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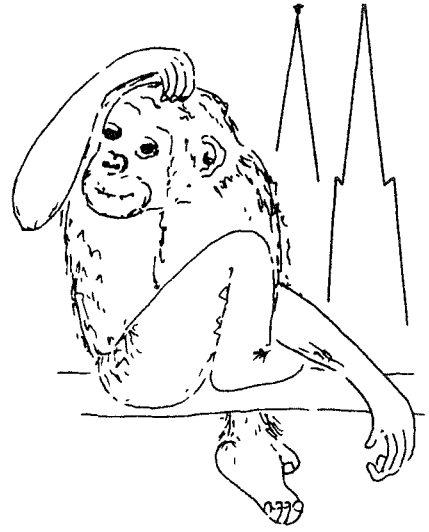
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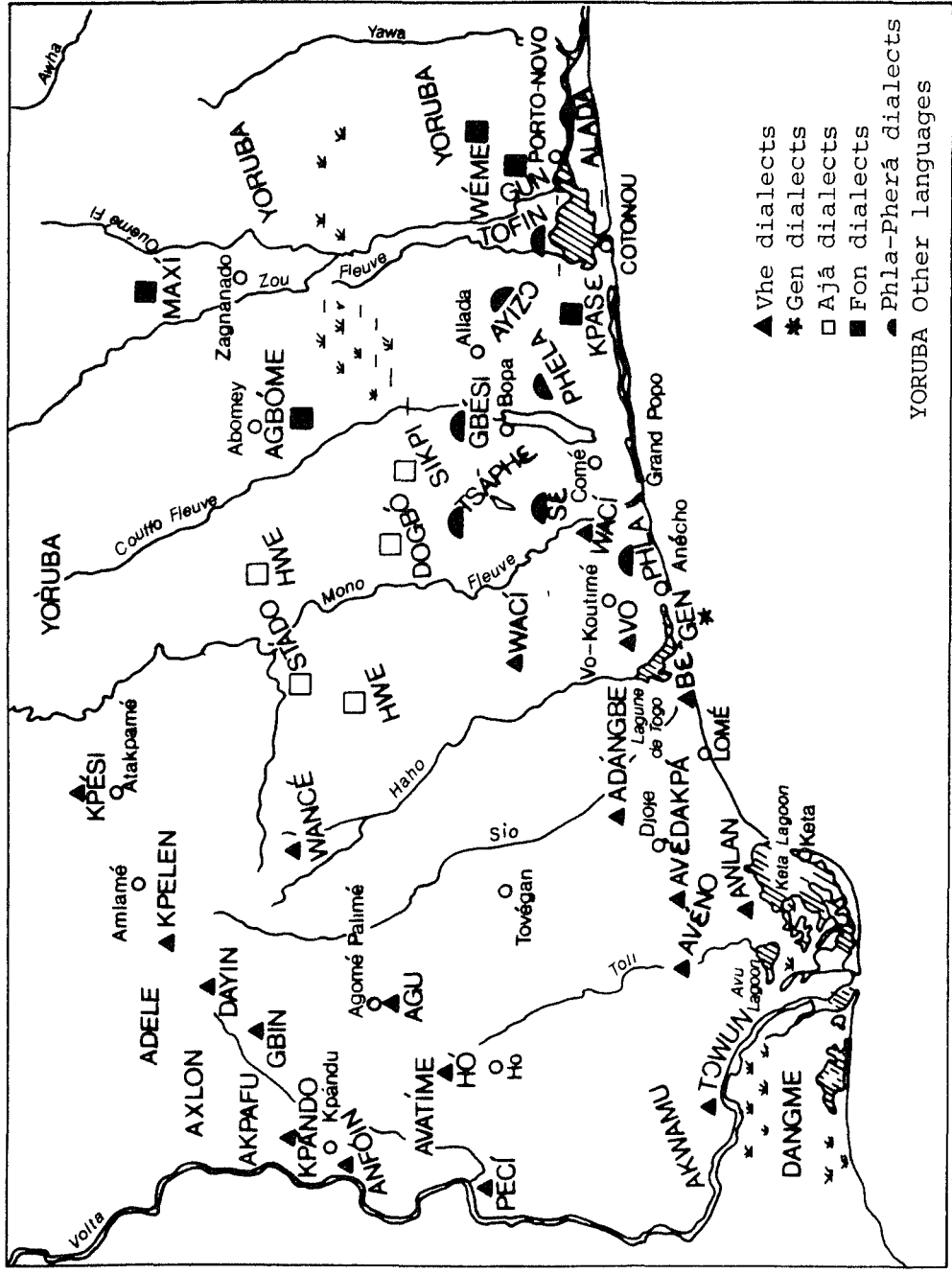
Thilo C. Schadeberg

A SMALL SKETCH OF EWE

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MAP: The Geographical Distribution of Ewe



Map taken from Capo 1982 (SUGIA 4:224)

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EWE

## I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1. About This Sketch

This publication is a slightly revised edition of the syllabus that was first provided in 1973 for the participants of an introductory course in Ewe at the Department of African Linguistics of the State University at Leiden. It is a condensed, selective and reorganized summary of the sources listed below. Most examples were taken from Ansre, and no attempt has been made towards regularization. It must be pointed out that Ewe has many dialects with great differences in phonology, lexicon and morpho-syntax. Some linguists (e.g. H. Capo) therefore prefer to speak of the "Gbe language group". Even Ansre's western "standard" or "conversational" Ewe is not a homogeneous dialect. The analyses proposed in this Sketch are a far way from a comprehensive description and should not be taken as definitive.

I am grateful to my friend and colleague Klaus Schubert (University of Munich) for his thorough reading of my manuscript and pointing out to me many of its weaknesses. I regret that I have not been able to make full use of all his comments.

