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REFERENCE COPY  
090394  
OAU, Ife (English)

# ODU

NEW SERIES • NO. 38 • JANUARY/JULY 1991

A Journal of  
West African Studies



A JOURNAL OF WEST AFRICAN STUDIES • OBAFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY

OBAFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY PRESS . ILB-IFB . NIGERIA.

# The Functions of Language in Herbalist-Client Interaction in Yoruba Traditional Medicine<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

A piece of language in use or 'text' can be studied from three vantage points. While sociological, socio-linguistic or socio-psychological approach will be interested in studying the social uses of (parts of) the text or the pragmatic activities of the speaker and interpretant accompanying its production and reception, a textual approach will be more interested in analysing its linguistico-pragmatic features such as the function(s) and message(s), and a linguistic approach will most probably focus the description of form (grammar and lexis) and meaning in the text. However, it is possible for a study of texts to involve two or all of the approaches above. Indeed Coulthard and Ashby (1976:72) have earlier argued that "an adequate understanding of language and social life must be based on an understanding of the different levels at which language is organized, and that the categories of sociological theories should be related to categories of linguistic description as well as directly to data." But, if the study intends to make any appreciable mark on language studies within a very limited space, it should better restrict itself to describing from just one point of view. This study intends to adopt a textual approach in describing the functions (i.e. the general communicative intentions or acts of speakers) in aspects of uses of Herbalist-Client (HC) texts in the field of Yoruba Traditional Medicine (YTM). Some basic categories of functions in language will first be listed and those functions that characterize HC interaction will be specified and illustrated with extracts and texts from data collected.

## Herbalist-Client Interaction in YTM

YTM represents an alternative source of medical practice to Western medicine in Yorubaland and both complement each other in ministering to the health problems of the Yoruba. In the cross-cultural, sociological, socio-medical and medical-studies on both fields of medicine, it has been found that both have a lot of things in common, while

## The Functions of Language in Some Texts of Yoruba Traditional Medicine

they also have some differences. They both have different areas of operation (e.g. general medicine, paediatrics, psychiatry, orthopaedics, obstetrics and gynecology, etc.) and also different speech encounters (doctor-patient, doctor-doctor, doctor-trainee, etc.) which take place in marked settings. They also both involve transactional behaviour between two major participants in them, i.e. the practitioner and a client. The relationship between these participants is often a positional rather than personal one and the tenor of communication between them is that of consultative interaction. Besides the above sociological similarities, and several other ones, some differences can be identified with HC and Doctor-Patient (DP) encounters in YTM and Western medicine. For example, HC interaction still relies heavily on speech while DP interaction utilizes both speech and writing. Also, in an HC event the utilization of the scientific procedure is still at its rudimentary stage as the participants hold tenaciously to their beliefs in the power of magic, the supernatural and other spiritual forces. In contrast, DP communication greatly depends on science and the participants value empiricism in their operations.

Just as there are sociological similarities and differences between HC and DP in YTM and Western medicines, there ought to be linguistic and pragmalinguistic similarities and differences as well. But the language-oriented features have not yet been recognized due to the dearth of cross-linguistic studies on both fields. While a few (socio-) linguistic descriptions of discourses in medicine are available on Western medicine (cf. Coulthard and Ashby, 1976; Coleman and Burton, 1985; van Naerssen, 1985; etc.), there is no systematic linguistics-oriented description of discourses in YTM events. Yet, until the essential descriptions are done in this respect, no reliable linguistic comparison can be made between discourses in speech events in these two fields. This study, which is part of a wider project investigating some features of language use in HC interaction in YTM, identifies and describes the functions of texts collected from this interaction. The findings are expected to be of benefit to both Yoruba and linguistic studies because it presents functions which are universal and illustrates these with data derived from the Yoruba language.

