The Body in Yorùbá

## A Linguistic Study

Mark Dingemanse

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àtàrí 'crown of the head'

ọrùn 'neck'

èjìkà 'shoulder'

àyà 'chest'

kókó ọmú 'nipple'

ọmú 'breast'

apá 'arm'

inú 'belly, inside'

idodo 'navel'

orúnkún 'knee'

ojúgun 'shin'

ọrùn-ẹsẹ̀ 'ankle'

Contents

Preface

> *Mon corps est la texture commune de tous les objets et il est, au moins á l'égard du monde perçu,*
> *l'instrument général de ma compréhension.*
> MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY

The first time the very subject of body-part terminology struck me as intriguing and important to investigate, was somewhere in 2005 when I laid hands upon Mathias Schladt's (1997) *Kognitive Strukturen von Körperteilvokabularien in kenianischen Sprachen*. Thanks to a tip of Maarten Mous, I subsequently became aware of a then still unpublished special issue of *Language Sciences* on body-part terminology (now published as Enfield, Majid and Van Staden (eds.), 2006), and soon I was immersed in the literature on the multi-faceted semantic domain of the body and its reflections in language. I already knew some speakers of Yoruba residing in the Netherlands, and when I discovered that this aspect of Yoruba had not really been described yet, the choice was made.

This study, therefore, describes and investigates the body-part terminology of Yoruba, a major language of Nigeria. Over the last 150 years, Yoruba has benefited from a lot of linguistic attention, mainly in the area of phonetics, (morpho-)phonology, morphology, and syntax. As with many African languages however, investigation of semantic issues has remained behind. The present study focuses on the body and its parts as a semantic domain, providing first of all a detailed and illustrated overview of Yoruba body-part terms (§2.1), and furthermore covering such areas as grammatical constructions for bodily actions and events, organizing principles of the domain, semantic extensions of body-part terms, some of the roles ascribed to internal body-parts, and the body in the context of the Yoruba conception of a person (the rest of chapter 2). An overview of previous research into body-part terminology (§1.2) provides the necessary background to the more descriptive part, as well as to the discussion of some broader theoretical implications of the Yoruba data in the third chapter.

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the enthusiastic collaboration of the native speakers of Yoruba I met in and around The Hague: first of all Olúwàṣeyì (Ṣeyì) Adémọla (originally from Lagos), but also Ayọ Gbadébọ (originally from Ìgbájọ̀) and Noa Olúrẹmi (Ondo town). Thanks are also due to the Yorubas I met in cyberspace: Akin 'Ado' Akinyele of Ibadan, and especially HRH Dr. Olúfẹ́mi Babalọla, the Oba'lúmò of Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún, who in various exchanges (online as well as by email), provided helpful comments on parts of chapter 2 and answered many questions that came up during my work on that chapter. *Ẹ ṣeun!*

I would like to deeply thank Felix Ameka, whose inspiring courses on semantics, cognitive linguistics and anthropological linguistics brought me to the subject of my thesis in the first place, and who in his capacity as primary thesis coordinator helped me greatly by thoughtfully and critically evaluating my work. This study has much benefited from his ideas. Felix, our many enjoyable conversations never failed to provide me with food for thought. *Akpé ná wò!*

Asifa Majid's help in providing me with pre-publication versions of some of the papers now published in Enfield, Majid & Van Staden (2006) is much appreciated. And last but certainly not least, I want to express my gratitude to Gijske for her unflagging patience and her invaluable input in countless discussions. *Ik lief jou!*

Of course, the contents of this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of any of those who have helped me, and responsibility for any remaining errors, misrepresentations and inconsistencies is entirely my own.

Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3 were based on the illustrations found in volume III of Jacques Rongier's (1990) *Apprenons l'Ewe*. Figure 2.4 is derived from Buhan & Essiben's (1979) fascinating study of the anthropology of the body among the Bakoko of Cameroon.

Abbreviations and conventions

The following abbreviations are used in this study:

1,2,3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	N	noun
AUX	auxiliary / part of a split verb	NEG	negative
BPT	body-part term	NOM	nominalizing prefix
DEM	demonstrative	O	object
DO	direct object (as in 1sgDO, 1st person direct object pronoun)	P	preposition/prepositional phrase
		pl	plural
EMPH	emphasis (used with emphatic pronouns as well)	POSS	possessive pronoun (as in 1sgPOSS)
		REL	relative pronoun
EXCL	exclamation	S	subject
HAB	habitual	sg	singular
IDEO	ideophone	V	verb
IMPF	imperfective		

Example sentences are formatted like (1) below; first the sentence in Yoruba, then morpheme-by-morpheme glosses in English, followed by a free translation which really should be read only in conjunction with the glosses (see also §1.3.2). Sometimes short examples are given inline; if not immediately obvious, glosses are provided between braces as in **orí igi** {head tree} 'top of the tree'.

1   **ó   wà   l'ẹ̀ẹ̀hìn mi** _{A181}
     3sg be   at-back 1sgPOSS
     'he is (standing) behind me'

Example sentences not obtained during field work sessions have their source mentioned in subscript after them; (1) for example originally comes from Abraham's dictionary, page 181. Every such example has been checked with at least one native speaker; glosses are always mine. All examples from all sources have been made to agree with the transcription used in this study. Ward (1952) for example uses ɛ and ɔ for **ẹ** and **ọ**, respectively, along with graphs after the examples to indicate tone, as in (2a). In the transcription used here, her example looks like (2b). Delano (1958) on the other hand does not provide any tone markings in his definitions, so tones in his examples have been added by me.

2   a   **O kɔ ile rɛ [¯ ¯ - ¯ · _]**   He built his house (Ward 1952:66)
     b   **ó   kọ́   ilé   rẹ̀** _{W66}
          3sg   build house 3sgPOSS
          'he built his house'

The following abbreviations are used for sources of examples:

A   Abraham 1958 (*Dictionary of Modern Yoruba*)
ADa   Adewọle 2000 (*Beginning Yorùbá, part I*)
ADb   Adewọle 2001 (*Beginning Yorùbá, part II*)
B   Bamgbọṣe 1966 (*A Grammar of Yoruba*)
D   Delano 1958 (*Atúmọ̀ ede Yorùbá*)
L   Ladipọ 1972 (*Ọba Kò So*)
LO   Lindfors & Owomoyela 1973 (*Yoruba proverbs*)
O   Ogunbọwale 1967 (*The Essentials of the Yoruba language*)
R   Rowlands 1969 (*Teach yourself Yoruba*)
S   Sachnine 1997 (*Dictionnaire usuel yorùbá-français*)
W   Ward 1952 (*An Introduction to the Yoruba Language*)

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1   Preliminaries

This chapter provides the necessary background to the rest of the study. The first part (§1.1) introduces the Yoruba language. A short phonology is provided in §1.1.1 along with a few words on Yoruba orthography. Some grammatical notes and common pronominal paradigms are included in §1.1.2 in order to facilitate comprehension of example sentences. The next part (§1.2) serves to introduce the topic under investigation by giving a more or less chronological overview of previous research into body-part terminology, covering such fields as philology, onomasiology, phenomenology, anthropological linguistics, embodied cognitive science, and psychology. Finally, the third part (§1.3) situates the present study in the context of Yoruba linguistics and provides more information on its specifics, detailing how the data was gathered, and providing some notes on metalanguage and terminology used.

1.1   Yoruba: a brief linguistic profile

Yoruba (native name *ede Yorúbà*, 'the Yoruba language') is a dialect cluster of southwestern Nigeria, southern Benin and central Togo. The bulk of its over 20 million speakers are found in the Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Kwara, Lagos, and western Kogi states of Nigeria; about 465.000 speakers of the Egba dialect live in Benin.[1] Traces of Yoruba are found among communities in Brazil and Cuba, where it is called Lucumi or Nago. Apart from referring to the aggregate of dialects and their speakers, the term Yoruba is used for the standard, written form of the language.

> Niger-Congo
> Atlantic-Congo
> Volta-Congo
> Benue-Congo
> Defoid
> Yoruboid
> Edekiri
> **Yoruba**
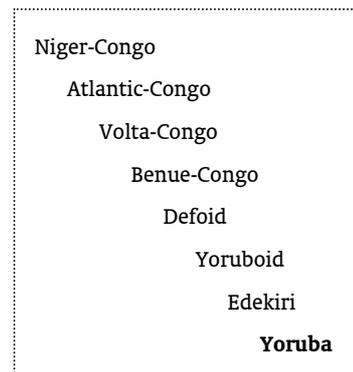
Yoruba is a Niger-Congo language of the Yoruboid branch of Defoid, Benue-Congo. Yoruboid consists of Igala, a language spoken to the east of Yorubaland by about 800.000 people, and the Edekiri group, the members of which are spoken in Benin and Nigeria. Edekiri includes the Ede language cluster (including Ede Ica, Ede Cabe, Ife, Ede Ije, Ede Nago), Itsekiri (500.000 speakers), and Yoruba proper. The Yoruba cluster itself consists of over fifteen varieties which can be classified into three major dialect areas: Northwest, Central, and Southeast.[2]

- *North-West Yoruba (NWY)*   Abẹokuta, Ibadan, Ọyọ, Oṣun and Lagos areas.
- *Central Yoruba (CY)*   Igbonna, Ifẹ, Ekiti, Akurẹ, Ẹfọn, and Ijẹsa areas.
- *South-East Yoruba (SEY)*   Okitipupa, Ondo, Ọwọ, Ṣagamu, and parts of Ijẹbu.

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[1] Ethnologue, 15th edition (Gordon 2005). Unless otherwise noted, speaker counts come from the Ethnologue.

[2] This widely followed classification is based on Adetugbọ's (1982) dialectological study. The classification originated in his 1967 unpublished PhD thesis; cf. also Adetugbọ 1973:183-193.

Common Yoruba (also known as *Standard Yoruba*, *literary Yoruba*, the *Yoruba koiné*, and often simply as Yoruba) is a separate member of the dialect cluster. It is the written form of the language, the standard variety learnt at school and that spoken by newsreaders on radio and television. Common Yoruba has its origin in the 1850's, when Samuel A. Crowther, native Yoruba and known as the first African Bishop, published a Yoruba grammar and started his translation of the Bible.[3] Though for a large part based on the Ọyọ and Ibadan dialects, Common Yoruba incorporates several features from other dialects; Adetugbọ notes that '[w]hile the orthography agreed upon by the missionaries represented to a very large degree the phonemes of the Abẹokuta dialect, the morpho-syntax reflected the Ọyọ-Ibadan dialects' (1967, as cited in Fagborun 1994:25). Additionally, Common Yoruba has some features peculiar to itself only, for example the simplified vowel harmony system, as well as foreign structures, such as calques from English which originated in early translations of religious works (Fagborun 1994).

Because the use of Common Yoruba did not result from some deliberate linguistic policy[4], some controversy exists as to what constitutes 'genuine Yoruba', with some writers holding the opinion that the Ọyọ dialect is the most pure form, and others stating that there is no such thing as genuine Yoruba at all. Common Yoruba, the variety learnt at school and used in the media, has nonetheless been a powerful consolidating factor in the emergence of a common Yoruba identity.

1.1.1 *Phonology*

Standard Yoruba has seven oral and four or five nasal vowels.[5] There are no diphthongs in Yoruba; sequences of vowels are usually pronounced as separate syllables. The status of a fifth nasal vowel, [ã], is controversial. Although the sound does occur in speech, several authors have argued it to be not phonemically contrastive; often, it is in free variation with [ɔ̃].[6] Orthographically, nasal vowels are represented by an oral vowel symbol followed by n, i.e. **in**, **un**, **ẹn**, **ọn**, except in cases where the [n] allophone of /l/ precedes a nasal vowel, i.e. [inṹ] 'inside, belly' is written **inú** instead of **inún**.[7] A dot under certain characters is used as a diacritic in representing the close

oral		nasal	
i	u	ĩ (in)	ũ (un)
e	o		
ɛ (ẹ)	ɔ (ọ)	ɛ̃ (ẹn)	ɔ̃ (ọn)
	a		ʔ ã (an/ọn)

Table 1.1 – The vowels of Yoruba

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[3] See Hair (1967) for an excellent overview of the early history of Yoruba linguistics.

[4] This is also the reason I opt here for the term *Common Yoruba* as opposed to *Standard Yoruba*.

[5] Dialects differ in the number of vowels they have; in NWY for example, the Proto-Yoruba upper vowels /i̠/ and /u̠/ were raised and merged with /i/ and /u/, just as their nasal counterparts, resulting in a vowel system with seven oral and three nasal vowels. CY lects on the other hand have seen the least innovations in their vowel systems, having retained nine oral vowel contrasts and six or seven nasal vowels, as well as an extensive vowel harmony system (Adetugbọ 1973).

[6] See Bamgboṣe (1966:8) and Ẹkundayọ (1982) for discussion. Abraham in his (1958) *Dictionary of Modern Yoruba* consistently transcribes **ọn**, so that **ọkàn** 'heart' is found under **ọkọ̀n**, etc. Since Bamgboṣe's (1965) *Yoruba Orthography*, most publications have **an** in this case. For the sake of consistency, I will follow the most common spelling. Thus, even when some of my informants say [èékɔ̃ná], I always give the word for 'nail' as **èékánná**.

[7] Abraham in his dictionary explicitly indicates the nasality of the vowel in this case; thus, **inú** is found under **inún**, etc.

vowels [ɛ] and [ɔ] (ẹ and ọ) and the postalveolar fricative [ʃ] (ṣ). Most other orthographic symbols have their IPA value; exceptions are provided in parentheses in the table below.

	bilabial	labio-dental	alveolar	post-alveolar	palatal	velar	labio-velar	glottal
plosive	b		t, d		ɟ (j)	k, g	kp (p), gb	
nasal	m							
fricative		f	s	ʃ (ṣ)				h
approximant			ɾ (r)		j (y)		w	
lateral approx.			l					

Table 1.2 – The consonants of Yoruba

The voiceloss plosives /t/ and /k/ are slightly aspirated in some Yoruba varieties, whereas /t/ and /d/ are more dental. The rhotic consonant is realized as a flap [ɾ], or in some varieties (notably Lagos Yoruba) as the velar approximant [ɹ]. Yoruba lacks a phoneme /n/; the sound [n] is an allophone of /l/ which immediately precedes a nasal vowel. Historically, it also lacks the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ (though this sound occurs in some English loanwords). Like many other languages of the region, Yoruba has the labial-velar stops /kp/ (written as <p>) and /gb/, e.g. **pápá** [k͡pák͡pá] 'field', **gbogbo** [ɡ͡bɔɡ͡bɔ] 'all'.

There is also a syllabic nasal which forms a syllable nucleus by itself. When it precedes a vowel it is a velar nasal [ŋ] (as in 3). In other cases its place of articulation is homorganic with the following consonant (4a,b) (examples from Bamgboṣe 1966).

3   **n**   **ò**   **lọ**   [ŋ ò lɔ]

       1sg NEG   go

       'I didn't go'

4   a   **ó**   **ń**   **lọ**   [ó ń lɔ]

          3sg   IMPF go

          'he is going'

       b   **ó**   **ń**   **fò**   [ó ɱ́ fò]

          3sg   IMPF jump

          'he is jumping'

Yoruba is a tonal language in which every syllable bears one of the three surface tones: high (marked by an acute accent [´]), low (marked by the grave accent [`]), and mid (unmarked); the latter is the default tone.[8] The mora is the tone bearing unit; a long vowel can have two tones.

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[8] Several authors have argued that the Mid-tone is not specified underlyingly, but rather is assigned by a *default rule* (Akinlabi 1985, Pulleyblank 1986, Folarin 1987). Evidence includes examples like the following:

     rí 'see' + **aṣọ** 'clothing' → **ráṣọ** 'see clothing', contrasted with **rí** 'see' + **òbẹ** 'knife' → **róꞌbẹ** 'see a knife'

In the first example, the final vowel of the verb **rí** is deleted but its High tone easily attaches to the first syllable of **aṣọ**, the Mid tone of which disappears without a trace. In the second example, the Low tone of the first syllable of **òbẹ** is not as easily deleted; it causes a downstep. The ease with which the Mid tone gives way is attributed to it not being specified underlyingly. Bamgboṣe (1966:9) calls the downstep effect 'the assimilated low tone'.

Contour tones are analysed as separate tones occuring on adjacent tone bearing units and thus have no phonemic status (Bamgboṣe 1966:6).

Yoruba has a preference for open syllables (CV). The majority of verbs are of monosyllabic CV form, whereas nouns typically have the form VCV(CV); the first vowel is a nominal prefix (a remnant of the proto-Niger-Congo noun class system). There is an optional process removing glides and liquids between vocals, resulting in words of the form VVCV or VCVV (5). Most long vowels within words are the result of this process followed by assimilation of the second vowel to the first. In all such cases, the tone of the assimilated vowel is retained.

5   **àdìrò**   ∼   **àà̀rò**   'hearth'

       òtító   ∼   **òótó**   'truth'

       Yorùbá   ∼   **Yoòbá**   'Yoruba'

When a word precedes another word beginning with a vowel, assimilation or deletion ('elision') of one of the vowels often takes place (see Bamgboṣe 1966:160-6 for in-depth discussion). In fact, since syllables in Yoruba normally end in a vowel, and most nouns start with a vocalic nominal prefix, this is a very common phenomenon, and indeed is only absent in very slow, unnatural speech. The official orthography follows speech in that word divisions are normally not indicated in words that are contracted as a result of assimilation or elision: **ra ẹja → rẹja** 'buy fish'. Sometimes however, authors may choose to use an inverted comma to indicate an elided vowel as in **ní ilé → n'ílé** 'in the house'. That is what I will normally do, too, in order to make examples more transparent for the the reader.

1.1.2   *Some notes on grammar*[9]

Basic constituent order in Yoruba is subject, verb, object (SVO), as in (6). The bare verb stem denotes a completed action (often called perfect); tense and aspect are marked by preverbal particles such as **ń** 'imperfect/durative', **ti** 'past' (7a-c, examples from Sachnine 1997). Negation is expressed by a preverbal particle **kò**. After pronouns, the negative particle is often shortened to **ò**.

	subject				object		possessive		emphatic	
	affirmative		*negative*							
	sg	*pl*	*sg*	*pl*	*sg*	*pl*	*sg*	*pl*	*sg*	*pl*
1	mo	a	mi	a	mi	wa	mi	wa	èmi	àwa
2	o	ẹ	o	ẹ	ọ / ẹ	yín	rẹ / ẹ	yín	ìwọ	ẹ̀yin
3	ó	wọ́n	ø	wọn	un / V	wọn	rè / è	wọn	òun	àwọn

Table 1.3 – Pronominal paradigms of Yoruba

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[9] The most helpful treatments of the grammar of Yoruba are Ogunbọwale (1967), Rowlands (1969), and Ward (1952). Adéṣọlá (2005b) is useful as a short sketch. Bamgboṣe (1966) is rigorous and trustworthy, but somewhat inaccessible due to it being cast in a by now obsolete theoretical framework (Hallidays' *Scale-and-Category Theory of Grammar*). Fagborun (1994) offers great insight into the history of some grammatical constructions.

6 **ó** **na Adé**

    3sg hit Adé

    'he hit Adé'

7 a **ó** **jẹun**

    3sg eat

    'he has eaten'

    b **ó** **ń** **jẹun**

    3sg IMPF eat

    'he eats/is eating'

    c **ó** **ti** **jẹun**

    3sg PAST eat

    'he has already eaten/he did eat'

8 **gbé** **àpótí wá** _{R107}

    bring box   come

    'bring the box'

Serial verb constructions are common, as in many other languages of West Africa (8). There are two different question words for entitites: **tani** for human or animate nouns ('who?') and **kini** for non-human or inanimate nouns ('what?').

For ease of reference, pronominal paradigms are provided in Table 1.3. The 3rd person singular negative subject pronoun is zero, as in **kò lọ** {NEG leave} 's/he has not left'. The 3rd person singular object pronoun often consists of a copy of the vowel of the preceding verb: **ó kí i** 's/he greeted him', **ó lù u** 's/he beat him'. The 3rd person plural emphatic pronoun is also used as a generic plural marker: **mo rí àwọn ìjòyè** {1sg see PL chief} 'I have seen the chiefs'. Not included in the table is an emphatic set of possessive pronouns, formed by **ti** 'of' (discussed with the associative construction below) plus the emphatic pronoun (e.g. **tèmi** 'mine', **tiwa** 'ours').

The associative construction (covering possessive/genitive and related notions) consists of juxtaposing noun phrases in the order modified-modifier as in **inú àpótí** {inside box} 'the inside of the box', **fìlà Àkàndé** 'Akande's cap' (lit. 'cap of Akande') or **àpótí aṣọ** 'box for clothes'. More than two nouns can be juxtaposed, of course: **rélùweè abẹ́ ilẹ̀** {railway under ground} 'underground railway', **inú àpótí aṣọ** 'the inside of the clothes box'. In the rare case where this results in two possible readings, disambiguation is left to the context. There is a special form of the associative construction using a particle **ti** (Bamgboṣe 1966:110-11, Rowlands 1969:45-6, Ward 1952:140).[10] This particle conveys a specific 'possessive' sense (as opposed to the more general associative), as can be seen by contrasting (9a) and (9b). It also adds emphasis, as in (9c).

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[10] Note that before nouns starting in a vowel (i.e., almost always), **ti** is shortened to **t'**. Bamgboṣe (1966:110-11) calls a modifying nominal in the genitival construction 'marked' when it is preceded by this particle **ti** and 'unmarked' when it is not (i.e. his 'genitival structure with an unmarked nominal' corresponds to our ordinary 'associative construction' here). I will gloss **ti** as 'of' just like Bamgboṣe does.

9   a   **aṣọ**   **ẹbí** _{B110}

           dress   family

           'family dress' (e.g., dress worn by all the family on a special occasion)

     b   **aṣọ**   **tẹbi** (< **ti ẹbi**) _{B110}

           dress   of·family

           'dress of the family' (i.e. belonging to the family)

     c   **ìwé**   **t'Òjó**   **n'ìyí** _{R45}

           book   of Òjó   be DEM

           'this is *Òjó's* book' (and not anyone else's)

There are two words that are commonly called prepositions: **ní** 'on, at, in' and **sí** 'onto, towards' (Sachnine 1997:19; Ogunbọwale 1967:91-4). The former indicates location and absence of movement, the latter encodes location/direction with movement. Position and direction are expressed by these prepositions in combination with spatial relational nominals like **orí** 'top', **apá** 'side', **inú** 'inside', **etí** 'edge', **abẹ́** 'under', **ilẹ̀** 'down', etc. (see Appendix I for examples). Many of these spatial relational terms are historically related to body-part terms (see §2.2.2); others derive from other source domains.

1.2   Previous research on body-part terminology

Over the past few centuries, research into body-part terminology has been carried out in many different ways, scattered over widely divergent subdisciplines. This section provides an overview of those currents of research I have acquainted myself with. It is not meant to be exhaustive and might just be a little biased here and there towards studies of African languages.

1.2.1   Philology

An early scientific approach to human language to take interest in body-part terminology was nineteenth century philology, the predecessor of comparative linguistics. Body-part terms were collected mainly because they were present in every language (every speaker having a body); accordingly, the emphasis mostly was not on analysis of the terms themselves within each language, but on comparison across languages, mostly at the phonological level. A somewhat late example of the traditional philological approach is Lilias Homburger's (1929) study *Les noms des parties du corps dans les langues Négro-Africaines*. Contrary to what the title suggests, this is not really a study of names for body-parts in African languages, but rather a comparative enterprise set up with the primary goal of uncovering a common phonology as well as common lexical roots among the over fifty languages in her sample.[11] Occasionally however, some interesting observations are made on the nature and content of certain body-part terms. As she says, '…ils [=the data presented in the study, MD] jettent souvent une lumière sur la mentalité des Africains' (1929:3). The fact that Yoruba forms part of her sample (as *Yorouba* of *Nigéro-*

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[11] cf. Homburger 1929:5: 'Le but immédiat et principal de ce travail est de montrer (…) qu'un même mot commun est représenté dans un nombre considérable des groupes linguistiques modernes par les mots qui désignent une même partie du corps'. I will not go into methodological problems of Homburger's study here.

Camérounienne affiliation) makes this study probably the first in which the body-part terms of Yoruba are singled out for examination. The Yoruba data is drawn from a 1885 French-Yoruba dictionary by Baudin, a missionary in Benin[12]. The data are not always accurate or complete, mainly because Homburger tends to omit words that do not fit readily into her proposals. This means, for example, that common words such as **ẹsẹ̀** 'leg' and **apá** 'arm' are missing.

The modern continuation of this comparative philological view on body-part terminology may be sought, among others, in the work of Morris Swadesh, who in the 1940-50's compiled a list of core vocabulary intended for historical-comparative purposes. Some twenty body-part terms form part of this widely used list. Wilkins (1993:24-5) proposes a reordering of comparative word lists based on regular semantic changes in the domain of body-parts (see §1.2.7 below).

1.2.2   Onomasiology

Somewhere around the end of the nineteenth century, a new approach came up in lexicology which studied the ways in which notions[13] are named in human languages. The Romanist Adolf Zauner coined the term *onomasiology* for this discipline[14], analogous to *semasiology*, the study of isolated words and the way their meanings are manifested. Aside from just looking at how notions are labelled, onomasiology tries to account for changes in this labelling, i.e. semantic change. Arguably, Zauner's study *Die Romanischen Namen der Körperteile* (1903) was foundational in many ways to research into body-part terminology, and much of the later findings in this area are already foreshadowed in his work. He offers an explanation for the general stability of body part terms; according to him, a body-part term refers to an *unwandelbares Aussenwesen* and hence is less susceptible to cultural change which according to him easily induces semantic shift (*Verschiebung*). At the same time, he offers some observations on semantic changes and shifts that nonetheless do occur in body part vocabulary: *verwechslung von Körperteilen*, for example, occurs mainly in body parts that are adjacent to each other (cf. Andersen 1978:357), but can also happen as a result of *äusseren ähnlichkeit*, as is often the case in palm of the hand and sole of the foot (a point also made by Brown and Witkowski some eighty years later; see also Wilkins (1993), Schladt (1997) and note 27 below). An unfortunate omission is that Zauner does not treat body parts for which he failed to find labels in some of his test languages. In other words, he only treats body part terms that are found in all Romance languages, and passes by terms for notions like *wrist, knuckle, hollow of the knee, shoulder blade, shin, side, groin*, etc. which he located in some, but not all languages of his sample.

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[12] Homburger cites P. Baudin, *Dictionnaire français-yorouba*, without providing the year of publication; Sachnine (1997:10) mentions an unpublished manuscript by the same author, dated 1885, titled *Dictionnaire français-yorouba*. The two probably refer to the same source, which in Jouni Maho's EBALL is listed as Baudin (1885) *Dictionnaire yorouba-français et français-yorouba*. Baudin's first name was not *Pierre*, as some sources have it; being a Roman Catholic missionary, he was called *Père Noel*.

[13] I believe the English term 'notion' best expresses Zauner's (1903:340) use of *Begriff* in this context.

[14] Onomasiology found its origin in Romance linguistics; the most important predecessors of Zauner's study were Ernst Tappolet's (1895) *Die romanischen Verwandtschaftsnamen* and Diez' (1875) *Romanische Wortschöpfung*. Subsequent years spawned a good number of onomasiological studies, mainly limited to Indo-European, however.