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Grammar:

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#### Dictionary:

Diedrich Westermann. 1954. *Wörterbuch der Ewe-Sprache*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

#### Practical Course:

Irene Warburton, Prosper Kpotufe, and Roland Glover. 1968. *Ewe Basic Course*. Bloomington: Indiana University.

#### Texts:

J. Spieth. 1906. *Die Ewe-Stämme*. Berlin.

### 3. Segment Charts

#### Vowels:

oral				nasal	
i		u	i	ɥ	
e		o			
ɛ	ɔ		ɛ	ɔ	
a				ã	

Consonants:

	obstruent				sonorant	
	voiceless		voiced			
bilabial	p	f	b	v	m	
labio-dental		f		v		
dental	t	ts	d	dz		
alveolar		s		z	n	l r
post-alveolar			ɖ			
palatal					ny	y
velar	k	x	g	h	ŋ	ɣ
labial-velar	kp		gb			w

Notes:

(i) r and l are in complementary distribution: r occurs after dentals, alveolars and palatals, l occurs elsewhere, i.e. syllable initially and after bilabials, labiodentals, velars, and labial-velars; r/l do not occur after ɖ.

(ii) w and ɣ are in complementary distribution: w occurs before rounded vowels, ɣ occurs elsewhere.

(iii) c and j occur as variants of ts and dz before i; ʃ and ʒ occur as dialect variants of s before i.

(iv) The class of voiced obstruents is called "depressor consonants" because of their lowering influence on tone.

4. Tone

Ewe has three level tones; the two lower levels are in complementary distribution:

NON-HIGH: low mid  
 HIGH: high

Rising and falling tones can be analysed as sequences of two different tones.

Systematic-phonemic spelling: NON-HIGH a  
HIGH á

Systematic-phonetic spelling: low à  
mid a  
high á

Mid-low distribution (first rule):

The NON-HIGH tone is realized as low  
(i) in sentence final position;  
(ii) before a low tone (iterative!).

ex. ame vá 'a person came'  
me kpó àmè 'I saw a person'

## 5. Syllable

V e.g. ò NEGATIVE marker  
N e.g. ñ CONTINUOUS marker  
CV e.g. kpó 'to see'  
CLV e.g. kplé 'and'  
yrá 'to bless'  
CiV e.g. fiá 'to show'

Various vowel sequences occur mainly across morpheme boundaries and in ideophonic words.

## II. CANONICAL VERBS AND NOUNS

## 1. Verbs

Most Ewe verbs are monosyllabic, but a few polysyllabic verbs do occur.

ex. *si* 'to escape'  
       *tró* 'to turn'  
       *biá* 'to ask'                      *súbó* 'to worship'

Ewe verbs may have HIGH or NON-HIGH tone, regardless of the class of the initial consonant.

ex. *tsí* 'to remain'                      *tsi* 'to grow'  
       *dú* 'to dance'                      *du* 'to eat'  
       *wú* 'to exceed'                      *wu* 'to kill'

## 2. Nouns

Ewe nouns canonically consist of a stem which may be preceded by an initial vowel (IV), mostly *a*. A NON-HIGH stem may be followed by a floating HIGH tone. (Some non-canonical nouns are, for instance, *ndí* 'morning', *ngɔ* 'front', *kísi* 'rat'.)

	HIGH	NON-HIGH	NON-HIGH+
<i>[-son]</i>	<i>tó</i> 'ear'	<i>tsi</i> 'water'	<i>ta.</i> 'head'
<i>[-voice]</i>	<i>atí</i> 'tree'	<i>asi</i> 'market'	<i>akpa.</i> 'fish'
<i>[-son]</i>	<i>gbɔ́</i> 'goat'	<i>dzo</i> 'fire'	<i>do.</i> 'hole'
<i>[+voice]</i>	<i>abó</i> 'arm'	<i>adzo</i> 'riddle'	<i>azi.</i> 'peanut'
<i>[+son]</i>	<i>nú</i> 'thing'	<i>nyi</i> 'cow'	<i>nu.</i> 'mouth'
	<i>anyi</i> 'bee'	<i>ame</i> 'person'	<i>ama.</i> 'greens'

## 3. Some Tone Rules

(1) In nominal stems, a NON-HIGH tone becomes low if the syllable begins with a depressor consonant; otherwise it becomes mid.

ex. dò:	'hole'	dzò lá	'the fire'
ta:	'head'	ts: lá	'the water'
nu:	'mouth'	ny: lá	'the cow'

(11) A HIGH nominal stem with an initial depressor consonant becomes low-plus-floating-high, i.e. rising. This rule makes HIGH and LOW-HIGH nouns with initial depressor consonant generally indistinguishable. (An environment in which the two tone types are distinct is the possessive construction; see Ch. 3.)

ex. gb̩̀: 'goat'  
àb̩̀: 'arm'

(111) The tone of the IV is always NON-HIGH. It becomes low if the following consonant is a non-sonorant; otherwise it becomes mid. (The IV is also low, by the rule given in chapter I, if the following syllable is low, regardless of the kind of consonant.)

ex. àtí	àsí lá	àkpa:
àb̩̀:	àdzò lá	àzì:
anyí	ame lá	ama:
	cf. àmè	

(1v) HIGH-tone verbs immediately preceding an object noun without IV whose tone is high or mid change their tone to falling.

ex. kofí kp̩̀:	kpé	'Kofi saw a stone'
kofí dí:	fíá lá	'Kofi sought the chief'
kp̩̀lé:	fú	'pregnant' ("with child")
but: mè	gà tsó gò lá ò	'do not take the gourd'
	é lá àg̩̀tí á	'he climbed the palm'

The fall may be from high to low or to mid, and the conditions are the same as for the IV: The fall is high-to-mid if the following noun stem starts with a sonorant consonant, and it is high-to-low if the following noun stem starts with a non-sonorant consonant.

ex. é kp̩̀:	kpé	'he saw a stone'
é kp̩̀:	ts: lá	'he saw the water'
é kp̩̀:	nú	'he saw something'

This all adds up to the conclusion that the second part of this falling tone on the verb is a floating tone that is part of the noun; in other words, all (?) nouns can be described as having a NON-HIGH prefix which is either a or floating.

