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## 7. VERBS AND VERBAL MODIFIERS

Verbs and verbal modifiers are the main focus of this chapter. Verbs differ with regard to the number of arguments they take. This chapter, therefore, looks at the argument structure of Tafi verbs. The verbs are classified as one-place, two-place and three-place predicates depending on the number of arguments they require semantically. Verbs also participate in different argument structure constructions. Hence, various argument structure constructions are also discussed. In addition, the verbs are classified according to their inherent semantics. Tense, aspect and mood as categories for which verbs can be modified are also discussed and finally, adverbs and adverbial phrases are examined.

### 7.1 The structure of verb forms

The following positions or slots can be distinguished in verb forms:

#### 1. SM NEG TAM STEM-SUFFIX

In (1), the initial position is filled by the subject marker (SM). The SM slot is filled by a pronominal which can serve to cross-reference the lexical subject on the verb. When the subject is represented by a noun belonging to any of the **bu-** classes it is not cross-referenced on the verb. The subject marker is followed by a negative marker (NEG) which is in turn followed by the tense, aspect and mood (TAM) markers. The verb stem (STEM) follows the TAM markers and the final slot is occupied by a verb extension such as **-no** 'COM' suffix. The underlined parts in sentences in (2) - (4) illustrate the structure of the verb forms. The vowels of the forms that fill any of the slots before the verb stem agree with the (initial) vowel of the stem in ATR value.

2. Kofi á tíwē 'éxwī elishí.  
**Kofi á-tí-wa kí-xwī e-lishí**  
Kofi SM-NEG1-work CM-work CM-night  
'Kofi does not work at night.'
3. Éébho 'ivuń.  
**é-é-bho ki-vu ní**  
3SG-PRSPROG-beat CM-drum DEF  
'He is beating the drum.'
4. Búbav' iedzīm obón.  
**bú-ba-vi ke-dzi kumi o-bón**  
1PL-FUT-go CM-market in CM-today  
'We will go to the market today.'

5. Ésí áyíkò agbèhín ávínò adziań.  
**Ésí á-yíkò a-gbè ní á-vi-nò a-dzĩ a-ní**  
 Esi SM-take CM-bowl DEF SM-go-COM CM-woman AM-PROX  
 ‘Esi took the bowl to this woman.’

The verb cluster in the sentence in (2) consists of a subject marker (SM) **a-**, the negative marker **tí-** and the verb stem **wa** ‘work’. In (3), the verb stem **bho** ‘beat’ is preceded by the 3SG pronoun and the form **é-** which signals the present progressive aspect in this context. In (4), the future marker **ba-** occurs before the verb stem **vi** ‘go’. Here too, the subject marker slot is filled by a pronominal form. In example (5), the second verb in the serial verb construction (SVC) has been suffixed with **-nò** ‘COM’, the comitative extension.

## 7.2 Verbs and their argument structure

In communication, speakers construct sentences which represent the states of affairs they wish to express to their interlocutor(s). A clause may comprise a predicate which is often a verb and its arguments. Verbs and other predicating elements are usually used to code the type of states of affairs whereas their arguments denote the participants in these states of affairs. In this section, I classify verbs as one-place, two-place and three-place predicates depending on the number of core arguments they occur with.

### 7.2.1 One-place predicates

One-place predicates occur with only one argument in intransitive clauses or one-place constructions. The single argument occurs before the verb and it is coded as the subject of the clause. The following are examples.

6. Ohuin ɔpó.  
**o-hui ní ɔ-pó**  
 CM-rope DEF SM-snap  
 ‘The rope snapped.’
7. Ádòkasín áshĩ.  
**á-dòkasí ní á-shĩ**  
 CM-teacher DEF SM-leave  
 ‘The teacher left.’
8. Ɔkúkónyēn ɔɔbɔ.  
**ɔ-kúkónyē ní ɔ-ɔ-bɔ**  
 CM-cock DEF SM-PRSPROG-crow  
 ‘The cock is crowing.’

In sentences (6) - (8) above, the verbs **pó** ‘snap’, **shī** ‘leave’ and **bɔ** ‘crow’ occur with a single argument in subject position and are thus one-place verbs.

Essegbey (1999:63-64) identifies three classes of intransitive verbs/one-place predicates for Ewe based on the type of constructions in which they occur. The first and second groups comprise verbs that can occur intransitively as well as transitively. What distinguishes verbs in Group 1 from those in Group 2 is that the expression with the subject function in the intransitive construction in the first group functions as the object NP in its transitive variant whereas the referent with the subject function in the transitive construction in the second group still remains the subject NP of its intransitive counterpart. The two groups of verbs participate in transitivity alternations. These are alternations involving the transitive and intransitive uses of a verb. The transitive use of verbs in Group 1 may be paraphrased as ‘cause to V-intransitive’ (Levin 1993). The third class of intransitive verbs (Group 3) may be described as canonical intransitive verbs. They can only occur intransitively. Intransitive/one place predicates in Tafi also fall into three groups like in Ewe. Examples of verbs in the various groups in Tafi are:

Group 1:

**lɔ́** ‘lose, get lost’; **yɔ́** ‘dissolve, melt, liquefy’; **ni** ‘become wide’; **dzyíni** ‘fulcrum-break’; **yě** ‘break’; **pó** ‘snap’; **tsywí** ‘tear’; **ní** ‘extinguish’; **da** ‘close, cover’; **danu** ‘open’; **zi** ‘spoil’; **xá** ‘be(come) bent’; and **dzɔ** ‘be(come) straight’

Group 2:

**bá** ‘come’; **vi** ‘go’; **bukú** ‘get/be drunk’, **kú** ‘reach, arrive’

Group 3:

**kóeyi** ‘go out, exit’; **prūdū** ‘fly’; **tri** ‘get/become big’; **kpe**, ‘be plentiful’; **pĩ** ‘be good’, **dzo** ‘bark’; **fū** ‘blossom (flower)’; **dze** ‘be(come) long’; **dzú** ‘be(come) deep’; **sí** ‘run, flee’; **tā** ‘burn’; **tɔ** ‘get/become tired’, **tsĩ** ‘sneeze’ and **vé** ‘be(come) bitter’

The sentences in (9) and (10) illustrate the verb **zi** ‘spoil’ from Group 1 while those in (11) and (12) exemplify the verb **bá** ‘come’ from Group 2. The verb **sí** ‘run’ in sentence (13) belongs to Group 3.

9. Gasón ézi.  
**gasó**      **ní**      **é-zi**  
 Bicycle    DEF    SM-spoil  
 ‘The bicycle is spoilt.’

10. Ézi gasón.  
**é-zi**              **gasó**      **ní**  
 3SG-spoil      bicycle    DEF

‘He spoiled the bicycle.’

11. *Ádɔkasín ábá.*  
**á-dɔkasí ní á-bá**  
 CM-teacher DEF SM-come  
 ‘The teacher came.’
12. *Ádɔkasín ábá sukú.*  
**á-dɔkasí ní á-bá sukú**  
 CM-teacher DEF SM-come school  
 ‘The teacher came to school.’
13. *Aga gbɔgbɔlǎn ésí ríqíqí.*  
**a-ga gbɔgbɔlǎ ní é-sí ríqíqí**  
 CM-animal big DEF SM-run IDEO  
 ‘The big animal ran continuously.’ (FS)

The sentence in (9) is a one-place construction in which the verb occurs with only one argument which functions as the subject. The verb **zi** ‘spoil’ can occur in a two-place construction as shown in (10). Sentence (10) is the causative alternative of (9). Here, the causer of the state of affairs coded by the verb is introduced in subject position. Thus, the referent with the subject function, **gasó ní** ‘the bicycle’, in the intransitive clause in (9) functions as the object of the transitive clause in (10). As illustrated in (11) and (12), the verb **bá** ‘come’ occurs in both one-place and two-place constructions. However, unlike the verb **zi** ‘spoil’, the expression with the subject function, **ádɔkasí ní** ‘the teacher’, in the one-place construction in (11) is the same as that of the two-place construction in (12) and **sukú** ‘school’ functions as the object of **bá** ‘come’ in (12). The verb **sí** ‘run’ only occurs in a one-place construction as illustrated in sentence (13).

Verbs which occur in one-place constructions fall into various semantic classes. They include directed motion verbs, non-agentive manner of motion verbs, verbs of emission, property verbs, verbs of bodily processes, and achievement verbs (as defined by Levin 1993 and Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995, 2005).

### 7.2.1.1 Directed motion verbs

Directed motion verbs denote movement of an entity to or from a particular place. Examples of directed motion verbs include:

14. **bá** ‘come’  
**vi** ‘go’  
**kóéyí** ‘exit, come/go out’  
**tǎ** ‘crawl’

<b>ló</b>	‘rise (up), get up’
<b>wóŋt</b>	‘fall’
<b>sí</b>	‘run, escape’
<b>nyó</b>	‘roam about, wander’

The examples in (15) and (16) illustrate the verbs **nyó** ‘roam about’ and **kóéyī** ‘go out’.

15. Báányō.  
**bá-á-nyó**  
 3PL-PRSPROG-roam.about  
 ‘They are roaming about.’ (FS)
16. ... kulí betsi ekóéyī n’òsíníṃ.  
**kulí be-tsí e-kóéyī ní o-sí ní kumu**  
 CONJ CM.PL-bee SM-exit LOC CM-tree DEF in  
 ‘... and then bees came out of the tree.’ (FS)

**Bá** ‘3PL’ in (15) and **betsi** ‘bees’ in (16) are moving entities which occur as the subjects of the verbs **nyó** ‘enter’ and **kóéyī** ‘exit’ respectively. In these sentences, the subjects are cross-referenced on these verbs and in (16), the verb occurs with an adpositional phrase complement introduced by the locative preposition **ní** ‘LOC’.

As illustrated by the examples in (12) above, some of the directed motion verbs can occur in two-place constructions. When they are used in two-place constructions, they take locative nouns as complements.

### 7.2.1.2 Non-agentive manner of motion

There are two intransitive verbs in my corpus which encode manner of motion and they have alternating transitive and intransitive uses. That is, they undergo the causative alternation. The verbs in question are **tró** ‘twist’ (borrowed from Ewe **tró** ‘twist’) and **glébē** ‘roll’. These verbs can be predicated of both animate and inanimate entities. The use of **glébē** ‘roll’ in the two types of constructions is illustrated below. Example (17) illustrates the intransitive use of the verb **glébē** ‘roll’ and (18) exemplifies its transitive use.

17. Kepluíń églébē ní kplǒńíábhā.  
**ke-pluí ní é-glébē ní kplǒ ní kábhā**  
 CM-gourd DEF SM-roll LOC table DEF on  
 ‘The gourd rolled on the table.’

18.      Ányín églébē kepluí.  
**á-nyí**    **ní**    **é-glébē**   **ke-pluí**    **ní**  
 CM-man DEF SM-roll CM-gourd DEF  
 ‘The man rolled the gourd.’

In the examples above, the entity that occurs in the subject position in the one-place construction in (17) is the one which occurs in the object position of the two-place construction in (18).

### 7.2.1.3 Verbs of emission

Verbs of emission in Tafi include verbs denoting the emission of sounds, substances, light as well as smell. The verbs listed in (19) and (20) are examples of verbs of sound and substance emission respectively. Light and smell emission verbs are exemplified in (23a) and (23b) below.

19.   **yi**           ‘sound’  
       **dzo**       ‘bark’  
       **bɔ**        ‘crow’
20.   **wi**           ‘leak’  
       **sísí**       ‘drip’  
       **wanyá**   ‘sprinkle’  
       **pí**        ‘spurt’

The verbs of sound emission **dzo** ‘bark’ and **bɔ** ‘crow’ take animate entities as their single participant, whereas **yi** ‘sound’ takes an inanimate entity. The single participant is coded as the subject. These verbs do not undergo the causative alternation. The sentences below illustrate the use of the verb **yi** ‘sound’.

21.   ɔdǎn óyi.  
       **ɔ-dǎ**       **ní**    **ó-yi**  
       CM-metal DEF SM-sound  
       ‘The bell has sounded.’
22.   Bákó ɔdǎn óyi.  
       **bá-kó**       **ɔ-dǎ**       **ní**    **ó-yi**  
       3PL-cause CM-metal DEF SM-sound  
       ‘They caused the bell to sound.’

In the sentence in (21), **ɔdǎ ní** ‘the metal’, the single participant of the verb **yi** ‘sound’ occurs in subject position. In (22), however, this verb occurs in a bi-clausal construction in which the entity supposed to emit the sound occurs in object

position of the causative verb **k5** ‘give; cause; let; make’. This verb is used to introduce the causer of the state of affairs designated by the verb **yi** ‘sound’.

So far, only one light emission verb and one smell emission verb have been encountered. They are **tā** ‘shine’ (of the sun, light bulbs, etc.) and **l5** ‘smell, stink’. **Tā** ‘shine’ is illustrated in (23).

- 23a. **Áwǔwǐn átáátā.**  
**á-wǔwǐ ní á-táá-tā**  
 CM.PL-star DEF SM-NEG:PRSPROG-shine  
 ‘The stars are not shining.’
- 23b. **Ónúg’ ónyí 5sí 55l5 ní bátíf5 otshutshúí ní 5heeshí?.**  
**ónú.gi ó-nyí 5-sí 5-5-l5**  
 COND 2SG.DEP-know SM-COMP 2SG.DEP-PRSPROG-smell  
**ní bá-tí-f5 o-tshutshúí ní 5-ha ki.shí**  
 TOP 3PL-NEG1-exude CM-fart LOC CM-group midst  
 ‘If you know that you have bad body odours you do not fart in public.’  
 (Proverbs #52)

The verbs of substance emission **sísí** ‘drip, strain’, **wanyá** ‘sprinkle’ and **pí** ‘spurt’ occur with liquid substances while **wi** ‘leak’ occurs with liquid, powdery and grainy substances. The verbs **sísí** ‘drip’, **wanyá** ‘sprinkle’ and **pí** ‘spurt’ but not **wi** ‘leak’ can undergo the causative alternation, thus, they occur in two-place constructions as illustrated by the verb **sísí** ‘drip’ in (25). Example (24) shows the occurrence of this same verb in a one-place construction.

24. **Bubó ní sísí.**  
**bu-bó ní sísí**  
 CM-oil DEF drip  
 ‘The oil dripped.’
25. **Máwúto asísí bubón.**  
**Máwúto a-sísí bu-bó ní**  
 Máwúto CM-drip CM-oil DEF  
 ‘Mawuto drained the oil.’

The sentence in (24) expresses the manner in which the oil comes out of the container. Here, **bubó ní** ‘the oil’ occurs as the subject whereas in (25), the oil occurs as the object of the two-place construction. Thus, the transitive variants of these verbs are causative. Sentence (25) encodes the notion of cause in that the entity that occurs in the subject position does something to cause the oil to drip.

## 7.2.1.4 Property verbs

Property verbs are used to encode inherent properties or qualities of the entities they are predicated of. Most property verbs in Tafi are primarily intransitive. Depending on the context, these verbs can receive a change of state (inchoative) or stative interpretation. Some examples of property verbs are given in (26) while the sentences in (27) and (28) illustrate two of these verbs.

26.	<b>dzã</b>	‘be(come) red/ripe’	<b>dze</b>	‘be(come) long’
	<b>tsómɔ̃</b>	‘be(come) rotten/ugly’	<b>gɪgamɪ</b>	‘be(come) strong/hard’
	<b>dzú</b>	‘be(come) deep’	<b>yɔ̃</b>	‘be(come) cold’
	<b>bubo</b>	‘be(come) soft’	<b>vě</b>	‘be(come) bitter’
	<b>dzɔ</b>	‘be(come) straight’	<b>nɪ</b>	‘be(come) wide’
	<b>tutúrū</b>	‘be(come) dirty’	<b>ɖama</b>	‘be(come) tall/high’
	<b>shurɔ̃ɖɪ</b>	‘be(come) slippery’	<b>sɔ̃nɔ</b>	‘be(come) equal with’
	<b>tri</b>	‘be(come) big’	<b>tɔ̃</b>	‘be(come) tired’

27. Osín ɔ̃ɖama.  
**o-sí ní ɔ̃-ɖama**  
 CM-tree DEF SM-become.tall  
 ‘The tree is tall.’

28. Buní ní yɔ̃.  
**bu-ní ní yɔ̃**  
 CM-water DEF become.cold  
 ‘The water is cold.’

**Osí ní** ‘the tree’ and **buní ní** ‘the water’ which are the single participants of the verbs **ɖama** ‘be(come) tall’ and **yɔ̃** ‘be(come) cold’ in (27) and (28) respectively are coded as the subject argument and they can be said to possess the qualities or properties described by these verbs.

Some property verbs including **nɪ** ‘be(come) wide’, **dzɔ** ‘be(come) straight’, and **xá** ‘be(come) bent’ can participate in the causative alternation. Thus, they occur in two-place constructions in which the referent with the subject function in the intransitive clause functions as the object of the transitive clause, as shown in (29) – (32).