1.2.3   Phenomenology

In the approaches sketched so far, the emphasis has been on body-part terms in their function of referring to parts of the human body. The first half of the twentieth century saw the rise of some currents of academic philosophy which opened up new ways of looking at the body in language. Between 1923 and 1929, the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer developed his *philosophy of symbolic forms*. In the first volume, dealing with language, he connected the meanings of certain spatial concepts to human embodiment and experience: 'Das Innen und Aussen, das Vorn und Hinten, das Oben und Unten erhält seine Bezeichnung dadurch, dass sie je an ein bestimmtes sinnliches Substrat im Ganzen des menschlichen Leibes angeknüpft werden' (1923:156).

In the same period, Edmund Husserl founded the phenomenological method. One of the most influential works in this tradition is Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945). The body, he said, is what mediates and constitutes our contact with the outside world. At the same time, it is only through the body that our inner life can manifest itself outwards — the body is expression (1945:226,230). Early followers of Merleau-Ponty who elaborated on this point include Louis van Haecht and Joost de Witte. For Van Haecht (1947), the primacy of bodily experience in human intuitions about space and time was evident from the fact that spatial and temporal prepositions often are derived from certain body-part terms.[15] Similar evidence was adduced for the notions of pointing and counting.

De Witte in particular offered a fascinating and masterful blend of the onomasiological and phenomenological approaches in his 1948 dissertation *De betekeniswereld van het lichaam: taalpsychologische, taalvergelijkende studie* (the semantic realm of the body: psycholinguistic and comparative linguistic study). Whereas Zauner's seminal study limited itself to Romance, the study by De Witte is much wider in scope, being based on an enormous wealth of data from over sixty languages from all over the world.[16] This 500 page study is impossible to summarize in a few sentences. Let me give just one example: his treatment of the body-part 'back' (II.17, pp. 220-7). De Witte starts with a diagram detailing the various sources of names for 'back' as well as paths of semantic change that lead from and to it. He furthermore recognizes and discusses the distinction between the zoomorphic and the anthropomorphic models of the body as source domains in grammaticalization (cf. Heine 1997, Reh 1999, see also §1.2.5 below), noting that the concept of human 'back' often serves as a source for 'behind' (spatial) and 'after' (temporal) whereas instances of 'back' being used in the sense of 'top/above' are more plausibly

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[15] Van Haecht 1947:83-4 as cited in De Witte 1948:10.

[16] The precise number of languages in De Witte's sample is impossible to determine. In some parts of his analysis he lumps together several related languages (e.g. Semitic) of which he also seems to have separate data per language. He has culled his data from a variety of sources, including specific onomasiological studies (e.g. Zauner 1903, but also Planert's voluminous study *Makroskopische Erörterungen über Begriffsentwicklung*), studies with a comparative outlook (e.g. Homburger 1929, which he considers 'problematic' (1948:38), or Brandstetter on Malayo-Polynesian), and many dictionaries of specific languages. De Witte mentions separate sources for about thirty languages, but from sources like the ones mentioned above he imports data on at least another thirty (and possibly even twice as much). African languages treated by De Witte include Kikongo, Ancient Egyptian, Sesutho, Zulu, and Ewe; of these, Kikongo figures most prominently in his discussion.

related to the animal 'back'. All throughout, his statements are illustrated by examples from a diversity of languages.

After 1950, studies taking a phenomenological approach to body-part terminology are quite rare. One particularly nice example however is Fédry's (1976) *L'experience du corps comme structure du langage*[17], a study of the human body and the *corps des choses*, as he calls it, in the Chadian language Sằr̃. With the expression 'corps des choses', Fédry refers to the fact that body-part terms are frequently used to describe things other than the human body. Fédry's study in turn influenced Buhan & Kange Essiben's (1979:191-216) description of the body in the language of the Bakoko of South-West Cameroon.

1.2.4 Ethnoanatomy

Onomasiology in its original form (as described above) thrived somewhere between 1870 and 1930 (Geeraerts 2002a). It returned in another form in the 1950-60's, when anthropologists started to take interest in folk biology and nomenclature.[18] The name most tightly connected with this current of anthropological linguistics is that of Brent Berlin (in several collaborations with Breedlove and Raven), although Conklin's (1954) *The Relation of the Hanunóo to the Plant World* is cited by them as one of the defining publications. Berlin et al.'s study was followed in its wake by the influential research of Cecil H. Brown and colleagues on body-part nomenclature (or *ethnoanatomy* as it was called at the time, analoguous to *ethnobiology*). This line of research was initiated in Brown (1976) and Brown et al. (1976); some other central publications include McClure (1975), Andersen (1978), and Witkowski & Brown (1978). Thoroughly influenced by earlier studies on taxonomy, the emphasis was on a comparable structure in the body-part domain: *partonomy*. Another axis of this work concerned the growth of nomenclature in the domain, focussing especially on implicational universals and the principles underlying these. In some studies (esp. in Brown & Witkowski 1981, 1983, Witkowski & Brown 1985), a decisively speculative approach to onomasiology was taken, correlating for example the occurrence or non-occurrence of labels with certain cultural and sociological traits. Importantly, much of the research on the growth of body-part nomenclature was carried out on the basis of data drawn from dictionaries rather than being gathered in field work. At least in the case of Yoruba, which forms part of their sample, this has rendered their results somewhat unreliable, as will be discussed in more detail in §3.1.2.

An interesting study of body-part terminology connected to these lines of research and the same time informed by cognitive linguistic approaches is Mathias Schladt's (1997) *Kognitive Strukturen von Körperteilvokabularien in Kenianischen Sprachen*. A special virtue of this study is

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[17] I am thankful to Stefan Elders for pointing me to this study.

[18] As an aside, it is worth noting that onomasiology was revived in anthropological rather than in linguistic circles. Part of the reason lies in the strong cultural ties onomasiology already had, especially in its close cousin the *Wörter und Sachen*-movement. But it also has to do with the fact that the dominant current of linguistic semantics at the time, generative semantics (as initiated by Katz & Fodor (1963) and developed by Katz in subsequent years), occupied itself with radically different questions. Developed as it was in the wake of Chomskyan generative linguistics (with the express goal of being incorporated in it), it mainly was concerned with a highly formalized, componential analysis of word meaning, to the neglect of the onomasiological point of view which *presupposed* this meanings. See Geeraerts (2002b) for a historical overview.

that all data (coming from eighteen Kenyan languages belonging to three different language families) has been gathered by the author himself in field work settings across Kenya. Schladt reviews earlier research into categorization, and refines and adjusts relevant findings on the basis of his own data.

One of the important contributions of the anthropological linguistic line of research is the notion of *salience*. It is well known that some objects and categories are more prominent than others to humans. In approaches to categorization, such prominent categories have been called 'generics' (Berlin et al. 1973) or 'basic level categories' (Rosch 1978). The domain of body-part terms shows similar salience effects. However, because the body-part domain differs from others in some significant ways, not all features of generics as outlined by Berlin and colleagues are applicable (this point will be taken up in more detail in §3.1). For example, the fact that categories at the generic level tend to be most populous (Berlin et al. 1973:215) is not really transferable to the domain of body parts, since the organization of the latter domain is radically different. To be able to describe prominence effects, but at the same time stay aware of the peculiarities of the body-part domain, Mathias Schladt has introduced the term 'canonical body-parts' (1997:69; 1999:395).[19] In his definition, canonical body-parts are body-parts with exemplary, canonical qualities ('beispielhaften, kanonischen Charakter'). They thus share some characteristics with 'prototypes' in Rosch' sense on the one hand, and with the 'generic level' of Berlin et al. (1973) on the other hand. According to Schladt, canonical body-parts are those that are most frequently encountered every day and hence are more salient than others. They tend to be among the first mentioned when speakers are asked to produce examples of body-part terms. They are unlike generics in that they constitute a relatively small set (less than 10 items), and do not occur on a specific level of the hierarchy only. Related notions are 'goodness of exemplar' (GOE, Croft & Cruse 2004:77) and 'onomasiological entrenchment' (Grondelaers & Geeraerts 2003:70-71,76).

Two factors underlie prominence effects. Following Brown (2001), I will call the first factor *functional salience*, function to be taken in the widest sense. This means that certain terms are prominent because they play significant roles either economically, culturally or otherwise; an example for Yoruba would be **orí** 'head', a concept that is of immense socio-cultural importance (see §2.5.1). Another, more fundamental factor is at play as well. Brown (2001:1179) calls it *natural salience*, explaining that 'some things are naturally salient for humans because our species is innately predisposed in some manner to perceive them as *standing out* or, in other words, as especially attention-getting' [emphasis in original]. While I am hesitant to follow Brown in his choice of 'color' as an example[20], it is clear that the way we are built can have a direct bearing on how we perceive things. An example is the human hand (**ọwọ́** in Yoruba), which has a comparatively high density of sensorial nerves, corresponding with a larger 'footprint' (neural map) on the sensory-motor cortices (Penfield & Rasmussen 1950; Morrison &

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[19] The German term is 'Kanonische Körperteile'.

[20] Because of the serious criticisms levelled at the universalist interpretation of color term research by several linguists, especially John Lucy (1997; cf. also Dimmendaal 1995:5-11).

Tversky 2005:697) and which is consequently of great *natural salience* to us. Of course, in most cases (especially in the body-part domain) functional and natural salience are just as tightly interwoven as the functional significance of the hand and its heigthened nerve density.

1.2.5   Embodiment and the cognitive sciences

In a way, the threads of onomasiology and phenomenology sketched above can be said to have come together in cognitive linguistics.[21] Lakoff & Johnson in their well-known *Metaphors We Live By* argue that our conceptualization of entities in more abstract domains is based on concrete concepts which are more clearly delineated in our experience (1980:112). According to them, the most primary source domain of such concrete concepts is the human body, which is not just *mediating* our experience of the world but which, in the most primary sense, also *constitutes* our experience (hence the name *experiential cognition*, which Lakoff (1987) puts in opposition to *objectivist cognition*). The emphasis on embodiment is reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology; and the onomasiological aspect becomes apparent when we recall that its fundamental question relates to how notions are named in languages. The answer of cognitive semantics to that question is that this frequently happens by means of a conceptual mapping from a more concrete domain onto a more abstract domain. Cognitive semantics, in its theory of conceptual metaphor, thus provides a systematic way to account for the frequent occurrence of certain body-part terms in other, more abstract domains such as spatial and temporal expressions. (The conventionality of the resulting expressions should be stressed; a simplistic view of this process as always involving online extension would place too great a burden on human cognitive processing power; cf. Keysar & Bly (1999) and Enfield (2002b) for other arguments, discussed in §3.2 below.)

In this context, mention needs to be made further of Alan Cruse's (1986) work on lexical semantics, especially his development of the notion of meronymy (another term for partonomy), in which part/whole-relationships between body part terms have played an important role. Related to the cognitive semantic approach but with a slightly different point of departure is the study of grammaticalization paths, especially the work of Traugott, Heine and others.[22] Studies like these have shown that the domain of body-part terms is a common source domain for grammatical adpositions expressing spatial or temporal concepts. The proposed reason for this is the primacy of the human body in structuring experience.

In another part of the spectrum of the cognitive sciences, Rohrer (2001, 2005) examines the neurophysiological basis of Lakoff's claims about metaphor and online extension. His findings show that certain areas of the sensorimoter cortex that can be correlated to body parts show neural activity not only upon tactile stimulation of the body part in question (e.g. the hand), but

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[21] I am putting it this way to signal the conceptual/philosophical connections between cognitive linguistics and the approaches reviewed above; I leave it to the historians of linguistics to point out the historical connections.

[22] A first large-scale study on sources of spatial adpositions in 125 African languages was carried out by Bernd Heine in 1989. Other names connected to this line of research are Svorou, Traugott, Claudi and Hünnemeyer. Heine (1997) provides an overview and synthesis; Heine & Kuteva (2002) is a useful encyclopedic overview of grammaticalization paths documented in grammaticalization/grammaticization literature.

also during processing of linguistic stimuli in which body part terms (or verbs related to them) figure. Moreover, this activity is not only triggered by literal use (e.g. 'he *handed* me the hammer'), but also (though —not unimportant— to a lesser extent) by stimuli involving metaphorical (non-literal) use (e.g. 'the student *grasped* the problem').[23] Rohrer's conclusion is that these parts of the brain are functionally involved in the semantic processing of body-part terms and verbs of bodily motion.

1.2.6 *Psychology: types of body knowledge*

Rohrer's results may be tentatively connected with a recent experimental study on 'bodies and their parts' by Morrison and Tversky (2005), focusing on participants' judgments and reactions to two different kind of stimuli: body-part terms and pictures of body-parts. One of the conclusions of their study is that *naming* body-parts (as opposed to depicting them) evokes a certain mental representation of the body-part that, in their words, "is based not only on the appearance of the body, but also on the behavior and function of the body".

Fifteen years earlier, Tversky (1989) set out to study partonomic and taxonomic knowledge in children. One of her conclusions is that partonomy among other things involves a top-down analysis of a domain, i.e. from the whole to its parts. This point lends support to the claim made by several others (Andersen 1978, Wilkins 1993, Schladt 1999:39, Croft & Cruse 2004:159) that the part/whole-relation is significantly different from the kind-of-relation in that the former implies (or requires) knowledge of the whole.

An important contribution of psychology lies in the recognition of several distinct, but potentially interacting types of body knowledge. Most commonly recognized is the notion of *body schema* which can be traced back to the early twentieth century work of Pick on *autotopagnosia*, the inability to localize and identify parts of one's own body.[24] The body schema is a real-time three-dimensional "postural model" of one's body, derived from sensory input. (It is this representation, for example, which enables one to perform routine motor acts such as reaching to a coffee cup while reading the newspaper; Coslett, 1998:529). Distinct from this is what has been called the *body image*, usually defined as a conscious representation of the body. Conceptual or semantic knowledge about the body constitutes another type of body knowledge; this covers, among other things, functional and associative knowledge about body-parts of the sort tested for example in the study by Morisson & Tversky referred to above. Recent studies show that it is most probably not the body schema which is affected in autopagnosia, but rather yet another representation, termed *body part structural description system* by Buxbaum & Coslett (2001). Their study of a 48-year old autotopagnosic suggests that his body schema is unaffected (*ibid.*, 296-7), and furthermore that he is able to localise body parts accurately when cued by semantic information (e.g., when shown shoes, he had no

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[23] It should be noted that, although Rohrer (2001:3n2) reports that stimuli sets were designed for hand, feet, and face terms, only the results of the hand terms have been published so far (in Rohrer 2001; cf. Rohrer 2006).

[24] Coslett (1998:528-9) offers an overview of the notion of *body schema* from past to present; see also De Witte (1948:10-12).

trouble pointing to his foot; *ibid.*, 298). According to them, what seems to be affected in their subject is a distinct representation of the explicit local relationships among body parts: the structural description system.

1.2.7 Various other approaches and recent work

A relatively isolated and short-lived current of research into body-part terms consists of studies like Heine (1975)[25] and Ultan (1976) on the *descriptivity of body part terms*, in which morphological properties of body-part terminology are investigated (cf. also the discussion in Schladt 1997:66-7). Roughly summarized, morphologically simplex terms are considered nondescript, whereas the descriptivity of morphologically complex terms depends on the degree to which they are analysable. Ultan (1976) sets out to compare the overall descriptivity scores of six different languages (Finnish, French, Maasai, Swahili, Ewe, and German). As I take it, a serious problem at this level of comparison is that it is difficult to see what exactly is being compared. Ultan treats the overall descriptivity score as an interesting, abstract property of a language, but seeing that this score is arrived at by lumping together those choices of speakers that have happened to become current in the population for a variety of historical reasons and accidents (and this in a semantic domain as divergent as the body), I think it is more realistic to consider it a mere epiphenomenon.

An important study combining several earlier threads is Wilkins' (1993)[26] study of semantic change and the principles governing it. Picking up where philology and historical-comparative linguistics left off, Wilkins notes that the comparative method, in spite of its rigorous formalization of principles of phonological change, has been going somewhat crippled in that it lacks a similar rigorous formulation of principles governing semantic change. In his study, Wilkins sets out to develop such a framework of semantic change by detailing several common paths of semantic change in the domain of body-part terms. He distinguishes four types of semantic change using the parameters metonymic/metaphoric and intrafield/interfield; for example, 'cheeks' → 'buttocks' is a metaphoric+intrafield change, whereas 'to slap' → 'hand' is metonymic+interfield. Wilkins also holds a 'polysemic view' of semantic change (p. 6-8), pointing out that it takes time for a semantic change to disperse throughout the community, so that the original meaning of a form is not immediately displaced, but the two coexist for some

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[25] As cited in Ultan (1976) and Schladt (1997).

[26] In 1993 it appeared as a MPI Working Paper, and in 1996 it was published as chapter 10 of *The Comparative Method Reviewed*. Since there are no substantial differences, I will cite the earlier version here.

time.[27] Somewhat akin to Wilkin's approach is a recent study by Martin Hilpert (2006), in which chained metonymies involving body-part terms are investigated in an approach combining corpus linguistics and cognitive linguistics, addressing the question whether lexical and grammatical chained metonymies involve different kinds of mappings.

Other recent approaches to the body in language include research on body-part terms in grammar and investigations of emotion terminology. With regard to the former, Chappell & McGregor (1996) brought together previous and current research in an edited volume on the grammar of body-parts and the alienable/inalienable distinction in languages across the world. The recent edited volumes by Harkins & Wierzbicka (2001) and Enfield & Wierzbicka (2002) provide an impetus for linguistic research into emotion terminology. Studies in the latter volume for example detail the ways in which people of various cultures talk about emotion, showing that body-part terms figure often in expressions about emotional and personal characteristics (see Dimmendaal (2002) for an overview of such constructions in Nilotic and Bantu, with many examples).

Very recently, Nick Enfield, Asifa Majid and Miriam van Staden co-edited a special issue of the journal *Language Sciences* titled 'Cross-linguistic categorisation of parts of the body' (Enfield et al. (eds.) 2006). The ten studies in this volume are dedicated to body-part terminologies of languages from all over the world[28] and provide a much needed update on the diversity of organizing principles found in the body-part domain. What the studies establish most clearly is that fact that partonomy is by no means the sole organizing principle in the domain, contrary to the suggestions of the influential studies by Brown and associates (e.g. 1976, 1981, etc.) and Andersen (1978). The volume also contains the Body Colouring Task (Van Staden & Majid, 2006), a way to visualize the extensional meanings of body-part terms, as well as an elicitation guide on parts of the body (Enfield 2006).

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[27] Wilkins is not the first to point this out, as he himself notes, mentioning Traugott and Witkowski & Brown as researchers who have stressed the importance of polysemy in the study of semantic change. In fact, 90 years earlier Zauner (1903:342) advances much the same view in a paragraph worth quoting in full:

"Den Gang der "Verschiebung" hat man sich wohl so vorzustellen, dass ein Ausdruck zunächst beide Körperteile bezeichnet, es findet also eine Erweiterung der Bedeutung statt; später tritt dann im Gegenteile wieder eine Verengung der Bedeutung ein und zwar in der Weise, dass das Wort in seinem Gebrauche nun gerade auf den später hinzugekommenen Teil seines Begriffsinhaltes eingeschränkt wird. Wenn also z.B. coxa im Lat. "Hüfte", im Franz. "Schenkel" bedeutet, so ist, glaube ich, ein Zwischenstadium anzunehmen, in dem das Wort für beide Teile gemeinsam ohne Unterschied verwendet werden konnen."

[28] The ten languages treated are Lavukaleve (Papuan; Solomon Islands; Terril 2006), Thaayorre (Paman; Australia; Gaby 2006), ASL (Pyers 2006), Lao (Southwestern Tai; Laos/Thailand/Cambodia; Enfield 2006), Savosavo (Papuan; Solomon Islands), Jahai (Mon-Khmer; Malay Peninsula; Burenhult 2006), Punjabi (Indo-European; Pakistan/India; Majid 2006), Yélî Dnye (Papuan isolate; Rossel Island; Levinson 2006), Tiriyó (Cariban; Brazil/Surinam; Meira 2006), and Tidore (Papuan; Indonesia; Van Staden 2006).

1.3   This study

The present study is primarily data-oriented. I believe it fills a gap in the abundant literature on the Yoruba language since, as far as I am aware, no systematic or detailed treatment (in English) of the body-part terminology of Yoruba exists to date.[29] That is not to say that no-one has recognized some of the roles played by body-part terms in the language. Among the authors who have, Rowlands deserves special mention. In his (1969) *Teach yourself Yoruba*, he devotes several sections to the different roles body-part terms play in Yoruba. He notes for example, that body-part terms figure extensively in expressions about position and direction (p. 139-43).[30] Also, in a chapter on emotions, sensations, and ailments (26, p. 127-31), he details some of the uses of body-part terms in emotion terminology. And finally, in a chapter titled "Some special words" (38, p. 212-15), he outlines some intriguing semantic extensions of a few very common body-part terms (**ojú** 'face', **ẹnu** 'mouth', **ara** 'body', **inú** 'inside, belly', **ìdí** 'bottom, base', **èhìn** 'back', **ọwọ́** 'hand' and **ẹsẹ̀** 'foot'). As he says in the introduction to that chapter:

> "A feature of the vocabulary of Yoruba is the great variety of meanings given to words which are basically names for parts of the body. These are so diverse that they are difficult to classify; some of the more common expressions are given here." (1969:212)

Contrary to what one might expect, the widely used introductory textbook by Schleicher (1993) does not contain any information on parts of the body. The recent small-scale work by Adéwọlé fares somewhat better, as it includes a small list of the most common body part terms (2000:29); for the present purposes however, its true value lies in the enormous wealth of example sentences it provides. Another field of Yoruba scholarship to take interest in the body and its parts is philosophy. Numerous studies in this tradition have called attention to the importance of such body-parts as **orí** 'head', **ọkàn** 'heart', **inú** 'stomach/inside' **ifun** 'intestine', **ojú** 'eye/vision/face' in Yoruba thought, and have placed the body as a whole in the context of **ènìyàn**, the person. Particularly notable for their careful perusal of linguistic data are the insightful studies by Gbadegesin (2003) and Oladipo (1992) on the Yoruba conception of a person and by Afoláyan (2004) on Yoruba epistemology.

Aside from describing a hitherto undescribed aspect of Yoruba, I hope to contribute to some theoretical and analytical issues concerning the study of body-part terminology in general. To that end, chapter 3 includes a review of some claimed lexical universals and some thoughts on a few special aspects of body-part terminology. Lastly, I have attempted to make this study a useful resource by including a lot of my data throughout chapter 2 and in the first two Appendices (p. 69-74); furthermore, Yoruba-English and English-Yoruba glossaries of body-part terms and related vocabulary can be found in Appendix III (p. 80-80).

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[29] I suppose someone must have taken up this issue before, but with some confidence I can say that it is not easily available, if at all. This excludes treatments in Yoruba as might be found in the Yoruba speech area and/or in the archives of the universities of Ife, Ibadan, and Lagos. I would very much appreciate to be pointed to such studies.

[30] Sachnine, in the introduction to her dictionary (1997:19-20), also devotes a paragraph to the observation that '[c]omme dans nombre de langues africaines, différentes parties du corps précédées d'une de ces deux prépositions permettent de préciser la localisation.'

1.3.1 The data base

The basic data for this study has been gathered during field work sessions with various native speakers of Yoruba residing in the Netherlands. The principal method of data-collection was by means of illustrations of the human body used to let participants point to body-parts and say their name, which I then wrote down. The first few sessions were aimed at collecting the body-part terminology roughly along the lines of Enfield's (2006a) elicitation guide; in later sessions, the emphasis was on uncovering organizing principles and on body-part terms in context. This would usually involve discussing scenarios and eliciting example sentences proposed by me or by the participant (or coming from secondary sources; see below). Most sessions took place in The Hague, and some shorter ones in Leiden.

Additionally, a corpus of example sentences has been built by grazing dictionaries, grammars, and various other sources (including scholarly articles on the language, collections of proverbs, and a play). All of these have been checked with at least one native speaker in order to weed out any erroneous or artificial sentences. The result is a corpus of about 300 actual utterances, many of which will turn up below. The linguistic analyses presented here thus are grounded in actual usage.

1.3.2 English as a metalanguage?

Although every human being has a body, languages and cultures differ in the way they look at it, partition it, and in the functions they ascribe to it and its parts. While this fascinating diversity is the *raison d'être* of studies like the present one, there is also a dangerous side to it – the risk of imposing language structures of the language *used* on the language *being described*. It is probably impossible to entirely avoid this, but being aware of the risk, I have implemented some notational conventions. The most important of these concern 'translations' and glosses.

'Translations' are always put in inverted commas like the first word in this sentence. This should be taken to imply the absence of a strict one-to-one correspondence between the Yoruba word (e.g. **ọ̀kàn**) and its English translation ('heart'). The assumption that there nonetheless is at least some common ground is crucial to the present study, and to comparative studies of body-part terminology in general. As I take it, the existence of this common ground follows from the universality of the human body and human ways of engaging with the world, and the observation that linguistic variation is between certain bounds (see Tomasello 1999:45-8). It also accords with my interpretation of the results of comparative studies like Zauner (1903), De Witte (1948), and Enfield et al. (2006).

Glosses serve to give rough morpheme-by-morpheme English equivalents. They are provided only to make examples more transparent to the reader and are not to be taken as some rigorously defined metalanguage. It is tried to make glosses as consistent as possible across examples, but in case of mismatches between Yoruba and English, the latter is favored for the sake of clarity. To give an example, Yoruba uses one preposition **ni** (combined with different spatial relational terms, cf. §2.2.2) to express location in (10) and (11) below. Rather than using one awkward English equivalent everywhere, **ni** in (10) is glossed as 'at' and in (11) as 'in'. This

helps to avoid the misleading impression that **ni** simply corresponds to one English preposition. Unsatisfactory as it may seem, it simply is the case that the mismatches have to be accounted for somewhere and for this study I have chosen to cut the knot here.

10	**ó**	**bẹ́**	**ẹ**	**l'órí** (<**ní orí**)
	3sg	cut	3sgDO	at·head

'he cut off his head' (lit. 'cut him at head')

11	**ọ̀rọ̀**	**dùn**	**un**	**l'étí** (<**ní etí**)
	word	hurt	3sgDO	in·ear

'the word/matter pained him in the ear' (he felt its impact)

Also, in Yoruba, number has to be inferred from the context (i.e., from the English perspective, the English category of grammatical number (singularity/plurality of nouns) does not have a regular morphological equivalent). Since it is not possible to *not* express number in the same way in English, nouns in glosses will be either singular or plural depending on the context.

1.3.3   Some notes on terminology

For the purposes of this study, a *body-part term* is a term that typically is used in reference to some part of the human body.[31] Not much attention will be paid here to *literally descriptive* terms for body parts, i.e. terms that simply describe the body part in question instead of naming it (following Brown et al. (1976), I will use the term *label* for terms that are not literally descriptive). An example of a literally descriptive term would be **ọwọ́ ọ̀tún** 'right hand' (lit. hand right); an example of a label is **ọwọ́** 'hand'. Sometimes it is difficult to draw a clear boundary between a label and a description, since descriptions can get lexicalized over the course of time, as seems to be the case in Yoruba **àtẹ́lẹwọ́** 'palm of the hand' and **àtẹ́lẹsẹ̀** 'sole of the foot', both of which are probably derived from an element related to the verb **tẹ́** 'to spread' plus **owọ́** 'hand' or **ẹsẹ̀** 'foot', respectively. In an earlier stage, these terms probably started out as literal descriptions, but the fact that their etymology no longer is transparent to native speakers (see §2.1.2) indicates that they have become lexicalized expressions, i.e. labels. Another note of clarification might be in order for my use of the term *metaphor*. When I note, in discussing the body-part term **agbárí** 'skull', that this is probably a metaphorical name since it can be derived from **igbá** 'calabash' + **orí** 'head', I do not mean to imply that any speaker using the term **agbárí** creatively uses the literary technique of metaphor to talk about the skull in terms of 'calabash of the head'. It only implies that there once was such a creative act, and that the resulting expression for various reasons became current in the speech community; this conventionalisation was accompanied by loss of metaphoric quality, so that speakers today are usually not even aware of the metaphoric history of the term (see Keller (1998) for a comprehensive account of sign genesis and sign metamorphosis).