(v) A floating high tone is deleted if the following syllable has a high tone.

ex. ta lá 'the head'  
 dò lá 'the hole'  
 àbò lá 'the arm'  
 nu lá 'the mouth'

but: gò. lè xò mè 'a gourd is in the house'  
 gbò. sia fù 'this goat is white'

### III. THE COMPLEX NOMINAL GROUP

#### 1. Additive Relationship

Two or more nouns (or nominal groups) may be joined together by the additive linker *kplé* 'and'. In a series of two or more nominal groups the last linker may be *kpakplé*, or only the last nominal group may have a linker. The pluralizer *wó* may occur after the last nominal group.

ex. *ene kplé adé kplé àsíéke kpakplé dèká lè bláàvè*  
       'four and six and nine and one are twenty'  
*gè kumásí tèmà kplé tàmàlè wó nyé dù gáà wó*  
       'Accra, Kumasi, Tema and Tamale are large towns'  
       (Note the exceptional low tones on the foreign  
       place names "Tema" and "Tamale".)

#### 2. Alternative Relationship

Two or more nominal groups may be joined together by the alternative linker *àlóó* 'or' (always with initial low tone) or its variant *lóó*. In a series of more than two nominal groups the linker may occur between all successive nominal groups or only between the last two.

ex. *fufú àlóó àbólo àlóó gálí àlóó àkplé mé lè àsí-wò ò à*  
       or: *fufú àbólo gálí àlóó àkplé mé lè àsí-wò ò à*  
       'don't you have fufu or bread or gali or akplé?'

#### 3. Possessive Relationship

"Alienable possession" is expressed by the possessive linker *fé* between possessor and possessed.

ex. *fia fé xò* 'the chief's house'

The IV becomes high after the possessive linker *fé*.

ex. *dàdà fé ámi* 'mother's oil'

HIGH tone noun stems with initial depressor consonant retain the high tone after *fé*, i.e. Rule (ii) given in Ch. 3 does not apply.

ex. *gbǎ* : *kofí fé gbǎ* 'Kofi's goat'  
*zé* : *dàdà fé zé* 'mother's pot'  
*dé* : *fia fé dé* 'the chief's palmtree'  
*ábú* : *máwúená fé ábú* 'Mawuena's arm'  
 but *do* : *dà fé dò* 'the snake's hole'  
*azi* : *kofí fé ázi* 'Kofi's peanut'

"Non-alienable possession" is expressed by mere juxtaposition Possessor:Possessed, without any linker. This construction is used if the possessed is either a relational or a postpositional noun.

ex. *kofí srǎ* 'Kofi's wife'  
*kofí ñǎ* 'Kofi's front'  
*yàwò lè kofí gbǎ* 'Yawo is with Kofi'  
*sényó wò-à dò. lè xò mè* 'Senyo works in the house'

Relational nouns are:

<i>dadá</i>	'mother'	<i>ncví</i>	'sibling'
<i>nc</i>	'mother'	<i>tási</i>	'aunt'
<i>tó</i>	'father'	<i>srǎ</i>	'wife'
<i>ví</i>	'child'		

Postpositional nouns are:

<i>mé</i>	'inside'	<i>gbǎ</i>	'side'
<i>ñǎ</i>	'front'	<i>dzi</i>	'top'
<i>té</i>	'underneath'		

Note:

The last two nouns belong to the same tone class as does, e.g., *gbǎ* 'goat'. Since the tone rules operating after *fé* are also valid for the "inalienable" possessive construction, and since positional nouns occur mainly in this construction, these words usually appear with a simple high tone (as listed above).

## IV. PRONOUNS

There are at least five series of pronouns:

1. Subject pronouns
2. Jussive subject pronouns
3. Object pronouns
4. Emphatic pronouns
5. Possessive pronouns
- (6. Logophoric pronouns)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	1 me	má	m	nye	nyè(´)	
SG	2 e/ne	-	wo	wo	wò(´)	
	3 é/wò	né	e	éya	é/è	ye/e
	1 míé	mí	mí	mí(áwó)	míá	
PL	2 mie	mi	mi	mi(awó)	mia	
	3 wó	wóné	wó	wó(áwó)	wó	

The forms which are marked in this table with a grave accent are consistently low, i.e. they do not follow the rules of mid/low alternation. The emphatic 3rd person singular pronoun *éya* always has final mid tone (instead of an expected rising tone: *éya´*).

## 1. Subject Pronouns

There are two forms for the 2nd and 3rd person singular. According to Clements 1975 they are in complementary distribution: *e/é* occur generally in sentence initial position, *ne/wò* occur elsewhere. Ansre notes the occurrence of *é* in free clauses (i.e. sentence initially), and after co-ordinating and optionally after neutral conjunctions (see Ch. X). By contrast, *wò* is used (according to Ansre) after subordinating and optionally also after neutral conjunctions. (Ansre makes no parallel distinction for *e/ne*.)

- ex. é dó yí élabéná é kpó m 'he shouted because he saw me'  
 qèqì té é-ńú éyaáta é dó àlẹ̀ 'he was tired, therefore he slept'  
 qèqì té é-ńú éyaáta wò dó àlẹ̀ (idem)  
 me yó ɛ éye wò tò 'I called him and he replied'  
 (ex. from Westermann; mid/low not distinguished:)  
 evá etsɔ or etsɔ nevá 'you came yesterday'

2. Jussive Subject Pronouns: see Ch. 5.3

### 3. Object Pronouns

The phonological form of the 3rd person singular is determined by the vowel of the preceding syllable:

i after i or u;  
 e after e or o;  
 ɛ after ɛ, ɔ, or a.