29. Kidzoń ínĩ.  
**ki-dzo ní kí-nĩ**  
 CM-road DEF SM-become.wide  
 ‘The path is wide.’

30. ɔdʒán ɔxá.  
**ɔ-dʒá ní ɔ-xá**  
 CM-rod DEF SM-become.bent  
 ‘The rod is bent.’
31. Ánī kidzoń.  
**á-nī ki-dzo ní**  
 3SG-become.wide CM-road DEF  
 ‘S/he widened the path.’
32. Áxá ɔdʒán.  
**á-xá ɔ-dʒá ní**  
 3SG-become.bent CM-rod DEF  
 ‘S/he bent the rod.’

I stated earlier on that some property verbs are intrinsically monovalent. These verbs do not undergo the causative alternation and for such verbs, the causer of the change of state can only be introduced in a bi-clausal construction in which the causer of the change of state occurs as the subject of the verb **kó** ‘give; cause; let; make’ which occurs as the first verb of the construction as shown in (33).

33. Ámā ákó oseyyuń ɔbubo  
**Ámā á-kó o-seyyu ní ɔ-bubo**  
 Ámā SM-cause CM-fruit DEF SM-become.soften  
 ‘Ama caused the fruit to soften/become soft.’

In (33), **Ama**, an agent and the causer of the state of affairs expressed by the second verb in the bi-clausal construction occurs as the subject of the first verb **kó** ‘cause’ whereas **oseyyu** ‘fruit’ occurs as the subject of the property verb **bubo** ‘be(come) soft’.

### 7.2.1.5 Verbs of (involuntary) bodily processes

The verbs which belong to this class encode bodily processes of humans and in some cases higher animals. Some of these verbs such as **fwě** ‘breathe’; **tsǐ** ‘sneeze’; **kólí** ‘cough’ and **yaká** ‘yawn’ do not involve voluntary participants and as such they do not control the state of affairs denoted by these verbs. Others like **mwí** ‘laugh/smile’ involve participants who exercise some control over the state of affairs expressed by such verbs. The sentence below illustrates the verb **fwě** ‘breathe’.

34. Ányunyǎn ááfwě pēēpēēpēē.  
**á-nyunyǎ ní á-á-fwě pēēpēēpēē**  
 CM-patient DEF SM-PRSPROG-breathe IDEO

‘The patient is breathing rapidly.’

As shown in sentence (34), the single participant occurs in subject position and it does not assert any control over the state of affairs indicated by the verb **fwě** ‘breathe’.

### 7.2.1.5 Achievement verbs

Another group of one-place predicates consists of achievement verbs. The single participant of these verbs is coded as the subject argument and it undergoes a change of state. Examples of achievement verbs include:

35. **zi** ‘spoil’  
**tsí** ‘die’  
**tsyrǒ** ‘destroy’ < Ewe  
**tsí** ‘dry up’

The sentence in (36) exemplifies the verb **tsyrǒ** ‘destroy’.

36. Bupán pétée tsyrǒ.  
**bu-pá ní pétée tsyrǒ**  
 CM-house DEF all destroy  
 ‘The whole household perished.’

As shown in (36), the verb occurs with a single argument, **bupá ní** ‘the house(hold)’, in subject position. The verb **tsyrǒ** ‘destroy’ in this sentence simply denotes a state of affairs in which the single participant undergoes a change of state without specifying how the change of state occurred.

Some of the achievement verbs such as **tsyrǒ** ‘destroy’ undergo the causative alternation whereas others like **tsí** ‘die’ do not as illustrated in the examples below:

37. Obúdin ɔtsyrǒ bupán pétée.  
**o-búdi ní ɔ-tsyrǒ bu-pá ní pétée**  
 CM-fetish DEF SM-destroy CM-household DEF all  
 ‘The fetish destroyed the whole household.’
38. \*Bowá ní tsí epidzyań.  
**\*bu-wá ní tsí e-pidzya ní**  
 CM-medicine DEF die CM-goat DEF  
 \*‘The medicine died the goat.’

39. Bowá ní kó epidzyan etsí.  
**bu-wá ní kó e-pidzya ní e-tsí**  
 CM-medicineDEF cause CM-goat DEF SM-die  
 ‘The medicine caused the goat to die.’

Sentence (37) is a two-place construction in which **bupá ní** ‘the house(hold)’ which is the participant in the subject position in the one-place construction in (36) occurs in the object position in (37). **Obúdi ní** ‘the fetish’ occurs in the subject position in (37) and is an agent. It is responsible for the state of affairs expressed by the verb which results in the change in state of the object NP, the patient. The sentence in (38), on the other hand, is ungrammatical as the verb **tsí** ‘die’ does not participate in a two-place construction. In (39), the causer or the participant responsible for the state of affairs designated by the verb **tsí** ‘die’ is introduced through a bi-clausal construction with the verb **kó** ‘cause, give, let, make’ as the first verb in the series.

### 7.2.2 Two-place predicates

Two-place predicates are bivalent verbs used to describe states of affairs which involve two arguments. One of these arguments is mapped on to the subject role and the other to the object role. Mostly, the argument in the subject position is the one which essentially determines the success of the state of affairs designated by the verb. Depending on the semantics of the verb, the role assigned to the subject NP by the verb may be an agent, an effector or an experiencer whereas the role assigned to the object NP could, among others, be a patient, theme, or location. Consider the following examples:

40. Ányín áyó `apamuń.  
**á-nyí ní á-yó ká-pamī ní**  
 CM-man DEF SM-sharpen CM-matchete DEF  
 ‘The man sharpened the matchete.’
41. Sóbhan etsí awolakpán.  
**sóbha ní é-tsí a-wolakpá ní**  
 rain DEF SM-wash CM.PL-leaf DEF  
 ‘The rain washes the leaves.’
42. Ímò adz’alílín y’adzyā.  
**í-mò a-dzī á-lílín yí á-dzyā**  
 1SG-see CM-woman AM-DIST 3SG.IND CM-brother  
 ‘I saw that woman’s brother.’

In (40), the subject and object slots are filled by an agent and a patient respectively. The agent does something which results in a change of state of the patient. In (41), the subject role is filled by an effector whereas the object role is

also filled by a patient. Thus, the rain carries out the state of affairs expressed by the transitive verb which has an effect on the leaves. The subject position in (42) is occupied by an experiencer and the object is a patient.

Two-place predicates in the language are of various semantic kinds. They include verbs of perception and cognition, speech act verbs, verbs of creation, ‘do’ verbs, verbs of planting, body-grooming verbs, verbs of caused change of location and verbs of cutting.

### 7.2.2.1 Verbs of Perception

Perception verbs are bivalent with the perceiver occurring in subject position in the clause and the entity that is perceived occurring in object position. Verbs of perception in Tafi include the following:

43. **mo** ‘see’  
**nú** ‘hear’  
**dí** ‘look’  
**lūku** ‘smell (something)’

The following sentences illustrate some of these verbs.

44. Ekénú ’íbúínyéébúí.  
**e-ké-nú** **ki-búí-nyáá-ki-búí**  
 3SG-NEG.PERF-hear CM-matter-DISTR-CM-matter  
 ‘S/he has not heard anything yet.’
45. Anóvōn eféké y’áfokpān éd’álīm.  
**a-nóvō ní é-féké yí bá-fokpā ní é-dí balí**  
 CM-child DEF SM-lift 3SG.IND CM.PL-shoe DEF SM-look 3PL  
**kum**  
 inside  
 ‘The child lifted his shoe and looked inside.’ (FS)

Some of these verbs also take sentential complements. As illustrated in (46), the verb **dí** ‘look’ occurs with a sentential complement which is introduced by the complementiser **sí** (see Chapter 9, § 9.2).

46. Élūku asrān édí sí abó dza.  
**é-lūku a-srā ní é-dí sí**  
 3SG-smell CM-tobacco DEF SM-look COMP  
**a-bó dza**  
 3SG.DEP-be.good UFP  
 ‘He smelled the tobacco to see if it is good.’

## 7.2.2.2 Verbs of Cognition

Verbs of cognition in Tafi include **nyí** ‘know’, **tí** ‘know, be aware’, **bákā** ‘remember’, and **dziki** ‘forget’. **Nyí** ‘know’ is exemplified in the sentence below.

47. Ínyí banōn pétéé n’ōmaním.  
**Í-nyí**      **ba-nō**      **ní**      **pétéé** **ní**      **o-ma**      **ní**      **kumu**  
 1SG-know    CM.PL-person    DEF    all    LOC    CM-town    DEF    in  
 ‘I know all the people in the town.’

As the sentence in (47) illustrates, the pre-verbal subject position is filled by a cognizer **í** ‘1SG’ and the object position is also filled by **banō ní pétéé** ‘all the people’ which is the content (i.e. the thing that is known).

Some verbs of cognition can take sentential complements. Example (23) is repeated here as (48). This sentence is a proverb.

48. Ónúgti óny’ ósí óólǒ ní bátí fǒ otsyutsyúí ní òheeshí.  
**Ónú.gi**    **ó-nyí**      **ó-sí**      **ó-ó-lǒ**  
 COND    2SG.DEP-know    SM-COMP    2SG.DEP-PRSPROG-smell  
**ní**    **bá-tí-fǒ**      **o-tsyutsyúí**    **ní**    **o-ha**      **ki.shí**  
 TOP    3PL-NEG1-exude    CM-fart      LOC    CM-group    midst  
 ‘If you know that you have bad body odours you do not fart in public.’  
 (Proverb #52)

## 7.2.2.3 Speech act verbs

There are speech act verbs which also take two arguments, that is, a subject and an object. The argument that occupies the subject slot is the speaker and the addressee or topic occurs in the object position. Some speech act verbs in Tafi are listed in (49) below and the verbs **tsiré** ‘tell’ and **klú** ‘call’ are exemplified in (50):

49.    **ɔ**      ‘say’                      **tsiré**                      ‘tell’  
       **kúlā**    ‘insult’                    **dó gbe dǎ**<sup>50</sup>          ‘pray’  
       **kulú**    ‘call’                        **bísi**                        ‘ask’
50.    B’otsiré ’uló n’ tǔn kánā le klúí!  
       **bá**    **o-tsiré**    **buló**    **ní**    **ı-kí**      **ká-nā**      **le-klú**      **yí**  
       come 2SG-tell 1PL    LOC    CM-here    CM-manner    3PL.DEP-call 3SG  
       ‘Come and tell us here what she is called!’ (Sáhǔwí)

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<sup>50</sup> **dó gbe dǎ** ‘pray’ is borrowed from Ewe where it literally means ‘send voice in(to) the distance’.

Some of the speech act verbs have multiple argument realisation. For instance, **tsiré** ‘tell’ and **bísi** ‘ask’ can also be used as three-place predicates (see section 7.2.4.1 on three-place predicates). **Bísi** ‘ask’ can also be used in a one-place construction with an unexpressed object as illustrated below:

51. **Íbísí.**  
**í-bísi**  
 1SG-ask  
 ‘I asked.’

#### 7.2.2.4 Verbs of creation

Verbs of creation denote states of affairs in which an agent performs an activity which results in the creation of another entity. They include:

- |     |             |         |            |             |
|-----|-------------|---------|------------|-------------|
| 52. | <b>kámī</b> | ‘sew’   | <b>yú</b>  | ‘weave’     |
|     | <b>nyá</b>  | ‘tie’   | <b>tsā</b> | ‘tie, bind’ |
|     | <b>tá</b>   | ‘draw’  | <b>dzu</b> | ‘build’     |
|     | <b>bho</b>  | ‘mould’ | <b>gba</b> | ‘fry’       |
|     | <b>tó</b>   | ‘cook’  | <b>bú</b>  | ‘create’    |

The sentences in (53), (54) and (55) exemplify the verbs **bho** ‘mould’, **yú** ‘weave’ and **bú** ‘create’ respectively.

53. **Áábh’owúlēn.**  
**á-á-bho**                      **o-wúlē**                      **ní**  
 3SG-PRSPROG-mould CM-rice.storage.bin DEF  
 ‘He is moulding the rice storage bin.’ (Kásālā)
54. **Bééyu ’ípótí n’Ofú.**  
**bé-é-yu**                      **ki-potí**                      **ní**                      **Ofú**  
 3PL-PRSPROG-weave CM-cloth LOC Ofu  
 ‘They are weaving cloth at Ofú.’
55. **Wóbú tǵbò nɪ tsyí.**  
**wó**                      **ó-bú**                      **ti-gbò**                      **ní**                      **tsyí**  
 2SG.IND SM-create CM-Tafi.language DEF also  
 ‘You (God) created the Tafi language also.’ (Spontaneous Prayer)

In the above examples, the agent, **á** ‘3SG’ in (53), **bé** ‘3PL’ in (54) and **wó** ‘2SG.IND’ in (55), is expressed as the subject of the sentence and the created entity/product, **owúlē ní** ‘the rice storage bin’ in (53), **kipotí** ‘cloth’ in (54) and **Tǵbò ní** ‘the Tafi language’ in (55), is expressed as its direct object.

It must be noted that in the cases where some material is involved in the creation of the entity, it can occur as the subject of the sentence as shown in (56).

56. Ihuin iyú apotí tabha ko.  
**i-hui ní i-yú a-potí ta-bha ko**  
 CM.PL-rope DEF SM-weave CM.PL-cloth AM-two only  
 ‘The yarns wove only two cloths.’

In sentence (56) above, the material, **ihui ní** ‘the rope’, in subject position is understood as being of a measure that was able to be used in weaving two cloths.

#### 7.2.2.5 ‘Do’ verbs

There are two ‘do’ verbs in Tafi which are both used as two-place predicates. One is borrowed. They are:

57. **wa** ‘do’ (borrowed from inland Ewe **wa** ‘do’)  
**bhuti** ‘do, make’

**Wa** ‘do’ collocates with certain nominals to express verbal meanings as listed in (58) and illustrated in (59).

58. **wa** ‘do’ + **kíxwí** ‘work’ [we ’exwí] ‘work’  
**wa** ‘do’ + **kúnú** ‘funeral’ [wa kúnú] ‘perform a funeral’  
**wa** ‘do’ + **buya** ‘farm’ [wa aya] ‘cultivate a farm’  
**wa** ‘do’ + **kídɔ** ‘thing’ [we ’edɔ] ‘weed’  
**wa** ‘do’ + **X shu kíxwí** ‘X body work’ [wa X shú ’íxwí] ‘make use of X’

59. Kásālā ēē awá amó gbugblā telí.  
**ka-sālā ēē a-wá a-mó gbugblā te-lí**  
 CM-tortoise INTJ SM-do CM-rice big AM-INDEF  
 ‘Tortoise made a very big rice farm.’ (Kásālā)

The following sentences in (60) and (61) illustrate the verb **bhuti** ‘do’.

60. Kídɔ nŋ́ gɪ ɔs’ɔbhuti ko, bhuti ’ulí ti lu nā óó.  
**kí-dɔ nŋ́ ní gɪ ɔ-sí ɔ-bhuti ko bhuti**  
 CM-thing wh.ever DEF REL 2SG.DEP-say SM-do just do  
**kulí ti lu-nā óó**  
 3SG COMP 3SG.DEP-reach UFP  
 ‘Whatever you want to do, do it the right way.’ (Kásālā)

61. Óbhíti 'idzyogö o, óbhíti 'izizi o, wó n'áhɔɪ.  
**ó-bhíti ki-dzyogö o ó-bhíti ki-zizi o wó ni**  
 2SG-do CM-good DISJ 2SG-do CM-bad DISJ 2SG.IND COM  
**a-hɔɪ**  
 CM-hand  
 'Whether you do good or you do bad, you do it for yourself.'

**Bhíti** 'do, make' is also used in an idiomatic expression **bhíti (k)ibúí**, literally, 'do case/matter' to express the predicate meaning 'thank' as in:

62. W'óbhíti 'íbúí popoopó.  
**wó ó-bhíti ki-búí popoopó**  
 2SG.IND SM-do CM-matter IDEO.very.much  
 'Thank you very much.'

### 7.2.2.6 Verbs of planting

Planting activities involve at least two participants, an agent who plants and a theme which is the seed or seedling that is planted. Other participants may also be involved such as the location where the theme/seed is planted and at times the instrument used. The different types of planting are referred to by verbs which emphasise the manner in which the seed or seedling is planted. Verbs that name planting activities in Tafi include the following:

63. **dzū** 'plant seedling' **dá** 'sow/plant'  
**béli** 'plant (rice)' **xwɪ** 'broadcast'
64. Sukúeyín édzú belí ní sukú 'oyaníñ.  
**sukú-be-yí ní bé-dzū be-lí ní sukú**  
 school-CM.PL-child DEF SM-plant CM.PL-oil.palm LOC school  
**bu-ya ní kumu**  
 CM-farm DEF inside  
 'The students planted palm trees in the school farm.'
65. Ásó 'oyaníñ kulí y'aḍa níkpě.  
**á-só bu-ya ní kumu kulí yí á-dá níkpě**  
 3SG-weed CM-farm DEF inside CONJ 3SG.IND SM-sow corn  
 'S/he weeded the farm and then planted corn.'
66. Áyadúń ébeli amó.  
**á-yadú ní é-beli a-mó**  
 CM-farmer DEF SM-plant CM-rice  
 'The farmer planted rice.'