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[31] Sometimes authors define body part terms on the basis of their felicitous use in a frame like *X is a part of the body*. One problem of this is that it presupposes one organizing principle where others in fact may be found (see §2.3); another problem is that it tends to obscure the distinction between *labels* and *literally descriptive terms*.

2   Yoruba body-part terms

In this chapter, the body-part terms of Yoruba will be looked at from different angles. §2.1 presents the basic data in the form of illustrations and tables, accompanied with some clarifying notes where deemed necessary. Section 2.2 outlines some grammatical characteristics of body-part terms. An overview of the organizing principles of the lexical-semantic domain of the body is provided in §2.3. Finally, we will have a look at the body as a functional whole on the one hand (§2.4) and as one of the elements of **ènìyàn**, the person, on the other hand (§2.5); and the chapter is closed off in §2.6 with a short summary.

2.1   Yoruba body-part terms

This section draws heavily on the illustrations in figures 2.1-2.4. The main function of the accompanying text is to clarify terms where needed, give variants not included in the illustrations, and to describe some naming strategies. Sometimes a brief foray into the semantics of a specific term is made, but in general, detailed discussions are delayed until later sections.

2.1.1   Orí and ojú, the head and the face

12   **orí   = apá oké   ara** $_D$
     head = part upper body
     'the upper part of the body'

13   **orí   = ile   ọpọlọ l'ára** $_D$
     head = place brain in-body
     'the place of the brain in the body'

The head, **orí**, is the upper part of the body ((12), definitions from Delanọ 1958). It is the locus of the brain, **ọpọlọ** (13); but more importantly, it is a symbol for the inner head (**orí inú**), the destiny of a person (this sense of **orí** will be discussed in more detail in §2.5.1 below). With reference to its place in Yoruba thought, language, and art, **orí** may be considered the single most important part of the body. Figure 2.1 presents the Yoruba labels for features of the head and face. The most common terms are morphologically simplex: **etí** 'ear', **ojú** 'eye/face', **ètè** 'lips', **ẹnu** 'mouth', etc. Some are straightforward binomial expressions: **eegun àgbòn** {bone jaw} 'jaw bone', **ihòòmú** {hole nose} 'hole of the nose', **irun-imú** {hair nose} or **irun-ètè** {hair lip} 'moustache'[32]. A last group of labels looks morphologically complex, but is not transparent

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[32] Sachnine (1997) and Abraham (1958) have the latter form, but my informants give **irun-imú** (shortened to **irunmú**), literally 'hair of the nose', for 'moustache'. One informant added that the term for nose hairs is **irun ihò-imú** {hair hole nose} 'nostril hairs'.
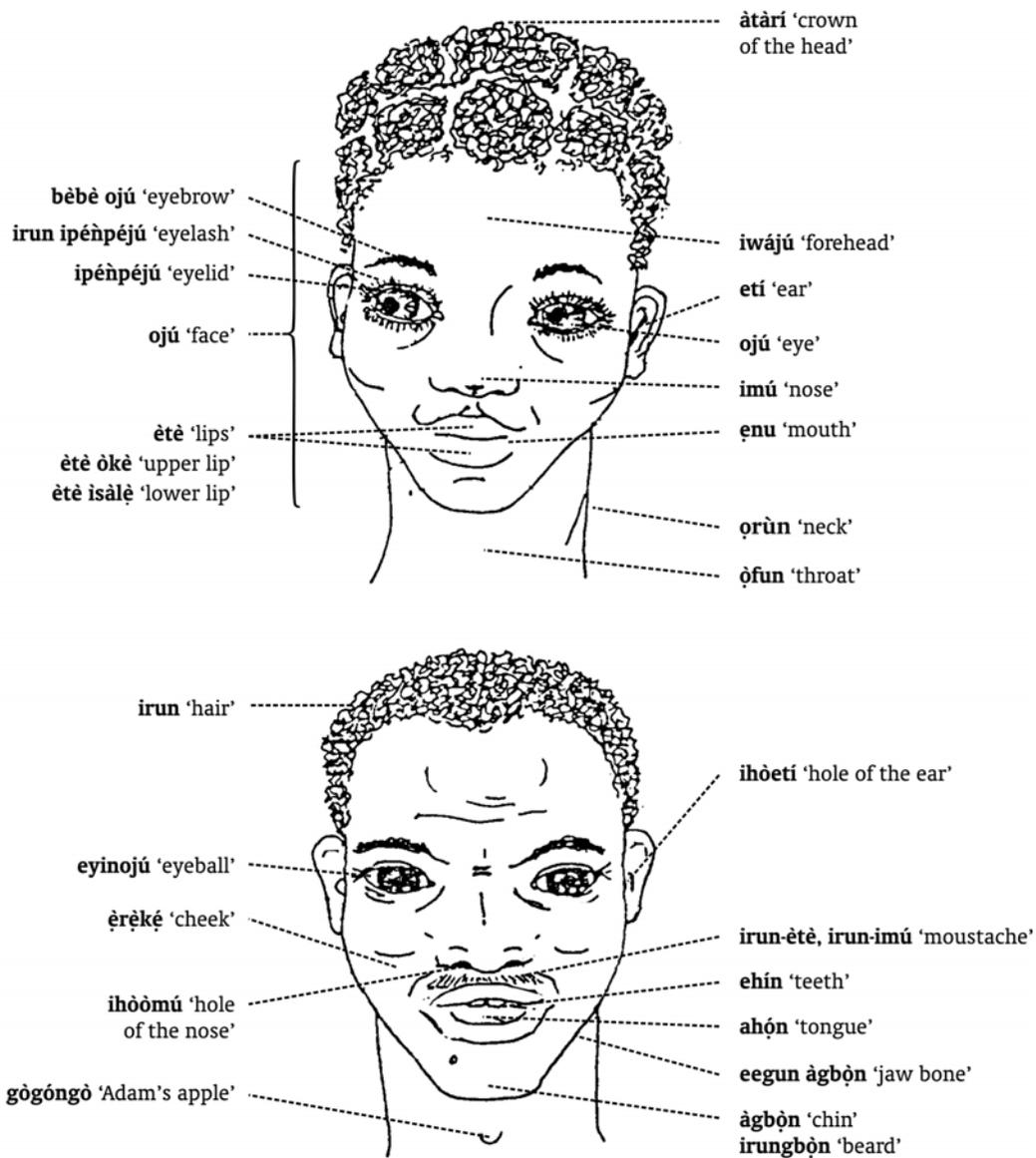
Figure 2.1 – **orí** 'head' and **ojú** 'face'

to analysis: **àtàrí** 'crown' could be derived from **àtà + orí**, but the nature of the first element is not clear; similarly, **ojú** is recognizable in **iwájú** 'forehead', but the **iwá**-part is unclear.[33]

The word **ojú** is ambiguous: depending on its use, it can refer to 'eye' or to 'face' (I will come back to the polysemy of **ojú** in §3.1.3). The two definitions provided by Delanọ (1958) are instructive; they are given in (14a,b) below. (Additionally, 14b provides a nice example of the common semantic extension FOREHEAD > FRONT.) In normal use, **ojú** seldom needs to be disambiguated. In (15a,b) for example, it only makes sense to interpret it in the sense of 'eye', whereas the sentences in (16) clearly refer to 'face'.

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[33] **Iwá** has the looks of a deverbal noun, but it is not clear what the source verb would have to be.

14   a   **ojú = èyaara   ìríran** _D

          ojú = body-part vision

          'the part of the body used for vision'

    b   **ojú = gbogbo iwájú orí** _D

          ojú = all   front head

          'all of the front of the head'

15   a   **mọ ní   ojú mèjí**

          1sg have ojú two

          'I have two eyes'

    b   **o   ó   rìí pupa ojú mi** _{R213}

          3sg FUT see red   ojú 1sgPOSS

          'you will see the redness of my eye'

16   a   **ó   bọ́   ojú rẹ̀** _{ADa21}

          3sg wash ojú 3sg

          'he washed his face'

    b   **ó   kun àtíkè sí   ojú** _{ADb11}

          3sg paint powder onto ojú

          'she put powder on (her) face'

That **ojú** is ambiguous rather than vague follows from the fact that informants reject the description of a face and an eye together as 'two **ojú**'s' (Enfield's (2006a) "I-saw-two-X's test").[34] **Ojú** in the sense of 'eye' refers more to the functional aspect of it (i.e. vision) than to 'eye' as an object. For that, one can use **ẹyínojú** 'eyeball' (< **ẹyín** 'egg' + **ojú**) in a sentence like (17a). In the case of two faces drawn on a sheet of paper, one informant felt that **mo ní ojú mèjí** 'I have two faces' was not specific enough. Instead, he proposed (17b).

17   a   **o   l'ẹyínojú   ńlá**

          2sg have eyeball big

          'you have big eyeballs'

    b   **mo ní   ojú ènìyàn mèjí**

          1sg have face person two

          'I have two people's faces' [context: two faces drawn on a sheet of paper]

Bèbè in **bèbè ojú** 'eyebrow' literally means 'edge'; it is also found in **bèbè idí** 'hip, waist' (edge of the buttocks, see Figure 2.3), and in such terms as **bèbè òkun** {edge sea} 'seashore' and **bèbè odò** {edge river} 'river bank'. The etymology of the term is unclear. The pupil of the eye can be described as **inú ẹyinojú** {inside egg eye} 'the inside of the eyeball'. Since this does not seem to be a label in the sense outlined in §1.3.3, it has not been included in Figure 2.1.

Many of the terms mentioned here enter into grammaticalization chains (e.g. **etí** 'ear' → 'edge' as in **etí odò** {edge river} 'riverbank') or have otherwise intriguing semantic extensions (e.g.

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[34] Numerous versions of this scenario have been tested (e.g. a picture of a whole face together with a picture of the eyes cut out of a similar picture; a face and one eye(ball); a face and two eyes/eyeballs), but all attempts to bring eye and face together as separate referents under one instance of **ojú** in an utterance were rejected as nonsensical.

ojú 'eye' as the focal point of action in such expressions as **ojú ọbẹ** 'knife-edge' and **ojú abẹ́rẹ́** 'point of needle'). Although the scope of this study does not allow for a comprehensive discussion of all of these terms, a few of them will be described in greater detail later on. Let me end this section with two riddles (Ogunbọwale 1967:145-6):

18   **ilé   ṣókótó, èkìkì   ẹ̀kan**
      house   small   nothing-but spear-grass
      'the small house is full of spear-grass'

19   **mo wò èyí,   wò èyí,   mo kò rí   ìyá   mi**
      1sg look DEM,   look DEM,   1sg NEG see   mother 1sgPOSS
      'I looked here, I looked there, but I did not see my mother'

(The answer to (18) is **ehín**, 'the teeth'. The answer to (19) is **etí**, 'the ear'.)

2.1.2   *Ara, the body*

Figure 2.2 (p. 23 below) and 2.3 (p. 26) present terms for body-parts of the front and back sides of the body. **Ara** is the physical body (20); it can also be used in the sense of skin, as in (21), but there is also the more general **awọ** 'skin' found in expressions like **awọ ara** 'human skin' and **awo ẹ́pọ̀n** 'skin of scrotum' (**ẹ́pọ̀n** refers to scrotum and testicles together). A pregnant woman can be called **abara méjì** {having·body two}, 'someone having two bodies'. **Ara** also enters into a grammaticalization pattern that is very common cross-linguistically: BODY > REFLEXIVE, as seen in (22).

20   **ara   rẹ̀   wú** _{ADb54}
      body   3sgPOSS be.swollen
      'his body is swollen'

21   **igi   náà ha   mí   l'ára** _{ADb2}
      stick REL graze 1sg   on-body
      'that stick graze my skin'

22   **Olú rí   ara   rẹ̀**
      Olu see   REFL 3sgPOSS
      'Olu saw himself'

The limbs (**apá** 'arm' and **ẹsẹ̀** 'leg+foot') can be referred to as **àwọn ẹ̀yà ara** {3p part body} 'the parts of the body'. This means that they are somehow exemplary body-parts. As in many languages, **apá** 'arm' is commonly used in the sense of 'side/direction', as in (23a,b). It may well be that this meaning has subsequently developed into the 'part/portion' sense seen in (24a,b) below.

23   a   **apá òsì ọkọ̀** _{A57}
         side left boat
         'the left side of the boat'

     b   **tí   ẹ   bá   dé   oríta,   ẹ   yà   sí apá ọ̀tún** _{S59}
         where 2sg hit·upon reach crossing 2sg turn   to side left
         'when you arrive at the crossroad, turn to the left'

àtàrí 'crown of the head' ---   --- orí 'head'

ọrùn 'neck' ---   ọwọ́ 'hand'

èjìkà 'shoulder' ---   ọrùn-ọwọ́ 'wrist'

àyà 'chest' ---   irun àyà 'chest hair'

kókó ọmú 'nipple' ---   abíyá 'armpit'
                                                             irun abíyá 'hair of armpit'

ọmú 'breast' ---   igunpá 'elbow'

apá 'arm' ---   ìhá 'side'

inú 'belly, inside' ---   eegun ìhá, ẹ̀fọ̀n ìhá 'rib(s)'

idodo 'navel' ---

orúnkún 'knee' ---   itan 'thigh'

ojúgun 'shin' ---   ẹsẹ̀ 'leg-foot'

ọrùn-ẹsẹ̀ 'ankle' ---   ọ̀pọ̀lọ́sẹ̀ 'calf of leg'

                                                             gìgìrísẹ̀ 'heel'
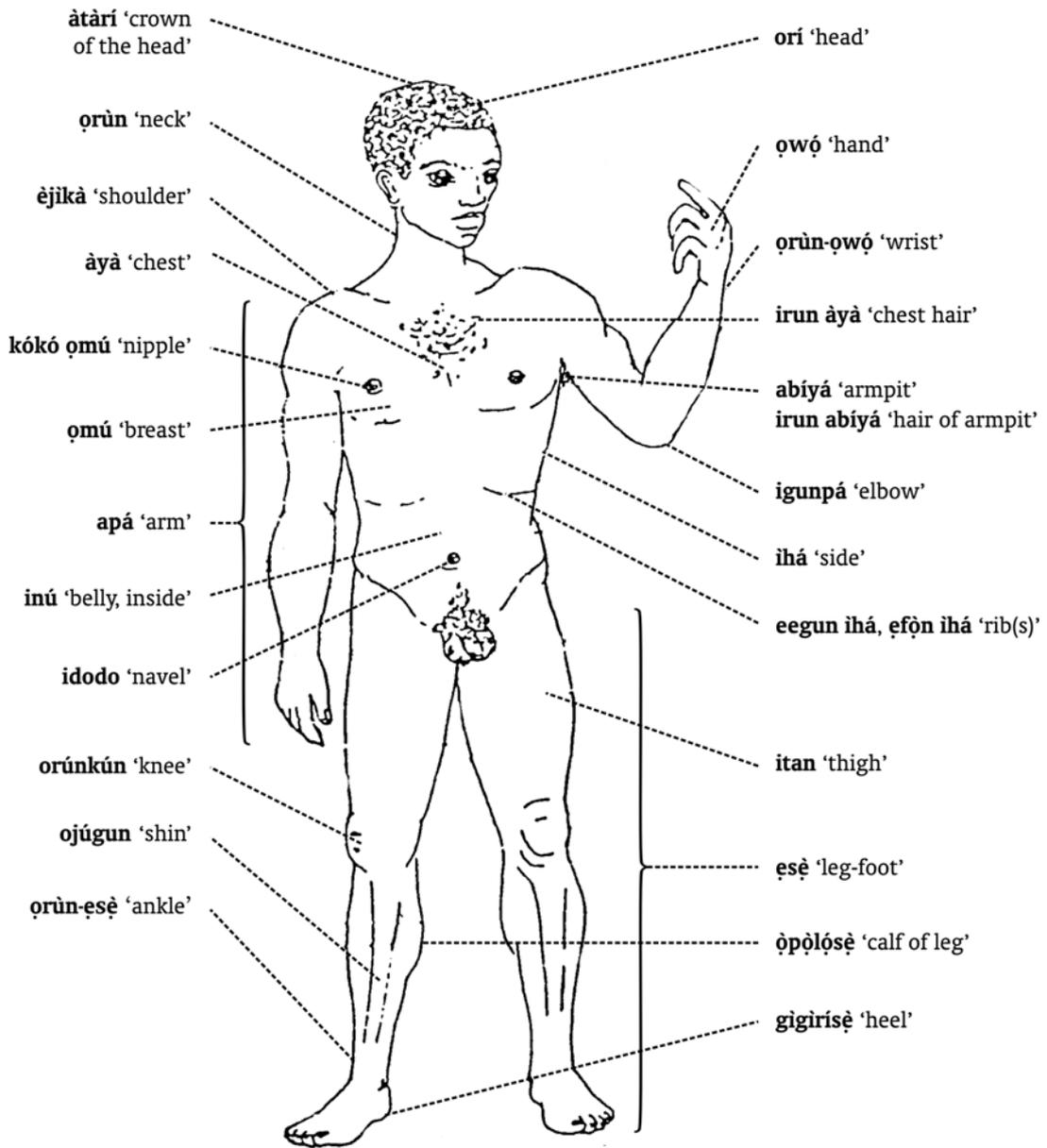
Note. All terms apply to both sexes, except the ones mentioned below (mostly related to **abẹ́** '(what's) under', i.e. the reproductive system).

okó 'penis'   òbò 'vagina'

ẹ́pọ̀n 'scrotum'   idọ 'clitoris'

awọ ẹ́pọ̀n 'skin of the scrotum'   ọyàn 'female breast'

kórópọ̀n 'testicles'

Figure 2.2 – ara 'body', front view

24   a   **apá òkè ẹsẹ̀**

         part top[35] leg

         'the top part of the leg, e.g. **itan**' (lit. part of the top of the leg)

     b   **ọwọ́** = **apá ara tí a ń fi di ń kán mú** _{D167}

         hand = part body REL 1pl IMPF use to IMPF hold thing

         'hand = part of the body which we use to hold things'

Apá 'arm' is also found in **igunpá** 'elbow' (< **igun** 'edge' + **apá**). There is also another term for 'elbow', **igbọ́nwọ́**, which Abraham (1958) derives from **gbọ́n** 'shake, shiver' + **ọwọ́** 'hand'. The fact that the elbow enables moving the hand up and down makes this derivation likely, although the word was not transparent to my informants. One informant who could not recall the term for 'wrist' quite liked my proposal **ọrùn apá** ('neck of arm', analogous to 'ankle', **ọrùn ẹsẹ̀**); but when presented with the variant **ọrùn ọwọ́** {neck hand} he conceded that that was probably even better. To others, that latter term indeed is the most common one.

Ẹsẹ̀ 'leg' is found in several terms for parts of the leg, e.g. **gìgìrísẹ̀**[36] 'heel' (the shortened form **gìgísẹ̀** is also quite common; the etymology of the first part is unclear), **ọrùn ẹsẹ̀** 'ankle' and **ọ̀pọ̀lọ́sẹ̀** 'calf of the leg' (< **ọ̀pọ̀lọ́** 'toad'[37] + **ẹsẹ̀**). The latter two expressions are both based on metaphoric mappings; **ọ̀pọ̀lọ́sẹ̀** is an instance of the tendency described by Brown & Witkowski (1981:601-3) of many languages to apply terms for various small creatures to certain muscular parts of the body.[38] **Àtẹ́lẹsẹ̀** 'sole of the foot' is formed in the same way as **àtẹ́lẹwọ́** 'palm of the hand'; both terms are probably historically related to the verb **tẹ́** 'spread out'. Abraham (1958:75) derives the shorter variants **àtẹ́sẹ̀** and **àtẹ́wọ́** directly from **àtẹ́** (deverbal noun of **tẹ́**) + **ọwọ́**/**ẹsẹ̀**. However, the longer forms seem to have another morpheme '**lẹ**' which cannot be directly related to the two elements mentioned by Abraham; possibly this is **ilẹ** 'place' or **ní** 'on/at' (recall the common change from n > l; however, the high tone is problematic). It should be noted that this expression is not at all etymologically transparent to native speakers — one informant commented on this derivation: 'That's what *you* make of it. To me, it's just **àtẹ́lẹsẹ̀**'. Not uncommon among the world's languages (Witkowski & Brown 1985), a separate term for 'foot' is absent in Yoruba so that **ẹsẹ̀** denotes all of the lower limb. In this context, it is interesting to note the existence of a length unit equivalent to English 'foot', which is called **ẹsẹ̀ẹ bàtà**, i.e. 'leg's shoe'. The choice for 'shoe' in this label might be taken to imply the absence of a concept 'foot' in Yoruba; however, it is equally possible that the 'shoe' part of the

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[35] On a sidenote, **òkè** is also in use as 'mountain'; its use as 'top' illustrates the fact that environmental features ('landmarks') commonly serve as a source domain for spatial relations (Heine 1997). The following sentence nicely illustrates **òkè** 'mountain'. Note the word for top here, derived from another common source domain for spatial relations.

    wọ́n tẹ Ìdànrè dó l'órí òkè kan _{S205}

    3pl found Ìdànrè dó on-top mountain one

    'they founded the village Ìdànrè on top of a mountain'

[36] Quite rarely, this word reveals a glitch in Abraham's dictionary: his entry for **gìgísẹ̀** (1958:264) reads 'see **gìgìrísẹ̀**', but the longer form is in fact not included in his dictionary, nor in the addenda.

[37] Not to be confused with **ọpọlọ** 'brain'.

[38] Interestingly, although Yoruba is part of their sample, this term escaped their attention.

label merely derives from the fact that the unit was introduced by 'shoed people' (the length unit probably being borrowed from English).

Turning to Figure 2.3, we find again morphologically simplex as well as complex terms, the latter often built upon the former. **Ẹ̀hìn** (also written **èyìn**, reflecting a common pronunciation) as a body-part means 'back' (25). As shown in (26), it is also used in a locative sense, conforming to a common grammaticalization pattern BACK (body part) > BEHIND (Heine & Kuteva 2002:47-8). The next step of this grammaticalization chain is an extension to the temporal dimension (BEHIND > AFTER), and this sense, too, is found in Yoruba (27).

25 **ó kín mi l'ẹ́hìn** ₐ_Db10
   3sg scrub 1sgDO on-back
   'he scrubbed my back' ('scrubbed me on the back')

26 a **òun ló³⁹ wà l'ẹ́hìn** (<**ní ẹ̀hìn**) ₛ_106
   3sgEMPH be·EMPH be on back
   'It's *him* that's behind'

   b **ó wà l'ẹ́hìn mi** ₐ_181
   3sg be on-back 1sgPOSS
   'he is (standing) behind me'

27 **l'ẹ́hìn ifọwọ́ síìwé àláfìà** ₐ_181
   on-after signing treaty peace
   'after signing the peace-treaty'

As mentioned in Figure 2.2, all body-part terms apply to both sexes, except **ọyàn** 'female breast' and the terms for the reproductive system, euphemistically called **abẹ́** '(what's) under'. Oyètádé & Buba (2000) mention **bùùráá** 'penis' as a loanword from Hausa; borrowing of course is common in the domain of taboo vocabulary.

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[39] **ló** < **ni ó**. Abraham (1958:435) calls it an 'emphatic particle *is*'; Ward (1952:144) translates it as *be*; both agree that it adds emphasis, so I will gloss it as be·EMPH. Note that this form is often used in combination with the emphatic pronoun.
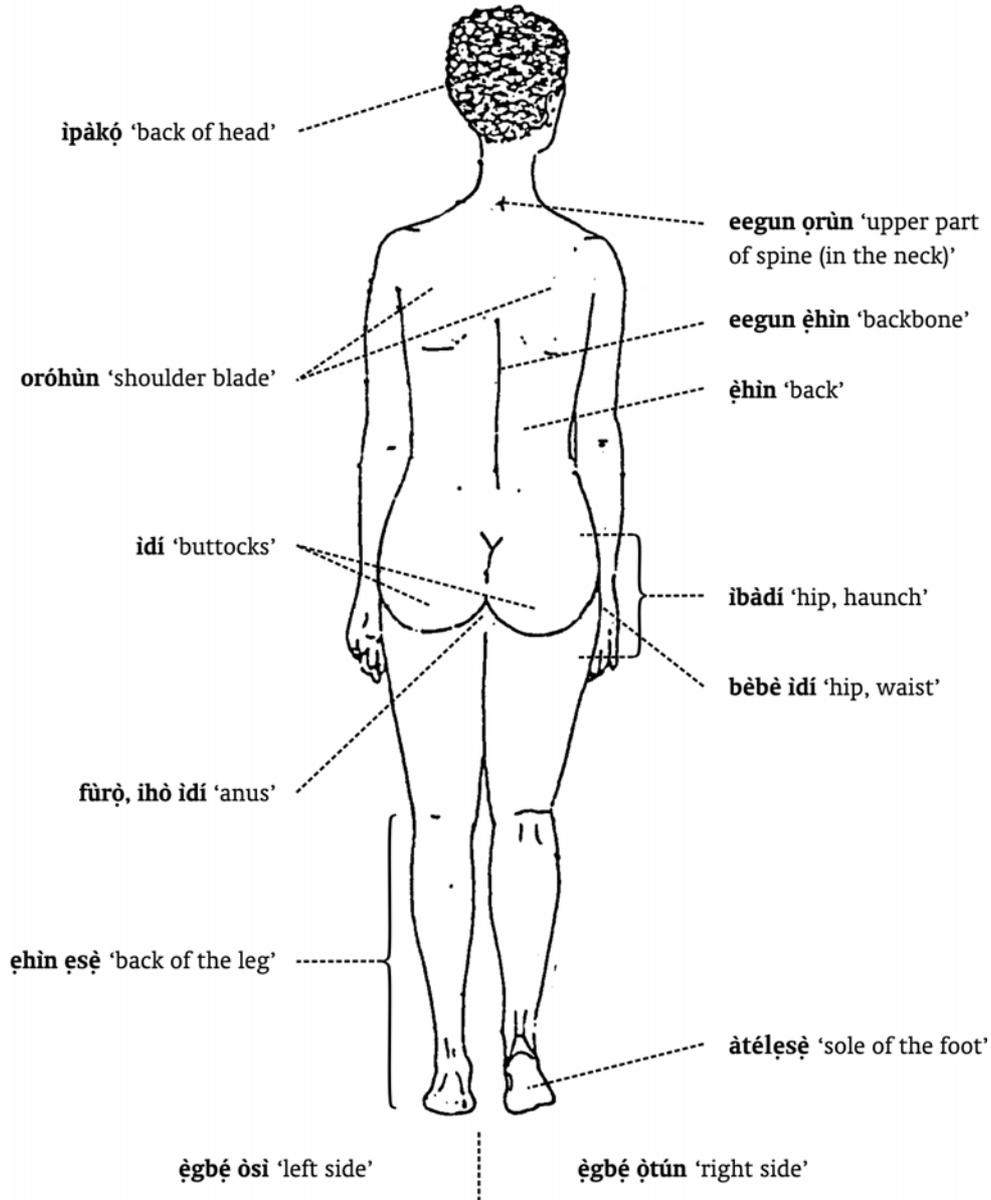
Figure 2.3 – **ara** 'body', back view

2.1.3 Hands, fingers, and toes

Figure 2.4 illustrates in more detail parts of the hand and feet (some parts of the lower leg have been included in Figure 2.2 above). The terminology for these parts of the body is highly symmetrical, with the terms for parts of the hand being mirrored in terms for parts of the foot, a common naming strategy world-wide (cf. Wilkins 1993, Andersen 1978:353, Schladt 1997:78ff.). **Ìka** could be translated as 'digit', but normally refers to 'fingers' (28a,b); cf. also **tọ́ka** 'to point at sb', derived from **tọ́** 'touch someone' + **ìka**. Toes are 'the ìka of the leg/foot': **ìka ẹsẹ̀**. If one wants to be really specific, one can also say **ìka ọwọ́** 'ìka of the *hand*'. Likewise, 'toenail' is **èékánná ẹsẹ̀** {nail leg/foot}, while **èékánná** in normal use refers to 'fingernail', as in
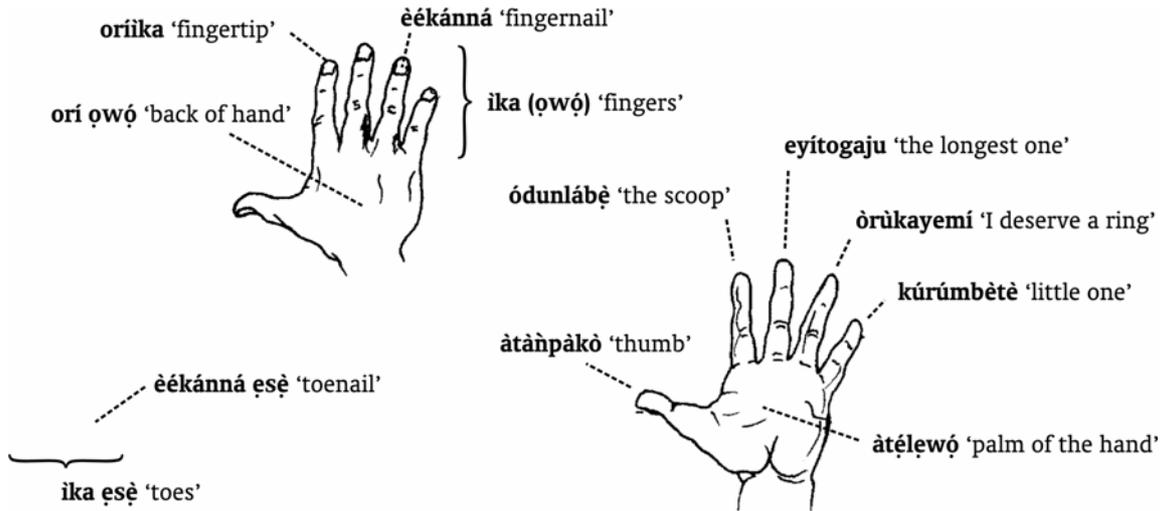
Figure 2.4 – hand, fingers, and toes

(29). Abraham's (1958) definition of this term as 'fingernail/toenail' suggests that **èékánná** is vague (i.e. not specific as to whether the nail belongs to to finger or toe), but my informants preferred **èékánná ẹsẹ̀** for 'toenail'. I will come back to this issue in §3.1.2.