- ex. mè wù i 'I killed it'  
 me tó è 'I pounded it'  
 me kpó ɛ 'I saw it'

(For a different set of forms and rules see Clements 1975.)

### 4. Emphatic Pronouns

Members of this series are used when the pronoun is emphasized or further qualified, or when the sentence contains no verb.

- ex. é fo éya 'he beat HIM'  
 cf. é fò è 'he beat him'  
 wò qèká tsi anyí 'you alone are left'  
 nyè à 'I?'  
 wo é kpó àdzè lá 'YOU saw the witch'

The plural pronouns of this series are always followed by the definite specifier á and by the pluralizer wò, except when followed by kátáá 'all'.

ex. mí á wò é dǔ ame qé wò 'WE sent someone to you'  
 but: mí kátáǎ 'all of us'

### 5. Possessive Pronouns

When the relationship is one of "alienable possession" the possessive pronouns of the 1st and 2nd person singular may either precede or follow the possessed; in the latter case they lose their final (floating) high tone. The other possessive pronouns take the linker *fé* and precede the possessed.

ex. nyè: xǎ or xǎ nyè 'my house'                      miá fé xǎ 'our house'  
 wò: xǎ or xǎ wò 'your house'                      miá fé xǎ 'your house'  
 é fé xǎ 'his house'                      wó fé xǎ 'their house'

No linker *fé* is used when the relationship is one of "inalienable possession". In the 3rd person singular, the pronoun is *é* before postpositional nouns (just as before *fé*), and it is *e* before relational nouns.

ex. è-vì á tsì 'his child is grown'  
 é-mè gòglò 'its inside is deep'

The same tone rules that have been observed in the nominal possessive are also valid for pronominal possessives.

ex. miá fé á sí wó 'our hands'  
 nyè á gǎ 'my coconut'  
 nyè: gǎ bú 'my money is lost'  
 wò á bǎ 'your arm'  
 wò á zì: 'your peanuts'  
 miá gbǎ fá 'our place is calm' (a greeting)

The details of the tonal paradigm of postposed *nyè(·)* and *wò(·)* are not well understood. Compare:

ex. gbǎ nye fá 'my place is calm'  
 gbǎ wo fá 'your place is calm'

Relational nouns sometimes take the definite specifier *á* instead of the the 3rd person singular possessive pronoun.

ex. fofó á 'his father'

## 6. Logophoric Pronouns

Pronouns of this series are used in reported or imputed clauses. In the dialect described by Ansre, there are two forms for the 3rd person singular subject pronoun: *yɛ* is used when the pronoun refers to the person making the report himself, and *ɛ* is used when the pronoun refers to someone other than the person making the report.

- ex. *kofí kpɔ́ bɛ̀ yɛ̀ xɔ̀ àbì* 'Kofi saw that he (himself) was wounded'  
*kofí kpɔ́ bɛ̀ ɛ̀ xɔ̀ àbì* 'Kofi saw that he (someone else) was wounded'

In other dialects (see Westermann; Clements 1975) there is only one logophoric pronoun (*ye*, plural *yewó*) which can function as subject, object or possessive pronoun, and may replace third or second person pronouns. It refers to the person whose point of view is reported, who must be different from the speaker of the sentence itself. (In this type of Ewe, the logophoric pronoun is not a separate series but rather an additional pronoun.)

- ex. (Clements 1975; tones by TCS, but without mid/low alternation:)  
*kofí bɛ̀ ye dzó* 'Kofi<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> left'  
*e bɛ̀ ye-á vá* 'you<sub>i</sub> said that you<sub>i</sub> (SG) left'  
*e bɛ̀ yewó-a vá* 'you<sub>i</sub> said that you<sub>i+3</sub> (PL) left'  
*kofí nyá bɛ̀ me kpɔ́ ye* 'Kofi<sub>i</sub> knew that I had seen him<sub>i</sub>.'  
*kofí wɔwɔ-m bɛ̀ kɔsí vá ye gbɔ́* 'Kofi<sub>i</sub> is arranging for Kosi to come to him<sub>i</sub>.'  
 (kofí bɛ̀) ye fé ga (bú) '(Kofi<sub>i</sub> said that) his<sub>i</sub> money (is lost)'

## V. THE VERBAL GROUP

## 1. Reduplication

Every verbal group contains a verb stem which may be either simple or reduplicated according to tense and transitivity. Reduplication is not a full anticipation of the verb stem but takes the following shape:

		verb stem		
		-----		
C copy	V copy	C	(L,i)	V
	[- nasal]			
	[- HIGH ]			
ex. yi	'to go'	yiyi		'(the act of) going'
bú	'to lose'	bubú		'losing; loss'
vǔ	'to fear'	vovǔ		'fearing; fear'
yrá	'to bless'	yayrá		'blessing'
biá	'to be red'	babiá		'being red, redness'
biá	'to ask'	babiá		'asking, question'

## 2. Imperative

The imperative exists only in the singular. It consists of the verb stem with certain tonal characteristics:

- (i) NON-HIGH verbs are low as the first or only imperative in a predicate.
- (ii) HIGH verbs with initial voiceless obstruent are high in the imperative.
- (iii) HIGH verbs with initial voiced (obstruent or sonorant) consonant have rising tone, unless
- (iv) a second imperative follows, in which case the first (voiced consonant initial) imperative becomes low.
- (v) Imperatives which follow another imperative do not follow these rules, they simply have the stem tone.

ex. tu :	tù xò lá	'build the house!'
bu :	bù sé lá	'respect the law!'
me :	mè tè èvè	'roast two yams!'
kpé:	kpé wó	'meet them!'
gbé:	gbè: wó	'refuse them!'
lọ :	lọ: lẹ lá	'remove the meat from the fire!'
vá :	và:	'come!'
	và nọ anyí	'come and sit down!'
	và liá àtí	'come and climb the tree!'