The verb **dzũ** ‘plant’ is used to describe the planting of seedlings such as oil-palm, cocoyam, cocoa, coconut, plantain or cassava cuttings. These are planted by placing a part of the plant in the ground. The method of planting grains and seeds including maize, okra, cocoa, groundnut and beans by putting them just beneath the soil is described using the verb **dǎ** ‘sow’. **Bēli** ‘plant’ is used to describe the planting of rice whereas **xwɪ** ‘broadcast’ is used to describe the broadcasting of seeds such as pepper, okra, tomatoes or garden eggs. In situations where seedlings are transplanted the term **kpě dzũ** ‘transplant’ is used. This term comprises two verbs, **kpě** ‘uproot (plants, grass, etc.) and **dzũ** ‘plant’. Thus when seedlings are transplanted, they are said to be ‘uprooted and planted’.

### 7.2.2.7 ‘Peel’ verbs

Peeling events in Tafi are described by different verbs depending on the type of outer covering the item being peeled/pared has and the kind of instrument used. These peel verbs require at least two arguments. Examples of these verbs include:

67. **fátĩ** ‘peel, pare, carve’  
**wúṣē** ‘peel’

The instrument may be one with a sharp edge as is the case for **fátĩ** ‘peel, pare, carve’ or it may be the hand as is the case for **wúṣē** ‘peel’. If the outer covering is too hard to be removed with the hand then **fátĩ** ‘peel, pare’ is used otherwise **wúṣē** ‘peel’ is used. Thus, **fátĩ** ‘pare or peel’ is used for the removal of the outer covering of foods or fruits such as yam, cocoyam, cassava and orange. **Wúṣē** ‘peel’, on the other hand, is used for the removal of the outer covering of food items including plantain, banana, maize, onions, beans and groundnuts. Here, the hand is used for the removal of the outer covering of these food items. **Wúṣē** ‘peel’, can also be used for an orange when its outer covering is removed using the hand. Both **fátĩ** ‘peel, pare’ and **wúṣē** ‘peel’ are illustrated in the following examples:

68. Adzun afáti ’ikũń.  
**a-dzĩ ní á-fátĩ kí-kũ ní**  
 CM-woman DEF SM-pare CM-yam DEF  
 ‘The woman pared the yam.’
69. Adzun eéwúṣē bladzyó ti apũ.  
**a-dzĩ ní e-é-wúṣé bladzyó ti a-pũ**  
 CM-woman DEF SM-PRSPROG-peel plantain PURP 3SG.DEP-roast  
 ‘The woman is peeling plantains to roast.’

These two verbs can also have the creation interpretation in the sense that **fátĩ** ‘peel, pare, carve’ is used to describe the carving of something, e.g., a statue

whereas **wúse** ‘peel’ is also used to mean ‘mend’ or ‘decorate’. Thus, **fātī** has the readings ‘peel, pare, carve’ while **wúse** has the readings ‘peel, mend or decorate’.

### 7.2.2.8 Body-grooming verbs

There are some verbs of shaving and barbering in my corpus which co-lexicalise instruments and are primarily transitive in that they take an agent as the subject and the part of the body that is shaved or barbered occurs as the object. These verbs are listed in (70) and they are illustrated in (71) and (72).

70. **xlǒ** ‘shave’  
**shī** ‘shave’  
**zhi** ‘shave’  
**tsí** ‘barber’

71. Kofi áxló / ashí / ézhí ɔtomí / ’ampiesí.  
**Kofi á-xló / a-shí / é-zhí ɔ-tómí / ká-mpiesí**  
 Kofi SM-shave CM-beard/ CM-armpit  
 ‘Kofi shaved his beard/ armpit.’

The verb **tsí** ‘barber’ is used to describe the process of using a pair of scissors to cut a person’s hair. The sentence in (72) exemplifies the use of **tsí** ‘barber’.

72. Bátisí ’ítókpú kó anúvǒní.  
**bá-tsí kú-tǒkpú kó a-núvǒ ní**  
 3PL-barber CM-head DAT CM-child DEF  
 ‘The child’s hair was cut.’ (Lit: They barbered head for the child’)

The verbs **shī** ‘shave’ and **zhi** ‘shave’ can be used intransitively and in this use they take an instrument as the subject.

73. Ihěn ááshī / éézhí.  
**i-hě ní á-á-shī / é-é-zhi**  
 CM-knife DEF SM-PRSPROG-shave  
 ‘The knife shaves.’

When some of these verbs are used intransitively, it is also possible for the agent to occur as the subject and the object is left unexpressed. Here, even though the object is not expressed, it is understood. Sentence (74) is an example involving **shī** ‘shave’.

74. Bááshu.  
**bá-á-shī**  
 3PL-PRSPROG-shave  
 ‘They are shaving.’

### 7.2.2.9 Verbs of caused change of location

Caused change of location verbs also occur in two-place constructions in that they allow the agent to be expressed as the subject of the verb and the theme as the object. Examples of these verbs are in (75).

75. **he** ‘pull, drag’  
**fi** ‘push’
76. Kofi ééhe kakudzogěń.  
**Kofi é-é-he ka-kudzogě ní**  
 Kofi SM-PRSPROG-drag CM-dog DEF  
 ‘Kofi is dragging the dog.’

As shown in (76), **Kofi**, the subject of the verb causes a change in location of **kakudzogě ní** ‘the dog’ which is the object.

### 7.2.2.10 Verbs of cutting

The verbs of cutting are used to describe separation events which predicate an agent acting on a patient that brings about a change in the material integrity of a patient and they focus on instrument or manner.<sup>51</sup> Cutting verbs<sup>52</sup> in the language include:

77. **té** ‘slash’  
**bhui** ‘cut’  
**yá** ‘cut’

**Té** ‘slash’ is a highly agentive verb which cannot occur without an agent performing the action expressed by the verb (see Bobuafor 2008a on Tafi and Ameka & Essegbey 2007 on Ewe). The verb **té** ‘slash’ lexicalises a specific manner and/or instrument. It is used to describe cutting events which are done in a

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<sup>51</sup> For a more elaborate discussion on “cut” and “break” verbs, see Bobuafor (2008).

<sup>52</sup> These are verbs elicited using “cut” and “break” video clips designed by Juergen Bohnemeyer, Melissa Bowerman and Penelope Brown (2001) at the Max-Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, the Netherlands (see fieldmanuals.mpi.nl).

slashing manner. Such events entail the use of prototypical instruments like axes, machetes and big knives which are heavy by nature.

78. Ányín été os'óshěń (n'íapamí).  
**á-nyí ní é-té o-sí ó-shě ní**  
 CM-man DEF SM-slash CM-tree CM-branch DEF  
**(ni ká-pamí)**  
 COM CM-cutlass  
 'The man slashed the tree branch (with a cutlass).' (C&B 3)
79. \*Os'óshěń óté.  
**\*o-sí ó-shě ní ó-té**  
 CM-tree CM-branch DEF SM-slash  
 \*'The branch slashed.'

Sentence (79) is unacceptable because **té** 'slash' only has a transitive use. Any activity expressed by **té** 'slash' requires an agent to perform it, possibly with the use of an instrument and therefore, this verb cannot occur intransitively.

**Bhui** 'cut' is used to describe most cutting events involving a sharp instrument such as a pair of scissors or a knife and like **té** 'slash', it expresses activities performed by an agent as illustrated by the sentence in (80). This verb is used to describe scenarios in which clothes designers cut textiles to make garments as well as the process of chopping vegetables for the preparation of sauce. It is also used in contexts such as **bhui (k)utokpú** 'behead' (lit. 'cut head') and **bhui (b)ónyínyí** 'circumcise' (lit. 'cut penis').

80. Ányínóvōēń ébhui kishín ni sâ.  
**á-nyínóvōē ní é-bhui ki-shí ní ni sâ**  
 CM-boy DEF SM-cut CM-stick DEF COM saw  
 'The boy cut the stick with a saw.' (C&B 15)

It is interesting to note that the verb **bhui** 'cut' occurs in intransitive constructions in restricted contexts such as formula for ending one's speech as in (81), the cessation of flow of water in a river as in (82) or tap as in (83) and cuts in the body as in (84).

81. Ibhui.  
**i-bhui**  
 1SG-cut  
 'I am done.'
82. Kenín ebhui.  
**ke-ní ní ke-bhui**  
 CM-river DEF SM-cut

‘The river has stopped flowing.’ (Lit. the river has cut.)

83. Buní ní bhui.

**bu-ní ní bhui**  
CM-water DEF cut

‘The water has ceased flowing (from the tap)’.

84. Y’ítsrĭń íbhui.

**yí kĭ-tsrĭ ní kĭ-bhui**  
3SG.IND CM-toe DEF SM-cut

‘His toe got cut.’ (Lit.: ‘His toe cut.’)

The sentence in (81) has an agentive argument and the verb has been routinised. Thus, in ending one’s speech the sentence in (81) can be uttered. The sentences in (82) and (83) have the patient NPs in subject position in which case, the causer of the state of affairs specified by the verb **bhui** ‘cut’ is not stated. In (84), we have the possessed body-part affected by the state of affairs denoted by the verb **bhui** ‘cut’ in subject position. The sentences in (82) – (84) give a resultative reading. That is, the state of affairs expressed by the verb may have come about as a result of a previous one. Thus, the toe that got cut in sentence (84), for instance, could be as a result of stumbling or even the result of the use of an instrument. The agent/effector (the causer) of the change of state in the patients in (82) and (83) can be introduced through the use of **kó** ‘give; cause; let; make’ which occurs as the first verb in a bi-clausal construction as illustrated by the example in (85). With regard to (84), the possessor of the body-part can also be expressed in the clause in which case, it will occur as the subject of the sentence with the possessed body-part occurring as the object as shown in (86). In addition, if the cut was caused by an instrument, the instrument can also be introduced as the subject of the sentence. In such a case, either the possessor together with the possessed body-part or only the possessed body-part will occur as the object of the sentence as in (87). Additionally, the instrument can be introduced through a take-SVC as in (88) or in a **nu** ‘COM’ prepositional phrase.

85. Ekpéń ákó kenín ébhui.

**e-kpé ní á-kó ke-ní ní ké-bhui**  
CM-dry weather DEF SM-cause CM-river DEF SM-cut

‘The dry weather caused the river to stop flowing.’

86. Kofí ébhui y’ítsrĭ.

**Kofí é-bhui yí kĭ-tsrĭ**  
Kofí SM-cut 3SG.IND CM-toe

‘Kofi cut his toe’ or ‘Kofi hurt his toe.’

87. Kápamín ébhui y’ítsrĭ.

**ká-pamí ní ké-bhui yí kɪ-tsřĩ**  
 CM-cutlass DEF SM-cut 3SG.IND CM-toe  
 ‘The cutlass cut his toe.’

88. Áyíko kápamín ébhui y’útsřĩ.  
**á-yíko ká-pamí ní é-bhui yí kɪ-tsřĩ**  
 3SG-take CM-cutlass DEF SM-cut 3SG.IND CM-toe  
 ‘He used the cutlass to cut his toe.’

**Yá** ‘cut’ is used to describe cuts made on the human body and it involves the use of sharp instruments such as knives and razor blades. For instance, in the ‘cut & break’ video elicitation, this verb was used to describe a woman cutting her finger with a knife (clip 18).

89. Adzĩn éébhui okútú kilí thěń áyé y’íwě.  
**a-dzĩ ní é-é-bhui o-kútú kilí t-hě**  
 CM-woman DEF SM-PRSPROG-cut CM-orange CONJ CM-knife  
**ní á-yá yí kɪ-wě**  
 DEF SM-cut 3SG.IND CM-finger  
 ‘The woman is cutting an orange and the knife cut her finger.’

The verb **yá** ‘cut’ can also be used in certain contexts to mean ‘bite-off/break-off a piece of something’ and ‘branch-off (a road).’

#### 7.2.2.10.1 Instruments of verbs of cutting

Typically, cut verbs co-lexicalise instruments (see Bohnemeyer 2007, Guerssel et al 1985, and Majid et al. 2007). This is true of Tafi verbs of cutting also. For example, all the verbs in (90) co-lexicalise instruments.

- |     |             |                     |            |              |
|-----|-------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 90. | <b>bhui</b> | ‘cut, shred, slice’ | <b>tě</b>  | ‘slash, cut’ |
|     | <b>fátĩ</b> | ‘carve, peel, pare’ | <b>tsĩ</b> | ‘cut (hair)’ |
|     | <b>shĩ</b>  | ‘shave’             | <b>yá</b>  | ‘cut’        |

There are other two-place predicates in Tafi which are inherently associated with the instrument role even if no instrument is overtly expressed (see Amuzu 1993, Bobuafor 2001 on Ewe). Examples of such verbs include:

- |     |             |             |
|-----|-------------|-------------|
| 91. | <b>nyá</b>  | ‘tie, bind’ |
|     | <b>gba</b>  | ‘sweep’     |
|     | <b>tsú</b>  | ‘dig’       |
|     | <b>kámĩ</b> | ‘sew’       |
|     | <b>só</b>   | ‘hoe’ (v)   |

Most often the semantic role of instrument is not given an overt expression if the instrument involved in the state of affairs described by the verb is the typical one associated with such action and is therefore predictable from the semantics of the verb (Givón 1984). Thus, the expression of such instruments becomes redundant. These instruments may be overtly expressed for certain reasons like:

- 92a. when verbs such as those listed above in (91) involve an instrument other than the typical one they presuppose (see example (94) below);  
 b. when it must be specified for reasons of emphasis (illustrated in (93) and (95)) or  
 c. when a speaker needs to supply some additional information with regard to the instrument (as in (93)).

In this regard, Fillmore (1968: 39) states with reference to the English verb ‘slap’ that “what is at issue here is not whether SLAP obligatorily refers to hands — one can after all slap someone with a fish — but whether there is some typically understood Instrument which need not be made explicit.” In the following Tafi sentences, there are different motivations for spelling out the instrument participant.

93. **Ányín** **été** **ósín** **n`iá****pamí** **ḡáḡáń.**  
**á-nyí** **ní** **é-té** **o-sí** **ní** **ni** **ká-pamí**  
 CM-man DEF SM-slash CM-tree DEF COM CM-cutlass  
**ḡáḡá** **ní**  
 sharp DEF  
 ‘The man slashed the tree with the sharp cutlass.’
94. **Ányínóvḡēń** **ébhui** **ke-pútakpáním** **n`ahɔi.**  
**á-nyínóvḡē** **ní** **é-bhui** **ke-pútakpá** **ní** **kimí** **ni**  
 CM-boy DEF SM-cut CM-piece.of.cloth DEF in COM  
**a-hɔi**  
 CM-hand  
 ‘The boy cut the piece of cloth with his hand.’
95. **Ányín** **été** **ósín** (**n`iá****pamí**).  
**á-nyí** **ní** **é-té** **o-sí** **ní** (**ni** **ká-pamí**)  
 CM-man DEF SM-slash CM-tree DEF (COM CM-cutlass)  
 ‘The man slashed the tree (with a cutlass).’

In (93), there is additional information which has been provided concerning the instrument NP. However, in (94), the instrument NP is one that specifies a non-typical instrument in connection with the activity designated by the verb. In (95), the instrumental object is in brackets because it is optional. So even if reference is not explicitly made to this instrument it is perceived that inherently, a sharp-edged instrument was used to perform the state of affairs specified by the verb.

As each of the examples in (93) – (95) above illustrate, in Tafi, the argument specifying the instrument is introduced by the preposition **ni** ‘COM’. Another way of overtly expressing the semantically inherent instrument is through the serial verb construction with the first verb being **yuk5** ‘take’ and the second verb being a verb associated with an inherent instrument. For example,

96. Ányín áyíko ʼapamí été osín nɔ.  
**á-nyí ní á-yíko ká-pamí é-té o-sí ní**  
 CM-man DEF SM-take CM-cutlass SM-slash CM-tree DEF  
**nɔ**  
 COM  
 ‘The man used a cutlass to slash the tree.’ (Lit.: ‘The man took the cutlass and slashed the tree.’)

In (96), the overtly specified instrument occurs as the direct object of the verb **yíko** ‘took’. In a ‘take’ SVC where the participant with instrument role is realised as object of the first verb, i.e., ‘take’, a comitative instrumental preposition variant **nɔ** ‘COM’ usually occurs at the end of the clause. This is as if the instrument NP has been moved from its prepositional object position (see also §5.1.2).

### 7.2.3 Obligatory complement verbs

A class of verbs in Tafi take obligatory complements. These complements may be generic, cognate or those that have been traditionally referred to as inherent complements. I will first discuss verbs that take the generic complements **an5** ‘person’ or **kíd5** ‘thing’. Secondly, I will look at those that take cognate objects and finally, I will discuss verbs that take inherent complements.