28	a	**mo ní ìka mẹ́wà**
		1sg have finger 10
		'I have 10 fingers'
	b	**ìka ń dùn mi**
		finger IMPF hurt 1sgDO
		'fingers hurt me'

29	**bí iná kò tán l'áṣọ, ẹ̀jẹ̀ kò ní-í tán ní èékánná** LO6
	if lice NEG finish in-cloth blood NEG HAB-FUT finish in nails
	'as long as you have lice in your clothes, your nails will remain bloody'

The knuckles can be described as **igun ọwọ́** {edge/corner hand}; this expression is not as lexicalized as **igunpá** 'elbow' in which the same **igun** can be recognized. The word **ẹ̀sẹ́** means 'fist'. The right and left hand are **ọwọ́ òsì** and **ọwọ́ ọ̀tún**, respectively. An alternate term for the right hand (especially widespread in northern Yorubaland) is **ọwọ́ àlàáfíà**, 'hand of health' (< Hausa *laafiya*).

Abraham (1958) provides the following set of names for the fingers:

30	a	**àtàńpàkò** 'thumb'
	b	**ìfá bẹ̀lá** 'index-finger' (< **fá** 'scrape' + **ọbẹ̀** 'soup' + **lá** 'lick')
	c	**baààrun** 'middle finger'
	d	**asọmọgbè** 'ring-finger' (< **sọgbè** 'next to')
	e	**ọmọdìnrin** 'little finger' (< **ọmọn** 'child')

One informant from Lagos provided an alternative set of names in the form of a children's song (31). The variation seen here is most probably of regional nature.

31　a　**àtàńpàkò** 'thumb'

　　b　**ódunlábẹ̀** 'the scoop' (< **odun** + **lá** 'lick' + **ọbẹ̀** 'soup')

　　c　**èyítogaju** 'longest one' (< **ju** 'exceed')

　　d　**òrùkayẹmi** 'I deserve a ring' (< **òrùka yẹ mi** {ring befits 1sg} 'a ring befits me')

　　e　**kúrúmbete** 'little one' (< **kúrú** 'short' + **mbete** 'INT')

2.1.4　*Terms not included in the illustrations*

Table 2.1 presents terms not included in the illustrations (see the Yoruba-English and English-Yoruba glossaries in Appendix III for an exhaustive listing).

Internal organs	*(for more details on some of these, see §2.4.1)*
ọpọlọ	'brain'
ikùn	'stomach' < **kùn** 'to grunt'
àpòokùn	'stomach' < **àpò** 'bag' + **ikùn**
àpò ìtọ̀, àpòtọ̀	'bladder' < **àpò** 'bag' + **ìtọ̀** 'urine' (see below)
ẹdọ̀kì, ẹdọ̀	'liver'
ẹdọ̀fóró	'lung(s)'
ọkàn	'heart'
Diffuse organs	
awọ, awọ ara	'human skin / leather'
iṣan	'muscle / nerve / sinew'
ẹranara	'muscle' < **ẹran** 'flesh' + **ara**
ẹjẹ̀	'blood'
eegun ~ egungun	'bone'
eegun ẹ̀hìn /	'spine, backbone' < **eegun** 'bone' + **ẹ̀hìn** 'back'
eegun ọrùn	'upper part of the spine (in the neck)' < **eegun** 'bone' + **ọrùn** 'neck'
agbárí	'skull' < **igbá** 'calabash' + **orí** 'head'
igbá àyà	'chest bone (sternum)' < **igbá** 'calabash' + **àyà** 'chest'
eegun ìhà / ẹfọ́n ìhà	'rib' < **eegun** 'bone' + **ìhà** 'side'
Excreta	
itọ́	'saliva'
òógùn	'sweat' (cf. **làágùn** 'to sweat' < **là** 'separate, secrete' + **òógùn**)
kóró	'seed'
ìgbẹ́, gbọnsẹ	'excretion, faeces' (**gbọnsẹ̀** < **gbọ̀n** 'shake, shiver' + **ẹsẹ̀** 'leg/feet')
ìtọ̀	'urine' (cf. **tọ̀** 'to urinate')

Table 2.1 – Terms not included in the illustrations

There seems to be a common formative element **ẹ̀dọ̀-** in the labels for 'liver' and 'lung', but the etymology of these terms is unclear. Both **àpòokùn**, a term for 'stomach' specifically referring to its form, and **àpòtọ̀** 'bladder' are named after **àpò** 'bag'. **Iṣan** is a general word used for 'muscle / nerve / sinew'. **Eegun** 'bone' (shortened form of **egungun**) is also used for 'skeleton' and for fish-bone. Labels for some individual bones are binomial expressions with **eegun** as the modified term, cf. **eegun àgbọ̀n** {bone jaw/chin} 'jaw bone', **eegun ihà** {bone side} 'rib', **eegun ẹ̀hìn** {bone back} 'backbone'. Other bones are metaphorically named: both **agbárí** 'skull' and **igbá àyà** 'chest bone' are named after **igbá** 'calabash' (cf. also **igbá ẹ̀hìn** {calabash back} 'shell of a tortoise'). Likewise, the label **ẹfọ́n ihá** for 'ribs' is motivated by the visual similarity of the ribs to **ẹfọ́n**, the back of the midrib (**ọwá**) of the oil-palm which is used to make baskets and arrows (Abraham 1958:174,530). The word for seed, **kóró**, is a very general word, which is also used for pip/kernel, cf. **kóró ọsòn** 'pip of ọsòn'.

2.2   Body-part terms in the grammar of Yoruba

Body-part terms, or words historically related to them, turn up frequently in any sample of spoken or written Yoruba. This section will go deeper into their place in the grammar. For our purposes, it seems useful to start with a distinction into three broad classes of use on the basis of a mixture of syntactic and semantic criteria.

A   body-part terms simply referring to parts of the body, as for example in **ó ha ọ̀fun** 'he cleared (his) throat', **ara ń hún mi** 'I have an itchy feeling (body is itching me)', **eyín rẹ̀ ká** 'his tooth fell out';

B   body-part terms in fixed (i.e. lexicalized) idioms such as **dójú lé** 'take a dislike to someone' (**ojú** 'eye'), **lérí** 'to brag / threaten' (< **lé** 'put' + **orí** 'head');

C   body-part terms metaphorically referring to a certain part of, or region contiguous to, another entity, either another body-part, as in **ọrùn ọwọ́** {neck hand} 'wrist', or any other object, as in **orí igi** {head tree} 'top of the tree', or **etí odò** {ear river} 'river bank'.

2.2.1   Fixed idioms

Leaving A for later, let me turn to B first. The idioms in B undoubtedly have their origin in simple, class A-like use of body-part terms.[40] I have separated the two because they significantly differ in a number of ways. First, these expressions are fixed, i.e. their elements are not freely modifiable. (32a) for example shows proper use of **dójú lé** 'take a dislike to someone'. The insertion of a possessive pronoun in (32b) breaks down the expression by prompting a literal reading which does not make sense. This signals that **ojú** does not transparently refer to the eyes of the boss anymore, which leads to the second difference from class (a): the original meaning of the body-part term has faded; it is an integral part of the expression, which has become lexicalized as a whole. A third feature of this class of expressions follows from the first two: often, their meaning is not obvious. To stick with the current example, **dójú lé** is probably derived from **dá ojú lé**, where **dá** 'fixate' and **lé** 'put, place' are verbs and **ojú** is 'eye'; literally,

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[40] In fact, class A and B might be considered a continuum from simple unlexicalized expressions with relatively transparent semantics (A) to heavily lexicalized idioms which are less transparent to analysis (B).

dá ojú lé would mean something like 'fixing one's eyes upon (someone)'. This general meaning has narrowed down to refer to one very specific way of looking at someone, i.e. looking in aversion. Furthermore, the expression has undergone a 'deliteralization': if Femi comes home one day and utters (32a), this does not necessarily mean that his boss literally has looked at him in aversion. It just means that something happened that allowed Femi to draw the conclusion that his boss has taken a dislike to him.[41]

32   a   **ọ̀gá ibi-iṣẹ́   mi   dójú   lé   mi** _{S94}
         boss place-work 1sgPOSS fix-eye put 1sgDO
         'my boss has taken a dislike to me'

     b   ? **ọ̀gá ibi-iṣẹ́   mi   dójú   rẹ̀   lé   mi**
         boss   place-work 1sgPOSS fix-eye 3sgPOSS put 1sgDO
         'my boss has fixed *his* eyes on me'

Yoruba has an overwhelming number of body-part idioms. Grammatically, they are mostly of the form S V+N$_{BPT}$ (V) (O), where S = subject, V = verb, N$_{BPT}$ = body-part term, and O = object. Some body-part terms figure more often in idioms than others. My impression is that **ojú** 'eye' is by far the most common; other common terms include **orí** 'head' and **ọwọ́** 'hand'.

2.2.2   Spatial relations

Class C as defined above typically involves the structure N$_{BPT}$ + N, i.e. an associative construction (cf. §1.1.2). Indeed, semantically, expressions like **orí igi** {top tree} 'top of the tree' and **inú àpótí** {inside box} 'inside of the box' are very much akin to other associative expressions like **fila Àkàndé** 'Akande's cap': parts or regions of things are conceptualized as *belonging to* these things. Syntactically too, they are much the same.

However, there is at least one syntactic difference. As noted in §1.1.2, there is a special (emphatic/possessive) form of the associative construction which makes use of the particle **ti**. My informants rejected sentences where this particle is used in between the body-part term as spatial orientation and its modifier: the sentences in (33a-c) are ungrammatical whereas without **t'** they would be fine. Thus, spatial orientation terms (the top of the tree and the top of the house) cannot be contrasted the way Akande's cap and Ojo's cap can.[42] This restriction might indicate that spatial orientation terms are more closely associated with their possessors than other nouns.

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[41] Compare English 'keep an eye on somebody'.

[42] One informant hypothesized that the reason may lie in the fact that **ti** may only be used with animate modifiers (as in *Ojo's* book). However, this is ruled out by sentences like **ọmọ ti ìlú mìí** {child of town another} 'a child belonging to another town', where town is as inanimate as box or cupboard (Bamgboṣe 1966:110).

33   a   * **orí   t'igi   n'ìyí**

 top of tree be·DEM

 'that's the top of the *tree*'

 b   * **inú   t'àpótí   n'ìyí**

 inside of box   be·DEM

 'that's the inside of the *box*'

 c   * **ó wà nínú   ti kọ́bọ́dù**

 3sg be in·inside of cupboard

 'it is in the inside of the *cupboard*'

Up to now, I have been talking about 'body-part terms' in class C type expressions as if they were just that: body-part terms. However, the way I have glossed the examples reveals that I do not consider this to be the case. In fact, there is abundant cross-linguistic evidence (De Witte 1948, Wilkins 1993, Heine 1997, Schladt 1997, Hilpert to appear, to name a few) of body-part terms undergoing a process of semantic extension/abstraction to analoguous parts or contiguous regions of other kinds of entities. This accords with the intuition of native speakers of Yoruba that trees do not have heads, and boxes do not have bellies. Thus, contrary to the common conception that in Yoruba 'spatial relations are expressed by body part terms' (Rowlands 1969:139ff, Sachnine 1997:19), it seems that this spatial relational sense is best regarded as only historically related to the body-part term. So properly speaking, class C is *not* about body-part terms; it rather reveals that these terms are heterosemous. Terms like **orí** and **iwájú** in one sense refer to parts of the body ('head', 'forehead'), and in another, fully distinct sense, they denote (regions contiguous to) parts of other entities: 'top' and 'front', respectively (34).[43] The syntactic difference outlined above suggests that in this spatial sense, these terms are also less prototypical nouns, which is why I will call them *spatial relational nominals*. (Compare Lillehaugen (2004) on Tlacolula de Matamoros Zapotec for a similar argumentation and some elegant ways to further test these matters.)

34   **ó   ro oko iwájú ile   rẹ̀** ADb32

 3sg cut bush front house 3sgPOSS

 'he cut the bush in front of his house'

35   a   **ó   wà   n'ínú   kọ́bọ́dù** R140

 3sg be   in-inside cupboard

 'it is inside the cupboard'

 b   **ó   gbẹ́   ihò s'ára   igi**

 3sg bore   hole to-whole tree

 'he bored a hole in the tree' ('…into the whole/body of the tree')

Expressions about location and direction are constructed by using the preposition **ní** 'on, at, in' or **sí** 'onto, toward' with C-type constructions, as in (35a,b) (Rowlands 1969:139-44; Ogunbọwale 1967:88-94). A lot more could be said about the semantics of both the spatial

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[43] Significantly, at some point during our discussion of Figure 2.1, one informant did not recognize **iwájú** as a term referring to the forehead, but only to the 'front' of something.

relational nominals and these two prepositions, but this is not the place for it. Appendix I provides a list of some common words with their use as body-part term and as spatial relations, together with examples.

2.2.3 *'Body-part syntax': four common constructions*

Class A was defined above as 'body-part terms simply referring to parts of the body'. There are many ways of course in which body-parts can figure in situations and events, and accordingly, there are several different grammatical constructions available for expressing these matters. A set of about 100 example sentences (included in Appendix II) breaks up in four common grammatical constructions (Table 2.2).[44]

	structure	example			101
A1	$S_{BPT\text{-}1 + POSS\text{-}1}$ V (…)	**eyín**	**rè**	**ká** $_{ADb9}$	29
		tooth	3sgPOSS	fall·out	
		'his tooth fell out'			
A2	$S_{BPT\text{-}1}$ V O_1	**ara**	**ń**	**hún mi** $_{ADb3}$	23
		body	IMPF	itch 1sgDO	
		'I have an itchy feeling' (lit. 'body is itching me')			
A3	S V O_1 P-BPT_1	**ó**	**kín**	**mi** **lẹ́hìn** $_{ADb10}$	19
		3sg	scrub	1sgDO on-back	
		'he scrubbed (my) back' (lit. 'he scrubbed me at back')			
A4	S_1 V $O_{BPT\text{-}1 (POSS\text{-}1)}$ (…)	**ó**	**bọ́**	**ojú** $_{ADa20}$	23
		3sg	wash	face	
		'he washed (his) face' (lit. 'he washed face')			

legend: S = subject; V = verb; O = object; P = preposition; BPT = body-part nominal; POSS = possessive pronoun; (…) = more may follow; subscript numbers indicate grammatical/semantical agreement.

Table 2.2 – Bodily actions and events: four common constructions

The first construction (A1) is rather straightforward grammatically: the body-part term is together with its possessor in the same grammatical role, that of subject, and the predicate is an intransitive verb. The semantics are as divergent as the things that can happen to the body and its parts in Yoruba: teeth fall out, legs limp (36), the body isn't well (37; negation is expressed by the common preverbal particle **kò**) or the inside is sweet (38). The majority of occurences of this construction in my corpus expresses states rather than events; the focus here seems to be on the body-part and the state it is in, or what is happening to it.

36 **ẹsẹ̀ rẹ̀** **kan ro** $_{ADb32}$
leg 3sgPOSS one limp
'one of his legs limps'

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[44] Just to show that all of these are reasonably common, I have included the counts in the table. Only seven examples (out of a total of 101) do not clearly fit into one of these constructions. They can be found, along with some comments, at the end of Appendix II.

37   **ara mi   kò dá** _{R261}

body 1sgPOSS NEG be·well

'I am not well'

38   **inú   mi   dùn** _{ADb42}

inside   1sgPOSS be·sweet

'I am happy' (lit. 'my inside is sweet')

In the second construction, A2, the body-part noun fulfils the role of subject, whereas its possessor is found in the object role. Significantly, the verb is almost always accompanied by the imperfective particle **ń**, encoding a durative/continuative aspect. Looking at its use, this construction is always about events and states that come about involuntarily. Saying **ara ńtu mi** for example implies that one is somehow starting to feel better without one having a hand in that process (39). This construction is used most often in unpleasant situations, e.g. of some body-part inflicting pain or a bad feeling on its owner (40). Presumably because of the inherent personal nature of feelings like this, this construction is almost exclusively used in the first person.

39   **ara ń   tu   mi** _{ADb50}

body IMPF dislodge 1sgDO

'I'm feeling better' (lit. 'body is loosening up')

40   **ìka   ń   dùn mi**

finger   IMPF hurt 1sgDO

'my fingers hurt' (lit. 'fingers are hurting me')

In construction A3, the body-part term is demoted to a prepositional phrase, where its function is to specify the location of something that is happening to its possessor. Here again, possessor (object) and body-part (in the prepositional phrase) are not in the same clausal constituent; the relationship is left implicit. This always concerns actions by others or effects from other entities, as in (41) and (42). The focus here is on the event having a certain effect on the patient, with the locus of the effect being specified by the body-part. The body-part thus does not play an active role in this construction.

41   **ó   rìn   mí   l'ábíyá** _{ADb31}

3sg tickle   1sgDO in-armpit

'she tickled my armpit' (lit. 'tickled me at armpit')

42   **ó dùn   mó   mi   n'ínú** _{R214}

3sg be·sweet be·stuck 1sgDO in-inside/belly

'It is pleasant to me' (lit. 'it pleases me within/in belly')[45]

The fourth and last construction is a simple transitive sentence with the body-part term in the role of object, and its owner (in subject position) performing a certain action on it (or, less commonly, with it), as in (43) and (44). Though not common, it is possible to include the

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[45] Both **dùn** and **mó** are verbs; the latter commonly occurs together with other verbs and is used in the sense of 'onto'.

possessive pronoun in the object role (e.g., (43) would become **…ojú rè**); when included, it always cross-references the subject.

43 **ó bọ́ ojú** _{ADa20}
3sg wash face
'he washed (his) face'

44 **mo fárí (<fá orí)** _{A202}
1sg shave head
'I shaved (my) head'

From the above discussion a peculiarity of Yoruba emerges, which can be illustrated by a comparison to English. Whereas the typical English equivalent of (40) above would be 'my fingers hurt', the Yoruba sentence **ìka ńdùn mi** (an A2 construction) literally means something like 'fingers are hurting me'. The point to note here is the fact that the possessive relationship, obligatory in English in this type of construction[46], is not expressed in Yoruba. The same holds for A4 constructions (e.g. (43a); see Appendix II for more examples), which in English always must express the possessive relationship, but in Yoruba more often do not. In fact, in three of the four constructions (accounting for about 70% of the total corpus), the possessive relationship between the body-part and its owner is not expressed morphologically.[47]

Cross-linguistically, this is quite atypical: in many languages, body-part terms have a privileged position (often shared with kinship terms and spatial relations) in that they enter in a special 'inalienable' possessive relationship. This cross-linguistic regularity is usually seen as a reflection of the special, indivisible and unchanging relationship of body-parts to (the body of) their owner (Chappel & McGregor 1995:4). At the phrase level, there are two common ways of expressing the alienable/inalienable distinction in languages across the world: the first is juxtaposition of the possessor and the possessed, in that order; the second is by means of a pronominal affix cross-referencing the possessor on the possessed. Yoruba does not seem to make use of either of these strategies; further research will have to show if and to what extent the alienable/inalienable distinction is relevant in Yoruba.[48]

Ewe, a Kwa language of south-eastern Ghana and southern Togo, is similar to Yoruba in that the possessive relationship between body-parts and their owners often is not expressed morphologically (Ameka 1996). Additionally, Ewe encodes the alienable/inalienable distinction, but whereas kinship-terms, socio-cultural relations and spatial relations are treated as

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[46] This excludes English constructions of the type 'he hit me at *the* back' (not: … *my* back), which are syntactically and semantically much like construction A3 in Yoruba.

[47] Arguably, construction A3 is less exceptional than A2 and A4 in this respect (cf. note 46 above). Whereas strictly speaking the relationship is not expressed morphologically, the fact that the body-part is present in a prepositional phrase adjoined to its owner in the object role makes this construction conceptually close to constructions in which the relationship *is* expressed.

[48] Chappell and McGregor (*ibid.*) point out that inalienability may be encoded at levels higher than word or phrase-level, citing Bally who argued that in Indo-European languages, there is a 'dative of involvement' construction which serves to code the indivisibilty of a person and associated body-parts.

inalienable, body-parts are not.[49] Ameka advances two proposals to account for the Ewe data, noting that they are not mutually exclusive. The first is conceptual; he points out that body-parts differ from the other categories mentioned in that the former can be manipulated at will by their owner, whereas the latter cannot. Thus, with respect to control, body-parts side with other alienable possessions and this, he argues (1996:796,811) is reflected in the fact that they are treated as alienable in the grammar. The other explanation is historical: many spatial relation terms evolved from body-part terms and probably the two receive different grammatical treatment so they can be more easily distinguished from each other (*ibid.*). It seems that Ameka's observation on control applies to our A4-construction; looking at the small corpus in Appendix II, most of the examples indeed concern owners manipulating their body-parts at will. However, the other construction in which the possessive relationship is not expressed morphologically, A2, does not fit this scenario. As mentioned above, this construction is always about events that come about involuntarily (to turn around the phrasing, what we have here are body-parts manipulating their owners at will). Either way, the overall generalization seems to be that in Yoruba grammar, body-parts are commonly singled out and considered separate from their owner.

In the introduction to *Ethnosyntax*, a volume exploring the interconstitutive nature of culture and grammar, Enfield notes that 'semantic analyses of different languages reveal different 'philosophies' regarding the involvement of individuals in bodily events and actions' (2002:7). This is also what Ameka, seeking an explanation for the similar position of body-parts in Ewe grammar, alludes to when he says that 'one could indulge in some kind of Whorfianism' (1995:796). It might be possible to explain the cross-linguistically atypical situation of Yoruba along the same lines, that is, to relate the fact that body-parts are commonly conceptualized as distinct from their owner to certain aspects of a Yoruba world view. Doing so would require a much deeper investigation however, along both the linguistic and socio-cultural axes.

2.3   Organizing principles

The body and its parts, **ara àti ẹ̀yàa rẹ̀**[50] in Yoruba, form a semantic domain. In any such domain, structure is to be found in the form of relations between lexical units; among these relations, different types can be distinguished. One type of branching hierarchy in our domain which has traditionally received much attention is that of *partonomy*[51], encoding part/whole

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[49] Tashelhiyt, a Berber language of southern Morocco, shows a pattern similar to this in that both kin terms and spatial relation terms go with a short form of possessive pronouns (e.g. *baba-s* {father 3sgposs} 'her father', *eddaw-s* {under 3sgposs} 'its underpart'), whereas body-part terms and all other kinds of possession go with the longer form (e.g. *ixf-nn-s* {head poss 3sgposs} 'her head', *tigmmi-nn-s* {house poss 3sgposs} 'her house'). However, most spatial relation terms in Tashelhiyt are not derived from body-part terms.

[50] **ara àti ẹ̀yàa rẹ̀** {body and part 3sgPOSS} 'the body and its parts'

[51] In the literature, there are two terms for this type of branching hierarchy, corresponding to two slightly different theoretical approaches: (1) *partonomy* (a back-formation from 'parton' (pl. *parta*) in analogy to *taxonomy*), which found its way into linguistic vocabulary through the work of Cecil H. Brown (Brown et al. 1976:81; Brown 1976:401); and (2) *meronymy* (derived from the Greek *meros* 'part'), which was introduced in Cruse's (1986) Lexical Semantics. Although meronymy contrasts nicely with *mereology*, the branch of logic that deals with part-of relationships in ontology, I will stick with the more commonly used partonomy here.

relationships. In Yoruba, as in virtually every language, partonomy plays a role in the organisation of the domain of body-part terms.[52] However, other types of organisation are found as well, for example taxonomies, locative relationships, relations of spatial contiguity, and connectedness.[53] Other structuring forces at play in the domain include natural salience and functional salience, two factors that determine the relative prominence of terms (as outlined in §1.2.4 above).

2.3.1 Partonomic structures

A subset of Yoruba body-part terms is organized partonomically. The part-of relation can be expressed in various ways in Yoruba. Two common constructions are given in (45a-b). Example (45c) shows that the relation is not captured by a simple expression of possession using **ní** 'to have'.