### 3. Jussive

A special series of pronouns characterizes the forms of the jussive; see Ch. 4. The imperative takes the place of the 2nd person singular of the jussive. The jussive forms of the 1st and 3rd person sg. and pl. are optionally preceded by the particle *na*.

ex. mi dzó	'depart!'
(nà) mi dzó	'let's depart!'
(nà) má yì	'let me go!'

### 4. Aorist

The aorist is formed by the simple verb stem.

ex. kofí tsi nùtó	'Kofi has grown very much'
é tó vù á	'he stopped the vehicle'
fùfù tì ò	'I am fed up with fufu'

### 5. Future

The future tense marker *áa* is fused with the subject pronoun:

Singular 1. maá	Plural 1. miá
2. (n)aa	2. miá
3. áa	3. wóa

- ex. áa kpó wó 'he will see them'  
 tsi áa dza fúú 'rain will fall plentifully'  
 yàwò áa wù dà lá ná m 'Yawo will kill the snake for me'

There are unresolved problems regarding the tonal paradigm of the future.

## 6. Habitual

The tone of the habitual tense marker *na* or *a* is always the same as the tone of the preceding syllable, the verb. According to Ansre 1966, *na* and *a* are in free variation; according to Westermann, *a* is used when an object follows the verb, and *na* when no object follows.

- ex. mè yi-nà àsi mè gbèsiàgbè 'I go to the market every day'  
 àfénó á kpó-á dèvi á dzi nyúié 'the lady supervises the child well'  
 ékpó-néé 'he usually sees her'

## 7. Continuous: *m*

## 8. Intentional: *gé*

- (a) present continuous : le { reduplicated verb } -*m*  
 present intentional: le { object + verb } -*gé*
- (b) past continuous : no { reduplicated verb } -*m*  
 past intentional: no { object + verb } -*gé*
- (c) future continuous : áa no { reduplicated verb } -*m*  
 future intentional: áa no { object + verb } -*gé*

- ex. dádi lá lè tsitsi-*m* 'the cat is growing'  
 yawá lè fufu tó-*m* 'Yawa is pounding fufu'  
 uú á nò tótó-*m* dèdèdè 'the vehicle was turning slowly'  
 dèvi á wó nò kpé da-*m* 'the children were throwing stones'  
 maá nò àgbàlè nlo-*m* ná mí 'I shall be writing you letters'  
 wó lè hà dzi-*gé* fífíá 'they will sing soon'  
 nyrué nò àgbèlè yi-*gé* háfí mié dè 'uncle was going to go to the farm when we got there'  
 wóá nò yi-*gé* 'they would be going'



ká	alleviating
kpó	negative
xa	frustration
ɖa	goal
hé	serial

- ex. dólélé á ká bobo vié 'the sickness has lessened slightly'  
 wó mé kpó vá hàqé ò 'they have not yet come'  
 mè xà lè àtíke wo-m 'I am taking medicine in vain'

The order of the different pre-stem particles is:

FUT - REP - AUG - PRES/PAST - VERB

- ex. vi' wo máa ga xa na nu' fo-m háfi á dzi hà ò à  
 'won't your child be barely talking before it sings?'

## 11. Negation

Negation is expressed by the discontinuous particle *mé ... o* which includes the whole verbal group as well as object and adverbial groups if present.

- ex. àtí lá mé kó ò 'the tree is not tall'  
 nyè mé gà lè tsitsi-m ò 'I am no longer growing'  
 gà ɖéké mé lè àsí nyè égbè ò 'I have no money today'  
 wó mé dà-à tú lè lè àvè. siá mè ò 'they don't shoot animals in  
 this forest'

*mé* combines with the future particle *áa* to form *máa*:

- ex. nùtsu á máa ɖó gè égbè ò 'the man will not reach Accra today'

The descriptions do not completely agree on the forms resulting from the fusion of *mé* with the subject pronouns. Warburton et al. give the following paradigm:

Aorist:	nye mé fó o	Future:	nye má vá o
	me fó o		ma vá o
	mé fó o		má vá o
	mié fó o		miá vá o
	mie fó o		mia vá o
	wó mé fó o		wó má vá o

Compare the following examples from Ansre:

ex. nyè máa nò fu kpé-m̄ yesíayí ò 'I will not be suffering forever'  
 mí máa ga wò àvà gbèdè ò 'we shall never fight again'  
 wó máa ga dà nò gbèvú wò-m̄ ò 'they will no longer be ruffians'

Negative repetitive forms of the aorist, future, or jussive express "prohibition".

ex. (from Westermann 1961; mid/low alternation not indicated:)

me ga yi o 'don't go' (singular)  
 mé/má/ná ga yi o 'he should not go'  
 mí má ga yi o 'we should not go'  
 mi (má) ga yi o 'don't go' (plural)  
 wó má ga yi o 'they should not go'

## 12. Two Complements

(i) two nominal complements:

ex. kofí tó dzò àvò á lè xò mè 'Kofi set fire to the cloth in the  
 room'  
 nùtsu sia lè gà ná-m̄ kofí 'this man is giving money to Kofi'

(ii) nominal complement + pronominal complement:

ex. kofí tási ná àkutsá m̄ ètsò 'Kofi's aunt gave me a sponge  
 yesterday'  
 é lè tó dób-m̄ wó 'he is obeying them'

(iii) pronominal complement + nominal complement:

ex. é fiá wó fia lá 'he showed them to the chief'  
 é le wó fiá-m̄ fia lá 'he is showing them to the chief'