## Classifications of Functions of Texts

Previous attempts by scholars have shown some categories of functions which generally underlie individual uses of language (cf. Jakobson, 1960; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Searle, 1976; Dore, 1979; and Hymes 1986). Although the categories suggested share certain fun-

fundamental assumptions, the individual uses of these terms have always been different. For example, in his pragmatic model, Jakobson (1960:350-377) suggests categories in terms of six situational factors of communication, thus (see Bell, 1976:83):

Addresser:	Emotive/Expressive/Affective
Addressee:	Conative
Context:	Referential/Cognitive/Denotative
Message:	Poetic
Contact:	Phatic/Interaction Management
Code:	Metalinguistic.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) mention such functions as informing, eliciting, checking, directing, etc. at different degrees of delicacy in their study. Sinclair (1976:27ff) lists five categories of functions or 'acts' as follows: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. Dore (1979:235ff.) lists his own six categories as requestives, assertives, performatives, responsives, regulatives and expressives. In all the suggestions above, the scholars have the fundamental belief that there are certain situational factors affecting communication. They also hold the opinion that describing the general and relatively stable communicative functions of texts is of more theoretical interest than describing the rather unstable individual uses of texts. These belief and opinion are undoubtedly among the strongest points of pragmatological studies of texts. But there has always been a big problem in these studies concerning the need to distinguish between what exactly are the general functions of texts and what are the individual uses which the functions activate in individual texts.

While this study does not reject the theoretical framework within which the different suggestions above have been made, it emphasizes the need to recognise the existence of certain categories within the level of situation for more explicit descriptions of texts. If one relies on the categories of situation listed by Hymes (1972), one could see the possibility of isolating such categories as setting and scene, participants, ends (or uses) act (function) sequence, key, norms and genres, etc. for description and relation to data. Concerning the features of use, one should recognize the pragmatic purpose(s) which every single text is intended to serve; e.g. entertaining, greeting, promising, educating, annoying, diagnosing, healing, expressing love, hatred, desire, pain, etc. Lastly, the uses of a text can be described in respect of the functions of the text since it is the functions which pro-

ject these uses in a text. A text can educate or greet or annoy by utilizing or failing to utilize any, some or all of a set of functions presented below. The categories of functions presented are five in number and they are selected across the various suggestions made earlier in this section. Here are the categories:

- a. the 'informative' function represents all the information (literal and non-literal) content of a text, whether such information is 'given' or 'new', requested, asserted or suggested;
- b. the 'directive' function underlies calling the attention of a hearer or requiring him to carry out a request or non-verbal action;
- c. the 'expressive' function underlies the expression of emotions or attitudes of the speaker of a text;
- d. the 'aesthetic' function is a function upgraded from the situational component of 'key' (Hymes, 1972) or mode of a text, and it is relevant when the mode of presentation stands out in a text;
- e. the 'phatic' (or 'ritualized' — cf. Akinnaso, 1985) serves mainly to establish social contact or rapport between a speaker or hearer.

The above categories provide the basic terms for describing the functions of texts. They can occur severally or together in texts. But when they occur together, they acquire statuses as primary, secondary and subsidiary functions according to their prominence or significance in the texts. Meanwhile, the data base and procedure of analysis of the functions of HC texts are stated below.

#### Data Base and Analytical Procedure

The data used for illustration in this study represent relevant examples from the analysis of over fifty texts derived from three main sources: tape-recording plus direct observation of natural HC encounters; recitation of texts during oral interviews with herbalists; and recordings of conversations in HC encounters from television plays. Majority of the examples come from the two samples provided in the appendix of this study. The data provided by these texts are, however, supplemented by extracts drawn from relevant texts which cannot be provided fully here. In all, the illustrations and references give a fair representation of features of functions of language in HC texts in YTM.