#### 7.2.3.1 Two-place predicates with generic complements

The generic complements in Tafi are **an5** ‘person’ and **kíd5** ‘thing’. Examples of verbs that take **an5** ‘person’ include:

97. **dʒ** ‘love’                      **tsyiri** ‘hate’  
**bu** ‘respect’                      **kóla** ‘insult’

Among verbs which take **kíd5** ‘thing’ as their obligatory complement are:

98. **sín5** ‘greet’                      **gba** ‘sweep, fry’  
**dʒa** ‘plant’                      **tʃ** ‘cook’  
**plũ** ‘wash’

Consider the following examples.

99. Étfbū án5.  
**é-tí-bū**                      **a-n5**  
 3SG-NEG1-respect CM-person  
 ‘S/he does not respect.’
100. Ámā at5 ’éd5.  
**Ámā a-t5**                      **kí-d5**  
 Ámā SM-cook CM-thing  
 ‘Ama cooked.’

In the above sentences, the subject of the sentence is an agent whereas the object is a patient. In (99) and (100), the generic complements may be said to be umbrella terms. In (100), for instance, **kíd5** ‘thing’ is an umbrella term covering everything edible. As shown in (101) and (102) below, specific nouns may be used to replace the generic complements these verbs take. The object NPs in these sentences name a specific person in (101) and a specific food in (102).

101. Étfbū y’akā.  
**é-tí-bū**                      **yí**                      **á-kā**  
 3SG-NEG1-respect 3SG.IND CM-father  
 ‘S/he does not respect his/her father.’
102. Ámā át5 ásí.  
**Ámā á-t5**                      **á-sí**  
 Ama SM-cook CM-rice  
 ‘Ama cooked rice.’

Some of these verbs can take both generic complements, i.e., both **an5** ‘person’ and **kíd5** ‘thing’. They include:

- 103a. **sín5 an5**                      [sín5 án5] ‘greet a person/ someone’  
 103b. **sín5 kíd5**                      [sínī íd5] ‘greet’
- 104a. **kúlā an5**                      [kúlā án5] ‘insult a person/ someone’  
 104b. **kúlā kíd5**                      [kúlē éd5] ‘throw insults about’ (not specifically insulting any particular person’
- 105a. **sí an5**                      [si an5] ‘fear a person/people’  
 105b. **sí kíd5**                      [si id5] ‘have regard for people or be cautious’

For these verbs, it appears the act of the verb event takes the generic ‘thing’ complement **kíd5**. The generic ‘person’ complement, **an5**, functions as object in situations where there is a target of the action.

### 7.2.3.2 Two-place predicates with cognate objects

Tafi has a number of cognate object taking verbs. Some of these are listed below with their cognate objects. Their use in sentences is illustrated in (107) – (109).

106. **mwí kumwí** ‘laugh’  
**mó kumó** ‘suck breast’  
**ɔɔ kaɔɔ** ‘speak, talk’
107. G’itsoku ’uvuním ní Kwamí áaɔɔ ’iaɔɔ.  
**gɪ i-tsokú bú-vū ní kumí ní Kwamí**  
REL 1SG.DEP-enter CM-house DEF inside TOP Kwamí  
**á-a-ɔɔ ka-ɔɔ**  
SM-PSTPROG-say CM-speech  
‘When I entered the room Kwami was talking.’
108. Kofí áámwí umwí.  
**Kofí á-á-mwí kɪ-mwí**  
Kofí SM-PRSPROG-laugh CM-laughter  
‘Kofi is laughing.’
109. Anóvōn akaámó ’émō.  
**a-nóvō ní a-ka-á-mó kɪ-mō**  
CM-child DEF SM-still-PRSPROG-suck CM-breast  
‘The child is still sucking breast.’

The verbs that take cognate objects can also occur with non-cognate objects. Thus, **ɔɔ** ‘say, speak’ illustrated in (107) above with a cognate object can also take a specific object as in (110).

110. Kodzó áɔɔ ’ebúí tilí.  
**Kodzó á-ɔɔ kɪ-búí ti-lí**  
Kodzo SM-say CM-word AM-INDEF  
‘Kodzo said something.’

I should perhaps point out that the cognate objects of some verbs can be omitted as shown in (111) below.

111. Kwámi ámwí.  
**Kwámi á-mwí**  
Kwami SM-laugh  
‘Kwami laughed.’

As the sentence in (111) illustrates, the omission of these cognate objects does not result in a change in meaning. Their omission makes the verbs function in one-place constructions. With some other verbs, the cognate objects seem to complete or further specify their meaning (Chafe 1970:156). The cognate object of the verb

**mó** 'suck', for instance, cannot be omitted. The omission of this object renders the sentence meaningless or ungrammatical in Tafi. This is illustrated below.

112. \*Anóvōn ámó  
 \***a-nóvō**    **ní**    **á-mó**  
 CM-child    DEF    SM-suck  
 \*'The child sucked.'

#### 7.2.4 Three-place predicates

A three-place predicate occurs in a three-place construction and it involves three participants. The first, second and third arguments are mapped on to the subject, object1 (Dative) and object2 functions respectively. I will begin with a discussion of verbs in Tafi which are considered canonical three-place predicates and subsequently, I will discuss three-place predicates which have an inherent complement in their frame.

##### 7.2.4.1 Canonical three-place predicates

Verbs in Tafi which are considered as canonical three-place predicates include:

- |      |              |        |                           |                           |
|------|--------------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 114. | <b>kó</b>    | 'give' | <b>kasī</b>               | 'teach/show'              |
|      | <b>bīsī</b>  | 'ask'  | <b>sīsī</b>               | 'send (for)'              |
|      | <b>tsiré</b> | 'tell' | <b>tsyé</b> <sup>53</sup> | 'give as a gift, forgive' |

**Kó** 'give', **kasī** 'teach/show', **tsyé** 'give as a gift' and **tsiré** 'tell' are illustrated below:

115. Ámā ákó Ákú síká.  
**Ámā á-kó**    **Ákú síká**  
 Ama SM-give Ákú money  
 'Ama gave Aku money.'

116. Ámā ákasī Ákú kí-dō  
**Ámā á-kasī**    **Ákú kí-dō**  
 Ama SM-teach Aku CM-thing  
 'Ama taught Aku.'

117. Kristo étsyé 'óló blo ebúí zizin.  
**Kristo é-tsyé**    **boló**    **boló**    **e-búí**    **zizi**    **ní**  
 Christ SM-forgive 1PL 1PL.IND CM.PL-matter bad DEF
- 

<sup>53</sup> This verb seems to have been borrowed from Akan via Inland Ewe.

‘Christ forgave us our sins.’

118. Anɔ ʔowã mítsiré wo ʔebúɔn.

**anɔ**            **buwã**        **mí-í-tsiré**                    **wó**    **ki-búí**  
 NEG.FOC    in.vain    1SG.IND-PRSPROG-tell    2SG    CM-matter  
**t-ní**  
 AM-PROX

‘I am not telling you this in vain.’ (Lit. ‘It is not in vain I am telling you this matter.’)

The sentences above have an agent as the subject NP, a goal or dative argument occurs in immediate post-verbal position as object1 and a theme following the goal as object2. The order of the post-verbal complements is fixed, unlike in Ewe (see e.g. Bobuafor 2001). It is not reversible. In the sentence in (119), the strict order of occurrence of the post-verbal complements has been reversed so the theme precedes the goal. Thus, the sentence is ungrammatical.

119. \*Ámã ákó síká Ákú.

\***Ámã á-kó**        **síká**        **Akú**  
 Ama SM-give money    Akú  
 ‘Ama gave money Aku.’

For most of the verbs, if the emphasis is on the theme and it has to be mentioned before the goal, then it has to be introduced by the verb **yúkó** ‘take’ in a serial verb construction as shown in (120).

120. Ámã áyíkó síká ákó Ákú.

**Ámã á-yíkó**        **síká**        **á-kó**        **Akú**  
 Ama SM-take money    SM-give    Aku  
 ‘Ama gave money to Aku.’

Some of the three-place predicates like **kasí** ‘teach, show’ and **bísí** ‘ask’ can also occur in two-place constructions (see section 7.2.2.3 for a discussion on **bísí** ‘ask’). **Kasí** ‘teach, show’ is exemplified in (121) below:

121. Mʔadzya ákasí akwíntã.

**mí**    **á-dzyã**        **á-kasí**        **a-kwíntã**  
 1SG    CM-brother    SM-teach    CM-mathematics  
 ‘My brother teaches mathematics.’

As shown in the sentence in (121), **mí ádzyã** ‘my brother’ which is the subject NP is an agent whereas **akwíntã** ‘mathematics’, the object NP occurs as the object of the sentence and is the theme.

Certain verbal meanings are expressed mainly by various collocations of a verb plus a nominal complement. These can occur in either two-place or three-place constructions. For instance, the way that the Tafi people express the ‘thank’ idea is by using the verb **hu** ‘hit’ in collocation with the body-part term **ahɔ̃** ‘hand’, i.e., **hu ahɔ̃** ‘strike/hit hand’ expresses ‘to thank’. Other examples include:

122.	<b>sí</b>	‘run, escape’	<b>kífū</b>	‘fear’	‘be afraid’
	<b>tá</b>	‘throw’	<b>otú</b>	‘gun’	‘shoot/ fire a gun’
	<b>tá</b>	‘throw’	<b>kikplí</b>	‘fist’	‘fight’
	<b>tá</b>	‘throw’	<b>kéyū</b>	‘war’	‘fight a battle’
	<b>tí</b>	‘know’	<b>kibúí</b>	‘word’	‘be wise/ intelligent’
	<b>bó</b>	‘relate, report’	<b>amanié</b>	‘message/mission’	‘give a report; recount a mission’

Some of the verbs in these collocations can occur in three-place constructions when the goal or target argument is introduced into the frame. These do not differ from their canonical double object constructions in the sense that the positions of their post-verbal arguments are fixed and cannot be changed with each other. Thus, in every construction with this kind of collocation, it is the goal that immediately follows the verb and the theme (or the restricted collocant) that occurs after the goal.

Consider the following examples:

122. Ábhuhú áta ǎhě́n ótú.  
**á-bhuhú**    **ní**    **á-tá**    **ǎ-hě́**    **ní**    **o-tú**  
 CM-hunter    DEF    SM-throw    CM-pig    DEF    CM-gun  
 ‘The hunter shot the pig.’ or ‘The hunter fired at the pig.’
123. Kofí áta Kúdzo ’ikplí.  
**Kofí**    **á-tá**    **Kúdzo**    **ki-kplí**  
 Kofi    SM-throw    Kudzo    CM-fist  
 ‘Kofi gave Kudzo a blow.’
124. Ábó Kwami amanié.  
**á-bó**    **Kwami**    **a-manié**  
 3SG-give Kwami    CM-message  
 S/he gave Kwami a report.’

There are different constructions for varying the order of the theme and the goal for some of these three-place constructions. With regard to **tá otú** ‘shoot/ fire a gun’, **otú** can occur as the complement of **yukɔ̃** ‘take’ as the first verb in an SVC as shown in (125). For **tá kikplí** ‘fight’ the goal can be expressed as a **nu** ‘COM’ prepositional complement as in (126). For **bó amanié** ‘give a report, recount a

mission’, the goal is expressed as an object of **kɔ** ‘give; cause; let; make’ which occurs as the second verb in an SVC as in (127).

125. Ábhubhúń áyíkɔ otú átá ǎhěń.

**á-bhubhu ní á-yíkɔ o-tú á-tá ǎ-hě ní**  
 CM-hunter DEF SM-take CM-gun SM-throw CM-pig DEF  
 ‘The hunter shot the pig.’ (Lit. ‘The hunter took a gun and shot the pig.’)

126. Kofí áte ’ekplí nɪ Kúdzo.

**Kofí á-tá ki-kplí nɪ Kúdzo**  
 Kofí SM-throw CM-fist COM Kudzo  
 ‘Kofi fought with Kudzo.’

127. Ábó amaniéń ákɔ Kwami.

**á-bó a-manié ní á-kɔ Kwami**  
 3SG-give CM-message DEF SM-give Kwami  
 S/he gave a report to Kwami.’

### 7.2.5 Summary

In this section, I have classified Tafi verbs as one-place, two-place, and three-place predicates depending on the number of arguments they take. The semantic roles that a verb assigns to its arguments are determined by the state of affairs this verb codes. Verbs classified as one-place predicates occur in one-place constructions and they take only one argument. Following Essegbey (1999), I identified three groups of one-place predicates based on the constructions in which they occur. They were also categorised into various semantic groups such as verbs of directed motion, non-agentive manner of motion verbs, verbs of emission, property verbs, verbs of bodily processes, and achievement verbs. Some of these verbs can also function in two-place constructions.

As regards two-place predicates, they occur in two-place constructions and they take two arguments. These verbs occur with an agent/effector/experiencer as subject argument. Also, I looked at verbs which take obligatory complements such as generic and cognate objects. Semantically, two-place predicates in the language include verbs of perception and cognition, speech act verbs, verbs of creation, verbs of planting, body-grooming verbs, verbs of caused change of location and verbs of cutting.

The discussion on the canonical three-place predicates shows that the post-verbal arguments that these verbs take have a fixed order of occurrence. The goal always precedes the theme.

Moreover, I also examined verbs which together with nominal complements are used to express verbal meanings. Some of these verbs can occur in both two-place and three-place constructions. Like the canonical three-place predicates when these verbs occur in three-place constructions, they do not have a variable constituent order. The nominal collocation of the verb in the two-place construction, which is the theme, occurs as object<sub>2</sub> in the three-place construction with the goal occurring as object<sub>1</sub> in immediate post-verbal position. It was also shown that the positions of the goal and the theme can be varied through the use of different constructions such as serial verb constructions.

### 7.3 Tense, aspect and mood

In this section, I examine tense, aspect and mood in Tafi. These are marked largely by preverbs. In Tafi, there is a basic tense distinction between future and non-future and a basic aspectual distinction between perfective and imperfective. The non-future is the unmarked form of the verb whereas the future is overtly marked by a preverb **ba-**. However, in the imperfective, there is a distinction between present progressive and past progressive marked by tone. The former is marked by a high tone and the latter by a low tone.

#### 7.3.1 Future

The future is marked by the morpheme **ba-**. This preverb is used to indicate that the state of affairs described by the verb has not happened, but is expected to happen at a time posterior to the time of speaking. The form of the future marker changes depending on the ATR value of the initial vowel of the verb root as illustrated in (128) and (129). Moreover, when the future marker is preceded by a subject marker (SM) for the **o-** class, or a 2SG/PL subject pronoun which has a rounded vowel its vowel takes on the [+round] as in (130) and (131). Thus, the vowel of the future marker becomes **ɔ/o** depending on the ATR specifications of the initial vowel of verb. Sometimes, in rapid speech, some speakers tend to delete the initial consonant of the future marker and some others replace its initial consonant with a palatal glide especially when this marker occurs after the 1PL subject pronoun **bu/bu** as shown in (132) and (133) respectively.

128. Ányínóvṣḗn ábawééxwī kó ekusín.  
**á-nyínóvṣḗ** **ní** **á-ba-wa** **kí-xwī** **kó** **e-kusí** **ní**  
 CM-boy DEF SM-FUT-do CM-work DAT CM-chief DEF  
 ‘The boy will work for the chief.’
129. Ádɔkasín ébetu sukúeyín.  
**á-dɔkasí** **ní** **é-be-tu** **sukúeyí** **ní**  
 CM-teacher DEF SM-FUT-beat pupil DEF  
 ‘The teacher will beat the pupil.’

130. Óbokú obón.  
**ó-bo-kú**            **o-bón**  
 2SG-FUT-reach CM-today  
 ‘You will arrive today.’
131. Nòbòtò así.  
**nò-bò-tó**            **á-sí**  
 2PL-FUT-cook CM-rice  
 ‘You will cook rice.’
132. Búatsyá.  
**bú-ba-tsyá**  
 1PL-FUT-meet  
 ‘We will meet.’
133. Búyatsyá.  
**bú-ba-tsyá**  
 1PL-FUT-meet  
 ‘We will meet.’

As indicated in (128), the future marker is **ba-** and this is because it precedes a verb that contains a [-ATR] vowel and in (129) it is **be-** because the vowel of the verb stem is [+ATR]. In (130) and (131), the vowel of the future marker is rounded because it harmonises with the [+round] feature of the 2SG and 2PL subject pronouns. Its vowel is /o/ in (130) and /ɔ/ in (131) because the vowels in the verb stems in these sentences are [+ATR] and [-ATR] respectively. In (132), the future marker occurs without its initial consonant and in (133), we have a palatal glide in place of the initial consonant of the future marker.

Alternatively, one could analyse this form as a potential marker especially given its uses in conditional clauses and procedural discourse. However, the temporal feature cannot be defeated, hence it seems better to analyse it as tense rather than a mood marker (cf. Essegbey 2008 on Ewe, Essegbey 2012 on Nyagbo).