## VI. SERIAL VERBAL CONSTRUCTIONS

### 1. General Observations

A "Serial Verbal Construction" (SVC) is a clause with several verbal groups.

ex. *é tró vá tó gbò-nyè yì àfé* 'he turned, came, passed my place  
(and) went home'  
*é nò tsi kú* 'he drowned' ("he drank water died")

The understood subject of the second verb in a SVC is co-referential with either the subject or the object of the preceding verb.

ex. *me yó nùtsu lá vá è* 'I called the man and came',  
or: 'I called the man to come'

### 2. The Ambivalent Complement

An otherwise transitive verb may appear as the final verb without any complement if the complement occurs previously in the SVC. Such a complement is analysed as ambivalent.

ex. *mié dà fùfù dù* 'we cooked fufu and ate it'  
*nyónu lá tró nya lá gblò* 'the woman changed the news and said  
it'

### 3. The Redundant Complement

If the final verb in a SVC is a verb of motion, and if the first verb in this SVC is transitive, then the whole construction is closed with the 3rd person singular object pronoun *è w è w ì*.



(vi) The augmenting particles *ɔa* [GOAL] and *hé* [SERIAL] occur only (?) in SVCs, but only once and never in the first verbal group. In the future tense, *há* is used instead of *hé*.

ex. *wó yì ɔà flè tè* they went to buy yams'  
*mié ɔa nú ɔù lè tsɪ hé mló anyí* 'we cooked food, ate, bathed  
and lay down'  
*wòà lè tsɪ á ɔu nú á há mló anyí* 'they will bathe, eat and lie  
down'

(vii) The augmenting particles *xa* [FRUSTRATION] and *kpó* [NEGATIVE] may occur in the first verbal group of a SVC.

ex. *yàwò xà zò vá kpó amegá lá à* 'did Yawo come to see the great  
man?'

(viii) The discontinuous particle *mé ... ò* encloses all verbal groups and implies negation of the whole SVC.

ex. *dàdì lá mé nò tsɪ kú ò* 'the cat did not drown'

### 5. Discontinuous Verbs

Discontinuous verbs are superficially similar to SVCs. They are different in that only their first part can take pre- and post-stem particles or complements.

ex. *kofí dzra-na ɔó kábá* 'Kofi gets ready quickly'  
*ɔèvi á nɔ náke tu-m ɔó* 'the child was piling up firewood'

Some examples of discontinuous verbs:

*dzra-ɔó* 'to prepare, get ready, hide'  
*ɔó-ɔá* 'to send'  
*ɔɔ-ɔó* 'to correct'  
*kplɔ-ɔó* 'to go after'  
*kpó-ɔá* 'to visit, look at'  
*ɲɔ-bé* 'to forget'  
*tu-ɔó* 'to pile up'



## (ii) Derived Adverbs:

from noun:	ɲútsu-tɔɛ̀	'in a manly way'
from verb + noun:	àkpé-dá-tɔɛ̀	'gratefully'
from neg. verbal noun:	màɖimàɖi-i	'without burial'
	àkpé-madámadá-è	'ungratefully'

diminutive: high tone = smallness/low tone = largeness

ex. é zò-nà hlòyì-hlòyì	'he walks clumsily/is large'
é zò-na hlóyì-hlóyì	'he walks clumsily/is small'

## 2. Intensifiers

Intensifiers can qualify nouns or function as adverbs.

Some reduplicable intensifiers:

ɲútó	'very (much)'	ɲútó-ɲútó-ɲútó
sóh	'plenty'	sóh-sóh-sóh
kátá	'all'	kátá-kátá or kátáá
ké	'exactly'	ké-ké-á-ké

Some non-reduplicable intensifiers:

(Some of these forms are marked for low tone, presumably because they fail to take part in the mid/low alternation.)

háà	'also'	kò	'just, only'
dzaa	'exclusively'	ya	'as for'
ɖèɖè	'only, single'		

ex. kofí wò-à dò ɲútó-ɲútó-ɲútó	'Kofi works very very hard'
kofí wò-à dò háà	'Kofi works also'

## 3. Adverbial Adjectives

A subclass of adjectives can function as adverbs.

ex. ɖèví á lè zòzò-m nyúíé	'the child is walking well'
é vá dzódzròò	'he came in vain'

## 4. Temporal Nouns

A subclass of nouns, all referring to time, can function as adverbs.

ex. maa dzó égbè	'I shall leave today'
ètsò dònò lá mé fú ò	'yesterday the patient did not get up'
but: égbè fá	'today (it) is cold'

## 5. The Verbid Construction

A verbid construction consists of a verbid followed by a nominal group. The following six words are verbids; they all have corresponding homophonous items in other word classes.

kplé	'with'	cf. 'and' (linker)
le	'at, in, ...'	cf. [PRES] (particle); 'to be somewhere'
tsó	'from'	cf. 'to come from'
ná	'to, for'	cf. 'to give'
dé	'towards'	cf. 'to reach'
tó	'through'	cf. 'to pass through'

Verbids are distinguished from verbs by not taking part in the system that operates in the serial verbal construction; they are distinguished from the second part of a discontinuous verb by their (exclusive) occurrence in adverbial groups.

ex. sényó wò-à dǒ. lè gè	'Senyo works in Accra'
àfènc lá xɔ amedzró lá kplé lǐlǐ gèqèè	'the lady received the guest with much kindness'
mè xò-à àgbàlè tó kofí dzí	'I receive letters through Kofi'

A verbid construction may also operate as a qualifier of a verbal noun.

ex. kòkò lè kútefé mé nyó ò	'laughing at funerals is not good'
kpedada dé tsi me dó-á dzidzòò ná dèví wó	'throwing stones in water gives joy to children'