The functions of the above texts are described in terms of identifying

their categories, occurrences and statuses in the texts. The categories are identified in terms of linguistic features in aspects of the texts. By 'aspect' here is meant the linguistic representation of uses of texts. An aspect refers to a part or whole of a text which corresponds to a specific use or set of uses. Each aspect also provides the domain of occurrences of functions and of statuses of these functions. A domain must have at least one primary function among others, depending on the significance of such a function or functions. It can have primary and secondary functions or a subsidiary function. A subsidiary function is located only in an aspect that is peripheral to the goal of a transaction. The totality of functions in a text defines each text, while the general trend of occurrences of functions and of statuses of functions of all observed texts define the HC texts.

#### *Communicative Functions of HC Texts in YTM*

In a recent study of aspects of pragmatic uses of HC texts in YTM practice (see Adedigbo, mimeo) five aspects are identified: the pre-diagnostic, diagnostic, divinatory,<sup>2</sup> medicating and post-medicating aspects. Two of these aspects, viz. the pre-diagnostic and post-medicating aspects which represent greetings, exclamations, exchange of pleasantries and expressions of goodwill, are considered as minor aspects in the texts because they are peripheral to the YTM business. They only introduce and close the transaction. The remaining three aspects are the major aspects of HC texts because they define the main events in the YTM encounter which are the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The different statuses of the aspects above notwithstanding, everyone of them is projected by certain functions. And it is of course natural to expect that the statuses of the different aspects will reflect in their respective (sets of) functions. Thus, the functions in a minor aspect cannot be very significant in a text as those in a major aspect will be. So, also, a primary function in a minor aspect may not be recognized as important in the text as a secondary function in a major aspect. In short, minor functions are peripheral to HC texts irrespective of their statuses while major functions are central to them.

#### *The functions in a diagnostic aspect*

The main underlying function of a diagnostic aspect is the informative function. Each aspect of diagnosis at the macro-level represents an exchange of information in terms of requesting for them or supplying them (see, for example, Text 1, Lines 4-24 and Text 2, Lines 5-9 in the appendix). In the first example, a herbalist seeks information about the state of health of a client's father and the symptoms of his illness,

while his clients try to provide as much information as they can give to the herbalist. In the second example, both the priest and client exchange information in form of requests, answers and assurances, e.g.:

1. Babaláwo: ... *Ṣé é sii o? O tójó mēta.*
- Aláísàn: *Baba, èyin ni mo wá rí.*
- Babaláwo: *Ṣé é le?*
- Aláísàn: *Ọrọ ara mi mà ni o. Gbogbo è ló wá sù mi gbáà.*
- Babaláwo: *Gbogbo ayé ló mí se. . . (Text 2, Lines 5-9)*
- Priest: *. . . Hope there's no problem? . . .*
- Client: *Father, it's you I've come to see.*
- Priest: *Hope it's nothing serious?*
- Client: *It's about my whole life. It's very hopeless and I'm tired of it all.*  
*It's happening to everybody like that .*

The example given above is representative of the kind of interaction between a herbalist and a client in an HC encounter.

#### *The functions in a divinatory aspect*

Unlike the diagnostic aspect whose underlying functions seem straightforward to recognize, the functions in a divinatory aspect are a bit complex. The aspect of divination have functions that are primary and secondary.

The primary function in a divinatory aspect is also the informative function. This function is projected in the aspect by the usual narration of one or more mythological events which predict the source(s) and nature of the present predicament of the client of a divination priest (cf. Abimbola, 1976 and Olatunji, 1984). The client is informed by the narration which represents the experience of a character (or some characters) who has a similar problem to the client's. The protagonist's experience then serves to encourage the client that there is already a precedent to his problem and that all the client requires to get his problem solved is to perform actions similar to those of the obedient protagonist of the story. For example, the information expressed by the divinatory aspect of Text 2 (Lines 12-42) assures the client against his hopelessness by telling him that his problem will be solved if he can appease his *orí* (personal god).

