

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/20916> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Bobuafor, Mercy

Title: A grammar of Tafi

Issue Date: 2013-05-30

11. ROUTINE EXPRESSIONS

In every speech community, interaction and communication among members is a daily affair. As such, words and expressions used during those interactions become conventionalised routines. These routine expressions are specific to the speech community in which they are used and they are performed according to the socio-cultural norms, but they can diffuse across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Routine expressions include greetings, expressions used for congratulating and welcoming people, consoling or sympathising with a bereaved person or a family, inviting people to join in a meal, showing gratitude or appreciation. This chapter deals with routine expressions in Tafi. Attention is drawn to the structure and context within which some of these expressions are used.

11.1 Social encounters and their act sequences

In the context of communal life in the small villages of Tafi, members of the community encounter each other in different situations and for different purposes. Thus, someone may just decide to visit another person be it a relative or a neighbour just to greet or say hello to him/her, to express condolences to a bereaved person or family, to congratulate or thank him/her, to wish a sick person a speedy recovery among others. Depending on the purpose of the visit, it could be short or lengthy. Ameka 1991:385 with reference to Ewe states that

These social visits could be of varying length. They could be ‘flying’ visits in the sense that the visitor comes around to say hello and departs after that; or they could be ‘sitting’ visits, where the visitor accepts a seat from the host and spends some time with him/her.

The sitting visits include formal ceremonies like marriages, funerals, announcement of death (by the bereaved family to the chief and elders of a community), arbitration etc. Usually, if the visit is formal, the exchanges are done through an intermediary referred to as **tsyámí** ‘spokesperson’ or a ‘linguist’ in Ghanaian English (see also Ameka 1991).

In the following sections, I describe what goes on during a ceremony or a visit to someone. When one pays a visit to somebody, the sequences of acts involved are as follows: attention calling, response to attention, welcome, seat offer, offer of water, exchange of greetings, inquiry about purpose of visit, leave-taking and departure. I must state that the discussion in this section draws heavily on a similar description of Ewe in Ameka (1991).

11.1.1 Attention calling

During a visit, attention calling is used by a speaker or visitor to announce his/her approach to a place and also to find out whether the host is present or not. Expressions used for attention calling include those in (1) and some of the responses to attention calling include those given in (2).

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1a. Agoo ((mɔ) lɔ)!
agoo mɔ lɔ
agoo ADD ADD
‘Attention, please!’ | 1b. kókókó!
kókókó
sound of knocking
‘Knocking’ |
| 2a. Amee!
amee
response
‘Come in!’ | 2b. Tsokú!
tsokú
enter
‘Enter!’ |
| 2c. Bókpastí.
bú-kpastí
1PL-be.in
‘We are in(side).’ | 2d. Ga bá!
ga bá
walk come
‘Come in!’ |

Agoo, as used in Tafi and other languages spoken in southern Ghana, is used to announce the approach or arrival of the speaker or visitor to a place be it a compound of a house, a room etc. As shown in (1a), **agoo** can be used with the addressive and attention getting particle **mɔ** and the addressive advisory particle **lɔ** which means ‘I advise you’. The particle **mɔ** is used only when there is more than one addressee. One could also use the expression **kókókó** ‘knocking’ or physically knock to ask for entry into a place. Also **agoo** can be accompanied by knocking. Two other contexts of use of **agoo** are (i) to call for the attention of a group of people at a public gathering before addressing them and (ii) to ask for the right of way.

The response to **agoo** is **amee**. It is used to permit people to enter a place. It is also used to give people the go-ahead to do something. The use of **agoo** to ask for the right of way does not call for a verbal response but a physical action of the addressee moving out of the way.

11.1.2 Welcome

The act of welcoming a visitor is determined by whether the visitor is a traveler from another village or town (in which case, there may be an elaborate welcome) or whether the person is from the same village. The following expressions in (3) are used to welcome a visitor from another village or town. The responses to the expressions in (3a) and (3c) are given in (3d) and (3e) respectively.

- 3a. W5 wulaa!
w5 wulaa
 2SG.IND hail
 ‘Hail!’
- 3b. Atúu!
atúu
 ‘I embrace you.’⁶⁵
- 3c. W’óga (ée)!
w5 ó-ga (ée)
 2SG.IND SM-walk UFP
 ‘You are welcome.’ (Lit. ‘you walked.’)
- 3d. ookpéh.
ookpéh
 response
 ‘Response’
- 3e. Yoo.
yoo
 okay
 ‘Okay’

Wulaa ‘hail’ is used when both the visitor and the host have not seen each other for a long time. Thus, just as the host sees the visitor coming s/he says **wulaa** ‘hail’ prefaced by the 2SG/PL independent pronoun. According to one of my consultants, ‘it’s like the host is acknowledging that s/he has seen the visitor coming and s/he is happy to see him/her coming’ and that ‘it’s like embracing verbally’. Moreover, a visitor can be welcomed by just mentioning his/her personal name as in (4a) or by using an address term as in (4b) accompanied by the vocative particle **oo** ‘UFP’.

- 4a. Ámā oo!
Ámā oo
 Ámā UFP
 ‘Ama!’
- 4b. Ákúdyá oo!
á-kúdyá oo
 CM-uncle UFP
 ‘Uncle!’

11.1.3 Offer of seat

Usually, the visitor is offered a seat immediately s/he enters the compound. The host offers the visitor a seat by using any of the following verbal routines in (5). When the encounter is formal or ceremonial such as marriages, funerals etc., sitting down is an important aspect of it.

- 5a. Kegbu ’alí!
ke-gbu ka-lí
 CM-chair SM-be.at
 ‘There is a chair/seat.’
- 5b. Ziesí!
za ke.sí
 sit down
 ‘Sit down!’

⁶⁵ Following Ameka (1991), I gloss **atúu** as ‘I embrace you’ since it is said by both the host and the arriving person and it is said while both people are embracing.

11.1.4 Offer of water

Like it is done by the Ewes, after the visitor is seated, if s/he is from another town or village, s/he is offered water. If the visitor is someone who believes in libation, then s/he will pour some of the water on the ground before drinking it. At times, the person may sip some of the water before pouring the rest on the ground. Pouring some water on the ground is a sign of goodwill. Thus, the visitor by so doing is praying for blessings, peace, long life, good luck among others for the host. After the visitor has been offered water, then either s/he or the host initiates the greeting exchange.

11.1.5 Greeting sequences

For details about the importance of greetings and the different types of greetings see § 11.2.

11.1.5.1 Pre-greetings

The greeting exchange may begin with pre-greetings. A pre-greeting initiated by the visitor is meant to seek permission to greet the host and it goes like this:

- 6a. (Ídḗ kúkú) íbasíní wó é lo.
Í-dḗ kúkú í-ba-síní wó é lo
 1SG-take.off hat 1SG-FUT-greet 2SG UFP UFP
 ‘(Please), may I greet you.’

The host may give any of the responses in (7) indicating his or her readiness to receive the greetings.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>7a. Vṭ ’lṭabhā!
 vṭ kṭlṭ kábhā
 go 3SG top
 ‘(You) go on!’</p> | <p>7b. Sínḵ fāā!
 sínḵ fāā
 greet freely
 ‘You are free to greet.’</p> |
| <p>7c. Kḵ ’elṭbá!
 kḵ kṭlṭ bá
 let 3SG come
 ‘Let it = greeting come!’</p> | |

If the host is not ready, s/he will indicate that to the visitor with any of the following expressions:

- 8a. Džrǝ ʼebóé/ gbo!
džrǝ kibóé/ gbo
 stop little/ a.while
 ‘Wait a little/a while!’
- 8b. Dzu ahɔ ʼɪtabhɛ ʼebóé!
dzu a-hɔ kɪlɪ kábhā kibóé
 put.down CM-hand 3SG.IND top little
 ‘Hold on a little!’