## VIII. THE NOMINAL GROUP

The simple nominal group consists of an obligatory head optionally followed by a qualifier. The head may be a noun, a pronoun, or a quantifier. The qualifier may be represented by one or more of the following items:

(1) one or more adjectives:

ex. vi nyúíé fáfáá dzèqèkáá lè àsí-wò 'you have a nice, gentle,  
good-looking child'

(2) a quantifier:

ex. qèvi èvè mló àbàti qèká dzi 'two children lay on one bed'

(3) a specifier:

ex. qèvi á wò dǎ: sia nyúíé 'the child did this work well'

(4) the pluralizer:

ex. mié kpó kesé wó le mó á tó 'we saw monkeys by the roadside'

(5) one or more intensifiers:

ex. áma nútó kúráá gò háà se nya lá 'even Ama herself also heard  
the news'

If the qualifier consists of items from several word classes, the order is the one given.

ex. átí gǎǎ èvè áqé wó háà mu dze mó á mè  
ADJ QNT SP PL INT

'some two big trees also fell on the road'

## 1. Adjectives

simple:	gá 'big'	
	fée 'young'	
Adj + é (diminutive):	loloé 'fairly large'	< loloó 'large'
	yibcè 'small and dark'	< yibcú 'dark'
V + V + ' :	tsitsii 'old'	< tsi 'to grow'
	kúkúú 'dead'	< kú 'to die'
	babiáá 'red'	< biá 'to be red'
but:	loloó 'large'	< lolò 'to be large'
V + N + ' :	nyá-núú 'wise'	< nyá nú 'know thing'
V + N + V + ' :	qù-nú-kpótó 'wealthy'	
	< qù nú kpótò 'eat thing leave (some)'	

## 2. Quantifiers

## Cardinal numerals:

(Tones - including the mid/low alternation - are indicated as they would appear in final position, but there are many uncertainties.)

1 - dèká	11 - wúídèké
2 - èvè	12 - wúìèvè
3 - ètù	20 - bláàvè
4 - ènè	21 - bláàvè-vò-dèké
5 - àtù	22 - bláàvè-vò-vè
6 - adé	23 - bláàvè-vò-tù
7 - adré	25 - bláàvè-vò-àtù
8 - enyi	30 - blá-ètù
9 - àsíéke	50 - blá-àtù
10 - ewó	100 - alafá (dèká)

## Ordinal numerals:

gbá(tó) 'first'	ètùliá 'third'
èvèliá 'second'	etc.

Non-numerical quantifiers: gèdèé 'many'

### 3. Specifiers

The complete list of specifiers is:

lá/á	'the'	siá	'this'
áqé	'a certain'	maá	'that'
qéké	'none'		

According to Smith 1968, á assimilates to the tone of the preceding syllable if followed by é, wó, dzi, gbó, tó; elsewhere it has high tone.

### 4. Pluralizer

When the DEFINITE specifier precedes the pluralizer wó, it always occurs in the variant á.

ex. qèví á wó 'the children'

Generally, the pluralizer does not immediately follow a quantifier.

ex. qèví nyúíé èvè lè xɔ á mè 'two good children are in the room'  
 qèví nyúíé gèqèè lè xɔ á mè 'many good children are in the room'  
 but: nyónu enyí á wó kèn qú-á ye nukútsè 'all the eight women  
 dance marvellously'

### 5. Intensifiers

Intensifiers, besides operating as adverbs, may also occur as the last qualifying item in a nominal group.

ex. kofí nùtú lè àfíì 'Kofi himself is here'  
 kofí nùtú-nùtú lè àfíì 'Kofi HIMSELF is here'  
 kofí háà lè àfíì 'Kofi is also here'

## IX. THE FORMATION OF NOUNS

Ewe has a great variety of word formation processes of which this chapter intends to serve as a reminder.

Some underived nouns are:

xɔ	'house'	ɲɔ́	'morning'
asi	'market'	ɲkɔ́	'name'
ta.	'head'	akpɔkplɔ	'frog'

## 1. Derivation Not Involving Verbs

N + lá	:	àdɛ́lá 'hunter' < àdɛ́ 'hunting'
		èvèá 'an Ewe person'
N + é	:	gòé 'small gourd' < gò. 'gourd'
		tsii 'soup' < tsi 'water'
N + N	:	nyivi 'calf'
		èvètɔ́ 'an Ewe man'
		àfètɔ́ 'mister, sir, Mr.'
		ɲkúnɔ́ 'a blind person'
		fòmè 'family'
N + N + .	:	gà-kpɔ́ 'metal fence' < gà 'metal', kpɔ́ 'fence'
		anyí-glii 'mud wall'
		nyi-vii 'little cow'
Adj + á/tɔ	:	nyúié-á/nyúié-tɔ 'the good one' < nyúié 'good'
		tsitsi-á/tsitsii-tɔ 'the old one' < tsitsii 'old'

Nominalized specifiers:

é-siá	'this one'	é-kaa	'which one'
é-máá	'that one'	qé.	'some'
é-kèmè	'that one over there'	qéké	'none'

## 2. The Verbal Noun

The verbal noun without an object is identical with the reduplicated verb.

V<sup>2</sup> : tsòtsó 'getting up' < tsó  
           nònò 'drinking' < nò  
           gbògbò 'saying' < gbò

A nominal or pronominal object precedes the reduplicated verb in the verbal noun; but in this case a reduplicated HIGH tone verb has high tone on both syllables.