In addition to the primary function above, the divinatory aspect may also contain three other secondary functions the aesthetic, expressive and, sometimes, directive functions. All these three functions, especially the first two, normally characterize divinatory texts and they are expected to occur wherever the texts are located. The aesthetic func-

tion represents the source of verbal mystery and entertainment by a YTM divinatory text, and it is able to achieve this value via some non-structural and structural devices such as fictionalization of characters and events, symbolism, and other features of the poetic structure like structural parallelism and repetition, tonal patterning, imagery and regularity of rhythm (cf., especially, Abimbola, 1976; Akinnaso, 1982 and Olatunji, 1984).

The expressive function underlies the use of language in vocatives, citations or invocations which usually characterize the openings of divinatory texts. The representation of this function may be very brief, as in when a priest of Ifa merely expresses his attitude during the performance of divination, or extensive, as in when the names and qualities of divinities and objects are invoked. See the examples below:

2. *Aaa, ire ni!*  
*Aá, o kare!*  
*Aah, it's good luck!*  
*Yees, that's good of you!*
3. *Ifá*  
*Èléríí ípín.*  
*Iwájú ọpọ́n o gbọ́ o*  
*Èyìn ọpọ́n dùn Ọlòkànràn' òtúń . . . etc.*  
*Ifa,*  
*The witness at the sharing of destinies*  
*The front of the divination tray, you hear*  
*The back of the tray and the Olokanran on the right*  
*. . . etc.*

The extent of such representations as are given above is further determined by other factors ranging from the circumstances of the divination to the nature of the *Odù* (configuration) that appears on the divination board or chain and also the attitude of the diviner (see also Text 2, Lines 12-14).

Lastly, the directive function may be performed by divinatory texts that do have an incantatory content in them, ie. *Ayajo* texts (cf. Olatunji, 1984). The exponent of this function is an utterance or set of utterances which expresses a wish based on a series of forceful assertions from which it derives its potency. Consider the utterances in Lines 7-9 of the example below:

4. *Agádámọfiya lorúko ọ́n ọ́n pọ́mọ*  
*Èléfùfùtiémí lorúko ọ́n ọ́n pọ́yún*  
*Pánpásigídí lorúko ọ́n ọ́n pe ibi*  
*Èdà gbòó lorúko ọ́n pe omira*

*mérèèrin nì gbèrù nskòlé ọ́run*

*Lẹ m bọ wa 'kòlé.aye.*

*Ilẹ n pe èyin mérèèrin o*

*Kẹ máa bọ o.*

*Agadamofiya is the name the baby is called*

*Elefufutiemi is the name of pregnancy*

*Panpasigidi is what the placenta is called*

*Eda gboo is the name of the amniotic fluid*

*All the four of you got prepared in heaven*

*And started coming to earth*

*Come quickly now*

*The earth is calling all four of you Come down.*

*The functions in medicating aspects*

The functions of texts in the three types of medicating aspects — prescriptive, incantatory and supplicatory aspects — are recognised along two directions. In the prescriptive aspect, both the informative and directive functions are significant since they are emphasized in it. Prescriptive aspects of HC texts always require the clients of herbalists to carry out certain directives that are given by herbalists in order to treat an illness. Such directives do normally inform clients about what actions to perform or desist from performing and what objects (herbs, ointment, powder, etc.) to seek for, prepare, apply, drink or bathe with or rub on the body, etc. (see Text 1, Lines 26-33 and Text 2, Lines 43-44).

In the incantatory and supplicatory aspects, however, about four functions — informative, directive, aesthetic and expressive — are significant at the primary and secondary levels. At the primary level of the aspects are the directive and informative functions which underlie the mild and subtle requests in supplications or the often forceful and aggressive expression of wishes in incantations, e.g.:

5. *Kí lágbájá náà ó mó kù ú*  
*Kó mó rùn.*  
*Kó mó sòfò*  
*Kó jíşẹ rẹ, Ọ́rúnmilá Ajàná*  
*Let so and so too not die*  
*Let him not fall sick*  
*Let him not suffer loss*  
*Let him reap the fruits of his labour, Orunmila Ajana*
6. *Bí ejò bá káki, şe ló hí tú*  
*Bí ejò bá ká, bó bá lópọ́, şe ló hí tú*

Inú ó n run lágbájá yí.  
 Kó má a tú nisinsinyí.  
 When a snake coils, it later uncoils itself  
 When a snake coils and twists, it  
 The stomachache that is troubling so and so  
 Should subside now.