Depending on the occasion, both the visitor and the host may communicate with each other through a **tsyámí** ‘spokesperson’. The spokesperson usually relays the speaker’s message by paraphrasing it.

11.1.5.2 The greeting exchange

When the pre-greeting sequence is done with, then the greeting exchanges begin. As it is in Ewe, the greeting exchange is made up of greetings and the ‘how are you?’ sequence which could be very simple or elaborate (see Ameka 1991). During the greeting sequence, if the host is not sure of where exactly the visitor is coming from and s/he wants to know s/he may ask:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>8a. Fǎ lóbabíŋ?
 fǎ ló-ba-bíŋ
 where 1PL.DEF-FUT-ask
 ‘Where should we ask of?’</p> | <p>8b. Ní fákó lóbabíŋ?
 ní fákó ló-ba-bíŋ
 LOC where 1PL.DEF-FUT-ask
 ‘Where should we ask of?’</p> |
|---|---|

The visitor answers the question by mentioning the name of the town or village where s/he is arriving from. The host may then ask about the people staying there as in (9) or if s/he knows any particular people s/he will mention their names and ask of them.

- 9a. Wɔ Kádjébi ókó áyí?
wɔ Kádjébi ɔ.kó a-yí
 2SG.IND Kadjebi place AM-POSSD
 ‘How are the people at (your) Kadjebi?’

The host may then ask the visitor about the health of the visitor and his/her people as in (9b) and (9c).

- 9b. Nɔlí mǎmǎ?
nɔ-lí mǎ-mǎ
 2PL-be.at RED-well
 ‘How are you (pl).’ (Lit.: ‘Are you well?’)

- 9c. Ee, nɔtsyɔ́'líá?
ee **ṽŋn̄ɔ́** **tsyí** **nɔ-lí** **a**
 yes 2PL.IND too SM-be.at UFP
 'Yes, how are you too?'

11.1.6 Inquiry about the purpose of visit

After the exchange of greetings, the host initiates the inquiry about the purpose of visit. This act is referred to as **amanié bubo** 'recounting of one's mission'. The term **amanié** like the Ewe and Ga **amanié** is borrowed from Akan. The host may enquire about the purpose of visit from the visitor directly as exemplified in (10) or through a **tsyámí** 'spokesperson' as in (11). In (11c), X represents visitor(s).

- 10a. Blɔ́ 'kín ɔ́yɔ́ /bububui /bɔ́kɔ́.
blɔ́ **ɔ-kí** **ní** **ɔ́-yɔ́ /bu-buibui /bɔ́kɔ́**
 1PL.IND CM-here DEF SM-be.cold/RED-cool/cool
 'Our place is cool.'
- 10b. Blɔ́ 'kí ní kizizi kányááká 'mā (obón)?
blɔ́ **ɔ-kí** **ní** **ki-zi-zi** **kányááká mā**
 1PL.IND CM-here DEF CM-RED-bad any be.at:NEG
o-bón
 CM-today
 'There is no bad news here (today).'
- 11a. A: Tsyámí alí 'klí?
tsyámí **a-lí** **ɪ-klí**
 spokesperson SM-be.at CM-there
 'Is the spokesperson there?'
- 11b. B: Alí
a-lí
 3SG-be.at
 'He is.'
- 11c. A: Nú 'gben̄ tɪ anán̄ X sí balága.
nú **i-gbe** **ní** **tɪ** **a-nán̄** **X sí**
 hear CM.PL-message DEF COMP 3SG.DEP-reach X COMP
balí **bá-ga**
 3PL.IND SM-walk
 'Hear it and let it reach X that they are welcome.'

- 11d. A: Blǎ 'kĩn ɔyɔ.

blǎ ɔ-kĩ ní ɔ-yɔ
 1PL.IND CM-here DEF SM-be.cold
 'Our place is cool.'

- 11e. A: Bal'idzoum amanié/ bal'ɔtsuríábhā amanié

balí ki-dzo kumu a-manié
 3PL.IND CM-road inside CM-mission

OR

balí ɔ-tsuri kábhā a-manié
 3PL.IND CM-leg top CM-mission
 'What is the purpose of their visit?'

- 11f. B: Yoo, ayí, makalímɔ, nonú 'gbe ní á?

yoo ayí mí a-ka-alí mɔ no-nú
 Okay ?? 1SG.IND CM-father-PL ADD 2SG-hear
i-gbe ní á
 CM.PL-message DEF UFP
 'Okay, my fathers, have you heard the message?'

If there is bad news, for instance, the death of somebody or a funeral, the host would state that there is bad news at their end as illustrated in (12).

- 12a. Blǎ 'kĩ ní kíkúkúpíníábhā lotsirí.

blǎ ɔ-kĩ ní ki-kúkúpí ní kábhā lo-tsirí
 1PL.IND CM-here DEF CM-hot DEF top 1PL.DEF-be.on
 'Our place is hot.'

- 12b. Blǎ 'kĩ ní vu 'ifú.

blǎ i-kĩ⁶⁶ ní i-vu ki-fú
 1PL.IND CM-here DEF SM-catch CM-fire
 'Our place is on fire.'

- 12c. Blǎ xún ní kúnúníábhā lótsirí.

blǎ xún ní kúnú ní kábhā ló-tsirí
 1PL.DEF as.for TOP funeral DEF top 1PL.DEF-be.on
 'As for us, we are performing the funeral rites.'

⁶⁶ **okĩ** and **ukĩ** 'here' are used interchangeably.

- 12d. Kɪgɪ nonú kɪlɪbɛhā lótsirí.
kɪ-gɪ no-nú kɪlɪ kabhā ló-tsirí
 3SG-REL 2PL-hear 3SG.IND top 1PL.DEP-be.on
 ‘What you heard, that’s what we are on.’

Like in Ewe, Tafi also has a ‘stereotyped phrase used as a pre-question or disclaimer in the inquiry turn’ (Ameka 1991:392) which is ‘**bényí tsyí bébisi/bekeebísi**’ ‘even if one knows one (still) asks’. This phrase is used even when the host already knows the reason for the visitor being there or when the mission of the visitor is obvious. On such occasions, the meetings have been pre-arranged.

Any of these statements, in (12), from the host informs the visitor or addressee about the state of affairs in which the host finds him/herself. By so doing, the host expects the visitor to recount the purpose of his/her visit. The visitor then starts stating his/her mission/purpose of visit as shown by the examples in (13). In (13a), this is done through a spokesperson.

- 13a. Wɔ tsyí óbonú tɪ anán’ alí sí blɔ tsyí divunɔ kizizi kányááká dí kɪgɪ lí kɪ ní?
wɔ tsyí ó-bo-nú tɪ a-nánɔ balí
 2SG.IND too SM-FUT-hear COMP 3SG.DEP-reach 3PL
sí blɔ tsyí di-vunɔ ki-zizi kányááká
 COMP 1PL.IND too NEG2-hold CM-RED-bad any
dí kɪ-gɪ lí ɪ-kɪ ní
 surpass 3SG-REL be.at CM-here DEF
 ‘You too you will hear and let it reach them that we too are not on any bad mission other than that which is here.’

- 13b. Blɔ tsyí kɪgɪ kɪlɪ bá ní kɪ ní kɪlɪ blɔ tsyí ní kɪlɪ idzo lótɔnɪ.
blɔ tsyí kɪ-gɪ kɪlɪ bá ní ɪ-kɪ ní
 1PL.IND too 3SG-REL 3SG.IND come LOC CM-here DEF
kɪlɪ blɔ tsyí ní kɪlɪ ki-dzo ló-tɔnɪ
 3SG.IND 1PL.IND too TOP 3SG.IND CM-way 1PL.DEP-follow
 ‘We too, what happened here that is what has brought us here’. (Lit. ‘we too, what happened here, it’s its way we are following’.)