In Tafi, as it is in Logba (Dorvlo 2008), the future marker is used in the description of procedural discourse, or in the apodosis of a conditional clause as illustrated in the sentences in (134) and (135) respectively. The sentence in (134) is about palm oil preparation whereas (135) was also given during the description of local soap preparation.

134. Óbóká tñón pétée óbú ní buníníñ.  
**ó-bo-ká**            **ti-nó**    **ní**    **pétée**    **ó-bú**            **ní**  
 2SG-FUT-squeeze CM-chaff DEF all SM-remove LOC  
**bu-ní**    **ní**    **kumu**  
 CM-water DEF inside

‘You will squeeze all the chaff out of the water.’ (Palm oil)

135. Ɔsí ɔtɔ béshɔkɔǔ, ɔbɔpɔt̩ kokɔ aklɔ.  
**ɔ-sí      ɔ-tɔ      bé-sh(e).ɔkɔǔ      ɔ-bɔ-pɔt̩      kokɔ a-klɔ**  
 2SG-say SM-cook CM-local.soap 2SG-FUT-burn cocoa CM.PL-pod  
 ‘If you want to prepare local soap, you will burn cocoa pods.’ (Local soap)

As the above examples illustrate, the future marker is used to talk about one’s intention to do something or an event which is not actual.

The future marker can occur with some other TAM markers in a construction. Consider the following example:

136. Átáábabashĩ.  
**á-táá-ba-ba-shĩ**  
 3SG-NEG:PRSGROG-FUT-VENT-leave  
 ‘S/he will not be leaving.’

In (136), the future combines with the negative and progressive markers as well as the ventive to indicate that the state of affairs expressed by the verb will not be ongoing at a future time.

### 7.3.2 Non-future and the aorist

The non-future form of the verb is unmarked. This unmarked form is the same as the aorist (aspectual) form. In the non-future, either there is a tone to indicate the present and past or for some verbs, both the present and past forms are the same. However, the full details of this are not yet completely understood. Further research is necessary to fully establish the patterns.

The aorist or factative is an aspectual category commonly described for West African languages (see Welmers 1973, Ameka & Dakubu 2008). The aorist aspectual form tends to have a past or present interpretation depending on the lexical aspect of the verb. In general, dynamic or action verbs have past interpretation and inchoative or stative verbs get a present interpretation. This is the case in Tafi as well (see (141) below for stative/inchoative verbs). However, some dynamic verbs in the aorist can have a past or present interpretation signalled by tone in context (see 138 below). There are some dynamic or action verbs where the tone does not vary with the present or past interpretation, as illustrated in (137).

- 137a. Ányín ébhui ʔdzyań.  
**á-nyí      ní      é-bhũ      kɪ-dzɪa      ní**  
 CM-man DEF SM-cut CM-meat DEF  
 ‘The man cuts (up) the meat.’ (Present interpretation)

‘The man cut (up) the meat.’ (Past interpretation)

Other dynamic or action verbs show tonal differences with respect to present or past interpretation. They include:

	Present		Past	
138.	<b>nù</b>		<b>nú</b>	‘hear’
	<b>bà</b>		<b>bá</b>	‘come’
	<b>tē</b>		<b>té</b>	‘cut/ slash’
	<b>hu</b>		<b>hú</b>	‘hit’
	<b>bakā</b>		<b>bákā</b>	‘remember’

There are also suppletive sets for some verbs: one form for the present and one for past/ non-present. For example,

	Present		Past/non-present	
139.	<b>lí</b>		<b>za</b>	‘be.at’
	<b>dzí</b>		<b>za</b>	‘sit’
	<b>nyí</b>		<b>tí</b>	‘know’
	<b>nú</b>		<b>dzí</b>	‘be’

The forms that have present interpretation are sometimes used to render a habitual situation as shown below:

140. Kiwinyééwi adzīn áto ’ed5.  
**ki-wi-nyáá-ki-wi**                      **a-dzī**                      **ní**                      **a-t5**                      **kí-d5**  
 CM-day-DISTR-CM-day    CM-woman    DEF    SM-sweep    CM-thing  
 ‘Everyday the woman cooks.’

Inchoative or stative verbs in the unmarked form have present interpretation. Examples include:

141. **dzā**                      ‘be(come) ripe’  
**qama**                      ‘be(come) tall’  
**tri**                          ‘be(come) big, thick’  
**dze**                          ‘be(come) long’  
**nó**                          ‘be(come) black’  
**ni**                          ‘be(come) wide’  
**dzyo**                      ‘be(come) straight’

The idea is that the change of state has occurred before the reference time and hence interpreted as the state occurring now. Thus, it is translated with the present tense into English.

In terms of tense interpretation, the unmarked form of the verb is a non-future and

this reading is reinforced by tonal changes. In terms of aspect such forms are aorist and their temporal interpretation depends on the lexical aspect of the verb.

### 7.3.3 The Perfective

Perfective aspect in Tafi is marked by **tí-/tí-**. The choice of either form is based on vowel harmony rules. The perfective aspect marker indicates a completed situation at a time prior to the moment of speaking. This morpheme has an ‘already’ sense. Temporal nouns and adverbials that locate the state of affairs at a time relative to the time the utterance was made can be used to indicate the time of occurrence of an action/event (e.g., morning, last year, etc.)

142. Ítíhú anóvṣń.

**í-tí-hú**            **a-nóvṣ**    **ní**  
1SG-PERF-hit    CM-child DEF  
‘I have hit the child (already).’

143. Bétíté isín ’ívūń.

**bé-tí-té**            **i-sí**            **ní**    **kí-vūń**  
3PL-PERF-cut    CM.PL-tree DEF    CM-yesterday  
‘They have (already) cut the trees yesterday.’

144. Kásālā átínyá y’oklebhó ní pétéé.

**ká-sālā**    **á-tí-nyá**    **yí**    **o-klebhó**            **ní**    **pétéé**  
CM-tortoise    SM-PERF-tie 3SG.IND    CM-bundle.of.thatch    DEF    all  
‘Tortoise had (already) tied completely his bundle of thatch.’ (Kásālā)

### 7.3.4 The Progressive

The progressive aspect in Tafi distinguishes the present progressive, marked by a high tone vowel (**ṽ**) and the past progressive which is marked by a low tone vowel (**ṽ̄**). Thus, the difference between the present progressive and the past progressive is indicated by tone. The progressive in the affirmative/positive is marked by a copy of the immediately preceding vowel.

#### 7.3.4.1 The Present Progressive

The present progressive, as I indicated earlier on, is marked by a high tone. It indicates situations/states of affairs taking place simultaneously to the moment of speech. (145) and (146) are conjugations of the verbs **ga** ‘walk’ and **tú** ‘pound’ in the present progressive.

145. **ú-gā**            ‘I am walking’

<b>óó-gā</b>	‘You are walking’
<b>áá-gā</b>	‘S/he is walking’
<b>bóó-gā</b>	‘We are walking’
<b>nóó-gā</b>	‘You are walking’
<b>báá-gā</b>	‘They are walking’

146. **íí-tǔ fufuo** ‘I am pounding fufu’  
**óó-tǔ fufuo** ‘You are pounding fufu’  
**éé-tǔ fufuo** ‘S/he is pounding fufu’  
**búú-tǔ fufuo** ‘We are pounding fufu’  
**noó-tǔ fufuo** ‘You are pounding fufu’  
**béé-tǔ fufuo** ‘They are pounding fufu’

The present progressive can also be used to describe a state of affairs that is planned to occur at a point in time in the future and there is the likelihood that the intended state of affairs being described will surely take place. The example in (147) illustrates this:

147. M'en' ááshĩ av'íédzím.  
**mí**      **é-nĩ**      **á-á-shĩ**      **a-vi**      **ke-dzi**  
 1SG.IND CM-mother SM-PRSPROG-leave SM-go market  
**kumi**  
 inside  
 ‘My mother is going to the market.’

The statement in (147) above, according to one of my consultants can, for instance, be given as a response by a child whose mother's whereabouts is asked for even though the mother is yet to depart for the market. It can also be said as an announcement of plans.

#### 7.3.4.2 The Past Progressive

The past progressive is marked by a low tone. It is used to describe situations which went on during a stretch of time in the past and has ended, or a customary action which used to take place in the past. (148) and (149) exemplify the same verbs **ga** ‘walk’ and **tú** ‘pound’ in (145) and (146) in the past progressive.

148. **íi-ga** ‘I was walking’ or ‘I used to walk’  
**óó-ga** ‘You were walking’ or ‘you used to walk’  
**áa-ga** ‘S/he was walking’ or ‘S/he used to walk’  
**bóó-ga** ‘We were walking’ or ‘we used to walk’  
**nóó-ga** ‘You were walking’ or ‘you used to walk’  
**báa-ga** ‘They were walking’ or ‘they used to walk’

149. **í-tú fufuo** 'I was pounding fufu'  
**óo-tú fufuo** 'You were pounding fufu'  
**ée-tú fufuo** 'S/he was pounding fufu'  
**búu-tú fufuo** 'We were pounding fufu'  
**nóo-tú fufuo** 'You were pounding fufu'  
**bée-tú fufuo** 'They were pounding fufu'

The tone indicating the past progressive marker is a polar tone because the tone on all the pronouns except the 2PL pronoun is high and that of the past progressive marker is low. However, in the past progressive, the tone on the 2PL pronoun changes to high to maintain the polarity.<sup>54</sup>

### 7.3.5 Negation

Negation in Tafi is expressed by a verbal prefix **tí-/tí-** in the present and **du-/di-** in the non-present depending on the ATR value of the initial vowel in the verb. The form of the present negative marker is homophonous with the perfective aspect marker **tí-/tí-**. However, negative constructions end with a glottal stop producing a sharp or abrupt end of the clause. The present (glossed NEG1) and the non-present (glossed NEG2) negative morphemes are illustrated in the conjugations in (150a) and (150b) and the sentences in (150c) and (150d) respectively.

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 150a. <b>í-tí-bhuti?</b> 'I don't do' | 150b. <b>í-tí-hu?</b> 'I don't hit' |
| <b>ó-tí-bhuti?</b> 'You don't do'     | <b>ó-tí-hu?</b> 'You don't hit'     |
| <b>á-tí-bhuti?</b> 'S/he doesn't do'  | <b>é-tí-hu?</b> 'S/he doesn't hit'  |
| <b>bú-tí-bhuti?</b> 'We don't do'     | <b>bú-tí-hu?</b> 'We don't hit'     |
| <b>nó-tí-bhuti?</b> 'You don't do'    | <b>no-tí-hu?</b> 'You don't hit'    |
| <b>bá-tí-bhuti?</b> 'They don't do'   | <b>bé-tí-hu?</b> 'They don't hit'   |

- 150c. **Ányín átíba?**  
**á-nyí ní á-tí-bá**  
 CM-man DEF SM-NEG1-come  
 'The man does not come.'

- 150d. **Osín ódudama?**  
**o-sí ní ɔ-du-dama**  
 CM-tree DEF SM-NEG2-become.tall  
 'The tree is not tall.'

---

<sup>54</sup> The tones on the verb root in the present progressive and the past progressive may also be different. Compare the forms of the verb in (145) and (148) as well as (146) and (149).

The negative morphemes **tí-/tí-** and **di-/di-** are selected on the basis of the temporal as well as the aktionsart features of the predicates they negate. With “active” and “stative” predicates, **tí-/tí-** expresses present negation, while **di-/di-** indicates past negation. For example,

151.	<b>ítíbá?</b>	‘I do not come’	<b>ídíbá?</b>	‘I did not come’
	<b>ítíwá?</b>	‘I do not do’	<b>ídíwá?</b>	‘I did not do’
	<b>ítíshī?</b>	‘I do not leave’	<b>ídíshī?</b>	‘I did not leave’
	<b>ítísí?</b>	‘I do not run’	<b>ídísí?</b>	‘I did not run’

Stative verbs tend to be negated with **tí-/tí-** and yield a present negation reading as illustrated in (152a). (152b) is the past form of the sentence in (152a). In the past, the verb **nyí** ‘know’ becomes **tí**.

152a. **Ítínyí?** ‘I do not know.’

152b. **Idítí?** ‘I did not know.’

When inchoative/stative property predicates are negated, they select **di-/di-** indicating the non-realisation of the change of state. For example,

153a.	<b>di tsobúnō</b>	‘be not near’
	<b>di tri</b>	‘be not big’
	<b>di kpe</b>	‘be not plenty’
	<b>di ni</b>	‘be not wide’

Some closely related lexical predicates distinguished only by aktionsart confirm this. Thus, **za** ‘sit, stay (past)’ is negated by **di-** while the stative **dzi** ‘be seated’ is negated by **tí-**.

Thus **tí-/tí-** always has a present negation reading and **di-/di-** has a present or past negation reading depending on the aktionsart of the verb.

Another negative marker in Tafi is **gu** which is glossed as ‘NEG3’. In fact, the occurrence of this morpheme in my corpus is very limited and it occurs after the verb **sí** ‘say’ and it expresses a meaning such as ‘not intend to do something’. It appears the use of this negative marker is no longer common. The following are examples illustrating its use.

153b. Eyí nō ní gu así y’ení atúdo trá elishí yí tsyí agusí abadó?.

<b>e-yí</b>	<b>nō</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>gu</b>	<b>a-sí</b>	<b>yí</b>	<b>é-ní</b>
CM-child	wh.ever	DEF	REL	3SG.DEP-say	3SG.IND	CM-mother
<b>á-tí-dō</b>		<b>tu-rá</b>	<b>e-lishí</b>	<b>yí</b>	<b>tsyí</b>	<b>a-gu-sí</b>
SM-NEG1-contact		CM-sleep	CM-night	3SG.IND	too	3SG-NEG3-say

**á-ba-dɔ**

SM-FUT-contact

‘The child who would not let its mother sleep will also not sleep.’

(Proverbs #39)

153c. Ékékúwúlú ní nía agíst así tɪ abá banɔ́ ’éshí.

**é-ké-wulú ní ní a a-gɪ-sɪ**

3SG-PERF-bath TOP TOP CFM 3SG-NEG3-say

**a-sí tɪ a-bá ba-nɔ́ ki.shí**

SM-COMP COMP 3SG.DEP-come CM.PL-person midst

‘If he has not taken his bath, he does not intend to come among people.’

(Gbaxáǎ)

The future is negated by the negative marker co-occurring with the future marker *ba/be-* as in (153d).

153d. Atíbabá.

**a-tí-ba-bá**

3SG-NEG1-FUT-come

‘S/he will not come.’

Negation interacts with some aspectual categories in Tafi. When the negative and present progressive markers co-occur, vowels of the resultant form are the same as the vowel of the personal pronouns and the subject pronominal forms they occur with, except for the 1PL subject pronoun and nouns in the two **bu-** classes both of which contain the same vowel **u/u** (see Table 3.2). For these, the vowels of the negative present progressive marker are **ɪ/i** which agrees in height with the vowel **u/u** of these forms. As usual, the vowel representing the negative present progressive aspect bears a high tone and that of the negative past progressive also bears a low tone. Example (153d) below is a conjugation of the verb **ga** ‘walk’ in the negative present progressive.

When the negative past progressive aspect marker occurs with the 2SG/PL subject pronominal forms as well as with nouns in the **o-** class, its vowels are /**oo/** or /**ɔɔ/** depending on the ATR value of the (initial) vowel of the verb root. However, when it occurs after the 1SG/PL and 3SG/PL pronouns or nouns belonging to the remaining classes, its vowels are /**aa/**. The example in (153e) is also a conjugation of the verb **ga** ‘walk’ in the past progressive. Compare (153d) and (153e).

153d. í-tí-gā?	‘I am not walking’
ɔ-tɔɔ-gā?	‘You are not walking’
á-táá-gā?	‘S/he is not walking’
bú-tí-gā?	‘We are not walking’
nɔ-tɔɔ-gā?	‘You are not walking’
bá-táá-gā?	‘They are not walking’

- 153e. **t-daa-gā?** 'I was not walking'  
**ɔ-dɔɔ-gā?** 'You were not walking'  
**a-daa-gā?** 'S/he was not walking'  
**bu-daa-gā?** 'We were not walking'  
**no-dɔɔ-gā?** 'You were not walking'  
**ba-daa-gā?** 'They were not walking'

### 7.3.5.1 Negative clefts

Negative clefts are introduced by **aní**<sup>55</sup> 'NEGCL' with the negated constituent in its scope. In example (154a), a negative cleft is used to show contrast and the example in (154b) is a proverb in which the information in the scope of the negative cleft is something that is not done.

- 154a. Kofí abaví aní wó.

**Kofí a-ba-ví aní wó**  
 Kofí SM-FUT-go NEGCL 2SG.IND  
 'Kofi will go, not you.'

- 154b. Aní 'tsá láyko epú ɔwísí n̄.