In the two extracts from texts presented above, relevant agents or forces are summoned and directed or requested to help carry out the enchanter's wish to solving a problem.

The aesthetic and expressive functions characterizing YTM incantations at the secondary level can be likened to the characteristic of these two functions in divinatory texts. Like divinatory texts, aesthetic and expressive features are inherent properties of incantatory texts and they manifest themselves in the non-structural and structural devices in the texts.

#### *The Functions of the minor aspects of HC texts*

Not all the functions that characterize aspects of HC texts are significant features of the texts. For instance, one can further identify the phatic function which is very common in the texts but which does not underlie any major uses of the texts. As it were, features representing the phatic function are peripheral to HC texts as they can be found in the pre-diagnostic and post- medicating aspects at the opening and closings of the texts (see Text 1, Lines 1-2 and Text 2, Lines 1-4 and 55-57).

While the phatic function prepares the ground for a cordial atmosphere in a normal HC interaction, via greetings, it is the expressive function that is again utilized in summoning herbalists at the pre-diagnostic stage of an emergency case handled in YTM. The expressive function here represents outbursts of emotions and attitudes of clients or relations of clients who are in some kind of dilemma or harrowing state of predicament and who will seek the prompt attention of herbalists than afford the 'luxury' of exchanging preliminary pleasantries. The extract below provides a good illustration of the expressive function in a pre-diagnostic aspect.

7. Okúnrin kan: (Sáré wọlé pẹ́lú omọ́ lówọ́) Baba, ẹ́ gbà mí!  
 Babaláwo: Kí ló dé? Kí ló dé?  
 Client: (Runs in carrying child in his . . . ) ~~Father~~, help me!  
 Priest: What's wrong? What's wrong?

#### *Conclusion*

In identifying the different functions in the aspects of HC texts above, certain useful observations have been made as follows:

- a. that the primary function in a diagnostic aspect is the informative function;
- b. that the primary function in a divinatory aspect is also the informative function;
- c. that the primary functions in a medicating aspect are the directive and informative functions;
- d. that there are secondary functions performed in a divinatory aspect, in addition to the primary informative function, viz. aesthetic, expressive and directive function (the directive function is included when there are incantations in the aspect);
- e. that the aesthetic and expressive functions are normally present as secondary functions when there are incantations in an aspect;
- f. that the phatic function is peripheral to an HC text (even though it is very common) and is thus not a significant function in it.

The above submissions thus imply that the informative function is the most productive (in the ordinary sense of the word) function in an HC text. They also imply that the directive function will always be present in the text, in so far as the medicating aspect is obligatory in it. Lastly they imply that the presence or absence of secondary functions in the text will depend on whether there are divinatory or incantatory aspects in it.

All the above implications can finally lead us to formulate a hypothesis in respect of the major and minor co-functions of HC texts, thus:

For every HC text in YTM, two functions – the informative and directive – are obligatory, while two – aesthetic and expressive – are optional. The obligatory functions are the primary, while the optional ones are the secondary functions. The phatic function is always present as a subsidiary function in the text. Compare the formula: P/E + I.(A)(E) D + P.