- 13c. Blɔ tsyí divunɔ kizizi kányááká, blɔ ’kɔ tsyí’óyɔ?
blɔ tsyí di-vunɔ ki-zi-zi kányááká
 1PL.IND too NEG2-hold CM-RED-bad any
blɔ ɔ.kɔ tsyí ɔ-yɔ
 1PL.IND place too SM-be.cool
 ‘We too are not on any bad mission, our place too is cool.’

After the visitor states his/her mission, the host again welcomes him/her. If the visitor is from another village/town, the host may then give an account of things going on, about to happen or that have happened including deaths etc.

11.1.7 Leave-taking

At the end of the meeting/ceremony, the visitor then seeks permission to leave by using the expression **bísi (k)idzo** ‘ask permission’ (lit.: ‘ask way’) as shown in (14). The host may grant or deny the request. Thus the visitor can only leave after the permission has been granted by the host. The granting of the permission may involve several turns depending on whether the encounter is a ceremony or an ordinary visit. When the permission to leave is granted by the host, s/he then adds a leave-taking expression and both parties may part with a handshake. The leave-taking expression added by the host after granting the visitor the permission to leave is meant to extend good wishes to the visitor and the visitor also responds to it.

- 14a. A: Tsyámī alí lo?

tsyámī a-lí lo
 spokesperson SM-be.at ADD
 ‘Is the spokesperson there?’

- 14b. B: Ee, tsyámī alí.

ee tsyámī a-lí
 yes spokesperson SM-be.at
 Yes, the spokesperson is (here).

- 14c. A: Óbonú kibanání bákān sí kígí kulí ní so lóbán, búḍo ’elí békē. Ónúgí kibuínyéebúí vāmā búúbisí ’ídzó oo.

Ó-bo-nú kí-ba-nání bá-kā ní sí
 2SG-FUT-hear 3SG-FUT-reach CM.PL-father DEF COMP
kí-gí kulí ní so ló-bá ní bú-ḍo kulí
 3SG-REL 3SG.IND TOP so 1PL.DEF-come TOP 1PL-say 3SG
békē ónúgí kí-buí-nyáá-kí-búí va⁶⁷-mā
 COMPL if CM-matter-DISTR-CM-matter again-be.at:NEG
bú-ú-bisí kí-dzo oo
 1PL-PRSPROG-ask CM-way UFP

‘You will hear and let it reach the elders that what we have come to do we’ve accomplished it so in the absence of any other matter we are asking permission to return to our place.’

- 14d. B: Yoo, makalí nonú gbe ní á? Basí éébisí ’ídzó oo.

yoo mí á-kā-alí no-nú i-gbe ní
 okay 1SG.IND CM-father-PL 2PL-hear CM.PL-message DEF

⁶⁷ This form could have resulted from a simplification of the consonant cluster of the preverb marker **vla** ‘again’.

a

UFP

ba-sí **bé-é-bisí** **ki-dzó** **oo**

3PL-say SM-PRSPROG-ask CM-way UFP

‘Okay, my elders, have you heard the message? They said they are asking for permission (to leave).’

- 14e. C: Bókó ’ál’ídzó oo.

Bú-kó **balí** **ki-dzo** **oo**

1PL-give 3PL CM-way UFP

‘We have granted the permission.’

- 14f. B: Bákāñ así kidzó lɪ so wũñᵀ bhitííbúí óbón ní oo.

bá-kā **ní** **ba-sí** **ki-dzo** **lɪ** **so**

CM.PL-father DEF 3PL-say CM-road be.at so

wũñᵀ **bhutí** **ki-buí** **ó-bón** **ní** **oo**

2PL do CM-matter CM-today DEF UFP

‘The elders say that permission is granted, thanks for today.’

If the encounter is just a flying visit and not a planned visit, when parting the visitor may use any of the expressions in (15) and the host may see the visitor off. The host may also use any of the expressions in (16).

- 15a. Íbaba srá nó dí.

í-ba-ba **srá** **wũñᵀ** **dí**

1SG-VENT-come visit 2PL EXP

‘I have come to visit you (pl).’

- 15b. Íbaba mɔ nó dí.

í-ba-ba **mɔ** **wũñᵀ** **dí**

1SG-VENT-come see 2PL EXP

‘I have come to see you (pl).’

- 15c. Íbaba sínɪ nó dí.

í-ba-ba **sínɔ** **wũñᵀ** **dí**

1SG-VENT-come greet 2PL EXP

‘I have come to greet you (pl).’

- 15d. Íbaba kpí áǵhũ dí nó.

í-ba-ba **kpí** **á-wǵhũ** **dí** **wũñᵀ**

1SG-VENT-come put.in CM-eye look 2PL

‘I have come to see you (pl)/ how you (pl) are doing.’

- 16a. Óvɪ úsín' alí.
ɔ-vɪ í-í-sín balí
 2SG-go 1SG-PRSPROG-greet 3PL
 'if you go I greet them.'
- 16b. óvɪ úsín' panímí oo.
ɔ-vɪ í-í-sín bu-pá ní kɪmɪ oo
 2SG-go 1SG-PRSPROG-greet CM-house DEF inside UFP
 'If you go I greet those in the house.' (lit.: you go I greet the household.)
- 16c. Kpáyā ágbám wó é lō.
Kpáyā á-gbám wó e lō
 God SM-lead 2SG UFP ADD
 'May God lead you.'

11.2 Greetings

The act of greetings is a very important gesture in Tafi as it is in all other African communities in general and Ghana in particular. There are several social encounters that require greetings. Every speech community or social group has its own set of greetings that is appropriate in the speech event. Thus, exchange of greetings may vary in terms of their purpose, level of formality, length of time and content.

In Tafi, greetings are required even among people living in the same house or compound when they wake up in the morning; among neighbours; people in the market; traders and customers; people whose paths cross as they go about their daily or individual activities like going to the riverside to fetch water, to the farm or market. Greetings are also exchanged between strangers. When people regularly greet each other it is a sign of showing concern and familiarity toward one another. Even though greetings are important, there are instances where people are prohibited from greeting. It is prohibited to greet when going to the toilet or the refuse dump. Greeting someone during such occasions is deemed as a sign of disrespect or an insult. This is also reported for Logba, Ewe and Ga (see Dorvlo 2008, Ameka 1991 and Dakubu 1981).

Greeting exchanges in Tafi are accompanied by certain non-verbal gestures. For instance, when someone is in a hat and wants to exchange greetings with elders, he has to take off the hat to show respect. It is culturally unacceptable to keep the hat on. Also, if one is in cloth, the cloth has to be lowered and held with the left arm. If the person in cloth is a linguist, he is expected to bring the cloth to waist level. This is referred to as 'étsú 'upot'íashĩ' meaning 'he wraps a cloth around the waist' or 'he lowers the cloth to waist level'. Also, when greeting an elderly person, the greeting is accompanied by slightly bending the upper part of one's body when

standing or slightly raising one's body and bending it when one is seated. The greeting may be accompanied by a handshake.

In Tafi, like in Nyagbo and Logba, the day has been divided into two parts with respect to greetings. The first part is made up of the morning and the second part spans from the afternoon to the evening.

11.2.1 Morning greetings

The following greetings questions and their response pairs are used only in the morning. The greetings in (17) and (19) are formal whereas those in (21) and (23) are informal. (17) and (21) are used for a single addressee whereas (19) and (23) are used when there is more than one addressee.

17. A: Óyi oo?

Ó-yi **oo**
2SG-get.up UFP
'Have you woken up?'