45	a	**orí**	**wà**	**l'ára**	**ara** [< ní ara ara]
		head	be	in-whole	body

         'orí is a part of ara'

	b	**orí**	**wà**	**nínú**	**èyàa**	**ara** [< ní ínú èyàa ara]
		head	be	in-inside	part	body

         'orí is among the parts of ara, is one of the parts of ara'

	c	*	**ara**	**ní**	**orí**
			body	have	head

         * 'the body has a head', cf. **mo ní oko** 'I have a farm'

Two things are to be noted about the construction in (45a), **X wà l'ára Y**, meaning 'X is part of Y'. First, the word **ara** (which we already met in its function of referring to the human body) is employed here in a more general sense as 'the main part of something' (Abraham's (1958) definition; I am glossing it as 'whole'). The second thing to be noted concerns the change of **ní** 'in, on, at' into **l'** before **ara** (the high tone of **ní** is preserved, yielding **l'ára**). In natural speech, this change always occurs (cf. also §1.1.1); in fact, the fully spelled out form looks and sounds awkward to native speakers, although it is not considered wrong. In accordance with Yoruba orthography, I will just give the elided form in all examples that follow. A literal translation of this construction would be 'X is in Y's whole', i.e. when talking about Y as a whole, X is in it. The most common way to express this state of affairs in English is 'X is part of Y'. The second construction is somewhat more elaborate. It involves a special word for part, member, or category: **èyà**, used in conjunction with **ara** which in (45b) means 'body' but in other part-of expressions 'whole'. Thus, it is quite literally a 'part-whole' construction. **Èyà** 'part' must be

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[52] Many authors have pointed out the dominance of partonomy as an organizing principle in this domain, cf. Brown et al. 1976:81; Andersen 1978:347; Schladt 1997:56, to name a few. There is nothing surprising about it, of course, seeing that the domain has been defined from the beginning as one of *parts* of a whole, not of *types* or *kinds*. For a view that puts more emphasis on other organizing principles, see Palmer & Nicodemus 1985; see also §3.1.1 for more discussion.

[53] Recently, in cognitive onomasiological approaches the broad term *engynomy* has come into use to cover part/whole relations and similar relationships of contiguity like cause/consequence, producer/product, activity/place (cf. Koch 2001:1155).

used together with **ara**; (46a) sounds strange, since **itan** is not 'in part of the leg', but 'among the parts of the whole of the leg' (46b).

46   a   ? **itan wà nínú ẹ̀yà ẹsẹ̀**
            thigh be in-inside part leg
            'itan is in part of the leg'

       b   **itan wà nínú ẹ̀yàara ẹsẹ̀**
            thigh be in-inside part-whole leg
            'the thigh is among the parts of the leg'

In (47a-c), a few more examples are given of sentences expressing partonomic relations.

47   a   **ọwọ́ wà l'ára apá**
            hand be in-whole arm
            'the hand is part of the arm'

       b   **ojú wà l'ára orí**
            face be in-whole head
            'the face is part of the head'

       c   **ìka wà l'ára ọwọ́**
            finger be in-whole hand
   'the finger is part of the hand'
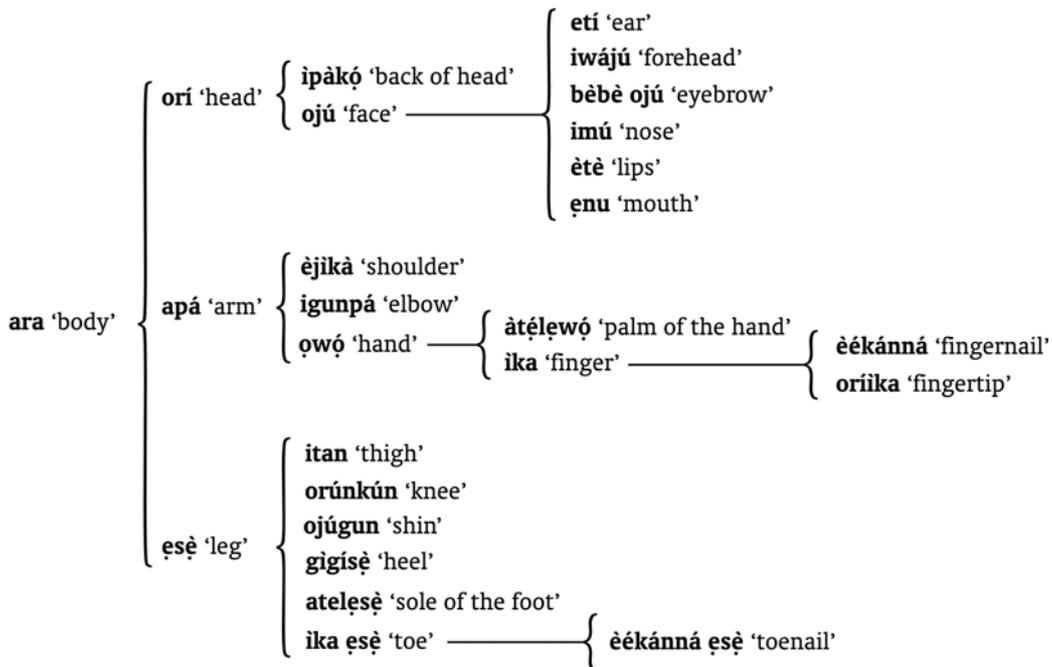
Figure 2.5 – Tentative partonomy

Figure 2.5 presents a tentative partonomy of those Yoruba body-part terms that enter into part/whole-relations.[54] One of the issues concerns **ojú** 'eye/face'. A semantic extension or shift from EYE to FACE is quite common cross-linguistically (cf. Wilkins 1993, Heine & Kuteva 2002:129, Schladt 1997; see also §3.1.3), so this is how the polysemy of **ojú** might be accounted for. I presume that it is this polysemy that results in anomalies like the one below; to a native speaker, (48) makes no sense. When faced with (49) instead, one informant said: "Intuitively right, but it lands on me like a strange statement".

48 * **ojú₁ wà l'ára   ojú₂**
    ojú   be in-whole ojú
    'the eye₁ is part of the face₂' (oju₁: pointing to eye; oju₂: pointing to face as a whole)

49 ? **ẹyínojú wà l'ára   ojú₂**
    eyeball   be   in-whole face
    'the eyeball is part of the face'

50 **ẹyínojú wà ní orí/agbárí**
    eyeball   be   in head/skull
    'the eyeball is in the head/skull'

The strangeness of (49) probably is partly due to the fact that **ojú₂** 'face' is conceptualized as 'all of the front of the head' (cf. 14b above) while the use of 'eyeball' is a very specific reference to an object that isn't properly thought of as 'part of the front of the head'. Indeed, **ẹyínojú** is more appropriately regarded as being 'in the head' or 'in the skull' (50).

Another question to be asked concerns the transitivity of the partonomical relation. Are part/whole-relations among Yoruba body-part terms transitive, i.e., given (51a-d), does (52) make any sense?

51 a **oríìka   wà l'ára   ìka**
       fingertip be   in-whole finger
       'the fingertip is a part of the finger'

    b **ìka   wà l'ára   ọwọ́**
       finger be in-whole hand
       'the finger is part of the hand'

    c **ọwọ́ wà l'ára   apá**
       hand be   in-whole arm
       'the hand is part of the arm'

    d **apá wà l'ára   ara**
       arm be   in-whole body
       'the arm is part of the body'

52 ?? **oríìka wà l'ára   ara**
    fingertip be   in-whole body
    'the fingertip is a part of the body'

---

[54] The diagram should be read from right to left, i.e. **oríìka** 'fingertip' is a part of **ìka** 'finger', etc. It should be noted that this partonomy is based on the judgements of only two native speakers.

As was noted already by Andersen (1978:348n17)[55], the transitivity of partonomic relations only holds to a certain degree. Any native speaker will tell you about (52) that "you don't say that". An explanation is offered by Langacker's notion of *immediate scope* (as cited in Croft & Cruse, 2004:23): in the hierarchy **oríika { ìka { ọwọ́ { apá { ara**, each term has scope over its immediate successor. Part/whole expressions like the ones in (51a-d) are perfectly right if they limit themselves to a term and its immediate successor only; they sound odd when the greater whole does not belong to the immediate scope of the part, as is the case in (52). In Langackers' theory, the immediate scope of a term is a function of our conceptualization.

Another reason for the occassional intransitivity of 'partonomic' relations is the fact that part-of constructions can cover other relationships. McClure (1975:84 as cited in Brown 1976:407) gives the following example: "teeth are parts of mouths, mouths are parts of faces, but teeth are not parts of faces". The reason for the anomaly of this English-language inference is that teeth are more appropriately regarded as 'in the mouth', and that the 'part of'-terminology here in fact covers a locative relationship. Which brings us to the next section.

2.3.2 Other organizing principles

The semantic domain of body-part terms is governed by the complex interaction of many different organizing principles. Although in many languages, partonomy seems to play some role, it is important to note that it never covers the whole domain —unless of course one restricts the domain to terms included in the partonomy, as seems to be done in most if not all studies claiming the universality of partonomy (cf. Brown 1976:401, Andersen 1978:384; see also §3.1.1). Thus, only a subset of the body-part terms of Yoruba takes part in the tentative partonomy presented in Fig. 2.5 above.

As argued by Palmer & Nicodemus (1985), another important organizing principle is that of spatial orientation, or location. This principle is significant in Yoruba too. Teeth, for example, are not 'part of the mouth': they are in the mouth (53a,b).

53	a	* **ehín wà l'ára ẹnu**
		teeth be in-whole mouth
		'teeth are part of the mouth'
	b	**ehín wà nínú ẹnu**
		teeth be in-inside mouth
		'teeth are in the mouth'
54		**ahọ́n wà nínú ẹnu**
		tongue be in-inside mouth
		'the tongue is in the mouth'
55		**abíyá wà l'ábẹ́ apá**
		armpit be at-under arm
		'the armpit is under the arm'

---

[55] And in McClure (1975), as cited in Andersen (1978) and Brown (1976).

Similarly, **ahọ́n**, the tongue, is in the mouth just like the teeth (54), and **abíyá** 'armpit' is under the arm (55). However, there is a distinction to be noted. The teeth, **ehín**, can be thought of as something (or, properly speaking, a group of things, the individual teeth) occupying space, and having a certain form and function. Delanọ's definition is instructive: first, the teeth are defined as 'standing in the mouth' (location/orientation), and secondly they are 'used to eat' (function).

56 a **ehín = eegun ti ó gbé ẹnu ró ti a ń fi jẹun** _D

     teeth = bone REL 3sg inhabit mouth stand REL 1pl IMPF use eat

     'tooth = the bone which stands in the mouth, which we use to eat'

   b **ehín rè ta** _{ADb48}

     teeth 3sgPOSS protrude

     'his teeth protrude'

Abíyá 'armpit' on the other hand is quite different. It is more of a location than a thing. It does not have a function; it is not part of anything, it is just a place on the body, under the arm, where one typically has hair, **irun abíyá**. More specifically, it is the corner between one's arm and one's side (57). The inherent locative nature of **abíyá** is borne out grammatically by the fact that it normally occurs in A3-constructions, where it functions to specify the locus of some action (see §2.2.3 above, example (41) is repeated as (57b) below).

57 a **abíyá = kọ̀rọ̀gun ti o wà láàrin apá ati ihá** _{D2}

     armpit = corner REL 3sg be in-centre arm and side

     'armpit = the corner that is between the arm and the side'

   b **ó rìn mí l'ábíyá** _{ADb31}

     3sg tickle 1sgDO in-armpit

     'she tickled my armpit' (lit. 'tickled me at armpit')

Some body-parts are not just located somewhere, but they are thought of as *connecting* other parts. **Ọrùn**, the neck, is a good example: it supports the head (58), and connects it to the rest of the body (59). In this respect, it is very similar to certain other parts or places of the body ('wrist and 'ankle'), which accordingly are named **ọrùn-ọwọ́** and **ọrùn-ẹsẹ̀** respectively.[56]

58 **ọrùn ló gbé orí dúró** _{S226}

    neck be·EMPH carry head stand

    'it is the neck that supports the head'

59 **ọrùn = apá ara tí o so orí mọ́ ara iyókù** _{D165}

    neck = part body REL 3sg tie head onto body rest

    'neck = the body-part that connects the head to rest (of the body)'

Less clearly perceptible elements of the body such as bones and blood, along with 'diffuse body-parts' like skin and hair were called 'building blocks' by Brown (1976) to account for the fact that these terms do not fit neatly into partonomies. As Schladt (1999:391ff.) points out, the main problem is probably the fact that they are unlocalizable, as they do not have a certain

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[56] Apart from connection, there is another functional similarity: the wrist and the ankle, just like the neck, make it possible to *rotate* the body-part they are connecting to the body. Thanks to Gijske for pointing this out.

position in the body but may occur everywhere. Schladt (1997:57) notes that these terms do enter into taxonomies, which is the final organizing principle to be discussed here: individual bones like **eegun ẹ̀hìn** 'spine', **eegun ìhà** 'rib', **eegun àgbọ̀n** 'jaw', **igbá àyà** 'chest bone' are all *types of* **eegun** 'bone'. Likewise, **irun abíyá** 'hair of armpit', **irun ètè** 'moustache' and **irun ipénpéjú** 'eyelash' are all kinds of **irun** 'hair'.

2.4 The body as a whole

In the preceding sections, the emphasis has been mostly on the body and its parts as a lexical domain. Even though this *modus operandi* has proven useful to find out about names for body parts and to uncover certain relationships, it should not be forgotten that essentially, it is a level of abstraction at which body parts are lifted out of their usual context. What, then, is their usual context?

Ara, in Yoruba thought, is the physical body. Oladipo defines it as 'a collective term for all the material components of a person' (1992:15), and in Gbadegesin's words it is 'the physico-material part of the human being' (2003:175). As such, it includes both external parts (**apá**, **ẹsẹ̀**, **orí**, etc.) and internal components (**ọkàn** 'heart', **ikùn** 'stomach', **ifun** 'intestine', **ọpọlọ** 'brain', etc.). The external parts serve to help us function in the world, as the functional definitions culled from Delanọ in (60a-c) show. Afoláyan (2004:191-2) describes some important notions connected to **ojú** 'eye', including **ojú inú** {eye inside} 'inner eye' (a term that seems roughly similar in meaning to English *insight*) and **ojú riro** {eye painful} 'painful eye' (a symbol of laziness, lack of initiatives, and a manifestation of apathy towards work). Likewise, **ọwọ́** 'hand' is connected with skills, and **ọwọ́ yiya** {hand swift} 'swiftness of hand' implies mastery of an act or a learning process (*ibid.*, 196).

60 a **ojú** = **ẹ̀yààra   ìríran** _{D150}
eye = part-body vision
'the part of the body used for seeing'.

b **ọwọ́** = **apá ara   tí   a   ń   fi   di   ń   kán mú** _{D167}
hand = part body   REL   1pl   IMPF use   to   IMPF hold things
'part of the body which we use to hold things'

c **ẹsẹ̀** = **ibi   tí   a   ń   fi   rìn** _{D75}
leg = thing   REL   1pl   IMPF use   walk
'that which we use to walk'

The internal components of the body play interconnected roles to ensure the survival and proper functioning of **ènìyàn**, the person. Some of them will be discussed in more detail below.

2.4.1 Some crucial internal components of the body

Among the internal components, some are considered particularly fundamental. One of them is **ọkàn**, which one usually finds translated as 'heart'. Purely anatomically, **ọkàn** is seen as the organ responsible for the pumping and circulation of blood (**ẹjẹ̀**) through the body. At the same time, **ọkàn** is conceived of as the source of emotional and psychic reactions. For Gbadegesin (2003:176,182), this is a reason to place it on one level with **emi**, **orí**, and **ara** rather than

subsuming it under the latter. I do not follow Gbadegesin in this analysis, because **ọkàn**, as the place where emotional and psychic reactions 'happen', is located inside the body nevertheless (see (61a,b) below; cf. also Oladipo 1992:17).

61   a   **ọkàn wà nínú   ara**
         ọkàn   be   in-inside   body
         'the ọkàn is located within the body'

     b   **ọkàn wà nínú   ẹ̀yàa ara**
         ọkàn   be   in-inside   parts   body
         'ọkàn is among the parts of the body / is one of the parts of the body'

62   a   **ó   l'ọ́kàn** ₐ₅₁₂
         3sg   have-heart
         'he is brave'

     b   **ọ̀rọ̀   náà dùn mí   dé   ọkàn** ₛ₂₂₀
         affair   DEM   hurt 1sgDO   reach   heart
         'that affair hurt me deeply'

     c   **ọkàn mi   wà ní   ibòmíràn** ₛ₂₂₀
         heart   1sgPOSS   be   in/at   elsewhere
         'my thoughts are elsewhere' (lit. 'my heart is elsewhere')

Some expressions exemplifying the function of **ọkàn** are provided in (62). Significantly, Delanọ in his Yoruba dictionary does not even include the physiological sense of **ọkàn**; the four terms of which his lemma consists are **ẹ̀mí**, **ẹ̀rí-ọkàn**, **ìwà**, and **ìgbésí-ayé**. The first of these, the 'life-giving essence', is discussed in §2.5.1 below; the second is usually translated as 'conscience'[57]; the third as 'character, nature, temperament, personality'[58]; and the last one as 'life'. Although the accuracy of Delanọ's description might be contested, the gist of it is that some important functions of **ọkàn** are not to be found at the physiological level.

Another term is sometimes used for heart in the physiological sense: **àyà**, which according to my informants primarily refers to the region of the chest, but by extension also to heart, as in (63a). **Ọkàn** can be used in the pure physiological sense too, as in (63b). Both sentences describe physiological rapid heartbeat, for example in fear.

63   a   **àyàà   mí   ń   lù kì-kì-kì**
         chest   1sgPOSS   IMPF   hit   IDEO
         'my heart is beating fast'

     b   **ọkàn mí   ń   lù kì-kì-kì**
         heart   1sgPOSS   IMPF   hit   IDEO
         'my heart is beating fast'

Àyà also figures in expressings relating to fear, as in (64a,b). One of the informants described this feeling of fear as follows: "The 'chest' is broken or cut (as in a string)." This is not

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[57] This compound derives from **ẹ̀rí** 'evidence' (< **rí** 'have the appearance of', related to **rí** 'see') + **ọkàn**.
[58] As in **ìwà tó hù sí mi** ₐ₃₂₈ 'the way he behaved towards me'.

something that happens to **ọkàn** (64c). However, as the same informant added, the Yoruba would encourage a person to be courageous by saying "**Mu ọkàn**" ('take heart').

64 a **ó   jáàyà** _{A341}
　　　　3sg cut-chest
　　　　'he felt afraid'

　　b **àyà   mí   já**
　　　　chest 1sgPOSS cut
　　　　'I am afraid'

　　c *****ọkàn mi   já**
　　　　heart 1sgPOSS cut
　　　　? (not used in Yoruba)

Another fundamental organ is **ọpọlọ**, the brain. It is located in the head, and it is conceived of as the center of thinking and reasoning (Gbadegesin 2003:178). Accordingly, one can say *'his brain is not complete'* of someone who is mentally retarded; and traditional healers regard a disruption in the functioning of the **ọpọlọ** as a physical cause of mental illness.

65 **ọpọlọ rẹ̀   kò pé**
　　brain 3sgPOSS NEG be·complete
　　'his brain is not complete'

A third organ recognized as fundamental by both Gbadegesin and Oladipo is **ifun**, the intestine(s). Having only one **ìfun** (or worse yet, none) is a sign of weakness and cowardice (66). Worth mentioning here is the expression **ifun doríkodò** which according to Delanọ means **òpè ènìyàn** 'ignorant person' but which I would translate rather as 'dejected' or 'heavy-hearted' (67a). **Doríkodò** can also be used on its own; it derives from **dà orí kọ odò**[59] 'turning the head downwards' (cf. 67b).

66 **kò ní ifun   n'ínú** _{A281}
　　NEG have intestine in-inside
　　'he is weak, forgetful' (he does not have intestines inside)[60]

67 a **ifun   doríkodò**
　　　　intestine doríkodò
　　　　'dejected, heavy-hearted person'

　　b **ó   dà orí   kọ   odò** _{A128} **(doríkodò)**
　　　　3sg turn head towards down
　　　　'he feels dejected'

The last term I will treat here is **inú** 'inside, belly'. Sometimes it can be translated as 'stomach', as in (68a), but that sentence can also be used if one has an indeterminate pain somewhere in the belly, suggesting that **inú** is more general than 'stomach'. The more specific word for

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[59] **Odò** 'down' is related to 'river', reflecting a common grammaticalization path in which environmental features serve as a source domain for spatial expressions (Heine 1997).

[60] The 3sg negative pronoun is ø, i.e., zero (see §1.1.2).

'stomach' is **ikùn**, derived from **kùn** 'to grunt'; accordingly, 68b is a perfectly sensible thing to say when one has a stomach-ache. As shown by the proverb in (69), the function of **ikùn** is tied to the digestion of food.

68   a   **inú   ń   lọ́   mi**

inside IMPF hurt 1sg

'I have tummy ache'

b   **ikùn   ń   lọ́   mi**

stomach   IMPF hurt 1sg

'I have stomach-ache'

69   **òrìṣà   bíi   ikùn   kò   sí** _{A299}

Orisha   like   stomach NEG be

'there is no Orisha (as lucky as) the stomach' (for the latter receives offerings every day)

70   a   **inú   rẹ̀   dí** _{R214}

inside 3sgPOSS blocked·up

'he bears grudges' (his inside is blocked up)

b   **bá   inú   sọ   má   bá   ènìyàn sọ** _{R214}

AUX   inside tell   IMP·NEG AUX   person tell

'tell your inside, don't tell people', i.e. 'keep your own counsel'[61]

c   **inú   bí   mi**

inside stir·up 1sgDO

'I felt angry'

d   **inú   mí   dùn** _{A144}

inside 1gPOSS be.sweet

'I felt happy'

d   **inú   mí   bàjẹ́** _{R128}

inside 1sgPOSS spoilt

'I am upset'

e   **ìrònú** _{A571} < **rò** 'stir' + **inú** 'inside'

'reflection, cogitation'

Inú 'belly, inside' figures in a host of expressions relating to emotional and cognitive states and qualities of persons. A selection is given in (70) above. The generality of **inú** as compared to **ikun** 'stomach', the wide variety of functions ascribed to it, as well as the overlap of some of these with other internal organs might be explained partly by understanding **inú** more like a *containing region* ('the inside') than a discrete internal body-part.[62] This also accords with

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[61] For lack of a better option, I have glossed **bá**, which is combined with a great many verbs in ever so many senses, as AUX here. Abraham (1958:87, bá D.) does the same; Ward devotes a chapter to its uses (XIV) and treats it as 'a verb used always in a double verb construction'. This **bá** is not to be confused with low-tone **bà** which occurs together with **jẹ́** in (70d).

[62] If **inú** is taken to be more of a general containing region than a discrete internal organ this might also be the reason that Gbadegesin and Oladipo treat **ọkàn** 'heart', **ọpọlọ** 'brain' and **ìfun** 'intestine' as important internal components of the body, but skip **inú** (Oladipo (1992:16) does say that psychic functions are attributed to 'almost all the internal organs'.)

Afoláyan's description of **inú** as 'a huge storage space that houses wisdom and words of knowledge' (2004:193).

A deeper investigation of these matters, involving for example a comparison of the functions ascribed to certain internal components of the body, is very much needed; I regret to say that this falls outside the scope of the present study. A few very preliminary generalizations are offered in Table 2.3 below, keying some internal body-parts to the functions they are connected with. In earlier treatments, a distinction has often been made between the physiological function of the internal body-parts on the one hand and their function in emotion and thought on the other hand; however, further investigation should provide more insight as to the desirability of this distinction.[63]

body-part / locus	ọpọlọ 'brain'	ọkàn 'heart'	àyà 'chest'	ikùn 'stomach'	inú 'belly, inside'	ifun 'intestine'
used in expressions about	thought; (when absent/impaired:) mental illness	heartbeat; courage; strength	heartbeat; fear	digestion of food; its sound (**kùn** 'to grunt')	good feelings (sweet); bad feelings (blocked); anger (stirred up); thinking	(lack of:) cowardice
example nr.	65	61, 62, 63b	63, 64a,b	68b, 69	68a, 70	66, 67

Table 2.3 – Some internal parts and their functions

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[63] In this respect, some philosophical accounts seem to fall prey to the very Cartesian dualism they are arguing to be inconsistent with traditional African beliefs. Cf. for example Gbadegesin's (2003:176-179) discussion of ọkàn, in which the recurring comparison to Webster's definitions of English 'heart' and 'mind' muddles the issue rather than clarifying it. More seriously, despite the initial cautionary note concerning 'inadequate prejudgements concerning resemblances between English-language and Yoruba-language philosophical discourses' (*ibid*., 175), no Yoruba-internal reason is given for the final distinction arrived at, that between the physiological ọkàn and some 'invisible source of thought and emotions which is quite distinct from the physical heart' (*ibid*., 177); see also Oladipo 1992:16ff.).

2.5   The body as a part: the Yoruba concept of ènìyàn[64]

Although the emphasis of the present study is on the physical body and its parts in Yoruba, this is by no means an isolated entity in Yoruba. **Ara** is just one of the elements of **ènìyàn**[65], the person in Yoruba. Much has been written already about the Yoruba conception of a person. Here, I will try to sketch the common Yoruba understanding of **ènìyàn** and its components, mainly based on the literature, but talked through with a number of native Yorubas.

2.5.1   The three main elements of ènìyàn

The common Yoruba view takes **ènìyàn** to consist of three main elements: **ara**, **è̩mí** and **orí**. The first of these elements has been discussed at some length in the preceding section; the only thing we need to keep in mind here is that it is the physical component of the person. **È̩mí** is the life-giving essence[66], invisible and intangible. This component is understood best by looking at how it comes to form part of the **ènìyàn**. First the body is made by *Orìsà-nlá*, the arch-divinity. After the construction of the lifeless body, *Olódúmarè*, the supreme deity, breathes **è̩mí** into it, thereby endowing it with life. **È̩mí** thus is the principle of life (in fact the English expression *breath of life* might be the best translation equivalent available); it is understood as a portion of Olódùmarè's divine breath. Having **è̩mí** makes one a child of the deity and therefore worthy of protection from harm (Gbadegesin 2003:178). The continued presence of **è̩mí** is manifested by **èémí**, the physically identifiable breath of a person; both words are related to **mí** 'to breath/the act of breathing'.[67] Accordingly, when a person dies, the fact that there is no **èémí** 'breath' anymore is the physical manifestation of the fact that his **è̩mí** has been recalled by Olódùmarè.

After being endowed with **è̩mí**, the person in the making (**ara** + **è̩mí**) is still incomplete, as it lacks the **orí**. It then proceeds to the house of *Ajàlá*, the 'potter of orí', for the choice of an **orí**. The **orí** is the individual destiny of a person, the course of life. We have come across **orí** before as the term for the physical head; it should be made clear that it is not, however, the physical head that is chosen in this stage. The physical head is part of the human body as it is crafted by *Orìsà-nlá*, so it already forms part of the person in the making that has to choose its destiny. Thus, **orí** is a polysemous term; it can be used for the physical head, but also for the inner head.

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[64] Much of the discussion here draws on the excellent and thoughtful studies by Segun Gbadegesin (2003[1991]) and Olusegun Oladipo (1992). Oyeshile (2002) and Kaphagawani (2004) provide broader comparative views. Salami (1991) is mainly an attempt to reconcile the constituents of **ènìyàn** with concepts from traditional Western philosophy of mind, an enterprise for which I fail to see the need.

[65] In earlier times often spelled **ènìà**, by Abraham **ènìò̩n**; optionally abbreviated to **èèyan**.

[66] The dominant translation of this term in the philosophical literature is 'life-giving principle', but I agree with Dr. Femi Babalola that 'essence' is a better word to use in this case, so I have adopted his suggestion.

[67] Gbadegesin (2003:178-9) argues coherently for the difference between **è̩mí** 'life-giving essence' and **èémí** 'breath', but his account is somewhat hampered by the fact that the typographical distinction between /e̩/ and /e/ is lost in his paper. I consider this a most unfortunate omission, but it seems customary in papers discussing African philosophical and artistical concepts to omit any diacritic marks that might be of help to the reader (tone of course is rarely marked, too – although it *is* in Gbadegesin 2003).