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## APPENDIX

## Text 1

Okùnrin méjì:	È káàárò mà.	
Oníṣègùn:	È káàárò o.	
Okùnrin:	Òd̀gùn la fẹ̀ mà. Tàgbàlagbà.	
Oníṣègùn:	Báwo ló ṣe n ṣe yín?	
Okùnrin:	Dádì wa ni. Ìdí è ti yò.	5
Oníṣègùn:	Só n wólé furara è?	
Okùnrin:	Kò wólé.	
Oníṣègùn:	Kò wólé? Sò lé bí éwo bá yí ni? (Ó ṣàpèjúwe)	
Okùnrin:	Ó jáde bá yí. (Ó ṣàpèjúwe)	
Oníṣègùn:	Wòn òn ṣe wá fún rara wòn?	10
Okùnrin:	Wòn òn lé wá. Agbàlagbà ni . . .	
Oníṣègùn:	Ní jò wo ló yò?	
Okùnrin:	Ó tó bí ojú méta.	
Oníṣègùn:	Aà! Ni ò wólé fún rara è?	
Okùnrin:	Kò sọ fún wa. Ìsinyí náà gan an ló sọ fún wa	15
Oníṣègùn:	Ṣé wòn le jókòó? O le jé bí éwo yèn ni o, kó wá lénu fùrò. Kí ṣé 'di yíyọ gan an. Torí ìdí yíyọ ó máa n pupa bí aṣọ yí ni o. Ṣé bẹ̀ẹ̀ ló rí?	
Okùnrin:	Èn èn, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ló rí.	
Oníṣègùn:	Kí ló dé tí wòn òn wá tí wólé?	20
	Iyen a ti gi ran an. . . kò se wa fun rara e?	
Okùnrin:	Agbàlagbà ni.	
Oníṣègùn:	Òkúkira mà le o! Látijeta?	
Okùnrin:	Aárò yí náà ló sọ fún wa.	
Oníṣègùn:	Un ùn. A à t'Òlòrun. Òlòrun le ní tẹ̀ bá ba tí wólé kó wólé. Ṣé è ló ràgò bí ìgò òrèpítà wá? Ìgò lásán ni o. È è raa wa. Torí màa ba yín fi bu nkan sí. Tẹ̀ è bá délé, pèlášọ tí m bá fun yín, è è bu kinni yèn le lórí. È è wáa baa . . . è è fòpòsì è ni o, torí látì jeta tẹ̀ ti pèé yèn. Tó bá jé aárò yí ni, kò bá yá tètè wólé. Sò ti ye yín? È è wáa múu. È è fi tí wólé. È è ní kó pàdí mọ̀ọ̀ bá yí. A á pẹ̀ẹ̀ tó ti pàdí mọ̀ọ̀. Kò ní yọ mọ̀. (Okùnrin jáde lọ ra ìgò.)	25 30

Source: Recorded from Alhaja Iyá Ibejì Alágbò olómọ-wéwé. NW7/71 Sodipo Street, Ekotedo, Ibadan.

Client (Two men):	Good morning madam.
Herbalist:	Good morning . . .

Client (one of the men):	It's a drug that we want, madam. For an adult.	
Herbalist:	What's wrong with you	
Client:	It's our dad. He has haemorrhoids.	5
Herbalist:	Does it go in on its own?	
Client:	No.	
Herbalist:	It doesn't? Does it swell as a ball like this? (Demonstrates)	
Herbalist:	Why doesn't he come himself?	10
Client:	He can't come. He's old . . .	
Herbalist:	When did it come out?	
Client:	That's about three days now.	
Herbalist:	Ah! And it doesn't go in by itself	
Client:	He didn't tell us. He just told us now.	15
Herbalist:	Can he sit down? Could it be a boil that is on his bottom. Not really haemorrhoids. Because the colour of haemorrhoids is always red like this cloth. Is it like that?	
Client:	Yes. It's like that.	
Herbalist:	Why then didn't he push it in? It would have become stubborn by now . . .	20
Client:	Why doesn't he come himself? He's an old man.	
Herbalist:	But it's really serious to be an introvert! Since the day before yesterday?	
Client:	It was only this morning that he told us.	
Herbalist:	Well. You never can tell. God may make it enter when you push it in. Will you go and buy a bottle which looks like Orheptal bottle? Just the bottle. and you will also buy the one which is wide enough to accommodate your hand, like the grease bottle. You will buy and bring it here, because I'll put something in it for you. You will scoop that thing on it. You will then . . . you will force it in, since you said it's three days old. If it had been this morning, it could have entered easily. Do you understand? You will then take the cloth and use it to force the veins in. As soon as you have pushed them in for him, you will ask him to shut them in. After shutting them in for a long time, they will no	25 30