**aní kɪ-tsá lá-yko be-pú ɔ-wísí**  
 NEGCL CM-needle 3PL.DEP-take SM-punch CM-axe.handle  
**n̄**  
 COM  
 'We do not punch a hole into an axe handle with a needle.' (Proverb #17)

### 7.3.5.2 Prohibitive

The prohibitive construction uses the negative marker **tu/ti** to mark an imperative (singular) or (plural) (cf. Chapter 8, § 8.3.2). For example,

155. Tiklū w'eni y'enyínē edzini ɔsí w'eni ...

**ti-klū wó é-ní yí e-nyínē e-dzini**  
 NEG1-call 2SG.IND CM-mother 3SG.IND CM-husband CM-wife  
**ɔ-sí wó é-ní**  
 SM-COMP 2SG.IND CM-mother  
 'Do not call your mother's co-wife your mother, ...' (Proverbs #28)

<sup>55</sup> The form **aní**, the negative cleft, is similar to the proximal demonstrative form **aní** which modifies nouns in the **a<sup>1</sup>-**, **ba(a)-**, **ka-** and **a<sup>2</sup>-** classes, and to **aní**, a post verbal or clausal topic marker. At this stage, these three entities are considered to be similar in form and probably related in function. Further analysis could determine the exact relationship, e.g., whether one developed from the other.

## 7.3.5.3 Privative negation

Tafi, like Ewe, has a way of forming privative negation. The privative negative is derived by prefixing the verb root with **ma-** and then the resulting stem is totally reduplicated. This form appears to have been borrowed from Ewe. Some examples of such privative negative forms are listed in (156a) and their use in sentences is illustrated in (156b).

156a.	<b>mɔ</b>	‘see, get’	<b>mamɔmamɔ</b>	‘unseen, not getting’
	<b>yɔ</b>	‘be(come) cold’	<b>mayɔmayɔ</b>	‘not cool’
	<b>kla</b>	‘read, count’	<b>maklamakla</b>	‘uncountable’
	<b>ti</b>	‘know, be aware’	<b>matimati</b>	‘ignorance’

156b.	Tɪ kɔ láshĩ ekusí ní mamɔmamɔ.				
	<b>ti</b>	<b>kɔ</b>	<b>lá-shĩ</b>	<b>e-kusí</b>	<b>ní</b> <b>ma-mɔ-ma-mɔ</b>
	NEG1	cause	3PL.DEP-leave	CM-chief	DEF PRIV-see-PRIV-see
	‘Don’t let them leave without seeing the chief.’				

## 7.3.5.4 Negative existential

Tafi also makes use of a negative predicate of existence, **má** ‘be.at:NEG’ which is used to negate existential propositions as is shown in (157).

157.	Buninyɔ́uní má bunietsukpúnĩm.				
	<b>bu-ni-nyaa-bu-ni</b>	<b>má</b>	<b>bu-ní</b>	<b>ke-tsukpú ní</b>	
	CM-water-DISTR-CM-water	be.at:NEG	CM-water	CM-pot	DEF
	<b>kum</b>				
	inside				
	‘There is no water in the water-pot.’				

This verb **má** is the negative of the locative-existential verb **lí** ‘be.at’ (see Chapter 6, § 6.6.1.1.1 for further details).

## 7.3.5.5 Negative perfective

The negative perfective aspect marker in Tafi is **ká**. It is realised as **ká/ké** or **kɔ́/kó**. The choice of either of these realisations is based on vowel harmony rules. Thus, depending on the ATR value of the (initial) vowel of the verb root, the negative perfective marker is realised as **ká/ké**. If the subject argument is 2SG/PL or a noun belonging to the o- class, this preverb is realised as the rounded counterparts **kɔ́/kó**. The **ká** morpheme indicates that the state of affairs expressed in the rest of the clause has not yet occurred. This is exemplified in the following sentences in (158a) and (158b). The example in (158c) is a proverb.

158a. Akábá.

**a-ká-bá**  
3SG-NEG.PERF-come  
'S/he has not yet come.'

158b. Ekénú íbúínyéébúí.

**e-ké-nú**                      **ki-búí-nyáá-ki-búí**  
3SG-NEG.PERF-hear    CM-word-DISTR-CM-word  
'S/he has not heard anything yet.'

158c. Anóvō ní gí ákányó edí ní y'áq̣o así y'eni y'ényí 'ító dí.

**a-nóvō**    **ní**    **gí**    **á-ká-nyó**                      **e-dí**    **ní**  
CM-child DEF REL 3SG.DEP-NEG.PERF-roam SM-look TOP  
**yí**    **á-q̣o**    **a-sí**                      **yí**    **é-ní**    **yí**  
3SG.IND SM-say SM-COMP 3SG.IND CM-mother 3SG.IND  
**é-nyí**    **ki-tó**    **dí**  
SM-know CM-cook surpass

'The child who has never travelled says that his mother is the best cook.'  
(Proverbs #49)

### 7.3.6 The persistive aspect

The persistive aspect is expressed by **ka**. This morpheme is realised as **ka**, **ke**, **ko** or **ko** depending on the ATR value of the (initial) vowel of the verb root as well as the person or class of the subject argument. **Ko/ko** is chosen if the subject argument is 2SG/PL or a noun belonging to the **o-** class. The persistive marker can co-occur with any of the other elements in the verbal cluster. It has two main uses: (i) persistive and (ii) repetitive. In its persistive use, it indicates that a state of affairs is or was still on-going over a period of time. For example,

159a. Akalí 'klí.

**a-ka-lí**                      **ɪ-klí**  
3SG-PERS-be.at CM-there  
'S/he is still there.'

159b. Ekelí 'klí.

**e-ke-lí**                      **ɪ-klí**  
3SG-PERS-be.positioned CM-there  
'He is still lying there.'

**Ka** combines with the progressive marker to reinforce the persistive reading as in (160).

160. Akaábá.  
**a-ka-á-bá**  
 3SG-PERS-PRSPROG-come  
 ‘He is still coming.’

When the persistive marker **ka** combines with the negative marker, they together express the idea of ‘no longer, anymore’ as illustrated in (161).

161. Bátikaágban’ ágl̩.  
**bá-tí-ka-á-gban̩**                      **á-gl̩**  
 3PL-NEG1-PERS-PRSPROG CM-RECIP  
 ‘They no longer marry each other.’

In some contexts, the **ka** morpheme can have an ‘again’ or repetitive reading. This is exemplified in (162).

162. Akaábub̩ ti ebu ʼɪdzya tilí ko...  
**a-ka-á-bub̩**                      **ti**      **e-bú**                      **ki-dzya**  
 3SG-PERS-PRSPROG-bend      PURP 3SG.DEP-remove      CM-meat  
**ti-lí**                      **ko**  
 AM-INDEF just  
 ‘Just as he bent again to pick another piece of meat...’

The repetitive reading of the **ka** morpheme is reinforced by the addition of the morpheme **vla** ‘again’ as in (see section 7.3.8 for a discussion of **vla**):

163. Ikavlehu anóv̩ń.  
**ɪ-ka-vle-hu**                      **a-nóv̩ń**      **ńí**  
 1SG-PERS-again-hit      CM-child DEF  
 ‘I hit the child again.’

### 7.3.7 The repetitive marker

The repetitive marker is **za**. It can co-occur with any of the other elements in the verbal cluster. It is used to indicate the repetition or iteration of a state of affairs. It can thus be interpreted as ‘again’. Depending on vowel harmony rules, person and the class of the subject NP, the repetitive marker **za** is realised as **za**, **ze**, **zu**, **zi**, **zo** or **zo**. If the subject NP is the 1SG or IPL pronoun or any noun from the **i-**, **ki-** or any of the **bu-** classes or their pronominal forms then the choice is **zu/zi** and if it occurs with the 2SG or 2PL pronoun or with nouns belonging to the **o-** class or their pronominal forms then it is realised as **zo/zo**. Moreover, when it occurs with any of the remaining pronouns or nouns from any of the remaining noun classes or

their pronominal forms, then the choice is **za/ze**. The examples in (167) are taken from the text on palm oil preparation.

167a. Óbɔzɔnyonyɔ ɔbɔnánĩ ...

**ɔ-bɔ-zɔ-nyunyo**      **ɔ-bɔ-nánĩ**  
 2SG-FUT-REP-knead    SM-FUT-reach  
 ‘You will continue kneading until ...’ (Palm oil)

167b. ... gɪ bɔbazyabá g’lǔ babí.

**gɪ**    **bɔ-ba-zi-yabá**      **gɪ**    **lǔ-ba-bí**  
 REL   3SG-FUT-REP-boil    REL   3SG.DEP-FUT-be.cooked  
 ‘...while it continues boiling until it is done.’ (Palm oil)

### 7.3.8 The marker **vla** ‘again’

**Vla** ‘again’ like **za** ‘REP’ is a preverb marker which is used to express the repetition of a state of affairs. It is realised as **vla**, **vle**, **vlo**, or **vlo**<sup>56</sup> depending on the person, class of the subject argument as well as ATR harmony. Like for other preverbs such as **za**, **ka**, or **gbla**, **vlo/vlo** is used if the subject argument is 2SG/PL. It can co-occur with any of the preverb markers in the verb cluster including the repetitive marker **za** and the persistive marker **ka**. Consider the following examples:

168a. Kásālā abhti ’ibuinyéébúí ’ídí sí tí kevlékóéyĩ ní ketsukpúníĩ.

**ká-sālā**      **á-bhítĩ**      **ki-bui-nyáá-ki-búí**      **kí-dĩ**      **sí**  
 CM-tortoise    SM-make    CM-matter-DISTR-CM-matter    CM-type    COMP  
**ti**      **ké-vlé-kóéyĩ**      **ní**      **ke-tsukpú ní**      **kumĩ**  
 COMP    3SG.DEP-again-exit    LOC    CM-pot    DEF    in  
 ‘Tortoise did every kind of thing to get out of the pot again.’ (Kásālā)

168b. Klíso, ɔzɔkɔvlɔbɔwĩ ’ulu obón tsyí áē?

**klíso**    **ɔ-zɔ-kɔ-vlɔ-bɔ-wĩ**      **bu-lu**  
 so    2SG.DEP-REP-PERS-again-VENT-drink      CM-drink  
**ɔ-bónĩ**    **tsyí**    **áē**  
 CM-today too    UFP  
 ‘So, you are going to drink again today too?’

In (168a), **vle** ‘again’ occurs as the only preverb whereas in (168b), it co-occurs with the repetitive, persistive and future markers.

### 7.3.9 The excessive marker **gbla**

<sup>56</sup> Some speakers also use **fla**, **fle** etc.

The preverb **gbla** is used to express excessiveness of an action or state. It is realised as **gbla** or **gble**, (as in (169a), (169b) and (169d)), depending on the ATR value of the (initial) vowel of the verb root. If the subject argument is the 2SG/PL or a noun belonging to the **o-** class the preverb is realised as the rounded counterparts **gblɔ** or **gblɔ** as shown in (169c).

169a. Égbléyi `ubhíté.

**é-gblé-yi**                      **bu-bhíté**  
3SG-EXC-resemble CM-maiden  
'She is extremely beautiful.'

169b. Ágblápĩ.

**á-gblá-pĩ**  
3SG-EXC-be.good  
'S/he is extremely good.'

169c. Ógblótóónu `ikanyááká.

**ó-gbló-tóó-nu**                      **ki-kányááká**  
2SG-EXC-NEG:PRSPROG-hear CM-any  
'You are very uncompromising.' (Lit.: You are not hearing anything at all.)

169d. Sam' eglekuń `ívul'én.

**sam**      **e-gble-kú**              **mí**      **kí-vulɔ**              **ɪ-ní**  
happiness SM-EXC-reach 1SG CM-morning AM-PROX  
'I am extremely happy this morning.' (Lit.: 'Happiness excessively reach me this morning.')

### 7.3.10 Habitual

The habitual expresses a customary or generic action which used to take place in the past, or still takes place at a time overlapping with the moment of speech, and predicts that it could take place in the future as well. The habitual in Tafi can relate to present or past time reference. In Tafi, the habitual is expressed by a construction in which the verb **gano/ ganu** 'keep, walk with, pass through' acts as the operator and its complement is either a VP as shown in (170a), (170b) and (171a) or a nominalised event as illustrated in (170c), (170d) and (171b). If the verb in the VP or event nominal is transitive, the object precedes it, thus the VO order is permuted (see (170b) and (170d), for example). The citation form of the operator is **gano** but in context it is **ganu**. It seems this verb stem is made up of the root **ga** 'walk' and the comitative suffix **-no** 'COM'.

#### 7.3.10.1 Present habitual

In the present habitual, the operator verb occurs after the subject as shown in (170). The present habitual is used to express states of affairs that occur regularly with the prediction that they can always occur.

170a. ágan'abá.

**á-gant**      **a-bá**  
3SG-HAB    SM-come  
'S/he usually comes.'

170b. Ágan' iegbuantabhā aza.

**á-gant**      **ke-gbu**    **a-ni**            **kábhā**      **a-za**  
3SG-HAB    CM-chair AM-PROX    top            SM-sit  
'S/he sits on this chair.'

170c. Ágan'ubá

**á-gant**      **bu-bá**  
3SG-HAB    CM-come  
'S/he usually comes.'

170d. Ágan' epidzya 'uyí ní blúnyεem.

**á-gant**      **e-pidzya**    **bu-yí**      **ní**      **blúnya**    **kumi**  
3SG-HAB    CM-goat CM-kill    LOC    christmas    inside  
'S/he usually kills a goat during Christmas.'

### 7.3.10.2 Past habitual

The past habitual aspect is formed the same way as the present habitual except that **gant** is marked for the past progressive. The past habitual is used to characterise states of affairs that occurred regularly in the past with the implication that they no longer occur. For example,

171a. Áagan' iegbuantabhā aza.

**á-a-gant**                      **ke-gbu**    **a-ní**            **kábhā**      **a-za**  
3SG-PSTPROG-HAB    CM-chair AM-PROX    top            SM-sit  
'S/he used to sit on this chair.'

171b. Áagan' epidzya 'uyí ní blúnyεem.

**á-a-gant**                      **e-pidzya**    **bu-yí**      **ní**      **blúnya**      **kumi**  
3SG-PSTPROG-HAB    CM-goat CM-kill    LOC    Christmas    inside  
'S/he used to kill a goat at Christmas.'

Utterances with verbs that have a present or non-future interpretation can be understood as expressing habitual situations. This habitual interpretation is reinforced by the use of temporal nouns and adverbials such as **kíwinyééwi** 'everyday' and **kibenyéébe** 'always' etc. (see § 7.3.2).

172. Kíwinyééwī adzīn agbe 'ed5.

<b>kí-wi-nyáá-kí-wi</b>	<b>a-dzī</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>á-gba</b>	<b>kí-d5</b>
CM-day-DISTR-CM-day	CM-woman	DEF	SM-sweep	CM-thing
'Everyday the woman sweeps.'				

The sentence in (172) shows that the action referred to is habitual and that it is practised everyday.

### 7.3.11 Phasal Aspect

It is assumed that situations or states of affairs (i.e. events, processes, actions and states, cf. Comrie (1976) and Mourelatos (1981)) are temporally divisible into an *onset* - a first moment, which is a necessary and an obligatory preparatory stage in the development of every situation, a *nucleus* - a main part, and a *coda* - a final temporal phase (Freed (1979:30ff). The nucleus can be further divided into an *initial* period, a *middle*, and a *final* part. As Ameka (2008) explains languages tend to provide linguistic forms for the description of these stages. Hence English, for example, has the aspectual verb *start* and *begin* which are used to refer to the *onset* and the *initial* period of the nucleus of situations respectively (Freed 1979, Wierzbicka 1988). Similarly the verbs *finish* and *end* are used to code the final part of the nucleus and the coda respectively (Wierzbicka 1988:77-78, Dixon 2005). The markers of the *onset*, *nucleus*, and *coda* phases of a situation may be described as ingressive/inceptive, progressive/continuative, and egressive respectively. In the following subsections, I describe the various phasal aspect constructions in Tafi and I use the term 'completive' instead of 'egressive' to describe the coda phase.

#### 7.3.11.1 The inceptive

The inceptive aspect refers to the beginning of a state of affairs. The beginning stage of the states of affairs may be referred to as the onset (Ameka 2008). There are two ways of expressing the inceptive. One is through the use of the verb **tén5** 'start' and the other involves a construction with **kpí X kesí**<sup>57</sup>. Both the verb **kpi** 'put in' together with the postposition **kesí** 'under' co-lexicalise the inceptive aspectual meaning. The specifier (NP) of the postposition **kesí** codes the situation about to begin. **Tén5** 'start' is a phasal verb which is followed by event nominals or nominalised verbs. If the event expression to be nominalised is represented by a transitive verb and its complement, e.g., **té ekle** 'cut thatch', the nominalisation

<sup>57</sup> This is an areal pattern used across many of the languages in the Volta Basin, eg., **dze X gome** 'contact X bottom'; Akan **she X asi** 'put on X bottom'; Ga **je X shishi** 'set out X bottom'; Likpe **kpé X ká.so** 'put X bottom/under'.

involves the permutation of the VO order plus the marking of the V as a nominalised verb. This creates a double object construction with **ténō** as the verb and the O as object1 and the nominalised verb as object2. The following are examples:

173a. Étén' ekleñ 'úté.

