 3SG  
He/she is sleepy.
18. *àfiámà fián rèn*  
anxiety cut 3SG  
He/she is worried.
19. *ègbé wọ́ọ ọ̀rè*  
body tire 3SG  
He/she is tired.
20. *(a) ènì ẹ̀nrèn (b) ọ̀tẹ̀n ọ̀nrèn (c) ọ̀dù ẹ̀rè (d) ọ̀sè ọ̀rè*  
name 3SG relative 3SG heart 3SG friend 3SG  
his/her/its name his/her relative his/her/its heart his/her friend

Examples (6) – (9) show forms which are acceptable as agents of transitive clauses or arguments of an intransitive one. The sentences in (10) – (13) show forms which function as patients in transitive clauses. In examples (14) – (16), one finds forms which serve as recipients and locatives, and in (17) – (19), there are forms used for experiencer arguments. Example (20) shows forms which function as possessors. From these examples, one would observe that syntactic case distinctions are not always evident in the pronouns. This neutralisation is not limited to third person pronouns; there are variants of first and second person which have the same overlap in their syntactic distribution. The technical term for this phenomenon is



syncretism.

Syncretism is a morpho-syntactic relationship where the distinctions required by syntax are not realized by morphology (Brown and Arkadiev, 2018). For the present discussion, what we have is case syncretism - the realisation of multiple case functions in a one form (Baerman and Brown, 2013). From the data, what obtains in Èdó is a many-to-many correspondence between pronoun forms and case functions. This observation raises two pertinent questions. One, how can one describe Èdó in terms of the case language typology? Two, to what extent does case differentiate Èdó personal pronouns?

The typological survey of case systems, (Malchukov and Spencer, 2009), discusses four patterns of variation: case inventory, the distinction between morphological and syntactic case, coherence within case paradigms, and the interaction between case, agreement and word order. This paper describes Èdó in relation to the first two patterns. In terms of case inventory, Omoriege (1983) identified four types of case: nominative, accusative, genitive and dative. The four types of case were established based on syntactic functions; so case in the language is structural not morphological.

In the mapping from morphology to syntax, there are overlaps in the pronoun forms which realise the respective cases. For instance, in examples (6) – (9) one would find that nominative case has seven acceptable pronoun forms; three of these forms (ìrèn, ọ̀rè and ẹ̀rẹ̀) also function as patients, experiencers and possessors. When one compares examples (10) – (13) and examples (20 (a) – (d)), one would agree with Omoruyi (1986a:86) that the accusative pronouns also serve as genitive. Nonetheless case serves a distinctive purpose in the language. This is because there are certain pronoun forms (like ìrẹ̀n, ẹ̀ and ọ̀) which are restricted to particular case positions. Given such forms, one can state that case differentiates Èdó personal pronouns. However, the wide spread case syncretism suggests a need for alternative explanations about the variation in personal pronouns.

#### **4.1.2. On the morpho-phonemic conditioning of long and short personal pronouns**

The second assumption about Èdó personal pronouns is that “pronouns have underlying longer forms and several shorter variants which are derived via deletion rules” (Omoruyi 1986a:83). As used in that publication, objective case refers to noun phrase positions in the predicate of a sentence. This study confirmed that second person plural *wá* is only acceptable as subject, but found that the first person singular *mẹ̀* is unrestricted in terms of structural

case positions.

21. (a) *mẹ*      *yó*      *nẹ*  
 1SG      go      already  
 I have gone (already). (Agheyisi 1986:95)
- (b) *ọ*      *rhié*      *mẹ*  
 3SG      give.PST      1SG  
 He/She gave me. (Agheyisi 1986:95)

Examples 21 (a) and (b) show that *mẹ* can function as a subject as well as an object pronoun. Data suggests that the use of *mẹ* is not dependent on case. It is determined by the type of predicator and the semantics of the sentence. Consider *mẹ* and similar short pronouns in the examples below.

22. (a) *Àtéwẹ*   *dẹlẹ*   *èmwí*   *gí*      *ìmẹ*  
 Atewẹ   buy.IT   thing   for      1SG  
 Atewẹ buys things for me.
- (b) *Àtéwẹ*   *dẹlẹ*   *èmwí*   *gú*      *mwẹ*  
 Atewẹ   buy.IT   thing   for      1SG  
 Atewẹ buys things for me.
- (c) *Àtéwẹ*   *dẹlẹ*   *èmwí*   *mẹ*  
 Atewẹ   buy.IT   thing   1SG  
 Atewẹ buys things for me.
23. (a) *Òrhuẹ*   *gbènné*      *èbé*      *nè*      *ìmẹ*  
 Orhue   write.IT      letter      for      1SG  
 Orhue writes letters for me.
- (b) *Òrhuẹ*   *gú-mwẹ-gbènné*   *èbé*  
 Orhue   help-1SG-write.IT      letter  
 Orhue helps me to write letters.
- (c) *Òrhuẹ*   *gbènné*      *èbé*      *mẹ*  
 Orhue   write.ITletter      1SG  
 Orhue writes letters for me.
24. (a) *ọ*      *sẹtín*      *nọ*      *ìmẹ*  
 3SG      can      ask      1SG  
 He/she can ask me.
- (b) *ọ*      *sẹtín*      *nọ*      *mwẹ*  
 3SG      can      ask      1SG  
 He/she can ask me.
- (c) *ọ*      *sẹtín*      *nọ*      *mẹ*  
 3SG      can      ask      1SG  
 He/she can enquire on behalf of me.