Text 2

Babaláwo: E máa wolẹ o.  
 Aláísàn: E kaásán baba.  
 Babaláwo: Ooo. Dábò, ãlááfíà ni?  
 Aláísàn: A dúpẹ baba. Awọn iyáà mi nkó? Šára wọn le?  
 Babaláwo: O lálááfíà. Šé é sí o? Ó tójó mẹta 5  
 Aláísàn: Baba èyin ni mo wá rí.  
 Babaláwo: Šé é le?  
 Aláísàn: Ọrọ ara mi mà ni o. Gbogbo ẹ ló wá sú mi, gbàá.  
 Babaláwo: Gbogbo ayé ló mí ẹ. Šé láa báfá sòrọ nígbẹẹẹ 10  
 Aláísàn: Kò burú. (Idákẹ diẹ)  
 Ọyẹkú Papẹ̀nòsẹ . . .  
 O ní àgbágbá a bewé gbàá  
 Í òpùrùpùrù balẹ polú yéye  
 Í ọn kúnlẹ wẹ̀jì setí omi óorà 15  
 Ọn í ọrọ ọ̀ọ̀n dibàjẹ  
 Í kọ̀n làa tónrìşe  
 Ọn dódò Ọ̀rìşà  
 Ọ̀rìşà í òun í tónrìşe léèmejì  
 Í ọ̀dò Èdù ni kọ̀n ọ̀n gbà sí 20  
 Ọ̀n dódò Ọ̀rùnmilà  
 Ọ̀n í kó gbà wọn  
 Ọ̀n í ko báọ̀n tónrì àwọn ẹ  
 Ó sèé gbe pẹ̀pẹ̀ rẹ̀ kalẹ̀  
 Ó rùú ó sọ ọ̀ 25  
 Wàmù!  
 Ọyẹkú papẹ̀nòsẹ,  
 Aà!  
 Í òun á sì tun se  
 Ló bá kófá jọ 30  
 O rúbọ fún ọ̀n  
 O şèsisi fún wọn  
 Orí bá n di dáadáa  
 Gbogbo orí í kù diẹ  
 Ọ̀rùnmilà ló n tún un ún ẹ 36  
 Wọn se “Tónrìşe ooo  
 Tónrìşe màa sìn òdò: ‘Ba aatónrìşe.  
 Èşùfùlẹ̀lẹ̀, Tónrìşe màa sìn