18. B: Óshíí/ yawee

óshíí/ yawee
response
'Response'

19. A: Óyi mɔ oo?

ó-yi **mɔ** **oo**
2SG-get.up ADD UFP
'Have you (pl) woken up?'

20. B: Óshíí/ yawee

óshíí/ yawee
response
'Response'

21. A: Ótíyi á e?

ó-tí-yi **á** **e**
2SG-PERF-get.up UFP UFP
'Have you already woken up?'

22. B: Ee, wɔ tsy'óyi á?

ee **wɔ** **tsyí** **ó-yi** **á**
yes 2SG.IND too SM-get.up UFP
'Yes, have you too woken up?'

23. A: Notíyi á e?

no-tí-yi **á** **e**
 2PL-PERF-get.up UFP UFP
 ‘Have you (pl) already woken up?’

As shown in the examples, any of the following particles **á**, **oo**, **e** can be used as illustrated in (21) and (23), or more than one can be used.

These greeting questions and response pair may be accompanied by either a ‘how-are-you’ question, e.g. (26) or a ‘topic-only’ greeting question as in (24) or both in different turns of the greeting exchange as illustrated below.

24. A: Bupáními e?

bu-pá **ní** **kumi** **e**
 CM-house DEF inside UFP
 ‘How is the home?’

25. B: Kpasí.

kpasí **oo**
 be.in UFP
 ‘Fine’ (Lit.: ‘It is in.’)

26. A: Nólí á?

nó-lí **á**
 2PL-be.at UFP
 ‘How are you?’ (Lit.: ‘Are you there?’)

27. B: Ee, nó tsy’ ólí á?

ee **wǔnǔ** **tsyí** **nó-lí** **á**
 yes 2PL.IND too SM-be.at UFP
 ‘Yes, how are you too?’ (Lit.: ‘Are you too there?’)

28. A: Banóvǔn alí mǔ?

ba-nóvǔ **ní** **ba-lí** **mǔ**
 CM.PL-child DEF SM-be.at well
 ‘Are the children fine?’

29. B: Balí oo! Básiṁ wǔ/wǔnǔ.

ba-lí **oo** **bá-síṁ** **wǔ/wǔnǔ**
 3PL-be.at UFP 3PL-greet 2SG/PL
 ‘They are there. They greet you.’

W’ayán tsyí álí loo?

wǔ **a-yí** **a-ní** **tsyí** **ba-lí** **loo**
 2SG.IND AM-POSSD AM-PROX too SM-be.at ADD

‘Are yours too fine?’ (Lit.: ‘Are yours too there?’)

30. A: Ee, w’óbhutí ’íbúí.

ee w’ó ó-bhutí ki-buí
yes 2SG.IND SM-do CM-matter
‘Yes, thank you.’

31. B: Nò tsy’ óbhutí ’íbúí oo.

ñũń tsy’ nò-bhutí ki-buí oo
2PL.IND too SM-do CM-matter UFP
‘Thank you (pl) too.’

Nod’ anóíábhā oo.

no-dí a-nñ kábhā oo
2PL-look CM-person top UFP
‘You (pl) are taking care of them.’

32. A: Yoo, wò tsyí oo.

yoo w’ó tsyí oo
okay 2SG.IND too UFP
‘Okay, you too.’

33. B: Yoo

yoo
‘Okay’

During greetings if the visitor is from another town, after the visitor responds to the greetings the host will ask the ‘how-are-you’ question in (34a) instead of the one in (24).

34a. W’epí ní e?

w’ó ke-pí ní e
2SG.IND CM-home DEF UFP
‘How is your hometown?’

The ‘how-are-you’ questions and the topic-only questions can be asked during any part of the day.

The following expressions in (34b) – (34d) can be used by a sick person as responses to ‘how-are-you’ questions.

34b. Ábhítu akóm ’íbóé.

á-bhítu a-kó mí kúbóé
3SG-do SM-give 1SG little
‘I am getting better.’

- 34c. Ábó.
á-bó
 3SG-be.good
 ‘I am/feel well.’ (Lit.: ‘it is good.’)
- 34d. Ídzí ’íbóé.
í-dzí kíbóé
 1SG-become little
 ‘It is getting better.’

11.2.2 Midday to evening greetings

The greeting and response pairs that are appropriate from midday to the evening are given below in (35), (36) and (37). They are usually followed by the ‘how-are you?’ and topic-only questions as illustrated in (38) and (39). (35) illustrates the greeting involving one addressee while (37) is used when there is more than one addressee. The responses to the greeting, topic-only and ‘how-are-you?’ questions in (36) and (37) are the same when greeting more than one addressee as in (38). The only difference is that the 2SG pronoun is replaced by the 2PL pronoun.

35. A: Ayī oo
ayī oo
 greeting UFP
 ‘Greetings’
36. B: Yawēē, w’ókó ní e?
yawēē w’ókó ní e
 response 2SG.IND place DEF UFP
 ‘Response, how is your place?’
37. A: Kpasí oo! Nólá?
kpasí oo nɔ-lí á
 be.in UFP 2PL-be.at UFP
 ‘Fine, are you there?’
38. A: Ayī mǎ oo
ayī mǎ oo
 greeting ADD UFP
 ‘Greetings’

When the people to be greeted are engaged in a discussion or conversation, one has to politely seek permission from them with the expression in (39) in order to greet them. The responses are given in (40).

39. A: *W̃n̄ŋ káfra, idibhui 'ibúi kpí w̃n̄ŋ 'unú?*

w̃n̄ŋ káfra i-di-bhui ki-búi kpí w̃n̄ŋ
2PL.IND excuse 1SG-NEG2-cut CM-matter put.in 2PL.IND

bu.nú
mouth

‘Excuse me, I don’t mean to interrupt you.’ (Lit.: ‘I did not cut a matter into your mouth.’)

The permission may be granted with the expression in (40) or the person may be asked to defer the greeting if they are not yet ready, as shown in (41) and (42).

40. *Kɔ 'élí bá oo!*

kɔ kulí bá oo
let 3SG come UFP
‘Let it come!’

41. *Dzyr̄ŋ gbo / 'ébóé!*

dzyr̄ŋ gbo / kɪbóé
stop a.while / a.little
‘Wait a while/ a little!’

42. *Dí 'óló āmú 'ibóé!*

dí buló ā-mú kɪbóé
look 1PL.IND CM-face a.little
‘Wait a while/ a little!’ (Lit.: ‘look into our face a little’).

11.2.3 Greeting people when they are eating

In Tafi, usually, when you go and meet people eating, they consider you a well-wisher. However, if you arrive when they had just finished eating, it is considered that you don’t wish them well and that is why the gods did not bring you there while they were eating.

When a visitor meets someone having a meal, s/he would have to salute him/her using the expression in (43) and by so doing s/he admits the fact that s/he has seen the person eating. The one eating responds to the salutation as is shown in (44a) and (44b) and in turn invites the visitor to join in the meal with any of the expressions illustrated in (45a) – (45d).

43. *Kp'áhɔ odí oo!*

kpí a-hɔ o-dí oo
put.in CM-hand SM-look UFP
‘Bon apétit!’ or ‘enjoy your meal!’ (Lit.: ‘Put your hand in and see.’)