From the examples above, one can observe that all 1SG pronouns yield acceptable sentences. Observe that *ìmẹ* and *mwẹ* occur with prepositions in (22), but *mẹ* does not. Also, one can use *ìmẹ* and *mwẹ* with a discontinuous verb as in (23); *mẹ* does not occur with these kinds of verbs. In terms of their semantics, the examples have similar meanings; but the proposition of sentences which contain *mẹ* sometimes differs from the others as shown in example (24). These differences show that one can adduce several reasons for the existence of short pronouns in this language. Given the array of plausible reasons outlined for examples (22) – (24), why does the literature assume that Èdó personal pronouns have underlying forms with variant surface realisations?

Omoruyi (1986a: 85) specifically mentions the need for morpho-phonemic constraints; however, that study did not expatiate. This study explores the idea with these examples of second person singular pronouns. As shown on table 1, their underlying form is *ùwẹ*.

25. *ì lèlẹ = ùẹ gbèrràá èmwá*  
 1SG follow = 2SG pass here  
 I will not follow you beyond this point. (Amowie & Ogbomo 2010)
26. *làré nè ì khàmàá rùén èmwí*  
 Come so\_that 1SG tell 2SG thing  
 Come so that I tell you something. (Agheyisi 1986:100)
27. *ù má rhèrhè rrè, mà í diàkhèrè rùẹ*  
 2SG NEG early come, 1PL NEG wait\_for 2SG  
 If you do not arrive early, we will not wait for you. (Omoregie 1983:33)
28. *wẹ tòbórùẹ tàràá mwẹ íghẹ ù dèé*  
 2SG REFL.2SG tell 1SG COMP 2SG come.PROG  
 You yourself told me that you are coming. (Imasuen 1993:69)

In these examples, one will find bound and free forms of the second person singular. Apart from the *ù* and *wẹ* in (27) and (28), the other 2SG have nothing in common with the phonological form of the underlying *ùwẹ*. Imasuen (1996: 101 -103) explains that the clitic *ùẹ* in (25) and the independent *rùén* in (26) are alternate realisations of *rùẹ* in (27). Omozuwa's r-deletion rule provides a basis for this analysis, showing that the initial segment of *rùẹ* is a lax consonant which is deleted whenever it occurs between two vowels.

**r-deletion rule:**  $[ɾ] \rightarrow \emptyset / [(VC)_0 V_V (CV)_0]_{\text{Formative}}$  (Omozuwa 1989: 322)

The alternation between *rùẹ* and *rùén* in can be explained in terms of nasal assimilation. It involves the spread of the features of a nasal segment to

a following or preceding oral segment (Omozuwa 2013). Following these phonological processes, 2SG will be realised as *ùḗ* where the r-deletion rule applies; in the environment of nasal sounds it will be realised as *rùḗn* and elsewhere its form will be *rùḗ*.

Although, Èdó phonology offers viable ways of explaining the variation in examples (25) – (27), there are other personal pronouns that one cannot explain using nasalisation and the deletion rule. Consider the clitics in the following sentences.

29.      *ónì*      *nyá=à*                      *òbó*      *dé*      *né*  
          DEM    yank.PST=2SG                      hand      fall      already  
          That (matter) is now out of your hands.      (Amowie & Ogbomo 2010)

30.      *ì*      *hòó*      *nè*      *ì*      *mìḗ=ò*  
          1SG    wish    to      1SG    see=2SG

I wish to see you.

Other than their number and person features, *à* and *ò* in examples (29) and (30) are completely unrelated to the other forms of second person singular pronouns. For both forms, r-deletion and nasalisation do not proffer suitable evidence of morphophonemic conditioning. Tables 1 and 2 show other forms to which these rules do not apply.