'Ba aatónrìşe" 40  
 Ọ̀rùnmilà a- tónrì-ẹni-şe.  
 Babaláwo (Sí Aláísàn): Ebo lo a rú. Ifá sí o a rúbọ. Ọ la borí rẹ. Ifá sí o máa tàtà-jèrè. Ifá sí é ní sọgun wàhálà mó.  
 Aláísàn: Bẹẹ gan an ni. Ọjà mi ò tà. Bí mo bà . . .  
 Babaláwo: Gbogbo ẹ nífá rí. Ètùtù la máa ẹ. Ó sì a ná ẹ 45  
 ní ogojì òkẹ — túwẹ̀ntí nairà. Abí o a ra nnkan èlò rẹ̀ fúnra ẹ?  
 Aláísàn: Šé twenti nairà ni? Ọun rée  
 Babaláwo: Šé aa ráyè padà á lólaa? 50  
 Maa ti ra nnkan ètùtù sílẹ.  
 Aláísàn: Bí igbà wo nìyẹn?  
 Babaláwo: Un ùn, láago márùn-ùn sí mẹfà.  
 Aláísàn: Mà á wá láago márùn-ùn sí mẹfà.  
 Babaláwo: E è burù nígbẹẹẹ. Mo a máa retí. Mà a wolẹ o.  
 Aláísàn: E ẹşun o baba. Ó dàbò o. 55  
 Babaláwo: Ọ̀rùnmilà a gbè á o.  
 (Recorded from Mr Oyinbo Orunmila Awotidoye, 29, Odi Olokun Street, Ile-Ife.)  
 Priest: You're welcome.  
 Client: Good afternoon, sir.  
 Priest: You're welcome. Hope you're fine?  
 Client: We thank God. How about mother? Hope she's fine?  
 Priest: She's in good health. Hope there's no problem. It's quite some days.  
 Client: Father, it's you I've come to see. 5  
 Priest: Hope there is nothing serious.  
 Client: It's about my whole life. It's very hopeless.  
 Priest: That's how it is with the whole world. Will you speak to Ifa then.  
 Client: That's all right. (A short silence)  
 Priest: (Manipulating divination materials) It's good 10  
 news Ifa has brought you. It's Oyeku that has shown on the board. Oyeku papenose . . .  
 He says "agbagba a bewe gbaa"  
 He says "opurupuru got down in despair beside the Oora river"  
 They said they were in a terrible state of predi- 15



cament  
**And they should go to Orisa (Obatala)**  
 They should go and change their bad ori (destiny)  
 They got to Orisa  
 Orisa said he doesn't repair destiny twice  
 He said they should go to Edu's (Orunmila's) place 20  
 They got to Orunmila  
 They asked him to save them.  
 They said he should help make their destinies better.  
 He then brought out his divination instruments  
 He performed the divination 25  
 Wham!  
 Oyeku  
 Papenose  
 Ah ah  
 He said he would repair their ill luck  
 So he gathered his divination materials 30  
 He performed sacrifices for them  
 He made the essential appeasement on their behalf.  
 And their destinies began to turn better  
 All cases of ill luck  
 It is Orunmila who used to repair them  
 They sang "Tonrise ooo 35  
 It's Tonrise (One who repairs destinies) I'll worship  
 The god who repairs destinies  
 Efululelœ, it's Tonrise I'll worship  
 The god who repairs destinies. 40  
 Orunmila, the one who repairs destinies.  
 (To Client) You'll have to make some sacrifices. Ifa says you'll sacrifice to you destiny (personal god). Ifa says you'll make profit in your business. Ifa says there are no more problems for you.  
 Client: That's exactly it. I now make poor returns in my market. If I . . .  
 Priest: Ifa has seen everything. We shall make some sacrifices, and it will cost you twenty naira. Or will you buy the ingredients yourself? 45

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Client: Is it twenty naira. Here you are.  
 Priest: Will you have time to come tomorrow? I'll have got the items for sacrifice ready  
 Client: By what time? 50  
 Priest: Em . . . in the afternoon . . . What about in the evening?  
 Client: I'll come between five and six.  
 Priest: That's all right. I'll be expecting you. Bye.  
 Client: Thank you very much sir. Bye. 55  
 Priest: May Orunmila give us his support.

Notes

1. This paper is a revision of an earlier one presented at the Conference of Languages, Linguistics and Literatures held from 29th August to 1st September 1988 at the Lagos State University, Lagos.
2. Note here that the aspect of divination, whenever it occurs in HC interaction represents a special form of diagnosis, although it almost always suggests the remedy for a problem. The divinatory aspect is optional in HC texts unlike the diagnostic and medicating aspects which are obligatory. In fact, the art of divination is not peculiar to YTM; but it relates to all aspects of Yoruba life. Thus while diviners may serve as herbalists, they also perform other priestly duties unrelated to medical healing.

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