- 44a. Yoo, ɔga mǎ.
yoo ɔ-ga mǎ
 okay 2SG-walk well
 ‘Okay, you have walked well.’ Or ‘You have come at a good time.’
- 44b. Yoo, ɔnā ’aga.
yoo ɔ-nā bu-ga
 okay 2SG-be.able CM-walk
 ‘Okay, you know how to walk.’ Or ‘You have come at a good time.’
- 45a. Bɔkp’ahɔt odí ee.
bá ɔ-kpí a-hɔt o-dí ee
 come 2SG-put CM-hand 2SG-look UFP
 ‘Come and join us.’ (Lit.: ‘Come and put your hand in and see.’)
- 45b. Bodí ’óló!
bá o-dí buló
 come 2SG-look 1PL
 ‘Come and join us!’ (Lit.: ‘Come and look at us.’)
- 45c. Ga ba oo!
ga ba oo
 walk come UFP
 ‘Come and join us!’ (Lit.: ‘Walk and come.’)
- 45d. Bá tɪ lɔŋe ’édɔ oo!
bá tɪ lɔ-ŋa kí-dɔ oo
 come COMP 1PL.DEP-eat CM-thing UFP
 ‘Come and let’s eat the meal!’

According to one of my consultants, the expression in (45d) is used to invite people who are close by and not necessarily those passing by. (45a) – (45c) are used among friends and people who know each other very well.

Any of the responses such as those in (46a) – (46f) may be used to respond to any of the expressions in (45).

- 46a. Abó.
a-bó
 3SG-be.good
 ‘It is okay.’
- 46b. Yoo, w’ɔbhutí ’íbúí.
yoo wɔ ɔ-bhutí ki-búí
 okay 2SG.IND SM-do CM-matter

‘Okay, thank you.’

- 46c. Oo, laa mɪ tsyí ítkp’áhɔɪ.

oo laa mɪ tsyí í-tí-kpí a-hɔɪ
 INTJ just.now 1SG.IND too SM-PERF-put.in CM-hand
 ‘Oh, I have just eaten.’ (Lit.: I have just put my hand in.)

- 46d. Oo, kɔ y’átsɔ̃.

Oo kɔ yí á-tsɔ̃
 INTJ let 3SG SM-be.quick
 ‘Oh, go ahead.’ (Lit.: ‘Let it go quickly.’)

- 46e. Kɔ ’ɛɪ vɪ mǎmǎ.

kɔ kɪ́ vɪ mǎ-mǎ
 let 3SG go RED-well
 ‘Enjoy your meal.’ (Lit.: ‘Let it go very well’)

- 46f. M’áhɔɪ akpasí (’ísúgbém aplónɔ nɔ).

mɪ a-hɔɪ a-kpasí kí-súgbá kumɪ a-plónɔ w̃ñń
 1SG.IND CM-hand SM-be.in CM-pot inside SM-add 2PL
 ‘My hand is in (the bowl together with yours).’

When the person invited decides to join in the meal and after sometime the host notices that s/he is not eating enough of the meat or fish, the host draws his/her attention to the meat/fish by saying:

47. Oo, d’óníním ló

oo dí o-ní ní kumɪ ló
 INTJ look CM-soup DEF inside ADD
 ‘Feel free to take some of the meat/fish.’ (Lit.: ‘Look inside the soup.’)

11.3 Gratitude expressions

In Tafi, as in all other communities in Ghana, expressing or showing gratitude for something good someone has done for you is very important. Thus, if someone does something for another person it is expected that the beneficiary or recipient and at times his/her family show appreciation for that good deed. Gratitude is expressed by means of the expressions in (48a) - (48e). (48a) and (48b) are expressions addressed to someone who has done something good for the speaker. (48c) and (48d) are expressions used to express thanks to God for something good that has happened to an addressee. Depending on the number of speakers expressing their appreciation or the number of addressees being thanked the appropriate pronouns are used. Also, depending on the individual’s spiritual or cultural inclination, s/he may express gratitude to God as exemplified in (48c) and

(48d). For instance, (48d) was used in a context where a sick person responded to a question about his health that he was feeling better and then the visitor says ‘we thank God’. The responses to the gratitude expressions in (48a) and (48b) are given in (49a) and (49b) respectively. The gratitude expression in (48a) and (48c) can be modified by the ideophonic intensifier **popoopó/pópópó** to demonstrate the intensity of gratitude being expressed by the speaker.

- 48a. W’óbhtí ’íbúí (popoopó).
wó ó-bhtí ki-búí popoopó
 2SG.IND SM-do CM-matter IDEO.very.much
 ‘Thank you (very much).’ (Lit.: You have worked.)
- 48b. Íhú w’áhɔɪ.
í-hú wó a-hɔɪ
 1SG-hit 2SG CM-hand
 ‘I thank you.’ (‘I hit you hand.’)
- 48c. Máwú⁶⁸/ Kpáyā y’ábhtííbúí lo! (popoopó)
Máwú/ Kpáyā yí á-bhtí ki-búí lo / popoopó
 God 3SG.IND SM-do CM-matter ADD IDEO.very.much
 ‘God has worked (so much).’ i.e. ‘we thank God.’
- 48d. Buhú Máwú/ Kpáyā ahɔɪ ló!
bu-hú Máwú/ Kpáyā a-hɔɪ ló
 1PL-hit God CM-hand ADD
 ‘We thank God.’
- 49a. Wɔ tsyí oo.
wó tsyí oo
 2SG.IND too UFP
 ‘(I thank) you too.’
- 49b. Yoo.
yoo
 ‘Okay.’

Moreover, depending on the individual’s spiritual or cultural inclination, the interaction may include a turn or two which conveys a speaker’s well-wishes for the addressee by praying for God’s blessing upon the addressee for what s/he has done for him/her as illustrated in (50).

⁶⁸ **Máwú** ‘God’ is a borrowing from Ewe.

50. Ebúin pétéeé g'òbhutí w'òbhutí 'íbúí. Eε, Kpáyān élú alí ózakó kó wó oo.
e-búí ní pétéeé gí ó-bhútí ní wó ó-bhútí
 CM-matter DEF all REL 2SG-do TOP 2SG.IND SM-do
ki-búí
 CM-matter
εε Kpáyā ní é-lú alí ó-zakó kó wó oo
 INTJ God DEF SM-put 3PL CM-place DAT 2PL UFP
 'Thank you very much for all what you have done. May God bless you in return.'

11.4 Expressing congratulations

When good things (such as marriage, child birth, passing of exams or any successful events) happen to people, they are praised or congratulated. In Tafi, some of the expressions used on such occasions are not different from those used for expressing gratitude. With expressions for congratulations, apart from humans being regarded as having worked hard, it is also believed that God or other supernatural beings are responsible for making good things happen, as illustrated in (51a) - (51e). Traditionally, it is believed that everybody has **budòkpábí** as used in (51b) which are little little beings around him/her which are his/her spiritual guardians. They do things to support, defend and protect him/her. So when they do a good job then something good happens to the person and then when people come to the person they congratulate him/her on their success. The expression in (51e), for instance, can be said to someone who has passed an exam and the same expression can also be used without the ITIVE preverb marker to congratulate someone who has built a house. All the other expressions in (51a) – (51d) can be used to congratulate people on any happy occasion.

- 51a. Wó Máwú/ Kpáyā y'ábhutí 'íbúí lo!
wó Máwú/ Kpáyā yí á-bhútí ki-búí lo
 2SG.IND God 3SG.IND SM-do CM-matter ADD
 'YOUR GOD has worked.'
- 51b. Wó 'òdòkpábí bhutí 'íbúí oo.
wó bu-dòkpábí bhutí ki-búí oo
 2SG.IND CM.PL-spirit.being do CM-matter UFP
 'Your personal spirit beings have worked.'
- 51c. W'éabhē 'édō bhutí 'íbúí oo.
wó kábhā kí-dō bhutí ki-búí oo
 2SG.IND top CM-thing do CM-matter UFP
 'Your personal spirit beings have worked.' (Lit.: Your thing above has worked.)

- 51d. W'éábhē 'édō yī kó wó.
wó kábhā kí-dō yī kó wó
 2SG.IND top CM-thing show.up DAT 2SG
 'Your personal spirit beings have showed up for you.'
- 51e. W'ódòbhtí 'íbúí oo.
wó ó-dò-bhtí kí-búí oo
 2SG.IND SM-ITIVE-do CM-matter UFP
 'Congratulations' (Lit.: You have gone to work.)