N + V<sup>2</sup> : dówòwò 'work'  
           lɔ̀vɔ̀vɔ̀ 'fear towards an animal'  
           dèviwó dídí 'seeking for children'

Fro + V<sup>2</sup> : éfòfò 'the striking him'  
           but: tódódòè 'the obeying him'

The negative verbal noun:

(ma + V)<sup>2</sup> : makúmakú 'immortality' < kú 'die'

N + (ma + V)<sup>2</sup> : àkpé-madamadá 'ingratitude' < dá àkpé 'to thank'

N + (ma + V)<sup>2</sup> + N : gá-mañámaná-dèvi 'not giving money to a child'

## 3. Derivation Involving a Verbal Noun

V<sup>(2)</sup> + lá : sísí-lá 'fugitive'  
           dzì-lá 'parent'

V<sup>(2)</sup> + fé : kúkú-fé or kù-fé 'place/manner of dying'

V<sup>(2)</sup> + γ<sub>1</sub> : tsòtsó-γ<sub>1</sub> or tsó-γ<sub>1</sub> 'starting time'

V<sup>2</sup> + me : kòkò-me 'height'

V<sup>2</sup> + N + í : fèfè-núú 'toy'  
           tsítsì-tèfée 'position of honour'

N + V + lá	:	àgblè-dè-lá	'farmer'
N + V + fé	:	àgblè-dè-fé	'farming area'
N + V + yi	:	àgblè-dè-yi	'farming season'
(N + V) + N + ' .	:	àgblè-dè-wùú	'farming clothes'
N + (V + N) + ' .	:	taá-du-ameé	'headache'

#### 4. Derivation Involving Several Verbs

V <sup>2</sup> + V	:	zòzò-vá	'coming by walking'
V <sup>2</sup> + V + V	:	gbògbò-vá-dó	'returning and arriving'
(ma + V) <sup>2</sup> + V	:	màtomatró-gbò	'without returning'
V + N + V + V	:	qù-àmè-tsà-tó	'tarantula'
			< 'bite - person - wander - tell'
V + N + V + N	:	nò-àfé-dè-dù	'telephone; gossiper'
			< 'stay - home - go - town'
V + N + V + N + é	:	mè-vi-me-nc-é	'a stinging insect'
			< 'sting - child - sting - mother - DIM'
V + N + N + V + é	:	qù-àmè-dzi-hlq-i	'centipede'
			< 'bite - person - heaven - roars - DIM'
N + (ma + V) + N + V:		konc-manyé-vi-kú	'an unloving barren woman'
			< 'childless woman - not know - child - die'

## X. THE SYNTAX OF SENTENCE AND CLAUSE

## 1. Constituents of Sentence and Clause

A sentence consists of a free clause, optionally preceded by one or two and followed by one, two or three bound clauses.

ex. ési me kpó qèví á / éye wò tró megbé lá / me yó è / élàbéná me  
nyá ε nyúíé / ésime mié nò àfé qèká mè lè kpándo / háfí wò dzó  
vá àfíí

'when I saw the child and she turned back I called her because I  
knew her well when we lived in a house at Kpando before she left  
to come here'

A bound clause is always introduced by a CONJUNCTION.

Co-ordinating conjunctions:

élàbéná 'because'                      gàké 'but'

Subordinating conjunctions:

ábé (álési/qè)	'as'	éye	'and'
ési(me)	'when'	kásiáá	'just before'
ési ... nùtí/tá	'because'	háfí	'before'
vásé (qé) (ésime)	'till'	tètè	'suddenly'

Neutral conjunctions:

álé (bé)	'so that'	né	'if, when'
bé	'that'	tógbóbé	'although'
éyaáta	'therefore'		

An INTERROGATIVE sentence is marked by a sentence final floating low tone (̀) if it contains a question word, otherwise it is marked by sentence final à.

ex. àfí kaá ne gblé qèví á qó háfí vá le ye qú-m̀ :  
'where did you leave the children before you came to dance?'  
núfiálá yó kofí à 'did the teacher call Kofi?'

A MAJOR CLAUSE has the following structure:

(L)((A)S)P(C<sub>1</sub>(C<sub>2</sub>))(A)

- L - LINK element, i.e. a conjunction
- A - ADJUNCT, i.e. one or more adverbial groups
- S - SUBJECT, i.e. a nominal group
- C - COMPLEMENT, i.e. a nominal group
- P - PREDICATOR, i.e. a verbal group

If a clause has several predicators this is called a Serial Verbal Construction.

## 2. Rank Shifting

(i) A REPORTED CLAUSE (bé ... (lá)) or an unmarked clause may function as the head of a nominal group.

ex. bé wò yì sukúu kábá lá nyé nú nyúíé áqé 'that he went to school  
early is a good thing'  
me wu i klóé mé fò-à detsií ò "I almost killed it"  
does not make soup'

(ii) A clause may function as qualifier in a nominal group (RELATIVE CLAUSE). Such a clause is marked by the relative particle si in initial position and optionally by the terminal particle lá. If the noun preceding si has the shape VCV (NON-HIGH NON-HIGH) and C is a sonorant then the second vowel becomes high.

ex. atí si me do lá kú 'the tree which I planted is dead'  
amé si kpó dà lá lá né vá wù ì 'the person who saw the snake  
should come and kill it'

Several relative clauses may qualify one head of a nominal group. If present, a qualifier from the word classes Adj, Qnt, Sp, Pl, Int always precedes the relative clause(s).



(iv) Emphasized P is marked by the particle *dè* plus a repetition of S in the form of a subordinated pronoun. The preceding S is deleted if it consists only of a pronoun.

ex. *kofí dè wò kó* 'Kofi IS tall'  
*dè wò kpó gá* 'he IS rich' ("he DID see money")

#### 4. Minor Clauses

A minor clause, i.e. a clause without a predicator element, may be represented by

- vocatives;
- referential or elliptic utterances;
- some forms of salutations.

Elliptic utterances consist of one or more adverbial groups; a referential utterance consists of one nominal group and is frequently emphasized.

ex. *anúfí é* '(it's) an orange'  
*nyónu lá é* 'it's the woman'  
*míá fé ágbè é* '(it's) our farm'

*dóno ná mi kéré* (salutation to people at work)