**é-ténō e-kle ní bu-té**  
 3SG-start CM-thatch DEF CM-slash  
 'He started cutting the thatch.'

173b. Gt étén' oklebhón 'únyá ko...

**gt é-ténō o-klebhó ní bu-nyá ko**  
 REL 3SG.DEP-start CM-bundle.of.thatch DEF CM-tie just  
 'Just as he started tying the bundle of thatch...' (Kásalā)

173c. Flôgo ti búbakp'ibúiniésí ní...

**flôgo ti bú-ba-kpí ki-búí ní ke.sí ní**  
 before COMP 1PL-FUT-put.in CM-matter DEF under TOP  
 'Before we start with the proceedings...' (Saxwí)

173d. Búbakpí okoníésí.

**bú-ba-kpí o-ko ní ke.sí**  
 1PL-FUT-put.in CM-custom DEF under  
 'We will start with the ceremony.'

### 7.3.11.2 The continuative aspect construction

The expression **vi X kábhā** 'continue, go on' (lit. 'go X top') is used to express the continuity of a situation, the nucleus phase of the states of affairs. The verb **vi** 'go' is a motion verb which takes a postpositional phrase headed by **kábhā** 'on, top' as complement. Consider the following examples:

174a. Nókó 'óló ídzó ti búv' ibúiniábhā.

**nó-kó buló ki-dzo ti bú-vi ki-búí ní**  
 2PL-give 1PL CM-way COMP 1PL-go CM-matter DEF  
**kábhā**  
 top  
 'Allow us to continue with the proceedings.' (Saxwí)

174b. Kíxwīn ívī 'líábhā.

**kí-xwī ní kí-í-vi kúí kábhā**  
 CM-work DEF SM-PRSPROG-go 3SG.IND top  
 'The work is continuing.'

This is similar to the Ewe continuative construction **yi X dzí** ‘go X top’ (Ameka 2008).

### 7.3.11.3 The durative aspect construction

The durative aspect is expressed by the construction **tsirí X kábhā** ‘be.on X top’ which is an instantiation of the basic locative construction. In this context, it is extended to the temporal domain for the expression of the durative aspect. The verb takes a complement headed by the postposition **kábhā** ‘on, top’. For example,

175a. Blǝ kúnúníábhā lótsirí.

**buló kúnú ní kábhā ló-tsirí**  
1PL funeral DEF top 1PL.DEP-be.on  
‘We are going on with our funeral rites.’

175b. Wǝnótsirí ílábhā.

**wǝnó no-tsirí kíl kábhā**  
2PL.IND SM-be.on 3SG.IND top  
‘You keep working.’ Or ‘You are on it’ i.e. Courage!

The sentence in (175b) is a routine expression used in Tafi in acknowledging people doing some work and urging them to work harder. The 3SG pronoun **kíl** ‘it’ stands for **kíxwí** ‘work’.

### 7.3.11.4 The completive aspect

The completive aspect is indicated by the grammaticalised verb **békē** ‘finish’. This form is used to signal that a situation or event has ended. When **békē** ‘finish’ is used to mark the completive aspect, it occurs after another verb and the subject argument is not cross-referenced on it as shown in the examples in (176b) and (176c). Thus, it appears to have become grammaticalised (see also Ameka 2008, 2006 for a discussion on Ewe). The example in (176a) shows the verb **békē** ‘finish’ occurring as a fully inflected verb.

176a. Onín óbékē.

**o-ní ní ó-békē**  
CM-soup DEF SM-finish  
‘The soup got finished.’

176b. Ámā akáŋe ’edǝ békē.

**Ámā a-ká-ŋa kí-dǝ békē**  
Ama SM-NEG.PERF-eat CM-thing COMPL  
‘Ama has not yet finished eating.’

176c. Gu ámo sí la flǝ békē...

**gi á-mo sí lá-flǎ békē**  
 REL 3SG.DEP-see COMP 3PL.DEP-pass COMPL  
 ‘When he saw that they have passed...’

In (176a) above, **békē** ‘finish’ occurs as a main verb and the subject is cross-referenced on it whereas in (176b) and (176c), **békē** ‘COMPL’ occurs as a postverbal modifier and functions as a completive aspectual adverbial.

### 7.3.11.5 The cessative/ terminative aspect

**Yíl5/ yól5** is an aspectual verb meaning ‘cease, stop’. Both **yíl5/ yól5** are used interchangeably. It is used as the operator verb where it takes a nominalised complement denoting the main event that has ceased or the speaker wants to be stopped as shown in (177). It thus codes a cessative or termination aspect.

177a. *Áyíl5 ’ulu ’oŵĩ.*  
**á-yíl5 bu-lu bu-ŵĩ**  
 3SG-stop CM-drink CM-drink  
 ‘He does not drink anymore.’

177b. *Yíl5 ɪdɔŋɔŋan ’ɔŋa!*  
**yíl5 kɪ-dɔŋɔŋa ní bu-ŋa**  
 stop CM-food DEF CM-eat  
 ‘Don’t eat anymore!’

Phasal aspectual meanings are periphrastically expressed involving verbs that code the deictic or temporal dimension of events as operators. Some of the verbs, e.g., **békē** ‘finish’ have become grammaticalised. Similar structures are involved in the coding of modality which we survey in the next subsections.

## 7.3.12 Modality

Modality is mainly expressed by periphrastic constructions usually involving operator verbs and a nominalised event expression.

### 7.3.12.1 The ability and possibility markers

There are two ability and possibility markers in Tafi. They are **téŋú** ‘can, be able’ and **nā** ‘can, be able’. Both markers occur in different constructions. **Téŋú** ‘can, be able’ is a borrowing from Ewe and in both languages it functions as a preverb as well as a verb as illustrated by the Tafi examples in (178a) and (178b) respectively. **Nā** ‘can, be able’ on the other hand, takes an event nominal or a nominalised verb as a complement and if it is used in a three-place construction, the event nominal occurs as the second object as shown in (178c).

- 178a. Pamprö xúń ní, óbotéńúdzú teđjkpó kó idru ttá aloo tífí.  
**pamprö xúń ní ó-bo-téńú-dzú te-đjkpó kó**  
 bamboo as.for TOP 2SG-FUT-can-erect AM-one DAT  
**i-dru tu-tá aloo tu-ífí**  
 CM.PL-mound AM-three DISJ AM-four  
 ‘As for the bamboo sticks, you can erect one for about three or four yam mounds.’ (Yam cultivation)
- 178b. Éfíbetéńú awe ’éxwĩń?  
**é-tí-be-téńú á-wa kí-xwĩ ní**  
 3SG-NEG1-FUT-can SM-do CM-work DEF  
 ‘S/he cannot do the work.’
- 178c. Átíbanē ’éxwĩń ’úwa.  
**á-tí-ba-nā kí-xwĩ ní bu-wa**  
 3SG-NEG1-FUT-can CM-work DEF CM-do  
 ‘S/he cannot do the work.’

As the examples in (178a) – (178c) show, **téńú** ‘can, be able’ and **nā** ‘can, be able’ can occur with other preverb markers, and in these examples, they occur with the negative marker (178b) and (178c) and the future marker (178a) – (178c).

### 7.3.12.2 Nyá ‘certainly, really’

**Nyá** ‘certainly, really’ has the following realisations: **nyá**, **nyé**, **nyó** or **nyó** depending on ATR harmony of the verb root. **nyó** or **nyó** is triggered by the 2SG/PL subject pronoun or a subject argument which belongs to the **o-** class. The form has a vague epistemic sense which in context, can be interpreted as epistemic certainty as in (179a) and (179b). In some other contexts, it can be interpreted as probability as in (179c) and (179d).

- 179a. Mávúto ényéte osín.  
**Mávúto é-nyé-té o-sí ní**  
 Mawuto SM-CERT-slash CM-tree DEF  
 ‘Mawuto certainly/did cut the tree.’
- 179b. Kofí ányááwe ’éxwĩń.  
**Kofí á-nyá-á-wa kí-xwĩ ní**  
 Kofi SM-CERT-PRSPROG-do CM-work DEF  
 ‘Kofi is really doing the work.’
- 179c. Bal’ ényézúru ’ídōn sí tu ladádu.  
**balí bé-nyé-zúru kí-dō ní sí tu**

3PL.IND SM-CERT-steal CM-thing DEF COMP COMP  
**la-dá-dí**

3PL.DEP-ITIVE-sell

‘Perhaps, THEY stole the things (in order) to sell (them).’

179d. Kibúí gigan ti lí kúf nyá-bá.

**ki-búí gigan ti-lí kúf nyá-bá**

CM-matter difficult AM-INDEF 3SG.IND CERT-come

‘Something serious has probably happened.’

To avoid ambiguity in contexts, speakers choose an adverbial or modal expression to re-enforce the interpretation they intend, for example, **kígbā** ‘truth’ as in (179e) is used to reinforce the veracity of the proposition.

179e. Kokó y’anyáde ’égbā.

**kokó yí a-nya-dá kí-gbā**

cocoa 3SG.IND SM-CERT-plant CM-truth

‘Cocoa, he truly did plant (it).’

The form **nyá** is probably borrowed from Ewe where there is an epistemic certainty preverb modal **nyá** which evolved from the verb **nyá** ‘know’ (see eg. Ameka 2008).

### 7.3.12.3 Necessity and other modal meanings

Several modal meanings such as necessity and obligation are expressed in constructions in which the matrix clause consists of an impersonal pronoun which is the subject, and a sentential complement introduced by **sí** (which is a quotative or complement clause introducer) for the factual and the realis situations and for the irrealis, a **ti** complementiser combining with the **sí** complementiser (see Chapter 9, § 9.2 on complement clauses). These matrix clauses include those listed in (180a) and exemplified in (180b) and (180c).

- 180a. **alásí (ti)** ‘It is necessary that’  
**kutó sí** ‘It is necessary that’  
**kizhiā sí** ‘It is necessary that’ (lit. ‘it is needed that’)  
**kiwí sí** ‘It is obvious that/ obviously’ (lit. ‘it appears that’)  
**kúf ’mú dání sí** ‘it is obvious/ apparent that (lit. ‘its inside open that’)  
**kúf ’mú bhui sí** ‘it is obvious/ apparent that (lit. ‘its inside cut that’)  
**kúf ’mú tsá sí** ‘it is obvious/ apparent that (lit. ‘its inside clear that’)

180b. Alásí (ti) Kofi ávi idzoum.

**a-lí a-sí (ti) Kofi á-vi ki-dzo kumu**  
 3SG-be.at SM-COMP (COMP) Kofi SM-go CM-road inside  
 ‘Kofi must travel.’

180c. ...so kîní ní, kîdaazhîā sí budayîkò kasí abrewa.

**so kî-ní ní kî-daa-zhîā sí**  
so AM-PROX TOP 3SG-NEG:PSTPROG-need COMP

**bu-da-yîkò kasí a-brewa**  
1PL-ITIVE-take show CM-old.woman

‘... so concerning this one, it was not necessary to seek counsel with (the) old lady.’<sup>58</sup>

Other constructions which express modal meanings include those listed in (180d). They indicate epistemic modality and are used to express the speaker’s doubts about the reality of the reported event. **Ébedzi** and **éedzi** as well as **óbhi** and **ébhi** are variants of the same modal expressions respectively.

180d. **ébedzi/ éedzi** ‘maybe, perhaps’ (lit. ‘it will be’)  
**óbhi/ ébhi** ‘maybe/ perhaps’  
**ádipî** ‘maybe/ perhaps’ (lit. ‘it not be good’)

These expressions are lexicalised from the kinds of matrix clause structures we have seen above.

#### 7.3.12.4 The desiderative

The preverb **ti/ti** ‘want, desiderative’ is related in form and meaning to the clause introducer **ti** ‘PURP’. It is used to indicate that the participant in the subject role wants to carry out an action represented by the main verb as shown in the following examples.

181a. Kofî ávî etibu idru.

**Kofî á-vî e-ti-bu i-dru**  
Kofî SM-go SM-DESID-create CM.PL-yam.mound  
‘Kofi went to make yam mounds.’

181b. ... so ótimîní òlí ní òg’òkpasí kîbhîlòxòénímî búbalú lóbálú kú anò àmî?.

**so ó-ti-mîní òlí ní ò-gi ò-kpasí kî-bhîlòxòé**  
so 2SG.DEP-DESID-lick 3SG TOP 3SG.REL SM-be.in CM-ladle  
**ní kumu bu-balú ló-balú kú a-nò à-mî**  
DEF inside CM-pour 3SG.DEP-pour ALL CM-person CM-face  
‘... and you want to lick it as well, the soup in the ladle will spill into your eyes.’ (Proverbs #27)

<sup>58</sup> It is a common practice in Southern-Ghana cultures when elders retire to consult among themselves during an arbitration to say that they go to consult an old lady or grandma.

181c. Ítyíko 'edḡíḡá ko, ítívi ti 'wə 'oyaníḡ?

**í-ti-yíko**                      **kí-dḡíḡá ko**                      **í-tíí-vi**  
 1SG-DESID-take    CM-food just    1SG-NEG:PRSPROG-go  
**ti**                      **í-wə**                      **bu-ya**                      **ní**                      **kumi**  
 PURP    1SG.DEP-delay    CM-farm DEF    in  
 'I am just going to take food stuff, I am not going to keep long in the farm.'

In example (181c) for instance, there are three instances of the segmental form **ti**. The first is the desiderative in **í-ti-yíko** which we are concerned about in this section and the second is in the negative progressive form in **í-ti-vi** and the third is the purposive **ti** introducing the dependent clause 'I keep long in the farm'.

### 7.3.13 The directional preverbs

There are two directional preverbs in Tafi. They are the itive and the ventive. They are described in turn in the subsections below.

#### 7.3.13.1 The itive

The itive in Tafi is expressed by the directional preverb **dá** 'ITIVE'. It is realised as **dá/dé** and **dḡ/dó** depending on the person of the subject argument and the ATR value of the verb root. As usual, if the subject is 2SG/PL, the forms with the rounded vowels, **dḡ** and **dó** are used. The itive expresses the idea of a state of affairs occurring away from the deictic centre. From a semantic point of view and considering the forms, the itive could have evolved from the verb **di** 'go'. The examples in (182a) - (182d) are illustrations of the use of **dá** 'ITIVE'.

182a. Ávidékpú ní áyakpáníḡ.

**á-vi-dé-kpú**                      **ní**                      **á-yakpá**                      **ní**                      **kumi**  
 3SG-go-ITIVE-hide LOC    CM-bush                      DEF    inside  
 'S/he went and hid in the bush.'

182b. Ádāwḡsḡsísí.

**á-dá-wḡsḡ**                      **ke.sí**  
 3SG-ITIVE-lie    down  
 'S/he went to lie down.'

182c. Ká ḡdḡkḡ adzḡń ská.

**ká**                      **ḡ-dḡ-kḡ**                      **a-dzḡ**                      **ní**                      **ská**  
 then    2SG.DEP-ITIVE-give    CM-woman    DEF    money  
 'Then you go and give the woman money.'

182d. Ádídédzḡ akpḡ.

**á-dí-dé-dzí**      **a-kpǎ**  
 3SG-go-ITIVE-buy CM.PL-fish  
 ‘S/he went and bought fish.’

### 7.3.13.2 The ventive

The ventive in Tafi is **bá**. It is realized as **bá/bé** and **bó/bó**. Like for the itive, the choice between these forms is based on person of the subject and vowel harmony rules governed by the initial vowel of the verb. **Bá** ‘VENT’ is a directional preverb that is used to indicate that a state of affairs eventually occurs at the deictic centre. It can co-occur with other preverb markers and if it does it occurs in the slot immediately before the verb. It also co-occurs with the verb **bá** ‘come’ from which it grammaticalised as well as with the future marker **ba** which also grammaticalised from the verb **bá** ‘come’. In fact, the three forms can co-occur as in (183c). It seems that when the ventive occurs with the future marker its tone becomes low as shown in (183c).

183a. Bébékú.  
**bé-bé-ku**  
 3PL-VENT-reach  
 ‘They arrived.’

183b. Ábádó ’unya kpatá.  
**á-bá-dó**      **bu-nya**      **kpatá**  
 3SG-VENT-contact CM-sickness suddenly  
 ‘S/he suddenly fell sick.’

183c. Ábababá kívū.  
**Á-ba-ba-bá**      **kívū**  
 3SG-FUT-VENT-come tomorrow  
 ‘S/he is going to come tomorrow.’

### 7.3.14 Operator verbs with “adverbial” meanings

#### 7.3.14.1 **Tiklěńō** ‘be susceptible to, be prone to, have a high propensity to do something’

The verb **tiklěńō** is used to indicate that a state of affairs occurs very often. It signals that the referent of the subject argument has a high propensity to be engaged in the state of affairs. **Tiklěńō** takes an event nominal or a nominalised verb as complement, as shown in (184a). If the event is represented by a transitive verb with its complement, there is a permutation of the VO order, as in (184b) which is a proverb.