The responses to all these expressions are:

- 52a. Yoo, wǔnǒ yóla (kó mí) oo.
yoo wǔnǒ nò-yóla kó mí oo
 okay 2PL.IND SM-bless DAT 1SG UFP
 'Okay, you gave your blessing (to me).'
- 52b. Yoo, wǔnǒ dó gbe dǎ.⁶⁹
yoo wǔnǒ nò-dó gbe dǎ
 okay 2PL.IND SM-send voice up
 'Okay, YOU have prayed.'

11.5 Expressions addressed to someone at work

To salute people who are engaged in some kind of work, be it physical or mental, the following expressions in (53a) and (53b) are used. Depending on the number of people involved, the 2SG or 2PL pronoun is used. The reply to these expressions is given in (53c).

- 53a. W'ótsirí 'ílíábhā oo.
wó o-tsirí kílí kábhā oo
 2SG.IND SM-be.on 3SG.IND top UFP
 'You are on its top.' (i.e. 'You are on it.')
- 53b. D'áhò oo.
dí a-hò oo
 look CM-hand UFP
 'Watch your hand.'
- 53c. Yoo.
yoo

⁶⁹ **dó gbe dǎ** 'pray' is borrowed from Ewe.

‘Okay.’

The expression in (53a) is addressed to someone who is engaged in any type of work be it physical or mental while (53b) is used for someone who is engaged in a physical or manual work like farming, fishing, carpentry etc. Another expression used is **áyíkóó** and its response is **yaaye**. This expression is used for someone who is engaged in a physical or manual work. A similar expression **ayikóó** (with a different tone) with its response also used in Ewe, Nyagbo and Logba appear to have been borrowed from Ga. In Tafi, **áyíkóó** when used is preceded by the 2SG/PL independent pronoun with their (final) vowel elided as in **w’áyíkóó** and **wūn’áyíkóó** ‘ayikoo to you (sg/pl)’. These expressions, when used, indicate to the addressee that the work they are doing is being appreciated.

Also, if someone meets another person already at work, e.g. on his/her farm or office, the interaction goes like this:

- 54a. A: W’ótúgba ní e?
wó o-túgba ní e
 2SG.IND CM-front DEF UFP
 ‘How is the front?’ (i.e., ‘What things have happened before I arrived?’)
- 54b. B: Kpasí, kide⁷⁰ ní e?
kpasí ki-de ní e
 be.in CM-back DEF UFP
 ‘Fine, how’s the back?’ (i.e. how are things behind?)
- 54c. A: Kpasí oo! W’ótsirí ’ílábhā oo.
kpasí oo wó o-tsirí kulí kábhā oo
 be.in UFP 2SG.IND SM-be.on 3SG.IND top UFP
 ‘Fine, you are on it.’ (Lit.: ‘you are on its top’)
- 54d. B: Yoo, otsí w’óóbā?
yoo otsí wó ó-ó-bā
 okay now 2SG.IND SM-PRSPROG-come
 ‘Okay, are you now coming?’
- 54e. A: Ee
ee
 ‘Yes’

In the above interaction, person A meets person B at work and enquires about the things that happened at the workplace before the time that they are meeting.

⁷⁰ It appears **kide** is derived from **kede** ‘back’.

Similar expressions are used in exchanges that occur when people are welcomed from their workplace. These are described in the next section.

11.5.1 Welcoming people from work

Greetings are also exchanged to indicate the order in which the speaker and addressee arrived at home from work etc. Usually, the interactants ask about things that have happened in their absence. The following is an illustration of a greeting exchange between two interactants, one of whom arrived home before the other.

55a. A: W'ódi oo!

wó ó-di oo
2SG.IND SM-go UFP
'Welcome!' (Lit.: 'You have been somewhere and back.')

55b. B: Yoo, w'ótúgba ní e?

yoo wó o-túgba ní e
okay 2SG.IND CM-front DEF UFP
'Okay, how is the front?' (i.e., 'What things have happened before I arrived?')

55c. A: Kpasí, w'ede ní⁷¹ e?

kpasí wó ke-de ní e
be.in 2SG.IND CM-back DEF UFP
'Fine, how's the back?' (i.e. how are things behind?)

55d. B: Kpasí.

kpasí
be.in
'Fine.'

The turns may continue with the interactants enquiring about the places of work or where B is returning from, i.e. farm, office, market etc. For instance, if the person just returned from his/her farm, the speaker can ask the question in (55e). The response to this question is the same as (55d).

55e. Wó 'óyanímu oo?

wó bu-ya ní kɪmɪ oo
2SG.IND CM-farm DEF inside UFP
'How is your farm?'

⁷¹ One could also use the expression **kide ní e?** 'How's the back' as in (54b).

When a person is back from the farm, etc., the people in the house who stayed behind may use the same expressions stated above to welcome him/her except the one in (55b) as shown in the turns below.

56a. A: W'odi oo!

wó **o-di** **oo**
2SG.IND SM-go UFP
'Welcome!' (Lit.: 'You have been somewhere and back.')

56b. B: Yoo, w'ede ní e?

yoo **wó** **ke-de** **ní** **e**
be.in 2SG.IND CM-back DEF UFP
'Fine, how's the back?' (i.e. how are things behind?)

56c. A: Kpasí, wó 'óyanímu oo?

kpasí **wó** **bu-ya** **ní** **kumi** **oo**
be.in 2SG CM-farm DEF inside UFP
'Fine, how is your farm?'

The response to (56c) is the same as the one in (55d).

11.6 Expressing sympathy

When tragedy such as an accident or death befalls someone or when someone falls sick, the person's friends, family or members of the community visit him/her to console or sympathise with him/her. One of the expressions used to express sympathy in Tafi is **babaa** which is borrowed from Ewe. Just as it is used in Ewe, **babaa** is used in Tafi to sympathise with or to apologise to the addressee for any problem or inconvenience caused. For instance, if someone lifts a chair and it hits another person, s/he has to say **babaa** to that person to express regret. However, in Tafi, **babaa** can be prefixed with either the 2SG/PL independent pronoun depending on the number of addressees involved as shown in (57a). Another expression used is **káfra** which is borrowed from Ewe as in (57b).

57a. Wó babaa (oo)!

wó **babaa** **oo**
2SG.IND sorry UFP
'Sorry to you (sg)!'

57b. Ô, káfra!

Ô **káfra**
INTJ excuse
'Oh, sorry!'

The expression **babaa** ‘sorry’ is also used to express sympathy when someone is bereaved. Other expressions used on such an occasion are:

58a. W’ótsyáñt’ íbúí oo.

wó	ó-tsyáñt’	ki-búí	oo
2SG.IND	SM-meet	CM-matter	UFP
‘You have suffered it.’ (Lit.: ‘You have met it.’)			

58b. W’ónú ’íbúí zizi oo.

wó	ó-nú	ki-búí	zi-zi	oo
2SG.IND	SM-hear	CM-matter	RED-bad	UFP
‘You have heard bad news.’				

If the death occurred as a result of the person being sick for some time and all attempts to cure him/her proved futile, then the expression in (58c) may be said to the bereaved family.

58c. W’ótsyt’ ubhútí oo.

wó	ó-tsy	bu-bhútí	oo
2SG.IND	SM-do.in.vain	CM-do	UFP
‘You have tried or worked in vain.’			

When one pays a visit to a sick person, the following expressions in (59) could be used to express sympathy. (59d) and (59e) are used for those who are bedridden and could not move about.

59a. W’óómo zhǎ́ oo.

wó	ó-ó-mo	zhǎ́	oo
2SG.IND	SM-PRSPROG-see	problem	UFP
‘You are having problems.’			