A more specific term for the latter is **orí inú** {head inside}.[68] It is the **orí inú** that is chosen in the house of *Ajàlá*. The fact that **orí inú** is spiritual can also be seen from the fact that the following is nonsensical:

71	*orí	inú	wà	nínú	èyàa	ara
	head	inner	be	in-inside	part	body

     'the inner head is among the parts of the body / is one of the parts of the body'

Accounts of this process sometimes differ in the exact nature and order of the events, but in the most common version, we get the picture of numerous orí's all tied to different destinies; the person in the making kneels down to choose one that appeals to him or her, without knowing anything about the destiny tied to it (Makinde 1985:58-60; Gbadegesin 2003:180; Jegede 2002:324; Salami 1991:6-7).[69] Despite the fact that one essentially is ignorant about the destiny one chooses, both trouble and good times in one's life are attributed to one's choice of **orí**. This is why Ṣàngó, in Duro Ladipọ's dramatization of the traditional Yoruba story on how he became a god, cries out 'save me, o my orí!' (72a) when he realizes the havoc he has done in Ọ̀yọ́; only to complain that 'the orí, which one follows into the world, treats one as it likes' (72b) (examples from Ladipọ 1972:130-31). Similarly, (73) shows that having a good wife can be ascribed to one's **orí**.

72	a	gbà	mí,	oríi	mi	o!
		save	1sg	head	1sgPOSS	EXCL

     'Save me, o my *orí*!'

	b	orí	a	bá	wáyé	ló	ń	ṣeni	bó ti wù	ú
		head	REL	join	be.born	be·EMPH	IMPF	do·to·one	as it please	3sgDO

     'The *orí*, which one follows into the world, treats one as it likes'

73	mo ní	orí obìnrin A480

    73 mo ní orí obìnrin _{A480}

     1sg have orí wife

     'I'm lucky in having a good wife'

The immense importance of the concept of **orí** in Yoruba culture is seen, among other things, in the oft-noted prominence of the head in Yoruba art. For example, Drewal et al. (1989:26ff.) note that in Yoruba sculpture, the size of the head size is often enlarged in relation to the body. Another sign of the importance attached to **orí** is the shrine many people kept traditionally,

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[68] Of course, it is no coincidence that the same term is used, cf. Gbadegesin (2003:180): '…*orí* is considered vital even in its physical character (…). The postulation of a spiritual *orí* beyond this physical *orí* is in recognition of this.' (Afoláyan 2004:190 makes the same point.) In other words, the physical head is taken to *symbolize* the inner head.

[69] Gbadegesin mentions another version, in which 'it is the *orí* itself, as a full personality, that kneels down to make the choice of destiny' (*op.cit.*, 180). He then proceeds to propose a synthesis of the two versions: 'to do this one may allow that what is meant by the choice of *orí* here is that the individual (*ara + èmí*) kneels down before *Olódùmarè* to choose, by verbal declaration, what he/she would be or do in the world' (*ibid.*). Although interesting, I think this synthesis has to be ruled out because it is irreconcilable with the insistence of the other sources cited above on the fact that the destiny is unknown. Makinde (1985) argues that the choice made is not a *free choice i*n the technical sense precisely because the alternatives are unknown, thus making an informed, preferentially-based choice impossible.

called **ile orí** 'house of the head', in which an object symbolizing the inner head was kept and worshipped (*ibid.*, 30). Finally, let me cite a common prayer:

74	orí	inú	mi	kò	màá	bà	tí	òde	jé
	head	inside	1sg	NEG	IMP·NEG	spoil	REL	outside	spoil

'May my inner head not spoil my outer one'[70]

2.5.2 The philosophy of balance: ìwòntúnwònsì

In a fascinating study of Yoruba dance subtitled *The Semiotics of Movement and Body Attitude in a Nigerian Culture*, Ọmọ́fọlábọ̀ Àjàyí (1998) provides among other things a broader perspective on the person in Yoruba. Although Àjàyí's subject matter falls largely outside the scope of this study, in her introductory chapter she discusses an important theme which merits mention in the context of the present section. It is the principle of **ìwòn òtún ìwòn òsì**, a theme that pervades Yoruba socio-cultural thinking. Colloquially abbreviated to **ìwòntúnwònsì**, it can be translated literally as *measure (of the) right, measure (of the) left*.[71] It is a philosophical concept of symmetrical balance, and hence moderation, in life. For instance, when the conditions are very favourable to someone, without any distressing experiences to counterbalance the good, that person should be on the look-out for the moment the negative forces will strike. Conversely, in the case of someone in whose life the negative aspects are far in excess of what is considered normal, people will wonder if it is not just a retribution for excesses committed in an earlier situation or a former life; however, steps will be taken to improve the situation and balance the scales appropriately (Àjàyí 1998:27-8). In the life of someone who has reached the state of **ìwòntúnwònsì**, the good things outweigh the bad things and vice versa. Such a person is referred to as **o dógba** 's/he is in balance'.[72] Geurts (2003) describes in detail a similar notion among the Anlo Ewe of Southern Ghana. In fact, Yoruba **ogba** 'the state of balance, of being equivalent' is very probably historically related to the Anlo Ewe term *agba* as described in Geurts (2003:4-5,102-5).

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, the body-part terminology of Yoruba was presented, and we have looked at this rich domain from different angles. Body-part terms play many different roles in the grammar of Yoruba; we have briefly considered body-part idioms, established the heterosemy of certain terms that are in use as body-part terms and as spatial relational nominals, and surveyed four common grammatical constructions involving bodily events and actions, each construction having its own characteristic semantics. From these constructions it emerged that Yoruba commonly conceptualizes body-parts as distinct from their owner, something that is atypical cross-linguistically and thus invites further investigation.

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[70] As given in Drewal et al 1989:26, tone marks and diacritics added; **bà … jé** 'spoil' is a split verb.

[71] **ìwòn** 'measure, balance' < **wòn** 'to measure, weigh' as in **ó wọn ilè** $_{S282}$'s/he has measured the place' or **ó wọn tòmátì** $_{S282}$'s/he weighed the tomatoes'

[72] **o dógba** {3sg be·in·balance} < **dé** 'reach' **ogba** 'the state of balance, of being equivalent'

The semantic domain of the body is governed by the complex interaction of many different organizing principles. Partonomy, a branching hierarchy defined by the part-whole-relationship, is one of them. A subset of Yoruba body-part terms can be thought of as being organized partonomically. Another important organizing principle is location; here, a distinction was made between distinctive parts being located somewhere (e.g. **ehín** 'teeth') on the one hand, and parts that are more properly thought of as being locations themselves (e.g. **abíyá** 'armpit') on the other hand. Other organizing principles include connection and taxonomy.

The usual context of body-part terms is **ara**, the physical body, where every part of the body has its own role. External body-parts serve to help us function in the world, and the internal components of the body play interconnected roles to ensure the survival of the human being. In Yoruba, as in many languages, emotional and personal characteristics of individuals are often attributed to body-parts. The distinction often made between a 'physiological' sense and a 'metaphysical' sense of certain internal body parts is not a straightforward one, and more research will be needed to assess its desirability.

The body itself is a part of **ènìyàn**, the person. In the Yoruba conception of a person, **ènìyàn** consists of three parts: **ara** 'body', **orí** 'inner head', and **èmí** 'life-giving essence'. The inner head stands for the individual destiny or course of life of a person, and it is symbolized by the physical head. The concept of **orí** is of immense importance in Yoruba culture. Finally, a theme pervading Yoruba socio-cultural life is that of **ìwòntúnwònsì**, a philosophical concept of balance (and hence moderation) in all things.

3   Discussion: the body in language

> *For daily puzzles of expressing meaning, the body is an abacus, a sextant, a pencil and paper.*
>
> Nick Enfield (2005:72)

In this chapter I take a step back to look at implications of the Yoruba data in the broader context of research into body-part terminology. Section 3.1 critically evaluates claims about lexical universals concerning the structure of the domain itself and certain nomenclatural principles. Section 3.2 goes deeper into the nature of body-part terms and the processes underlying their preponderance in communication. Finally, in §3.3, I enumerate issues not addressed in the present study, along with some pointers for future research.

3.1   Evaluating claims about universals

In the literature, quite a few claims can be found regarding universals in the domain of body-part terminology. The two publications most explicitly devoted to uncovering universal principles in this domain are Brown (1976) and Andersen (1978). The former lists twelve 'nomenclatural principles', the latter nine 'universals of categorization in the body-part domain' of which at least four overlap with those identified by Brown. Brown's study is based on data from 41 globally distributed languages (Brown 1976:401,422n8), while Andersen's data comes from several other treatments of body-part terminology (including Brown 1976) along with data collected from speakers of six other languages (Andersen 1978:347-8).

Some claims are uncontroversial, such as the claim that all languages have a label for 'head' (Brown 1976:405, Andersen 1978:348) or the claim that more prominent body-parts (head, hand, eye) tend to be labelled by morphologically simplex terms. Some are controversial, like the claim that partonomy is the main (or even the sole) organizing principle of the domain. Some have not been really assessed yet, for example the 'depth principle'. Rather than treating all proposed principles one by one, I have selected those which are specifically interesting in the light of the Yoruba data or in the light of analytical concerns of this study.[73]

3.1.1   *Proposed structural universals: partonomy and the 'depth principle'*

To Andersen and Brown, *partonomy* is the absolute basic organizing principle of the domain of body part terms. As Andersen puts it: 'There is a hierarchical organization to body-part domains in all languages' (i.e., a partonomy) (Andersen 1978:347). Likewise, Brown (1976) more or less implicitly assumes that all body-parts enter into a partonomy.

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[73] Sometimes I will refer to proposed universals as 'Brown's principle x' or 'Andersen, principle y'. 'Brown' refers to Brown (1976) and 'Andersen' to Andersen (1978).

However, as noted in §2.3.2, a partonomy never covers the whole conceptual domain of the body, unless of course one restricts the domain to terms included in the partonomy (and this is what both Brown (1976) and Andersen (1978) seem to have done.)[74] Thus, what we have seen in §2.3.1 is that only a subset of Yoruba body-part terms takes part in the partonomy. In fact, the partonomic organizing principle is by no means as pervasive as both Brown and Andersen suggest, as witnessed by Palmer & Nicodemus (1985) and also by the studies in Enfield, Majid and Van Staden (2006). Thus, Burenhult (2006), Gaby (2006), Pyers (2006), Terrill (2006) and Wegener (2006) failed to find much evidence for any hierarchical partonomic organization in Jahai (Mon-Khmer; Malay Peninsula), Thaayorre (Paman; Australia), ASL, Lavukaleve (Papuan; Solomon Islands) and Savosavo (Papuan; Solomon Islands) respectively, while Punjabi (Majid 2006), Lao (Southwestern Thai; Enfield 2006), Tiriyó (Cariban; Brazil/Surinam; Meira 2006), Tidore (Papuan; Indonesia; Van Staden 2006) and Yélî Dnye (Papuan isolate; Rossel Island; Levinson 2006) are like Yoruba in that only a subset of terms enters into a partonomy.

In their investigations of general features of body-part terminology, both Brown (1976) and Andersen (1978) have noted that body partonomies generally do not exceed five hierarchical levels. They believe this 'depth principle' to be related to a similar finding for ethnobiological classification. As far as I am aware, this claim has not yet been subjected to a critical evaluation (cf. Enfield 2006a:149). The assessment of this claim is the subject of the remainder of this section.

The depth principle was first proposed in Berlin, Breedlove and Raven (1973) on the basis of their research into folk biological classification. Discussing various levels (ranks) of classification, they say: 'These ethnobiological categories (…) probably number no more than five. They may be named as follows: unique beginner, life form, generic, specific, and varietal.' (Berlin et al. 1973:214-5). Although they are not explicit about it, the depth principle, like other structural features identified by them, makes most sense in the context of their work when conceived of as a function of human conceptualization, i.e. the result of the interplay of two factors: human cognitive buildup and our interaction with the environment.[75] This is also how D'Andrade (1995) interprets it: noting that according to modern biology, there are at least twelve levels distinguishable in the plant domain, he argues that '[t]his limitation [i.e. the depth principle, MD] … is due more to the limitations of short-term memory than to the structure of plants' (D'Andrade 1995:93). Significantly, the levels differ in conceptual status: taxa at the

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[74] Brown (1976) seems to have limited himself to partonomic data from the outset, cf. the following statement: 'For instance, much of the *partonomic* data supplied to me involve external rather than internal body parts, and consequently no principles concerned with the latter —if they indeed exist— are described' (1976:404; emphasis MD). Significantly, he continues: 'In effect, there is no theoretical motivation, only data limitations, underlying the choices made in discussing body parts and related principles in this study' (*ibid.*). Since Andersen (1978) based much of her proposed universals on Brown's (1976) data, the same holds for her study (cf. Andersen 1978:353).

[75] Indeed, the work of Berlin and associates is founded all throughout on the realization that human language is not simply a 'mirror of nature' but rather reflects *human conceptualization of* nature.

generic level for example represent the most salient conceptual groupings and are the basic building blocks of all folk taxonomies (Berlin et al. 1973:240).

Brown et al. (1976) take over many of the principles described by Berlin et al. (1973) and claim that they apply in some ways to non-biological domains too. The assumption is that these principles reflect 'more general aspects of human psychic unity' (1976:73). According to them, the most pervasive principle is that taxonomies rarely exceed a maximum hierarchic depth of five levels (*ibid*., 75). Based on limited data[76], the principle is furthermore applied to partonomies (*ibid.*, 81), the underlying assumption apparently being that partonomical organization is just like taxonomical classification in this respect.

As noted above, both Brown (1976) and Andersen (1978) claim that this same depth principle also applies to body partonomies. For Brown, it is the first of his twelve principles, and just like in Brown et al. (1976), he takes this to be related to certain 'parameters of human psychic unity' (Brown 1976:400,421). Andersen calls it 'perhaps the most striking universal of these partonomies' and connects it directly to the findings of Berlin et al. (1973) (Andersen 1978:348). I might add that the Yoruba data fits this principle too, extending to a maximum of five levels (as seen in Figure 2.5). Both Brown and Andersen leave it at that; to them, the universality of the depth principle has been amply demonstrated and there is nothing more to say about the number of levels in human partonomies.

But is that all there is to it? It is instructive to look at the cases in which the principle is violated. Both Brown and Andersen note that in human body partonomies that exceed five levels, the sixth level always concerns fingernail and/or toenail (Brown 1976:404; Andersen 1978:348). The first thing to note is that this is quite different from taxonomies, where 'aberrant taxa' do occur, but are generally not the same across cultures, and where taxa on a sixth level usually are the object of (culture-) specific knowledge (Berlin et al. 1973:216ff.). Given the conception of the depth principle as some constraint governed by the interplay of human cognitive makeup and human interaction with the environment, the regular sixth level in body partonomies is difficult to account for *unless* another factor is explicitly considered: the structure of the domain itself, in this case the body.

This may seem a rather trivial point to make, but recall that the depth principle was proposed (and has most plausibly been demonstrated) in the context of ethnobiological classification, where the domain (i.e. the actual diversity) is so huge that it is indeed striking that cultures all over the world alike reduce this to five levels. What I am taking issue with is the uncritical

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[76] Their extension of the principle to partonomies is based on only three actual partonomies: the Seattle 'bucket' partonomy (which has six levels however), and human anatomical partonomies from two languages. In their final conclusion, Brown et al. (1976:83) admit to having only 'limited data' supporting their claim that the depth principle also applies to partonomies.

On a sidenote, the Huastec data given (*ibid*., 81-2) includes some parta related to teeth ('incisor, canine tooth, molar') on a *sixth* level and thus seems to be an immediate counterexample, were it not for the fact that Brown in a later article notes (1976:422n12) that these were erroneously labelled parts whereas in fact they concern *kinds of* teeth, thus rescueing the depth principle for Huastec.

application of this folk taxonomical depth principle to the domain of partonomy, without due consideration being given to other factors that might have a bearing on the number of levels of categorization. Specifically, I am suggesting that the actual structure of the domain may be quite important in partonomies, more so than in folk biological taxonomies. Partonomies are usually smaller than taxonomies. Partonomies concern more clearly delimited domains than taxonomies, which can be easily extended. Knowing a part implies having knowledge about the whole (Tversky 1989, Croft & Cruse 2004:159, Wilkins 1993, Schladt 1999:39). Indeed, seeing that partonomies have more to do with wholes being decomposed than with individuals being classified, it would not be surprising at all if the structure of the whole had a bearing on the number of levels of the partonomy[77] as well as on their constituents.

Note that I have deliberately used a somewhat indeterminate phrasing to describe the relation between the structure of the domain and the resulting partonomy. This is because it has been clear from the outset that language does not simply mirror nature, but reflects *human interpretation of* nature. Thus, the fact that all people have roughly the same body (glossing over sex differences) does not make it imperative to construe that domain partonomically, or to place finger- and toenails on the deepest or furthest level of such a partonomy. Take Punjabi (Majid 2006), in which a partonomy, if one were to construe one, would have three levels with one term (the body) on level 1, 143 terms on level 2, and 4 terms on level 3 (upper arm, forearm, upper leg, lower leg, dominated by arm and leg respectively). As Majid puts it, 'it does not appear to be a very impressive hierarchy' (2006:256). To establish that there are many different ways to conceptualize the domain does not mean, however, that there is no such thing as the structure of the domain. To say so would be to subscribe to what Keller (1998:62) calls 'naïve relativism': the view that reality is 'always already' linguistically mediated. As Keller notes, if this view is true, it is also incontestable. Cross-linguistic commonalities in categorization show that there is nonetheless a lot of information about reality built into the language, and this is why I have suggested that the structure of wholes does have a bearing on the ways in which they are conceptualized.[78]

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[77] A brief digression. To begin answering this question, a broad survey of decomposable wholes could be carried out, detailing in how much hierarchical levels such wholes fall apart. Leaving aside the interesting issue of variation between subcommunities (carpenters may have more fine-grained partonomic knowledge of furniture), a cursory survey of a few everyday entities for which part/whole-relations are significant leaves the impression that, aside from the body, it actually seems quite difficult to come up with domains decomposable into more than four hierarchical levels—let alone more than five. As I take it, this is strongly suggestive of a much more down-to-earth constraint on the number of levels in partonomies.
(A few examples: table > leg (2 levels); chair > back (2 levels); guitar > fretboard > fret (3 levels); costume > jacket > pocket (3 levels); 'UB' (Leiden University Library) > 'Noordhal' (north hall) > 'OLG' (Oriental Languages and History reading room) > 'studieplek' (cellar) (4 levels); **ara** 'body' > **apá** 'arm' > **ọwọ́** 'hand' > **ika** 'finger' > **oríika** 'fingertip' (5 levels).)

[78] This also accounts for the numerous languages with fewer partonomic levels where finger- and toenail still occupy the 'deepest' or furthest level (in Tidore for instance, there are three levels, and finger- and toenail are the only terms on level three; Van Staden 2006:341).

Demoting the depth principle from 'most striking universal' (Andersen 1978) to something much more down-to-earth also opens the way to more important questions about the number of levels in body partonomies. For example, the cross-linguistic variation in the number of levels calls for an explanation which cannot be phrased in terms of a maximum number of levels, and which should not be investigated without taking into account other organizing principles. Needless to say, sensible answers to such issues can only be found through careful language-internal investigation.

3.1.2 Proposed nomenclatural universals

According to Brown's principle 2 and Andersen's principle a, *the body is labelled in all human anatomical partonomies*. While Yoruba accords with this principle (cf. **ara** 'body'), it should be noted that the universality of this principle has been challenged; as noted by Wilkins (1993:9,9n3), there are quite a few languages in which there is no single word corresponding to English 'body'; instead, in some languages the overarching term corresponds to 'human being' or 'person', and in some other languages 'body' is only a secondary meaning of a term with the primary meaning 'skin' (cf. also Enfield et al. 2006:143).

For Wilkins, this is a reason to speak of 'person parts' instead of 'body parts'. However, the Yoruba data shows that this is not in all cases a suitable alternative. The body in Yoruba is considered a part of **ènìyàn**, the person, but this does not render **ènìyàn** the unique beginner of the body partonomy, since **ara** and all its parts are unified in being of 'physico-material' quality (Gbadegesin 2003:175; see §2.4 and §2.5 for discussion) whereas **ènìyàn** 'person' transcends the physico-material. That is, parts of the body are not thought of as parts of the person (75a,b) even though the body is possessed by the person (75c). (Note that these two examples invalidate Brown's (1976:401) equation of the part-whole relationship with a possessive relationship.)

75 a ?? **ọwọ́ wà l'ára ènìyàn**
          hand be in·whole person
          'the hand is a part of the (whole of the) person'

    b **ọwọ́ wà l'ára ara**
       hand be in·whole body
       'the hand is a part of the body'

    c **ọkàn wà nínú ẹ̀yà ara ènìyàn**
       heart be in·inside parts body person
       'the heart is among the parts of the body of the person'[79]

The third nomenclatural principle proposed by Brown is the following: *all parta at level 1 (i.e. those directly dominated by 'the body', level 0) are labelled by primary lexemes*. In the context of his framework, 'primary lexemes' are monolexemic labels (Brown 1976:403), i.e. morphologically

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[79] Another marginally possible reading of this sentence, 'the heart is among the parts of the whole of the person' (where **ara** is interpreted as 'whole' rather than 'body') was rejected by my informants for 'not making sense at all'.

simplex words. The proposal holds for Yoruba, which has **orí** 'head', **apá** 'arm', and **ẹsẹ̀** 'leg' on the first level. However, I propose that this has not so much to do with the organizing principle of partonomy, but rather with prominence as determined by functional and natural salience (outlined in §1.2.4). In other words, if rephrased to take prominence into account rather than relations to other body-part terms, this principle probably holds for many more languages than those which happen to organize body-part terms (partly) partonomically. The reason would seem to lie in economy of effort: to minimize the energy expended in an utterance, speakers will tend to use shorter and/or simpler forms for things they talk about more frequently. Frequency of being talked about is determined by joint salience for the members of the speech community (see Croft 2000:75-6 and references cited there).

A minor issue concerns 'leg' and 'toe'. In the first of a series of studies, Brown and Witkowski (1981) discuss a number of widespread naming patterns (they survey 118 languages, and most of their data is drawn from dictionaries). One of the patterns concerns the common tendency to label 'toe' as 'child of foot'. Brown & Witkowski (1981:602), on the basis of the 1913 CMS dictionary[80], mention the use of 'child of foot' for 'toe' in Yoruba.[81] The English-Yoruba section of that dictionary indeed lists **ọmọ ẹsẹ̀** {child leg/foot}, along with **èyà ẹsẹ̀** {part leg/foot} (tones corrected) as translations for 'toe' (1913:191). Neither of these forms was recognized as current by any of my informants, nor are they included in any recent dictionaries. Curiously, the terms are not even included in the Yoruba-English section of the 1913 dictionary itself. The only term for 'toe' found there is **ọmọkasẹ̀** (translated as 'toes'), the colloquial speech form of **ọmọ ìka ẹsẹ̀** {child digit leg/foot}. This expression is a specific instance of the more common **ọmọ ìka** {child digit}. According to my informants, **ọmọ ìka**, with the meaning 'finger' or 'toe' depending on context or specified by adding **ọwọ́**/**ẹsẹ̀**, is used mainly when talking about just one finger or toe.

Another proposed universal concerns the labelling of fingernail and toenail: *Fingernail and toenail are always labelled according to one of two nomenclatural patterns: (a) both are labelled by the same unanalyzable primary lexeme, or (b) both are labelled by different secondary lexemes* (Brown, principle 10; Andersen, principle f, cf. also Andersen 1978:353). Thus, according to them, languages use one of two ways to label fingernail and toenail: either they give them one unanalyzable primary (i.e. morphologically simplex) lexeme, or they give them two different secondary (i.e. morphologically complex) lexemes, as in English 'fingernail' and 'toenail'.

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[80] They list their source of the Yoruba data as 'Samuel Crowther (1913) *A Dictionary of the Yoruba language*'. This is the dictionary first published in 1913 by the CMS Bookshop in Lagos. Although it incorporates a lot of data from Crowther's older dictionaries, Crowther is not the only author; as noted by Canon C. Wakeman in the introduction, 'in addition to the names of the late Bishop Crowther and the Rev. E.J. Ṣowande, those of Mrs. E. Fry and the Rev. T.A.J. Ogunbiyi ought to be specially mentioned.' A photographical reprint of the 1937 edition (the printing plates of which were destroyed in an early World War II air raid on Exeter) is especially widely distributed and has been republished as recently as 2000.

[81] They do not give the Yoruba form, only a literal approximation.

How does Yoruba fare on this proposal? The Yoruba data (see §2.1.3) seems to allow for two interpretations, both posing their own problems to this proposed principle. The first interpretation would take **èékánná** to be a vague term meaning 'nail' (i.e. not being specific as to whether the nail belongs to finger or toe). More specify can be provided by the context (the default reading of **èékánná** is 'fingernail') or by a more specific label (**èékánná ẹsẹ̀** {nail leg/foot} 'toenail'). In this interpretation, Yoruba would correspond to pattern (a), in which both fingernail and toenail are labelled by one label. The first problem this poses to the proposed universal is the existence of the more specific label for 'toenail'. Another problem is that **èékánná** does not look like a morphologically simplex lexeme given the preference of Yoruba for disyllabic words. At this point, I do not have evidence to say whether or not it is indeed a derived form.

76	**bí iná kò tán l'áṣọ, ẹ̀jẹ̀ kò ní-í tán ní èékánná** LO6
	if lice NEG finish in-cloth blood NEG HAB-FUT finish in nails
	'as long as you have lice in your clothes, your nails will remain bloody'

The second way to interpret the Yoruba data would be to go by the default reading, taking **èékánná** to mean primarily 'fingernail' (see (76) for an example). In Brown's terms, fingernail would be labelled by a primary lexeme (be it unanalyzable or not), and toenail by a secondary lexeme (**èékánná ẹsẹ̀**). This would invalidate the proposed universal, but the issue is a little more subtle than that. As we have seen, **èékánná** can also be used to refer to 'nail' in general, and it is to the word in this general sense that **ẹsẹ̀** 'leg/foot' is adjoined to form 'toenail'. Also, if one would want to be really specific, one could even say **èékánná ọwọ́** {nail hand} 'fingernail'. Importantly however, this collocation is much less common, showing that the default reading of **èékánná** is quite strong; this could be taken as an argument for the second interpretation.

Whichever interpretation is favoured (I feel there is not enough data to settle the issue), it seems that **èékánná** is more fluid in reference than would be suggested by its translation as 'fingernail'; at the same time, the strength of the default reading speaks against an analysis of the term as simply 'vague' (i.e. never specific as to whether the nail belongs to finger or toe). There are reasons to assume that this pattern is more common than suggested by Brown's binary choice. Even English, a language corresponding to pattern (b) according to Brown, shows signs of it: only in a technical (or 'constitutive') construal the word 'nail' denotes the superordinate category of fingernail and toenail; in everyday contexts of use, 'nail' most frequently refers to 'fingernail' (cf. Croft & Cruse 2004:161). Tentatively, the higher salience of fingernails might be attributed to the position and the functional importance of the hands, which makes fingernails more visible and more easily accessible than toenails.

Subtleties like this can only be uncovered by careful, language-internal investigation. In large-scale comparative studies of nomenclature based on secondary sources, they will tend to go unnoticed, resulting in 'principles' which cannot stand close scrutiny.