However, one does not have to discard the idea that short pronouns are realisations of underlying longer forms. This study considered other ways of defining the relationship between short and long pronouns; and it found that one could simply explain the identical forms in terms of clipping. Clipping is a subtractive morphological process which shortens a word without changing its meaning or part of speech. Frequently, clipping changes the word's stylistic value (Bauer, 2003: 40). The process is not restricted to words; it can also apply to phrases (Jamet 2009:17). Clippings may be mutated (e.g. *varsity* < < *university*) or identical to the full forms (e.g. *exam* < < *examination*).

With respect to the Èdó language, Adeniyi and Yuka (2012) present a detailed discussion of how the process applies. They identified four types of noun clipping: back-clipping, fore-clipping, free-and-aprt clipping and free clipping. Back-clipping shortens the word from the end (*òkún* < < *òkúnmárhíà* “the ocean did not spoil anything”), while fore-clipping applies at the beginning of the word (*òkún* < < *àífìòkún* “one cannot trick the seas”). Free-and-aprt clipping subtracts from the beginning and end of the word (*àmèzè, mèzè and àmè* < < *àmèzèìsìòfò* “river water does not cause

sweat”). Free clipping splits the word in two; both short forms are retained (èdó and **óghòghò** < < èdóghòghò “day of joy”).

Extending their analysis to personal pronouns, this study found free clipping to be the prevalent type. It observed that almost all the first person short pronouns can be subtracted from the longer ones. Second and third person, on the other hand, have fewer clipped forms.

**Table 3: Clipping in personal pronouns**

Person & Number	Long Pronoun	Clipped Forms	
1SG	ìmèmwè	ì	mèmwè
		ìmè	mwè
		mè	mwè
1PL	ìàmàwà		màmwà
		ìà	mwà
		mà	mwà
2SG	ùwè	ù	wè
2PL	ùwà		wà
3SG	ìrèṣṣon	ìrèṣṣon	rèṣṣon

From table three, one can observe that clipping in the first and second rows produces nine short variants from the underlying forms of the first person singular and plural respectively. The longer clipped forms can also be truncated as in (mè and mwè < < mèmwè) and (mà and mwà < < màmwà). Clipping creates short variants with every segment of the singular form – **ìmèmwè**; but in plural i.e. **ìàmàwà**, the initial vowel is discarded. This is fore clipping; it also applies to second person plural and third person singular.

## 5. Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the paper looked into an aspect of the Èdó pronoun system. Earlier studies observed that personal pronouns have long and short forms. The longer ones are considered underlying forms, and the short ones are surface realisations. This paper evaluated the submissions of previous studies with the aim of describing and explaining the plethora of short pronouns. To achieve this aim, it set two objectives: describe the internal structure of

Èdó personal pronouns and appraise assumptions about these pronouns.

These objectives seek answers to two main research questions. One, why is it assumed that Èdó personal pronouns have underlying forms with variant surface realisations? Two, to what extent does case differentiate Èdó personal pronouns? Related to these questions are the issues of case typology and morphophonemic rules. Are the existent morphophonemic rules that can derive all short pronouns from the corresponding long forms?

Analyses of their internal structure reveal that the pronouns inflect for number. There are no generalisable morphophonemic rules to account the differences in their phonological forms. However, the subtractive process clipping lends credence to the assumption that Èdó personal pronouns have underlying long forms and shorter variants. On the issue of case, the data confirms that case differentiates short pronouns as some of them are restricted to specific grammatical functions. Thus, this paper suggests that the Èdó language can be described using the distinction between morphological and structural case. The language has a structural case system; its case inventory includes nominative, accusative, genitive and dative. The data shows case distinctions can be neutralised, as there is multiple correspondence between short forms and case values.

Given the widespread case syncretism and the lack of generalisable rules which could serve as the basis for morpho-phonemic constraints, the paper concludes there is a need for more studies on Èdó personal pronouns. Such subsequent works may consider using experimental methods to adduce evidence which will adequately explain the syntactic distribution of short pronouns.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The following symbols and abbreviations were used in this paper; Ø - null morpheme, 1 - First person, 2 - Second person, 3 - Third person, ACC - Accusative, COMP - Complementizer, DAT - Dative, DEM - Demonstrative, F - Feminine, GEN - Genitive, HAB - Habitual, IT - Iterative, NEG - Negative, NOM - Nominative, PL - Plural, PROG - Progressive, PST - Past, QNTF - Quantifier, REFL - Reflexive, SG - Singular. The n dash (-) represents an affix boundary; it also indicates incorporated words. Full stop (.) indicates non-segmental grammatical meanings and feature, while the equals sign (=) marks the position of clitic pronouns.

- |    |               |                        |
|----|---------------|------------------------|
| ii | <i>child</i>  | <i>children</i>        |
|    | (a) ọmọ       | èmọ                    |
|    | (b) ọvbókàhàn | ìbìẹ̀kà not *èvbókàhàn |