59b. W’óódi wó shúíábhā oo.

wó	ó-ó-di	wó	shú	kábhā	oo
2SG.IND	SM-PRSPROG-look	2SG.IND	REFL	top	UFP
‘You are looking after yourself.’					

59c. W’óónyína wó shú oo.

wó	ó-ó-nyína	wó	shú	oo
2SG.IND	SM-PRSPROG-hold	2SG.IND	REFL	UFP
‘You are taking care of yourself.’ (Lit.: ‘You are holding yourself.’)				

59d. W’ólí okó tódúkópó oo.

wó	ó-lí	o-kó	to-dukpó	oo
2SG.IND	SM-be.positioned	CM-place	AM-one	UFP
‘You are at one place.’				

- 59e. W'ódzǐ ákó tódúkǐpó
wó ó-dzǐ ɔ-kó to-ɖukpó
 2SG.IND SM-be.located.on.base CM-place AM-one
 'You are at one place.'

The response to all the expressions used when sympathising with a sick or a bereaved person is **yoo** 'okay'. The formulae in (59f) – (59h) can be used to wish a sick person speedy recovery.

- 59f. Ábakádéme ákó wó oo.
á-ba-kádéme a-kó wó oo
 3SG-FUT-improve SM-give 2SG UFP
 'It will be better.' Or 'Your condition will improve.'
- 59g. Ábabhítu kó wó oo.
á-ba-bhítu kó wó oo
 3SG-FUT-do DAT 2SG UFP
 'It will be better.' Or 'Your condition will improve.'
- 59h. Óbɔhayá oo.
ɔ-bo-hayá oo
 2SG-FUT-recover UFP
 'You will recover.'

When the visitor asks for permission to depart, the host expresses his/her appreciation by using any of the expressions below. (60a) can also be said anytime to anybody who pays someone a visit.

- 60a. W'ósrá áńó odí oo.
wó ɔ-srá a-nɔ o-dí oo
 2SG.IND SM-visit CM-person 2SG-look UFP
 'You came and visited a person.'
- 60b. W'ɔbáka áńó 'ébúí.
wó ɔ-báka a-nɔ ki-búí
 2SG.IND SM-remember CM-person CM-matter
 'You remembered a person's case.'
- 60c. W'óvé áńó 'únú oo.
wó o-ve a-nɔ bu.nú oo
 2SG.IND SM-V CM-person mouth UFP
 'You have been gracious.'
- 60d. W'óbí ɔplúnɔ áńó oo.

wó **ó-bí** **ó-plónó** **a-nó** **oo**
 2SG.IND SM-weep SM-help CM-person UFP
 ‘You have wept with a person.’

11.7 Disclaimers

Agoo as stated earlier in § 11.1.1 is used to get the attention of others when one is entering a building. It is also used to capture the attention of people and get them to be silent and attentive when someone wants to take the floor to say something and when someone wants the right of way to pass through, for instance, a crowded place. In the last instance, the response to **agoo**, which is **amee**, may not be given. The people or person may just move out of the speaker’s way for him to pass.

Káfra, **tafrátsyí** and **sébio** ‘excuse me, I beg your pardon’ as used in other Ghanaian languages are used to excuse oneself and show respect to one’s addressee(s) especially when what one is about to do or say is indecent or not pleasant. By so doing, these expressions are used to forestall any form of anger on the part of the addressee(s). For instance, when one wants to talk about the departed or any taboo word such as sex, a speaker has to preface it with any of these words.

Tafrátsyí and **káfra** could also be used to preface apologies as illustrated in (61a) and (61b). The expression in (61a) for instance, can be used if one steps on another person and (61b) could be used when one has said something unpleasant.

- 61a. Wó káfra lo, ɛdutsɔ wó ’ómɔʔ.
wó **káfra** **lo** **ɛ-di-tso** **wó** **bu-mo**
 2SG.IND excuse ADD 1SG-NEG2-do.early 2SG CM-see
 ‘Sorry (to you), I did not see you early.’
- 61b. Ô káfra, ɛdnāqɔʔ.
ô **káfra** **ɛ-di-nā-qɔ**
 INTJ excuse 1SG-NEG2-be.able-say
 ‘Oh sorry, I did not say it well’ (i.e., I am sorry for saying the wrong thing).

The use of the left hand when communicating with someone is culturally unacceptable. This is because the use of the left hand is considered more insulting than using insulting words and it is deemed a dishonourable act. However, if it should become necessary to use the left hand one must excuse one’s self by using the expression in (62a). Its response is given in (62b).

- 62a. Káfra, kíbutkpě lo.
káfra **kí-butkpě** **lo**
 excuse me CM-left.hand ADD
 ‘Excuse me, (it is) the left hand.’

- 62b. (Kɪlɪ tsyí) ɔhɔ.
kɪlɪ tsyí ɔ-hɔ
 3SG too CM-arm
 ‘It is also a hand.’

To show politeness or courtesy when communicating with an addressee who is older or who has a higher social status or when requesting for something, a speaker ought to preface his/her speech or request with the expression **íde kúkú** ‘I beg’, literally, ‘I take off (my) hat’. This expression is also used to apologise for any rude behavior. The verb phrase **de kúkú** ‘beg’ is a borrowing from Ewe and as stated in § 8.3.1, it is also used to mitigate the effect of the violation of any social norm or “the illocutionary force of [any] act that may inconvenience the addressee” (Ameka 1991:619).

11.8 Expressing farewell

Farewell expressions are used when people are parting from each other after a ceremony or visit or when someone is going on a journey either for a long time or a short time. Some of the expressions are (i) used to convey blessings and good wishes for the addressee; (ii) requests to the addressee to convey the speaker’s greetings to people where the addressee is going; and (iii) used to convey the speaker’s desire to see the addressee again (see also § 11.1.7). The following is a recording in which a nephew is parting from a paternal aunt after a visit.

63. A: Ɛɛ, m’akúdá, m’íkɪ tɪbɪbá ní, kɪwʊ́m dɔ́ so íbashĩ, íptí sí tɪ ɪbakrá wɔ́.
ɛɛ mí á-kúdá mí ɪ-kɪ tí-bí-bá ní
 INTJ 1SG.IND CM-aunt 1SG.IND CM-here CM-RED-come TOP
kɪwʊ́m dɔ́ so í-ba-shĩ
 ?? land so 1SG-FUT-leave
í-ptí sí tɪ í-ba-krá wɔ́
 1SG-want COMP COMP 1SG.DEP-VENT-notify 2SG
 ‘My aunt, it’s quite sometime now since I came so I would like to leave and I have come to bid you farewell.’

64. B: Ao, ɔgblɔ́bɔ́shĩ tsyí á?
ao ɔ-gblɔ́-bɔ́-shĩ tsyí á
 INTJ 2SG-EXC-FUT-leave too UFP
 ‘Oh! Are you leaving us so soon?’

65. A: Ee, eyíyíí aná kóm sí tɪ ushĩ.
ee e-yíyíí ní a-ná kó mí sí tɪ
 Yes CM-time DEF SM-reach DAT 1SG COMP COMP
í-shĩ
 1SG.DEP-leave
 ‘Yes, it is time for me to leave.’

66. B: Yoo, ɔvi ísɪn 'alí oo.

yoo ɔ-vɪ í-í-sɪnɔ balí oo
 okay 2SG-go 1SG-PRSPROG-greet 3PL UFP
 'Okay, when you go, I greet them.'

67. A: Yoo, w'ɔbɔbhutí 'íbúí popoopó.

Yoo wɔ ɔ-bɔ-bhutí ki-búí popoopó
 Okay 2SG.IND SM-VENT-do CM-matter IDEO.very.much
 'Okay, thank you very much.'