3.1.3 Eye and face polysemy: the case of ojú
The last claim I want to consider in the light of the Yoruba data derives from one of the Brown & Witkowski collaborations. In §2.1.1, we have seen that **ojú** is a polysemous word meaning

'eye' or 'face' depending on context. Accordingly, in a study comparing several pairs of terms across a world-wide sample of languages, Brown & Witkowski (1983) list Yoruba as one of the languages where 'eye' and 'face' reside under one label. In their study, they set out to investigate the direction of polysemy and consider possible motivations for certain polysemic patterns. Citing numerous studies of infant perception as well as lexical marking evidence, and pointing to the high natural salience of 'eye', they suggest a direction of polysemy from 'eye' to 'face' (1983:79), a suggestion that is corroborated by other cross-linguistic studies (e.g. Wilkins 1993, Heine & Kuteva 2002:129, Schladt 1997).[82] Moving into more speculative territory, they point to a correlation between this cross-linguistically relatively widespread pattern and societal scale. Recently, this claim was repeated in Brown (2001:1181):

> '[T]here is a strong relationship between societal scale and labels for 'eye' and 'face': languages nomenclaturally linking these referents tend to be associated with small-scale societies, and those separating them, with large-scale groupings.'

As they point out (Brown & Witkowski 1983:83), 'societal scale' is a summary variable composed of numerous individual variables, so a relationship between certain patterns of polysemy and this general variable is not very revealing. But one of the driving factors behind this relationship, they propose, is cultural salience:

> 'The nomenclatural uncoupling of 'eye' and 'face' in large societies may be linked to the increased importance of cultural activities associated with facial appearance such as special cleansing, hair removal, and decoration.' (Brown & Witkowski 1983:83; an almost verbatim copy of this statement appears in Brown 2001:1181)

The implication of this claim is that smaller societies will have less cultural activities associated with the face, an assumption that seems unwarranted in the absence of evidence. Indeed, a closer look at Yoruba shows that this line of argumentation does not, in fact, provide for a distinction between Yoruba and some languages where 'eye' and 'face' are nomenclaturally uncoupled. To start with, it would seem that the practice of facial markings (**ilà**) which has been common among the Yoruba for a long time, constitutes ample evidence for the cultural salience of the face. These marks, in the form of patterns of lines cut on both cheeks, signaled tribal affiliation and in some cases royal descent. Abraham in his (1958) dictionary lists at least forty different terms related to the practice of making facial markings; these include terms for different types of markings (**kẹ́kẹ́** for bold marks, **gòm̀bọ́** for faint ones), and for activities relating to the markings (**ó kọ ilàa turé** 'he cut a turé marking').

A more powerful argument for the salience of both 'eye' and 'face' in Yoruba stems from a survey of the semantic extensions of **ojú**. If only 'eye' were very salient, we should not expect to find many instances of semantic extension of the 'face' sense of **ojú**. Conversely, if expressions involving this extension are common, we may expect that the 'face' sense is quite salient (sufficiently salient, to be precise, for a speaker to put trust in it as a non-conventional

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[82] In Schladt's reading of the Brown & Witkowski collaborations (Schladt 1997:75ff.), they suggest that the existence of only one label implies that speakers do not conceptually distinguish between the two body parts. Though their point comes close to this, I have not actually found them stating as much; what they *do* suggest is that face must be of greater salience in large-scale societies that nomenclaturally distinguish between eye and face.

coordination solving device, for a hearer to understand this, and for the expression to catch on, spread through the population and be conventionalized; cf. §3.2). Expressions like **ojú ona** '(surface of the) road' and **ojú ìwé** 'page of a book', and also the label **ojúgun** {face bone} 'shin' clearly involve extensions from the 'face' pole of **ojú** along the common path of FACE > TOP/FRONT SURFACE (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002:130). Additionally, expressions like **ojú rẹ̀ bájẹ́** {face 3sgPOSS spoil} 'his face was spoilt' make clear that **ojú** is used also in the ethnographer's sense of *face* (i.e. related to positive (self-) esteem, Foley 1997:269ff.). Thus, contrary to Brown & Witkowski's (1983) assumption, it is clear that both EYE and FACE, the two poles of **ojú**, are quite salient in Yoruba culture.

3.2 On the nature of body-part terms

Body-part terms are often used to talk about other things than body parts. The explanation usually advanced for this is as commonplace as intuitive: it has to do with the primacy of bodily experience. We have come across this explanation in various guises quite a few times in the survey of previous research in §1.2. But what does it really mean to resort to this 'primacy of bodily experience'? While the preponderance of body-part terms and their derivates in communication has been widely recognized, the processes responsible for it have not received nearly as much attention. This brief section is intended as a contribution towards spelling out these processes.

Communication, in the perspective taken here, is the joint act of solving a coordination problem (Clark 1996). The coordination problem lies in the fact that speaker and hearer cannot read each other's mind, and that in speaking and understanding, they are trying to coordinate on the same meaning. A lot of our daily use of language depends on convention as a coordination solving device; as Croft puts it, '[c]onvention—whether conforming to it, violating it, or establishing it—plays a key role in language use and in language change' (Croft 2000:7; see *ibid.*:95-99 and Keller 1998:130-40 for more details on the nature of convention). Convention does not come into existence spontaneously; it needs to be established. As noted by Croft (2000:100), the first use of a word or phrase with a particular meaning is not a conventional use by definition, as it does not involve conforming to an existing community behaviour. In such cases, communication can only succeed by means of non-conventional coordination solving devices. The most important of such devices available to humans is *joint salience* (Croft 2000:100). Similarly, Keller, in discussing the costs and benefits of the metaphorical technique, writes that '[t]he risk of creative innovation is reduced by second-order regularity. The regularity of the imagery replaces the regularity of rule-based use' (Keller 1998:204).

This is where the body comes into the picture. Body-part terms provide solid second order regularity: everyone has a body, and it is easy to refer to its parts, so the body is a very suitable source domain for expressing a variety of things. The body jumps out at us, so to say, as the ultimate common ground[83] to resort to in solving our communicative coordination problems.

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[83] Although arguably the body is the ultimate common ground, it is not the only source of second-order regularity. See Sinha & Jensen de López (2000) for an extension of the embodiment hypothesis beyond the merely corporeal. As

This is what provides body-part terms with a selective advantage in the evolution of linguistic signs.

Many of the Yoruba expressions surveyed in the present study can serve as examples of this process. Thus, to give an example, we can hypothesize that quite some time ago, a Yoruba speaker found herself wanting to say something about the façade of her house (**ilé**). Lacking a conventionalized expression, she figured out that the best she could do was to put together a novel phrase using some jointly salient entity as a metaphor for what she wanted to get at. She chose **iwájú ilé**, 'forehead of the house'. Her interlocutor, recognizing that she fell back on a non-conventional coordination solving device, constructed the meaning 'front part of the house' on the basis of the regularity of the imagery she used. Moreover, precisely because of the regularity of the imagery, this metaphoric use of **iwájú** 'forehead' caught on and spread through the population. With the increase in frequency of use, the expression became more and more conventionalized so that speakers and hearers alike became less and less aware of its metaphorical nature, to the point of this use of **iwájú** becoming a distinct sense of the word, thus rendering the term polysemous (cf. §2.2.2).

Of course, this example oversimplifies things in a number of ways: for one, it idealizes the speaker-hearer scenario; also, precisely because of the selective advantage of body-part terms, we may expect this process to occur several times independently throughout the population; furthermore, people differ in their past experiences so that for one person the expression may be more conventionalized than for another; and lastly, this example focuses on one word whereas in fact it may well be that the relevant unit is a construction, or a pattern in corpus linguistic terms. However, what it hopefully makes clear is that the strategy of falling back on second-order regularity to maximize the chances of successful communication is the driving force behind the selective advantage of body-part terms.

3.2.1   *The intertwining of two representational systems*

There is one last aspect of body-part terms to which I want to call attention. For that, we first have to turn to a basic cognitive ability which humans share with many other species: the capacity to use information from the environment to preview candidate acts.[84] This capacity is described by Tomasello as follows:

> The ability of organisms to operate not only with perceptions of the environment but also with sensory-motor representations of the environment—especially object categories and image schemas of dynamic events—is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the natural world. Most importantly, it gives organisms the ability to profit from personal experience via memory and categorization and so to be less dependent on Nature's ability to foresee the future via specific, and often inflexible, biological adaptations. (Tomasello 1999:125)

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for Yoruba, we can already identify other sources of second-order regularity in certain labels for body-part terms themselves, for example in **ọpá ẹ̀hìn** 'backbone' (rod of the back) and **agbárí** 'skull' (< **igbá** 'calabash' + **orí** 'head').

[84] This goes further than just acting in real-time on the basis of direct perceptions of the environment, as it involves an inner selective environment in which the organism can 'test-run' possible behaviors or actions, thus 'weeding out the truly stupid options before risking them in the harsh world' as Daniel Dennett (1995:375-7) puts it. Dennett calls organisms with this capability (including mammals, birds, reptiles and fish) *Popperian creatures*, citing Popper who wrote that this design enhancement "permits our hypotheses to die in our stead".

Both Tomasello and Keller (1998:127-8) make a distinction between sensory-motor representation on the one hand, and language (which Keller calls, after Bickerton, a *secondary representation system*) on the other hand. Of course, 'sensory-motor representation' is a term covering many different forms of representation[85]: Tomasello mentions object categories (many mammalian species form categories of perceptual and motor experiences, Tomasello 1999:16-17) and image schemas[86]; additionally, most of the types of body knowledge surveyed in §1.2.6 fit in here. In this sense, the individual has internal sensory-motor representations of parts of the body; furthermore, it may be expected that these representations are especially salient for those body parts that are of high utility. The common feature of all of these representations is that they provide the individual with the ability to profit from personal experience in engaging with the world. Importantly, they are strictly private.

Traditionally, sensory-motor representation has been the domain of neurophysiologists and psychologists, whereas the secondary representation system humans use (language) has been the domain of linguists. Indeed, the distinction seems straightforward enough in most cases. However, the fact that the two levels can be distinguished does not mean that there is an unbridgeable gap between them. As a matter of fact, numerous recent studies show that certain body-part terms bridge this gap in interesting ways. Morrison & Tversky (2005) had participants carry out verification and similarity tasks based on different kinds of stimuli. When given a visual cue (e.g. a picture of a human arm or a picture of a human body with the arm highlighted), participants made their judgments mainly on the basis of visual distinctiveness (i.e. part distinctiveness), whereas when cued verbally (by a body-part term), their judgements were based mainly on part significance and function. Thus, naming evokes function more than visual presentation does — and function of course is intimately linked to the sensory-motor level of representation. Morrison and Tversky's conclusion is supported by fMRI/ERP experiments carried out by Rohrer (see §1.2.5), whose conclusion is that 'the semantic processing of body-part language *requires* the active participation of the sensorimotor cortices' (2001:5, emphasis in original).

There is also linguistic evidence suggestive of the importance of function in the semantic content of body-part terms. For example, as Enfield notes, 'idiomatic references to body parts often pick out precisely these functional components of meaning' (2006:196n9). This can be illustrated with a few examples from Yoruba. Thus, in (77), the 'for transport' sense of **ẹsẹ̀** 'leg/foot' is picked out; likewise, **ọwọ́** in (78) highlights the 'for doing' sense of 'hand'.

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[85] A terminological quibble: to some, the term *representation* carries with it some flavour of 'intentionality' or 'aboutness'. When understood in this sense, it evokes the philosophical problem of intentionality: how, or in virtue of what, do mental entities or structures relate to the outside world? It seems that this problem is avoided by a purely functional conception of representation as resulting from a process of *structural coupling* trough a history of recurring interactions between organism and environment (Foley 1997:9-11, citing Varela et al. 1991). Jackendoff 2002:19-21 offers an essentially similar solution from a more mentalistic perspective.

[86] See the Hampe & Grady (2006) for a recent collection of papers on the multifarious notion of image schema.

77 ẹsẹ̀   gìrìgìrì   ni ilé   àńjòfẹ́ _{O130}

legs/feet IDEO(go fast) to house abundance

'many hurry to the house where free food and drinks are available'

78 ó   ràn mi   l'ọ́wọ́ _{R22}

3sg help 1sgDO in-hand

'she helped me' (lit. 'she helped me in hand')

The reason expressions like this work so well is essentially the one outlined above: the strong functional component of the meaning of certain body-part terms is part of the common ground that helps communication succeed. What is interesting about this special case however is that something that is exclusively private (namely, sensory-motor representation) can apparently be of joint salience to speaker and hearer. This really reveals the power of human language, the secondary representation system, in that it affords its users the possibility to tap into the resources of personal experience. Body-part terms thus are a special kind of linguistic signs: they represent the intertwining of the private system of sensory-motor representation on the one hand, and the public, socially constituted system of human language on the other hand.

3.3 Threads left open in this study and directions for future research

As is inevitable in dealing with such a multifaceted domain as the human body and the way it figures in language, I have left a number of threads open. What follows is a partial list of such issues, some of which have been treated by others, and all of which would seem to merit deeper investigation in future research.

- *Clothing terms*. Vocabulary related to (actions of) clothing often provides a window on how the body is conceptualized. Rowlands (1969:62) lists some examples of general expressions related to clothing. A cursory glance at his data suggests that Yoruba has a lot of specific verbs used for different items of clothing – **wọ̀** for wearing clothes in general, **dé** ('cover') for putting on a cap, **dì** ('tie') for putting on a tie, **wé** ('twist') for wearing a head-tie, **ró** ('drape') for wearing a bright cloth Yoruba style, and so on. An example of a detailed study in this domain is Renne (1996) on virginity cloths and the related notions of virginity (**ìbálẹ́**) and bodily practice.

- *Health*. Cultural conceptions of health and illness (and the role of the body and its parts therein) determine how these issues are talked about and hence have a potential bearing on language structures. Although Yoruba notions of health and illness have been studied in some detail (see for example Jegede (2002) on health and illness in general and Jegede (2005) on the conception of mental illness and the notion of **were**), the connection with language structures has not yet been made. An issue worth investigating would be the relationship between cultural notions of bodily actions and events and the linguistic constructions available in Yoruba to express these matters.

- *Extensional aspects of body-part terms*. To what part of **ẹsẹ́** 'leg/foot' does **itan** 'thigh' refer exactly? From where to where does **apá** 'arm' run exactly? We have not much reason to expect that the boundaries of these terms are precisely the same as their English translation equivalents. One way to tackle this problem is to stipulate that the boundaries

are not clear to the speakers anyway (Brown 1976:402), but such a claim needs to be backed up by evidence. Yoruba provides a counterexample: **apá**, for example, includes the **èjìkà** 'shoulder' (see Figure 2.5), whereas in English, the shoulder is not normally considered a part of the arm. An interesting method to investigate this issue is the Body Colouring Task developed by Miriam van Staden and Asifa Majid (Van Staden & Majid 2006), a colouring in task which provides the researcher with the means to directly compare speaker judgements about the extensional meanings of body-part terms.

- *Historical comparative aspects of the body-part terms of Yoruba*. As evidenced by Wilkins (1993), historical-comparative study of this domain can yield insight in the nature of semantic change and in the history of particular body-part terms. An example of a term worth investigating would be **ojúgun** 'shin' (derived from **ojú** 'face/front' + **eegun** 'bone'), which may or may not constitute evidence for the tendency described by Witkowski & Brown (1985:204) of certain languages to have bone/leg polysemy (this label is interesting because it would seem to make more sense if **eegun** in the associative construction **ojú eegun** was 'leg' (yielding 'front of leg') rather than 'bone' (?'front of bone').

- *Emotion terminology*. Body parts (or in some cases terms historically related to them; Enfield 2002b) figure often in talk about personal feelings and emotions. Some examples were given in §2.2.3 and in §2.4.1; some more can be found in Appendix II and in Rowlands (1969:127-31). Needless to say, a systematic study of ways of expressing and talking about emotions in Yoruba would involve looking beyond body-part terms to the complex domain of emotion terminology as a whole (see the collection of papers in Enfield & Wierzbicka 2002).

- *Prominence effects / canonical body-parts*. An investigation into the relative prominence of body-part terms (as Schladt 1997:69-74 carries out, for example) could throw more light on the functional and natural salience of body-part terms. As a very preliminary result, it could be mentioned that all informants of my admittedly small sample mentioned **orí**, **apá**, and **ẹsẹ̀** (in that order) when asked to name exemplary parts of the body. Additionally, the high functional (including cultural) and natural salience of **orí** 'head' makes it very probable that that term will virtually always be named first.

- *Grammaticalization paths involving body-part terms*. Grammaticalization chains involving body-part terms found in Yoruba include HEAD > TOP (**orí**); FOREHEAD > FRONT (**iwájú**); ARM > SIDE > PART (**apá**); BACK > BEHIND (**ẹ̀hìn**); BELLY > INSIDE (**inú**); BODY > REFLEXIVE (**ara**); EAR > EDGE (**etí**); FACE > TOP/FRONT SURFACE (**ojú**). A few cases have been documented in §2.2.2 and some additional examples are provided in Appendix I. A systematic investigation of the grammaticalization paths body-part terms enter in would throw light on the semantic content of the terms themselves.

4 General conclusions

The semantic domain of the body in Yoruba is rich and multi-faceted. I have tried in chapter 2 to do justice to this richness by approaching it from different angles. Some key findings of that chapter are iterated here, followed by an overview of the most important points developed in chapter 3.

4.1 Body-part terms in Yoruba

2.1

Body-part terms play many different roles in the grammar of Yoruba, in idioms as well as in expressions about bodily events and actions. With regard to the latter, four common constructions have been established on the basis of a corpus of about 100 utterances. In the first two, the body-part term assumes the grammatical role of subject and the focus is on a quality (A1) or an activity (A2) of the body-part. Semantically, construction A1 is quite diverse, while a central property of construction A2 is that it is used for situations that come about involuntarily. In the other two constructions the body-part term does not play an active role, being demoted to a prepositional phrase (A3) or assuming the role of object (A4). In two of the constructions (A2 and A4, accounting for almost 50% of the corpus), the relation between the body-part and its owner is not expressed overtly, showing that Yoruba commonly conceptualizes body-parts as distinct from their owner. This is atypical cross-linguistically and thus invites further investigation along both the linguistic and socio-cultural axes.

2.2.1

2.2.3

In Yoruba, as in many languages, the body has served as a source domains for words expressing spatial relations. Two common examples are **orí** 'head / top' and **iwájú** 'forehead / front'. In spatial relational expressions, words like **orí** 'top' and **iwájú** 'front' are juxtaposed to their modifiers much like possessed items are juxtaposed to their possessors in the associative construction. However, contrary to common conception, it is not the case that "spatial relations are expressed by body-part terms" in Yoruba. Semantic and syntactic differences show that these *spatial relational nominals* do not function like ordinary body-part terms, and that they are only historically related to body-part terms.

2.2.2

A subset of Yoruba body-part terms can be thought of as being organized partonomically. There are two constructions expressing this relationship. Another important organizing principle is location; here, a distinction was made between distinctive parts being located somewhere (e.g. **ehín** 'teeth') on the one hand, and parts that are more properly thought of as being locations themselves (e.g. **abíyá** 'armpit') on the other hand. Other organizing principles include connection and taxonomy.

2.3.1

2.3.2

In Yoruba, as in many languages, body-part terms often figure in expressions about personal and emotional characteristics of individuals. Certain internal components of the body are especially important in this respect; to pick out two examples: **ọkàn** 'heart' is next to its physiological role also connected to positive personality traits like 'courage' and to certain forms of thinking; **inú** 'belly/inside' occurs in a host of expressions relating to emotions and would probably qualify for the label 'seat of the emotions'. The distinction made between a 'physiological' sense and a 'metaphysical' sense of certain internal body parts is not a straight-forward one, and more research will be needed to assess its desirability.

<div align="right">2.4</div>

The body itself is a part of **ènìyàn**, the person. In the Yoruba conception of a person, **ènìyàn** consists of three parts: **ara** 'body', **orí** 'inner head', and **èmí** 'life-giving essence'. The inner head stands for the individual destiny or course of life of a person, and it is symbolized by the physical head. The concept of **orí** in both senses is of immense importance in Yoruba culture.

<div align="right">2.5.1</div>

<div align="right">2.5.2</div>

4.2 Not your garden variety lexical domain

Levinson (2006:235) raises the question whether body-part terms together form a coherent semantic field, noting that semantic fields in the literature are most often structured in terms of one major type of semantic relation and one secondary one. He discards partonomy as it only holds for a subset of body-part terms, and considers topology (i.e. connectedness) instead. However, this, too, will not cover all body-part terms, leading him to conclude that 'in any language, only some body part terms may form a coherent mereological field'. Looking back at the Yoruba data in chapter 2 and at the discussion in chapter 3, it is indeed abundantly clear that it does not make sense to look at the body as one coherent lexical or mereological field. There are two main reasons for this: first of all, the body itself is complex in structure, with some parts more obviously related to each other than others, parts having multiple functions or playing interconnected roles with other parts, and all kinds of perceptual units and discontinuities. The second reason must be sought in the absolutely central role the body plays at so many different levels in our daily life. As Enfield puts it eloquently (2005:72): 'For daily puzzles of expressing meaning, the body is an abacus, a sextant, a pencil and paper'. Since even in folk taxonomies the categorisation picture gets more blurred as the entities being categorised play a more prominent role in our life (Berlin, Breedlove and Raven 1973:216; Schladt 1999:384-5), it should not come as a surprise that the complexity of our dealings with and through the body is mirrored in our conceptualization of the domain.

And so the body is, to use a colloquialism, not your garden variety lexical domain. A critical evaluation of some proposed universals concerning the structure of the body-part domain shows that this is quite literally the case. There is much more to body-part terms than the neat branching hierarchy of partonomy along with a mysterious depth principle. Accordingly, I propose, contrary to Brown (1976) and Andersen (1978), that the number of levels in partonomies has nothing to do with

<div align="right">3.1.1</div>

the depth principle for biological taxonomies as established by Berlin, Breedlove and Raven (1973), but rather with the mereological structure of the domain itself in conjunction with the complex interaction of multiple organizing principles.

Yoruba happens to accord with the nomenclatural principle proposed by Brown (1976) that parta at level 1 (those directly dominated by the body, level 0) are labelled by morphologically simplex words. Framing this principle in terms of partonomical organization muddles the issue, however: if rephrased to take prominence (as determined by functional and natural salience) into account rather than lexical relations to other body-part terms, this principle probably holds for many more languages than those that happen to organize body-part terms (partly) partonomically. 3.1.2

The discussion of principles related to fingernail/toenail and leg/toe nomenclature in the light of the Yoruba data reveals subtleties that went unnoticed in the influential comparative studies of body nomenclature by Brown and associates. Similarly, a closer look at the polysemy of **ojú** 'eye/face' shows that both senses are quite salient in Yoruba language and culture, contradicting Brown & Witkowski's (1983) assumption that 'face' is less culturally and cognitively salient in languages where eye and face reside under one label. The overarching conclusion is that ultimately, the most interesting questions should probe beyond superficial similarities, and that sensible and rigorous answers to these questions are only to be found through careful language-internal investigation of the semantic domain of the body and the ways it is conceptualized. 3.1.3

Body-part terms are often used to talk about other things than body-part terms. From a usage-based perspective on language, the selective advantage of body-part terms lies in the fact that the body, as the biological given, is the ultimate common ground for both speaker and hearer to resort to in solving the coordination problem that is communication. A special feature of certain body-part terms is furthermore that they represent the intertwining of two representational systems at the disposal of humans: the private system of sensory-motor representation on the one hand, and the public, socially constituted system of human language on the other hand. 3.2 3.2.1

This chapter opened with the statement that the semantic domain of the body in Yoruba is a very rich domain. Once more I should add, referring to §3.3, that is impossible to treat this domain satisfactorily in the scope of a study like the present one. I nonetheless want to express the hope that the present study provides a useful step towards more and deeper investigations into the intricacies of Yoruba language and culture in specific, and into the semantic domain of the body in general.

Appendices

I   **The body as a source domain for spatial relations**

The table below lists some common words with their use as body-part term and as spatial relations. Examples of the former use can be found throughout §2.1, in §2.2.3 and in Appendix II below, examples of the latter are provided in the table. Two notes are in order:

(1) These terms do not exhaust the spatial relation terms of Yoruba, i.e. there are also such terms as **òkè** 'top' (< 'mountain'), **ilẹ̀** 'below, down' (< 'ground'), **ábẹ́** 'under', **ìhín** 'here', **òde** 'outside', etc. (see Rowlands 1969:139ff. for more; the first two exemplify environmental features as a source domain for grammaticalization, Heine 1997). More research is needed to clarify the uses of these terms and their relation to the ones mentioned below.

(2) The spatial relational sense is in most cases just one of the semantic extensions of the terms below. Some other senses are provided throughout chapter 2, but here, too, more research is sorely needed.

term	*body-part*	*spatial relation*	*example of spatial relation*
orí	'head'	'top'	**orí igi** top tree 'top of the tree'
inú	'belly, inside'	'inside'	**inú kóbódù** inside cupboard 'the inside of the cupboard' **ó wà nínú kóbódù** [R140] < **ní inú** 3sg be in-inside cupboard 'it is in the cupboard'
ẹ̀hìn	'back'	'back, behind'	**òun ló wà ní ẹ̀hìn** [S106] 3sgEMPH be·EMPH FOC be on back 'It's *him* that's behind'
ìdí	'bottom'	'bottom, base'	**ìdígi** base tree 'foot of the tree'
		'place abutting on'	**ìdí odò** [A272] ìdí river 'river bank'
apá	'arm'	'side, direction'	**tí ẹ bá dé oríta, ẹ yà sí apá òtún** [S59] where 2sg hit·upon reach crossing 2sg turn to side left 'when you arrive at the crossroad, turn to the left'
ojú	'face'	'surface'	**ojú omi ni mo wà** [A462] face water be 1sg be 'I was on the high seas'
etí	'ear'	'edge'	**omí bì lu etí òkun** [A167] water push against edge sea 'waves dashed against the shore'

II   Body-part syntax: example sentences going with §2.2.3

In the examples below, I have separated most words for the sake of clarity, but it should be noted that words frequently are run together in everyday Yoruba speech. Also, in associative clauses, the final vowel of the modified word is lengthened before consonant-initial modifiers (i.e. **apá mi** {arm 1sgPOSS} 'my arm' is actually pronounced **apáami**); this lengthening is not marked here.[87]

Construction A1: S$_{\text{BPT-1+POSS-1}}$ V (…)

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1   **ara mí bó** $_{\text{ADa120}}$
         body 1sgPOSS be.grazed
         'my skin is grazed' (lit. my body)

2   **ara mi dá** $_{\text{A120}}$
         body 1sgPOSS be.clear
         'I am well'

3   **ara mi kò dá** $_{\text{R261}}$
         body 1sgPOSS NEG be.clear
         'I am not well'

4   **ara mí yá** $_{\text{A674}}$
         1sgPOSS be.easy
         'I feel better'

5   **ara rẹ̀ fà** $_{\text{ADa33}}$
         body 3sgPOSS feel.lost
         'he is out of sorts' (lit. his body)

6   **ara rẹ̀ gbóná** $_{\text{R261}}$
         body 3sgPOSS be.hot
         'his body got hot' (he got hot under the collar, was eager to intervene)

7   **ara rẹ̀ mọ́** $_{\text{ADb16, A422}}$
         body 3sgPOSS be.clean
         'he is not a suspect' (lit. his body is clean/clear)

8   **ara rẹ̀ so** $_{\text{ADb38}}$
         body 3sgPOSS have.spots
         'his body has spots on it'

9   **ara rè sú** $_{\text{ADb38}}$
         body 3sgPOSS have.spots
         'his body has spots on it'

10   **ara rẹ̀ wú** $_{\text{ADb54}}$
         body 3sgPOSS be.swollen
         'his body is swollen'

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[87] See Ward 1952:64-9 and Rowlands 1969:44-5 for more information on this lengthening process.