184a. Adzinóv5ěǎń étíklěń5 'onya.

**a-dzinóv5ě**    **a-ní**            **é-tíklěń5**            **bu-nya**  
 CM-girl      AM-PROX    SM-be.proned.to    CM-sick  
 'This girl easily falls sick.'

184b. Ban5 tabhe 'eshí épídzyá étíklěń5 ɔto 'uzā.

**ba-n5**            **ta-bha**    **ki.shí** **e-pidzya**    **é-tíklěń5**  
 CM.PL-person    AM-two    midst    CM-goat    SM-be.proned.to  
**ɔ-to**            **bu-za**  
 CM-outside    CM-stay  
 'A goat that is reared between two keepers apart strays very often.' i.e., is  
 prone to straying.            (Proverb #26)

### 7.3.14.2            **tsy** 'do something in vain'

**Tsy** 'do something in vain' is a verb with an adverbial meaning. It is used to express a frustrative meaning. Like other TAM operator verbs, it occurs with an event nominal or a nominalised verb as complement. The sentences in (185) illustrate this verb.

185a. Bátsy 'uga.

**bá-tsy**            **bu-ga**  
 3PL-do.in.vain    CM-walk  
 'They walked in vain.'

185b. W'ɔtsyĩ 'ubhítĩ oo.

**wó**            **ś-tsyĩ**            **bu-bhítĩ**    **oo**  
 2SG.IND    SM-do.in.vain    CM-do    UFP  
 'You have tried or worked in vain.'

### 7.3.14.3            **buso** 'do first'

**Buso** 'do first' is a verb with a temporal sequence meaning. It can occur with an event nominal as a complement as illustrated in (186a) or in a bi-clausal construction as shown in (186b). The examples in (186a) and (186b) are adapted from a riddle and a story respectively.

186a. Íkp'an5 sí edeklũ Tsě ákóm, Tsě ebuso 'úbá.

**í-kpí**    **a-n5**            **sí**            **e-dé-klũ**            **Tsě**    **á-kó**  
 1SG-send    CM-person    COMP    3SG.DEP-ITIVE-call    Tsě    SM-give  
**mí**    **Tsě**    **e-buso**            **bu-bá**  
 1SG    Tsě    SM-do.first    CM-come  
 'I sent someone to call me Tsě but Tsě arrived before the person.'

(Riddle #7)

186b. Kásālā bǒǰ ébuso aábá o.

**ká-sālā**      **bǒǰ**      **é-buso**      **a-á-bá**      **o**  
 CM-tortoise    rather SM-do.first    SM-PRSPROG-come    UFP  
 ‘Tortoise is rather the one who is arriving first.’ (Kásālā)

#### 7.3.14.4      **tsó** ‘do early’

**Tsó** ‘early’ is a verb with an adverbial meaning of speed. It takes a nominalised verb as its complement. The following examples in (187a) and (187b) show the use of **tsó** ‘do early’.

187a. M’eni ápī sí nǒtsó ’ovt tu nǒtsó ’óbá.

**mí**      **é-ní**      **á-pī**      **sí**      **nǒ-tsó**      **bu-vi**  
 1SG    CM-mother    SM-want    COMP    2PL.DEP-do.early    CM-go  
**tu**      **nǒ-tsó**      **bu-bá**  
 COMP    2PL.DEP-do.early    CM-come  
 ‘My mother wants you to leave early so that you come back early.’

187b. T’ǒtsó ’óbá.

**tu**      **ǒ-tsó**      **bu-bá**  
 COMP    2SG.DEP-do.early    CM-come  
 ‘May you come back early.’

The sentence in (169b) is a parting expression said to someone going somewhere for a short time, for instance, to the farm, on a day’s journey etc. (see chapter on routine expressions).

## 7.4      Adverbs and adverbial phrases

The adjunct slot in a clause can be filled by expressions from several categories such as adverbs, adverbial phrases, nouns and noun phrases as well as postpositional phrases. All these can be used to modify verbal expressions. Tafi has a limited number of basic adverbs. Semantically, adverbs in the language are classified into the following groups: manner, degree, time, place and modality.

### 7.4.1      Manner

Manner is mostly expressed by ideophones and adverbs. Examples include:

188a. **mǒ**      ‘well’  
**zia**      ‘fast, quickly, hurriedly, often’  
**gródzyu**      ‘reluctantly’  
**pēpēpēpē**      ‘out of breath (sound)’

<b>kídzéé</b>	‘quietly’
<b>bhadaa</b>	‘murky, slimy, grimy’
<b>ɔɔɔɔɔɔ</b>	‘slowly’

188b. Anóvon ááfwě pēpēpēpē.

<b>a-núvo</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>á-á-fwě</b>	<b>pēpēpēpē</b>
CM-child	DEF	SM-PRSPROG-breathe	IDEO.out.of.breath
‘The child is breathing like someone out of breath.’			

188c. Ezin ékpu étsojú uvuním kídzeé.

<b>e-zi</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>é-kpu</b>	<b>é-tsokú</b>	<b>bú-vū</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>kumu</b>	<b>kídzeé</b>
CM-thief	DEF	SM-hide	SM-enter	CM-house	DEF	in	quietly
‘The thief hid and sneaked into the room.’							

Some of these ideophones can be repeated for intensity as shown in (188d). The number of times an ideophone is repeated is iconic with the degree of intensity as exemplified in (188e) below.

188d. **mǎ** → **mǎ mǎ** ‘very well’  
**zia** → **ziazia** ‘very fast, quickly, often’

188e. Ékpu ’ídǎn ziaziaziazia.

<b>é-kpu</b>	<b>kí-dǎ</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>ziaziaziazia</b>
3SG-hide	CM-thing	DEF	IDEO.fast
‘S/he hid the thing very very quickly.’			

## 7.4.2 Degree adverbs

Degree is expressed by some basic adverbial words as well as ideophonic words. They include:

189a. <b>ko</b>	‘just, only’	< Ewe
<b>klóé</b>	‘almost’	< Ewe
<b>tso</b>	‘completely’	
<b>kubóé</b>	‘a little, nearly’	
<b>kodzɔ</b>	‘very well/ much, a lot’	
<b>wéé</b>	‘completely’	
<b>těyĩ</b>	‘completely’	
<b>tayee</b>	‘completely’	
<b>fǒǒ</b>	‘very much’	
<b>faánɔ</b>	‘too much’	
<b>kpáwú kpáwú</b>	‘too much’	< Ewe

<b>tútúútú</b>	‘exactly’	< Akan via Ewe
<b>pópópó</b>	‘very much’	

The adverbs **ko** ‘just, only’, **klóé** ‘almost’, **kpáwú kpáwú** ‘too much’ and **tútúútú** ‘exactly’ look like borrowed words from Ewe. The examples in (189b) - (189d) illustrate the adverbs **faánɔ̃** ‘too much’, **kodzɔ** ‘very well/much’ and **wéé** ‘completely’ respectively.

189b. Nɔ́wɔ̃ faánɔ̃.

<b>nɔ-ɔ-wɔ̃</b>	<b>faánɔ̃</b>
2PL-PRSPROG-stay	too.much
‘You are delaying too much.’	

189c. Kakudzɔgɛ́ań évu ídɔ̃ kodzɔ.

<b>ka-kudzɔgɛ̃</b>	<b>a-ní</b>	<b>é-vu</b>	<b>kí-dɔ̃</b>	<b>kodzɔ</b>
CM-dog	AM-PROX	SM-catch	CM-thing	very.well
‘This dog hunts very well.’				

189d. Ébéké ídɔ̃ń wéé.

<b>é-béké</b>	<b>kí-dɔ̃</b>	<b>ní</b>	<b>wéé</b>
3SG-finish	CM-thing	DEF	completely
‘S/he finished it completely.’			

### 7.4.3 Temporal expressions

There are some basic adverbs that have temporal senses. Some of these are listed in (190a). The first adverb seems to have been borrowed from Ewe.

190a. <b>gbo</b>	‘in a moment, in the meantime’
<b>pútɔ̃nɔ</b>	‘previously’
<b>otsígo/otsúgo</b>	‘now’

Other time words belong to different word classes but function in the same slot as adverbs. Some of these words are nouns as shown in (190b). Others are ideophones as in (190c). The forms listed in (190d) are adverbs and they may have been borrowed from Ewe.

190b. <b>kívū</b>	‘tomorrow’
<b>kemúzē</b>	‘afternoon’
<b>kíwinyééwī</b>	‘everyday’
<b>kibenyéébe</b>	‘every time, always’
<b>ɔwólago</b>	‘evening’

190c. <b>kúkúúkú</b>	‘already’
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<b>riɖjɖjɖi</b>	‘continuously, for a long time’
<b>ɔtsɔ̃</b>	‘now’
<b>tsɪ̃</b>	‘in a moment’
<b>ɔtsɔ̃tsɪ̃</b>	‘just now’

190d.	<b>kpata(a)</b>	‘suddenly’	< <b>kpata</b> , Ewe
	<b>katsyáá</b>	‘as soon as’	< <b>kasia</b> , Ewe
	<b>ɖáá</b>	‘always’	< <b>ɖáá</b> , Ewe from Akan

The examples below illustrate the use of the temporal adverbs **pútɔnɔ** ‘previously’ and **kpata** ‘suddenly’ in (190d) as well as **gbo** ‘in the meantime’ in (190e). The example in (190d) was adapted from a recording in which the elders of a clan were informing the chief and elders of the town about the death of a member of the clan and the chief and elders trying to find out what sickness caused his death; whereas the example in (190e) was adapted from a story about how the striped mouse got its stripes.

190d.	Bátíɖɔ pútɔnɔ sí ábáɖɔ ɔnya kpata.			
	<b>bá-tí-ɖɔ</b>	<b>pútɔnɔ</b>	<b>sí</b>	<b>á-bá-ɖɔ</b>
	3PL-PERF-say	previously	COMP	3SG.DEP-VENT-contact
	<b>bɔ-nya</b>	<b>kpata</b>		
	CM-sickness	suddenly		
	‘They said earlier on that he fell sick suddenly...’ (Butsiugu)			

190e.	Bubhi káyí yí gbo.			
	<b>bɔ-bhi</b>	<b>ká-yí</b>	<b>yí</b>	<b>gbo</b>
	CM-hunger	NEG.PERF-kill	3SG	in.the.meantime
	‘He is not yet hungry in the meantime.’ (Gbaxáǎ)			

#### 7.4.4 Days of the week

Days of the week can also function as adverbials.

191a.	<b>kíwalo</b>	‘Monday’
	<b>ɔwashu</b>	‘Tuesday’
	<b>ɔwashu ɔza</b>	‘Wednesday’
	<b>ehlowi</b>	‘Thursday’
	<b>kíshūi</b>	‘Friday’
	<b>kípā</b>	‘Saturday’
	<b>kípadzíwī</b>	‘Sunday’

It is worth noting that many of the young speakers do not know much about the Tafi names for the days of the week. Generally, the Tafi names for the days of the week are used interchangeably with the Ewe ones especially for Sunday (kwesra),

as illustrated in the example below. Ewe names for the days of the week themselves are ultimately borrowed from Akan. The sentence in (191b) like the one in (190d) was adapted from a recording of a meeting between the elders of a clan and a regent and council of elders of a community.

- 191b. Kípā ní ní bówa kúnú, kwesrá búdí kúsòlimi ónání 'íwalo.  
**kípā ní ní bó-wa kúnú kwesrá bú-dí**  
 Saturday DEF TOP 1PL-do funeral Sunday 1PL-attend  
**kú.sòlimi ó-nánṣ k'íwalo**  
 burial.service 2SG-reach Monday  
 'On Saturday, we perform (the) funeral rites, on Sunday, we attend the  
 burial service till Monday.' (Butsiugu)

#### 7.4.5 Adverbs of place

Deictic expressions in Tafi which are used to indicate direction or as adverbs of place include **ɪkí/ okí** 'here' and **ɪklí** 'there'. The following are examples:

- 192a. ɪklí, ekusín áká 'tabu sí...  
**ɪ-klí e-kusí ní á-ká a-tábú sí**  
 CM-there CM-chief DEF SM-say CM-oath COMP  
 'There and then, the chief swore an oath that...' (Butsé)
- 192b. Átíbā 'kí?  
**á-tí-bā ɪ-kí**  
 3SG-NEG1-come CM-here  
 'He does not come here.'

#### 7.4.6 Modal adverbials

Modal adverbials in the language include those listed in (191a) below.

- 193a. **buwá** 'in vain'  
**twá** 'in vain'  
**kɪgbíágbā** 'truly'  
**kookoko** 'certainly, surely' (borrowed from Ewe)  
**dewomahí/ domahí** 'perhaps, maybe' (borrowed from Ewe)

The following are illustrative sentences of modal adverbials:

- 193b. Kɪgɪ w'ósóbhutíán buwá/ twá.  
**kɪ-gɪ wós ó-ó-bhutí aní buwá/ twá**  
 3SG-REL 2SG.IND SM-PRSPROG-do TOP in.vain  
 'What you are doing is in vain.'

193c. Adzĩn ébepo wó kokooko.

**a-dzĩ ní é-be-po wó kokooko**  
 CM-woman DEF SM-FUT-wait 2SG surely  
 ‘The woman will surely wait for you.’

#### 7.4.7 Prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases introduced by the comitative **ni** ‘COM’ and **nĩ** ‘LOC’ can also be used to express adverbial meanings. If the complement of the comitative preposition **ni** is an abstract noun denoting an emotion, for instance, it can be interpreted as manner of performing the action in the clause. The locative preposition **nĩ** is used to introduce the location of an event. It is also used to mark the ground in the basic locative construction. The use of prepositional phrases as adverbials is illustrated below. The sentence in (194a) is adapted from a Frog Story narration while (194b) is taken from another story. (194c) exemplifies the locative preposition **nĩ**. In these sentences, the prepositional phrases **ni samu** ‘with joy’ in (194a) and **ni kiwĩ** ‘with shame’ in (194b) are used in adjunct position and are interpreted adverbially.

194a. Anóvōn ézhi áv’ édebú yí gbokóéń ni samu.

**a-nóvō ní é-zhi á-vi é-de-bú yí**  
 CM-child DEF SM-descend SM-go SM-ITIVE-remove 3SG.IND  
**gbokóé ní ni samu**  
 toad DEF COM joy  
 ‘The child got down and fetched his toad with joy (joyfully).’ (FS)

194b. ... kílí adzinóvōn ǎlǎ n’iŵĩ gĩ etsódzi avĩ y’eni ni y’aka ’kó.

**kílí a-dzinóvō ní á-lǎ ni ki-wĩ gĩ**  
 CONJ CM-girl DEF SM-get.up COM CM-shame REL  
**e-tsódzi a-vi yí é-nĩ ni yí**  
 2SG.DEP-return SM-go 3SG.IND CM-mother COM 3SG.IND  
**á-kā ɔ.kó**  
 CM-father place  
 ‘... and then the girl got up with shame and returned to her parents.’

194c. Bázha ’dzi ní sukú.

**bá-zha ɔ-dzi ní suku**  
 3PL-sing CM-song LOC school  
 ‘They sang in school.’

#### 7.4.8 Postpositional phrases

Some postpositional phrases can also be used to express adverbial concepts. The sentence in (195) below exemplifies this. In this sentence, the postpositional phrase

**kílē kum** ‘(lit. in air)’ is used to express the modal adverbial meaning of ‘in vain’. It is topicalised.

195. Kílēm ’iyo w’óóbíán.  
**kí-lē kum yiyo wó ó-ó-bí aní**  
 CM-air inside cry 2SG.IND SM-PRSPROG-cry TOP  
 ‘In vain you are WEEPING.’

#### 7.4.9 Clause positions for adverbials

The unmarked position of most adverbs or adverbials in Tafi is clause final. Few of them can occur in focus or topic position only, i.e., clause initial position whereas there are some that can occur in both initial and final positions of a clause. Below are examples. (196a) consists of examples of adverbs that can occur only clause-initially, in (196b), we have examples of adverbs that occur only in clause final position while (196c) comprises examples of those adverbials which can occur in both initial and final positions in the clause.

The clause initial adverbs and adverbials include:

- 196a. **otsígo/otsúgo** ‘now’  
**kátsyáá** ‘as soon as’

The clause final adverbs and adverbials include:

- 196b. **tso** ‘completely’  
**wéé** ‘completely’  
**kodzo** ‘very much, well’  
**faáno** ‘too much’  
**zia** ‘quickly’  
**gbo** ‘in a moment, in a meantime’  
**tútútú** ‘exactly’

Clause initial and clause final adverbs and adverbials include the following:

- 196c. **otsóó** ‘now’  
**buwá** ‘in vain’  
**twá** ‘in vain’  
**kulēm** ‘in vain’  
**ádipí** ‘perhaps, maybe’  
**ébhí/ óbhí** ‘perhaps, maybe’  
**kokoko** ‘certainly, surely’

Typically, when these occur clause initially, they function as scene-setting topics.