68. B: Ózazaa t'ɔflɔbɔsră l'ódí oo.

ɔ-za zaa ti ɔ-flɔ-bɔ-sră blɔ ɔ-dí
 2SG-stay short.time COMP 2SG.DEP-again-FUT-visit 1PL 2SG-look
oo
 UFP
 'After a short time come and visit us again.'

69. A: Yoo.

yoo
 okay
 'Okay.'

70. B: Ákan agbáni wɔ t'odokú ní ishu yúyɔémí oo.

á-kā ní a-gbáni wɔ ti o-do-kú
 CM-father DEF SM-lead 2SG PURP 2SG.DEP-ITIVE-reach
ní i-shú yú-yɔ kum oo
 LOC CM-body RED-be.cold inside UFP
 'May God lead you to get there in peace.' (i.e. 'safe journey')

71. A: Yoo, wŭnŭ tsyí wŭn'ód'ánsíábhā oo.

yoo wŭnŭ tsyí wŭnŭ no-dí a-nŭ kábhā oo
 okay 2PL.IND too 2PL.IND SM-look CM-person top UFP
 'Okay. You too, you have been hospitable.'

72. B: Yoo.

yoo
 okay
 'Okay.'

73. A: Ebúin pétée gi nɔbhutín wŭnŭ 'bhtífúí.

e-búí ní pétée gi nɔ-bhutí ní wŭnŭ nɔ-bhutí
 CM-matter DEF all REL 2PL.DEP-do TOP 2PL.IND SM-do
ki-búí
 CM-matter
 'Thank you very much for all what you have done.'

74. Εε, Kpáyā n'élú álí ózakó kó nó oo.
εε Kpáyā ní é-lú alí ɔ-zakó kó w̃ñń oo
 INTJ God DEF SM-put 3PL CM-place DAT 2PL UFP
 'May God bless you in return.'

75. B: Yoo.
yoo
 okay
 'Okay.'

In (63), the speaker notifies his aunt about his desire to leave after paying her a visit for sometime. In (66), his aunt requests the addressee to extend her greetings to the people where he is going while in (68), the speaker expresses desire for the addressee to visit again. (70) and (74) are expressions for blessing and good wishes to the addressee. (70) expresses the wish of the speaker that the addressee gets to his destination safely. The response to all the farewell expressions is **yoo** 'okay'. Other farewell expressions include:

- 76a. (Nɔ) ga m̃ oo!
nɔ ga m̃ oo
 2PL walk well UFP
 'Travel well/ safe journey!'
- 76b. (Nɔ)dɔtsɔ 'okú!
nɔ-dɔ-tsɔ bu-kú
 2PL-ITIVE-do.early CM-reach
 'May you reach early.'
- 76c. Mávú ágamí 'ídzó kó w̃s/'ñń.
Mávú á-gamí ki-dzo kó w̃s/w̃ñń
 God SM-clear CM-way DAT 2SG/2PL
 'May God clear the path for you (sg/pl).'
- 76d. Ákan agbánu w̃s/w̃ñń ɔɔɔɔɔɔ.
á-kā ní á-gbánu w̃s/ w̃ñń ɔɔɔɔɔɔ
 CM-father DEF SM-lead 2SG/2PL slowly
 'May God lead you calmly.'

The expressions in (77) are used in situations where the person is going to a place nearby and will be back after a short time. Thus, they could be said to someone going to the farm, market, school, riverside etc.

- 77a. ɔvi t'ɔtsɔ 'óbá oo!
ɔ-vi ti ɔ-tsɔ bu-bá oo
 2SG-go COMP 2SG.DEP-do.early CM-come UFP

‘If you go, come (back) early!’

- 77b. Tso ’obá oo!
tsɔ **bu-bá** **oo**
 do.early CM-come UFP
 ‘Come (back) early!’

11.9 Goodnight expressions

At night when people are retiring to bed or are parting, they wish that each other will sleep well. Some of the expressions used are given in (78). The responses are given in (79). The expression in (78b) can also be used as a response.

- 78a. (Wɔ) káagǎ oo!
wɔ **káagǎ** **oo**
 2SG.IND good.night UFP
 ‘Good night (to you)!’
- 78b. Kaza ti lotsyá oo.
ka-za **ti** **lo-tsyá** **oo**
 3SG-V COMP 1PL.DEP-meet UFP
 ‘Let’s meet when day breaks.’
- 79a. Yoo, t’ónáwús oo.
yoo **ti** **ɔ-ná-wús** **oo**
 okay COMP 2SG.DEP-be.able-sleep UFP
 ‘Okay, may you sleep well.’ (Lit.: ‘May you be able to sleep.’)
- 79b. Yoo, t’ɔza mǎ oo.
yoo **ti** **ɔ-za** **mǎ** **oo**
 okay COMP 2SG.DEP-spend.the.night well UFP
 ‘May you spend the night well.’
- 79c. Yoo, ákan/ Máwú áló ní ’óló.
yoo **á-kā** **ní** / **Máwú** **á-ló** **ni** **buló**
 okay CM-father DEF / God SM-get.up COM 1PL
 ‘Okay, may the Lord/ God wake us up.’

11.10 Other salutations

The Tafi people have salutations for different occasions. These include the expressions in (80) and (81). (80b) is a response to the salutation in (80a) and the responses in (82) are used for the formulae in (81). The expression in (80) is used

to express one's wish for another person to have a nice day while those in (81) are used at the beginning of a new year to express one's best wishes for others.

- 80a. Kíwíníĩ, (kí)pĩ kɔ wɔ́/ w̃ũńɔ́ oo.
kí-wĩ ní kũĩ (kí-)pĩ kɔ wɔ́/ w̃ũńɔ́ oo
 CM-day DEF inside 3SG-be.good DAT 2SG/ 2PL UFP
 'Have a nice day.' (Lit.: 'The day inside be good for you (sg/pl).')
- 80b. Yoo, kɔ wɔ́/w̃ũńɔ́ tsyí oo.
yoo kɔ wɔ́/w̃ũńɔ́ tsyí oo
 ok DAT 2SG/2PL too UFP
 'You (sg/pl) too'
- 81a. Kígɔ́ vuvɔ́ kɔ wɔ́/ w̃ũńɔ́ oo.
kí-gɔ́ vuvɔ́ kɔ wɔ́/w̃ũńɔ́ oo
 CM-year new DAT 2SG/ 2PL UFP
 'Happy new year' (Lit.: 'A new year to you.')
- 81b. Wɔ́/ w̃ũńɔ́ 'égɔ́ vuvɔ́ oo.
wɔ́/ w̃ũńɔ́ kí-gɔ́ vuvɔ́ oo
 2SG.IND/ 2PL.IND CM-year new UFP
 'Happy new year' (Lit.: 'Your new year')
- 82a. Yoo, (tí) kívlabatónɔ́ lɔ́ oo.
yoo (tí) kí-vla-ba-tónɔ́ blɔ́ oo
 ok COMP 3SG-again-VENT-catch.up.with 1PL UFP
 'Okay, may it come to meet us again.'
- 82b. Yoo, kɔ wɔ́/w̃ũńɔ́ tsyí oo
yoo kɔ wɔ́/w̃ũńɔ́ tsyí oo
 ok DAT 2SG/2PL too UFP
 'You (sg/pl) too'
- 82c. Yoo, (tí) kívlábhui⁷² lɔ́kpí
yoo (tí) kí-vlá-bhui lɔ́-kpí
 ok COMP 3SG-again-cut 1PL.DEP put.in
 'Okay, may it come to meet us again.'

⁷² There is disharmony in the vowels in the verb phrase. One would have expected the vowels to be +ATR because of the ATR value of the vowel in the verb. This might be due to the routinised nature of the expression.