11   **ara rẹ̀ yá** _{ADb59}

body 3sgPOSS be.easy

'he is happy'

12   **àyà rẹ̀ ń já** _{ADb3}

chest 3sgPOSS IMPF palpitate

'his heart is palpitating'

13   **ehín rẹ̀ ta** _{ADb48}

teeth 3sgPOSS protrude

'his teeth protrude'

14   **ẹnu mi ró pó** _{ADb25}

mouth 1sgPOSS say 'pó'

'my mouth makes the sound 'pó'

15   **ẹnu rẹ̀ dùn** _{R262}

mouth 3sgPOSS be.sweet

'his mouth is sweet' (he has a very persuasive tongue)

16   **ẹnu rẹ̀ tó ilẹ̀** _{R262}

mouth 3sgPOSS reach ground

'his mouth reaches the ground' (he is an important person whose every word carries great weight)

17   **ẹsẹ̀ mi ló dá** _{ADa27}

leg 1sgPOSS EMPH break

'I have got a broken leg'

18   **ẹsẹ̀ rẹ̀ gbun** _{ADa39}

leg 3sgPOSS be.crooked

'his leg is crooked'

19   **ẹsẹ̀ rẹ̀ kan ro** _{ADb32}

leg 3sgPOSS one limp

'one of his legs limps'

20   **etí rẹ̀ di** _{ADa31}

ear 3sgPOSS be.deaf

'he is deaf' (lit. his ear)

21   **eyín rẹ̀ ká** _{ADb9}

tooth 3sgPOSS fall·out

'his tooth fell out'

22   **inú mí dùn** _{A144}

inside·1gPOSS be.sweet

'I felt happy'

23   **inú rẹ̀ dí** _{R214}

inside 3sgPOSS blocked·up

'he bears grudges' (his inside is blocked up)

24   **inú rẹ̀ mọ́ sí mi** _{A423}

inside 3sgPOSS shine towards 1sgDO

'he is well-disposed towards me' (lit. 'his inside shone to me')

25   **inú rẹ̀ só** _{R214}

inside 3sgPOSS be.sulky

'he is churlish, sulky'

26   **ojú mi mọ́** _{R213}

eye 1sgPOSS be.clean

'my eye cleared' (said on realising too late that things have gone wrong)

27   **ọkàn rẹ̀ ko fẹ́ mi** _{A206}

heart 3sgPOSS NEG want 1sgDO

'he doesn't like me'

28   **orí rẹ̀ wú** _{ADb54}

head 3sgPOSS swell

'his head swelled' (he felt like shedding tears)

29   **ọkàn mí ń lù kì·kì·kì**

heart 1sgPOSS IMPF hit IDEO

'my heart is beating fast'

Construction A2: S_{BPT-1} V O₁

1   **ara ń fu mí** _{R214}

body IMPF suspect 1sgDO

'I felt suspicious' (lit. 'body suspecting (to) me')

2   **ara ń hún mi** _{ADb3}

body IMPF itch 1sgDO

'I have an itchy feeling' (lit. 'body itching me')

3   **ara ń ni mí** _{ADb42}

body IMPF inconvenience 1sgDO

'(my) body is inconveniencing me'

4   **ara ń ro mí** _{ADb5}

body IMPF hurt 1sgDO

'(my) body pains me'

5   **ara ń rọ̀ ọ́** _{R215}

body IMPF be.soft 3sgDO

'body is soft for him' (he has no difficulties)

6   **ara ń tu mi** _{ADb50}

body IMPF dislodge 1sgDO

'I'm feeling better' (lit. 'body is loosening up')

7   **ara ń yá mi** _{A674}

body IMPF be.easy 1sgDO

'I feel happy'

8   **ará ń rìn mi** _{A568}

body tickle 1sgDO

'I feel disheartened / I have a creepy-crawly feeling'

9   **àyà mí ń lù kì-kì-kì**

chest 1sgPOSS IMPF hit IDEO

'my heart is beating fast'

10   **ehín ń ro mí** _{A570}

teeth IMPF hurt 1sgDO

'I have toothache' (lit. teeth are hurting me)

11   **ẹsẹ̀ ń dùn mí** _{ADb18}

leg IMPF pain 1sgDO

'(my) leg is paining me'

12   **inú ń lọ́ mi** _{ADb12}

'inside IMPF twist 1sgDO

'I am having stomach-ache' (lit. inside twisting (to) me)

13   **inú ń run mí** _{ADb32}

inside IMPF hurt 1sgDO

'I am having stomach-ache'

14   **inú bí mi**

inside stir·up 1sgDO

'I felt angry'

15   **ojú kún mi** _{R212}

eye fill me

'eye filled me' (I became weary, bored)

16   **ojú ń ro mí** _{A570}

eye IMPF hurt 1sgDO

'I feel bored' (lit. eyes are hurting me)

17   **orí ń fọ́ mi** _{ADa34}

head IMPF pain 1sgDO

'I have a headache' (lit. 'head is paining me')

18   **orí ń sán mi** _{ADb37}

head IMPF ache 1sgDO

'I have a headache' (lit. head (is) aching me)

19   **orí ń yá mi** _{A674}

head IMPF be.easy 1sgDO

'I feel happy'

20   **ọ̀kàn fà mì** _{A202}

heart feel.lost 1sgDO

'I feel longing, I have a wistful feeling'

21   **ọwọ́ mí ro mí** _{A570}

hand 1sgPOSS hurt 1sgDO

'my hand pained me'

22   **ọwọ́ ń dùn mí** _{ADb18}

hand IMPF hurt 1sgDO

'(my) hand is paining me'

23   **ọwọ́ ń ro mí** _{ADb5}

hand IMPF pain 1sgDO

'(my) hand is paining me'

Construction A3: S V O₁ P-BPT₁

1   **ó rìn mí l'ábíyá** _{ADb31}

3sg tickle 1sgDO in·armpit

'she tickled my armpit'

2   **epo ta sí mi l'ára** _{ADb48}

oil spatter towards 1sgDO on·body

'oil spattered all over me' (lit. 'over me on body')

3   **wèrèpé jó o l'ára** _{ADb4}

cow-itch irritate 3sgDO on·body

'the cow-itch irritaties his body'

4   **igi náà ha mí l'ára** _{ADb2}

stick DEM graze 1sgDO on·body

'the stick graze my skin' (lit. 'grazed me on body')

5   **ó dùnmọ́ mi l'ára** _{R214}

3sg be.sweet 1sgDO in·body

'it is pleasant to me (physically)'[88]

6   **ó rìn mí l'áyà** _{ADb31}

3sg tickle 1sgDO in·chest

'it makes me feel sick'

7   **ó gbá mi l'étí** _{ADa37}

3sg slap 1sgDO at·ear

'he slapped me at the ear'

---

[88] The expressions in (5), (9) and (12) nicely contrast **ara** 'body', **ẹnu** 'mouth' and **inú** 'inside', as noted by Rowlands (1969:214).

8   **ọ̀rọ̀ dùn un l'étí** _{ADb42}

word hurt 3sgDO in·ear

'the word/matter pained him in the ear' (he felt its impact)

9   **ó dùnmọ́ mi l'ẹ́nu** _{A144, R214}

3sg be.sweet 1sgDO in·mouth

'it tastes sweet to me'

10   **ó jìn mí l'ẹ́sẹ̀** _{ADb4}

3sg trip 1sgDO on·leg

'he tripped me from the back' (he undermined my reputation)

11   **ó kín mi l'ẹ́yìn** _{ADb10}

3sg scrub 1sgDO on·back

'he scrubbed my back'

12   **ó dùnmọ́ mi n'ínú** _{R214}

3sg be.sweet 1sgDO in·inside

'it is pleasant to me (inside/mentally)'

13   **ó gán an l'órí** _{ADa36}

3sg cut 3sgDO at-head

'he cut off his head' (lit. 'cut him at head')

14   **ó bẹ́ ẹ ní orí** _{ADa19}

3sg cut 3sgDO at head

'he cut off his head' (lit. 'cut him at head')

15   **ó lọ́ ọ l'ọ́rùn** _{ADb12}

3sg twist 3sgDO at·neck

'he twisted his neck'

16   **ó jù mí l'ọ́wọ́ s'ílẹ̀** _{ADb4}

3sg throw 1sgDO on·hand to·ground

'he released my hand' (lit. 'threw to me on hand to ground')

17   **ó fún mi l'ówọ́** _{ADa35}

3sg squeeze 1sgDO at·hand

'he squeezed my hand' (lit. 'squeezed me at hand')

18   **ó fà mí l'ọ́wọ́** _{ADa33}

3sg hold 1sgDO at·hand

'he held me at hand'

19   **ó bọ̀ ọ́ l'ọ́wọ́** _{ADa21}

3sg shake 3sgDO at·hand

'he shook hands with him' (lit 'shook him at hand')

Construction A4: S₁ V O$_{BPT-1 (POSS-1)}$ (…)

1   **ó ṣán apá** $_{ADb44}$

     3sg swing arm

     'he swung (his) arms to and fro'

2   **mo fi apá mi** $_{A212}$

     1sg whirl arm 1sgPOSS

     'I swung my arm round and round'

3   **ó ń bẹ ara bí òbọ** $_{ADb43}$

     3sg IMPF scratch body/REFL like monkey

     'he is scratching (his) body like a monkey'

4   **mo họ ara** $_{ADb2}$

     1sg scratch body/REFL

     'I scratched myself' (I scratched where it itched me)

5   **ó fi ara pa** $_{ADb42}$

     3sg take body afflict

     'he suffered injury' (i.e. he has wounds on (his) body)

6   **ó ṣan ara** $_{ADb44}$

     3sg wash body/REFL

     'he washed (his) body'[89]

7   **mo f'ara pa** (<**fi ara**) $_{A205}$

     1sg take body afflict

     'I suffered injury' (lit. I took body afflicted (it))

8   **mo ré èékánná mi** $_{ADb31}$

     1sg trim fingernail 1sgPOSS

     'I trimmed my fingernails'

9   **ó f'etí sí mi** (<**fi etí**) $_{A206}$

     3sg take ear towards 1sg

     'he paid heed to what I said' (lit. take ear towards me)

10   **mo gbẹ́sẹ̀ lé e** (<**gbẹ́ ẹsẹ̀**) $_{ADb24}$

     1sg place·leg upon 3sgDO

     'I placed (my) leg on it'

11   **mo fi ẹsẹ̀ gbá òkúta** $_{ADa28}$

     1sg take leg hit stone

     'I knocked (my) leg against a stone'

12   **ó na ìka sí mi** $_{ADb24}$

     3sg point finger towards me

     'he pointed (his) fingers at me'

---

[89] **ṣan** indicates washing without soap (Adéwọlé, 2001:44. Here, as in other examples of this construction involving **ara** 'body/REFL', a reflexive reading is also possible ('he washed himself').

13   **ó sémú** (<**sé imú**) _{A583}

3sg block nose

'he held (his) nose' (by compressing it with his fingers)

14   **mo fárí** (<**fá orí**) _{A202}

1sg shave head

'I shaved (my) head'

15   **mo bójú** (<**bọ́ ojú**) _{ADb61}

1sg wash face

'I washed (my) face'

16   **ó bọ́ ojú** _{ADa20}

3sg wash face

'he washed (his) face'

17   **ó bọ́ ojú rẹ̀** _{ADa21}

3sg wash face 3sgPOSS

'he washed his face'

18   **ó nu ojú rẹ̀** _{ADb24}

3sg wipe face 3sgPOSS

'he wiped his face'

19   **ó sẹ̀ orí mọ́ Adé** _{ADb37}

3sg knock head stick.to Adé

'he knocked (his) head against Adé'[90]

20   **ó gbọn orí** _{ADa39}

3sg shake head

'he shook (his) head'

21   **ó ha ọ̀fun** _{ADb2}

3sg clear throat

'he cleared (his) throat'

22   **ó la ọwó rẹ̀** _{ADb11}

3sg open hand 3sgPOSS

'he opened his hand'

23   **ó ti fi ọwọ́ bù** _{ADa21}

3sg PAST take hand cut

'he has cut (his) finger'

---

[90] **sẹ̀**, glossed simply as 'knock' in (19), actually means something like 'vibrate resoundingly' (Abraham 1958:585); **mọ́**, often used as the second component in what Abraham (1958) calls 'compound verbs', contributes the sense of 'onto, against'.

Other constructions

Below, a few examples are listed that are somewhat different from the four common constructions outlined in §2.2.3. The fact that these seem less common might or might not be a function of my sample.

1   **ó tin l'ẹ́sẹ̀** _{ADb49}

      3sg be.thin on·leg

      'his legs are thin' (lit. 'he is thin on the legs')

2   **ó ń fá l'ọwọ́** _{A202}

      3sg IMPF scrape in·hand

      'he is throwing his weight around' (lit. 'he is scraping in (his) hands')

3   **ó rò l'ọkàn** _{A571}

      3sg stir in·heart

      'he reflected about it'

Examples (1-3) above are similar to construction A3 in that the body-part term does not play an active role; it occurs in a prepositional phrase, functioning to specify the locus of the event or activity expressed by the verb. The two main differences are that the body-part is possessed by the subject, and that the verb is intransitive.

4   **ó kun àtíkè sí ojú** _{ADb11}

      3sg put powder on face

      'he powdered (his) face' (lit. 'he put powder on face')

In (4) too, **ojú** 'face' is in a prepositional phrase, specifying the locus of some action. It is furthermore similar to the first three examples (and differs from ordinary A3-constructions) in that the body-part is possessed by the subject and not by the object. The difference is that the verb is transitive, so in a way this construction may be seen as the transitive counterpart of the construction in the first three examples above.

5   **ó mọ́ egbò apá rẹ̀** _{ADb16}

      3sg clear sore arm 3sgPOSS

      'he treats the sore on his arm'

It seems that example (5) can be analyzed in two ways. The first would be to understand **egbò** 'sore' as the object, in which case **apá rẹ̀** 'his arm' is to be taken in a locative sense. The normal way to do this, however, would involve embedding **apá rẹ̀** in a prepositional phrase (e.g. **l'ápá rẹ̀** 'on his arm') (note that this would make our sentence akin to construction A3). The fact that the preposition is missing may favor another analysis however, in which **apá rẹ̀** 'his arm', rather than **egbò**, is the object of the sentence. In this analysis, **mọ́ egbò** would need to be taken as one constituent (e.g. 'sore-treat (v)' instead of 'treat a sore'; verb+noun combinations like that are not uncommon in Yoruba, Ogunbọwale 1967:42) and the literal translation would become something like 'he sore-treated his arm'. More investigation is needed to settle this issue.

Example (6) and (7) below come from Duro Ladipọ's opera **Oba kò so**. The first consitutes the personification of a body-part term, a stylistic figure which I assume is most common in poetic language, and less so in everyday speech; the second is a serial verb construction which might lean to the idiomatic.

6   **ọwọ́ ń lu** _{L12}
         hand IMPF clap
         'hands are clapping'
7   **ó f'ọwọ́ ramú** (< **fi ọwọ́ ra imú**) _{L118}
         3sg take hand rub nose
         'he rubs his nose' (lit. 'takes hand rubs nose')

III   Glossary (Yoruba-English, English-Yoruba)

The Yoruba-English and English-Yoruba word lists are included here for ease of reference; they provide only approximate translation equivalents. More information on specific words can usually be found in chapter 2, especially §2.1, §2.2 and §2.4.1. The lists include terms for parts of the body but also related notions.

Yoruba-English

Derivations are only given when they are not directly obvious; translations of constituent words are only given when they do not have their own entry in the glossary. Thus, in the entry for **bèbè ojú** 'eyelid/eyebrow', the meaning of **bèbè** ('edge') is given because that word does not have its own entry; the buildup of **eegun àgbòn** 'jaw' on the other hand can be readily found out upon inspection of its constituent words.

abẹ́	genital organs < **abẹ́** 'under'
abíyá	armpit
agbárí	skull < **igbá** 'calabash' + **orí**
àgbòn	chin
ahọ́n	tongue
akúra	corpse, dead body < NOM + **kú** 'die' + **ara**
apá	arm
àpò ìtọ̀	bladder < **àpò** 'bag' + **ìtọ̀** 'urine'
àpòokùn	stomach < **àpò** 'bag' + **ikùn**
àpòtò	→ **àpò ìtọ̀**
ara kíkú	corpse, dead body < **ara** + NOM + **kú** 'die'
ara	body, skin, REFL, whole
asọmọgbè	ring-finger < **sọgbè** 'next to'
àtànpàkò ẹsẹ̀	big toe
àtànpàkò	thumb
àtàrí	crown, top of the head
àtẹ́lẹ	→ **àtẹ́lẹsẹ̀**
àtẹ́lẹsẹ̀	sole of the foot < **tẹ́** 'spread, be flat'
àtẹ́lẹwọ́	palm of the hand < **tẹ́** 'spread, be flat'
àtẹ́sẹ̀	→ **àtẹ́lẹsẹ̀**
àtẹ́wọ́	→ **àtẹ́lẹwọ́**
awọ epòn	scrotum (skin of it)
awọ	human skin; leather
awọn èyàa ara	limbs / arms and legs < PL + **èyà** 'part' + **ara**
àwùjẹ̀	fontanel
àyà	chest
baààrun	middle-finger
bèbè ìdí	hip < **bèbè** 'edge' + **ìdí**
bèbè ojú	eyelid, eyebrow < **bèbè** 'edge' + **ojú**

bùrá	penis < Hausa *bùuráa*
eegun	bone
eegun àgbòn	jaw
eegun ẹ̀hìn	spine, backbone
eegun ìhà	rib, ribs
eegun ọrùn	upper part of the spine (in the neck)
èékánná ẹsẹ̀	toenail
èékánná ọwọ́	fingernail
èékánná	fingernail, nail
èémí	breath < **mí** 'to breath'
egungun	bone
ehín	teeth
èjìkà	shoulder
ékún	knee
ènìyàn	person
epọ̀n	scrotum
èrò	thought < **rò** 'stir, think'
ètè	lip
etí	ear
eyín	→ **ehín**
èyítogaju	middle finger
ééwo	boil
ẹ̀dọ̀fóró, ẹ̀dò	lung
ẹ̀dọ̀ki	liver
ẹfọ́n ìhà	ribs < **ẹfọ́n** 'back of oil-palm's midrib'
ẹ̀gbẹ́ òsì	left side
ẹ̀gbẹ́ ọ̀tún	right side
ẹ̀gbẹ́	side of one's body
ẹhìn ẹsẹ̀	back of the leg
ẹ̀hìn, ẹ̀yìn	back
ẹjẹ̀	blood
ẹ̀mí	life-giving essence, life < **mí** 'to breath'
ẹni	person
ẹnu	mouth
ẹranara	muscle < **ẹran** 'flesh' + **ara**
ẹ̀rẹ̀kẹ́, èèkẹ́	cheek
ẹ̀rí-ọkàn	conscience
ẹsẹ̀	leg, foot
ẹsẹ̀ẹ bàtà	a length of 30 cm < **bàtà** 'shoe'
ẹ̀sẹ́	fist
ẹyinojú	eyeball < **ẹyin** 'egg'
fùrọ̀	anus, rear end, bottom
gbọnsẹ	excretion, faeces, < **gbòn** 'shake, shiver' + **ẹsẹ̀** (→ **ìgbẹ́**)
gìgìrísẹ̀, gìgísẹ̀	heel

gògóngò	Adam's apple
ìbàdí	hip, haunch < NOM + **bà** 'come into contact with' + **ìdí**
ìdí	buttocks
idodo	navel
ìfá bẹ̀lá	index-finger < **fá** 'scrape' + **ọbẹ̀** 'soup' + **lá** 'lick'
igbá àyà	chest bone (sternum) < **igbá** 'calabash'
ìgbẹ́	excretion, faeces (→ **gbọnsẹ**)
ìgbọ́nwọ́	elbow < **igbọ̀n** 'shaking' + **ọwọ́**
igun ẹsẹ̀	heel < **igun** 'edge'
igun ọwọ́	knuckle < **igun** 'edge'
igunpá	elbow < **igun** 'edge' + **apá**
ìhà	side of the body
ihò ìdí	anus < **ihò** 'hole'
ihòimú, ihoomú	nostril < **ihò** 'hole' + **imú**
ìka ẹsẹ̀	toe
ìka ọwọ́	finger
ìka	finger, digit
ikùn	stomach, belly < **kùn** 'to grunt'
imú	nose
inú	belly, inside
ipàkọ́	back of the head
ipénpéjú	eyelid < **ipé-n-pé** + **ojú**
ìrù	tail
irun abíyá	hair of armpit
irun-ètè	moustache
irun-imú, irunmú	moustache
irun ojú	eyebrow
irun	hair
irungbọ̀n	beard < **irun** + **agbọ̀n**
irunmú	moustache < **irun** + **imú**
iṣan	sinew, nerve, muscle
itan, itọn	thigh
itọ́	saliva
itọ̀	urine < **tọ̀** 'urinate'
iwájú	forehead
kókó ọmú	nipple
kóró	seed
kórópọ̀n	testicles < **kóró** + **epọ̀n**
kúrúmbete	little finger < **kúrú** 'short' + **bete** INT
làágùn	perspire, sweat < **là** 'secrete' + **òógùn** 'sweat'
òbò	vagina
ódunlábẹ̀	index finger < **lá** 'lick' + **ọbẹ̀** 'soup'
ohùn	voice
ojú ẹsẹ̀	footprint

ojú	eye, face
ojúgun	shin < **ojú** 'face/front' + **eegun**
okó	penis
ókún	knee
òógùn	sweat, perspiration
orí	head, top
oríika	fingertip < **orí** + **ika**
orí ọwọ́	back of hand (lit. 'top of hand')
oróhùn	shoulder blade
òrùkayẹmi	ring finger < **òrùka** 'ring' + **yẹ** 'befit' + **mi** '1SG'
orúnkún, orúkún	knee
òdò	presence of someone
ọ̀fun	throat
ọkàn	heart
ọmọ ika	fingers
ọmọdìnrin ẹsẹ̀	little toe < **ọmọ** 'child'
ọmọdìnrin	little finger < **ọmọ** 'child'
ọmọ̀nkasẹ̀	toe < **ọmọ** 'child' + **ika** + **ẹsẹ̀**
ọmọnríika	fingertip < **ọmọ** 'child' + **orí** + **ika**
ọmú	breast
ọ̀na ọ̀fun	throat < **ọ̀na** 'road' (→ **ọ̀fun**)
ọpá ẹ̀hìn	backbone, spine < **ọpá** 'rod'
ọpọlọ	brain
ọ̀pọ̀lọ́sẹ̀	calf of leg < **ọ̀pọ̀lọ́** 'toad' + **ẹsẹ̀**
ọrùn ẹsẹ̀	ankle
ọrùn ọwọ́	wrist
ọrùn	neck
ọ̀tuń	the right-hand side
ọwọ́ òsì	left hand
ọwọ́ ọ̀tuń	right hand
ọwọ́	hand
ọyàn	breast
tọ́ka	point (the finger) < **tọ́** 'touch smb' + **ika**

English-Yoruba

Adam's apple	gògóngó	**index-finger**	ìfá bèlá, ódunlábè
ankle	ọrùn ẹsè	**middle finger**	èyítogaju, baààrun
anus	ihò ìdí, fùrọ̀	**ring-finger**	asọmọgbè, òrùkayẹmi
arm	apá	**little finger**	kúrúmbete, ọmọdìnrin
armpit	abíyá	**fingernail**	èékánná, èékánná ọwọ́
armpit hair	irun abíyá	**fingertip**	oríìka, ọmọríìka
back	ẹ̀hìn, èyìn	**fist**	èṣé
back of the head	ipàkọ́	**fontanel**	àwùjè
back of the leg	ẹhìn ẹsè	**foot**	→ leg
backbone	eegun ẹ̀hìn, ọpá ẹ̀hìn	**foot (length unit)**	ẹsèe bàtà
beard	irungbọ̀n	**footprint**	ojú ẹsè
belly	inú	**forehead**	iwájú
bladder	àpò ìtọ̀, àpòtò	**genital organs**	abẹ́
blood	ẹjè	**hair**	irun
body	ara	**hand**	ọwọ́
boil	ééwo	**hand, left**	ọwọ́ òsì
bone	eegun, egungun	**hand, right**	ọwọ́ òtuń
bottom	→ buttocks	**haunch**	→ hip
brain	ọpọlọ	**head**	orí
breast	ọmú	**heart**	ọkàn
breast (female)	ọyàn	**heel**	gìgìrísè, gìgísè, igun ẹsè
breath	èémí		
buttocks	ìdí	**hip**	bèbè ìdí, ìbàdí
calf of leg	òpòlósè	**inside**	inú
cheek	ẹ̀rẹ̀kẹ́, èèkẹ́	**jaw**	eegun àgbọ̀n
chest	àyà	**knee**	ékún, ókún, orúnkún, orúkún (dialectal variation)
chest bone	igbá àyà		
chin	àgbọ̀n		
conscience	ẹ̀rí-ọkàn	**knuckle**	igun ọwọ́
corpse	akúra, ara kíkú	**leg (including foot)**	ẹsè
crown (top of head)	àtàrí	**limbs**	awọn èyàa ara
ear	etí	**lip**	ètè
elbow	igunpá, ìgbọ́nwọ́	**liver**	èdòki
excretion	ìgbẹ́, gbọnsẹ	**lung**	ẹ̀dọ̀fóró, èdò
eye	ojú	**moustache**	irun-imú, irun-ètè
eyeball	ẹyinojú	**mouth**	ẹnu
eyebrow	irun ojú, bèbè ojú	**muscle**	iṣan, ẹranara
eyelid	bèbè ojú, ipénpéjú	**nail**	èékánná (→ fingernail)
face	ojú	**navel**	idodo
faeces	→ excretion	**neck**	ọrùn
finger, digit	ìka, ìka ọwọ́, ọmọ ìka	**nerve**	iṣan
thumb	àtànpàkò	**nipple**	kókó ọmú

nose	imú	**skull**	agbárí
nose hair	irun ihòimú	**sole of the foot**	àtélẹsè, àtéle, àtésè
nostril	ihòimú, ihoomú	**spine**	→ backbone
palm of the hand	àtéwó, àtélẹwó	**spine (upper part)**	eegun ọrùn
penis	okó, bùrá	**sternum**	→ chest bone
person	ènìyàn	**stomach**	ikùn, àpòokùn
point (the finger)	tóka	**sweat**	òógùn
presence of someone	ọ̀dọ̀	**tail**	ìrù
rib	eegun ìhà, ẹfón ìhà	**teeth**	ehín
saliva	itó	**testicles**	kórópòn
scrotum	epòn	**thigh**	itan, itọn
scrotum (skin of it)	awọ epòn	**thought**	èrò
seed	kóró	**throat**	ọ̀fun, ọ̀na ọ̀fun
shin	ojúgun	**toe**	ìka ẹsè, ọmọǹkasè
shoulder	èjìkà	**big toe**	àtàǹpàkò ẹsè
shoulder blade	oróhùn	**little toe**	ọmọdìnrin ẹsè
side (general)	ẹ̀gbẹ́	**toenail**	èékánná ẹsè
side of the body	ìhà	**tongue**	ahọ́n
side, left	ẹ̀gbẹ́ òsì	**urine**	ìtọ̀
side, right	ẹ̀gbẹ́ ọ̀tún	**vagina**	òbò
sinew	iṣan	**voice**	ohùn
skin	awọ, ara	**wrist**	ọrùn ọwọ́

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[91] In many cases, the names of Yoruba authors are also known and used in the literature without diacritics. When known to me, I will refer to Yoruba authors by their Yoruba name; in the age of Unicode this is no more than a natural courtesy.

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