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Author: Bobuafor, Mercy

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Summary

This book presents a description of Tafi, one of the fourteen Ghana-Togo Mountain languages spoken in the south-eastern part of Ghana, across into Togo and with an outlier in Benin. The description consists of thirteen chapters and is based on a corpus gathered during two fieldwork periods in Tafi over a period of fifteen months.

Chapter One provides an introduction to the Tafi people, their language, geographical location and sociolinguistic situation, as well as the genetic classification and linguistic typological profile of the language. It also gives background information on previous studies of the language and describes the methodology of the research that was carried out.

Chapter Two examines the phonological system of the language. Tafi has five syllable types comprising a V/N syllable which is a vowel or nasal; a VC and CV syllables, made up of a vowel and a consonant and a consonant and a vowel respectively; a CVV syllable which consists of a consonant and a long vowel and a CCV which is made up of two consonants and a vowel, the second consonant may be a liquid or a glide. Tafi has consonant phonemes made at these places of articulation: bilabial, labio-dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, palatal, velar and glottal. The consonants include /bh/ and /f/. /bh/ is an aspirated voiced labial stop. It has no voiceless counterpart in the language and /f/ is a voiceless labial fricative which has no voiced counterpart. It was introduced into the language as a result of borrowing from Ewe. Tafi has double articulated labial velar stops /kp/ and /gb/ as well as alveolar and palatal affricates /ts/, /dz/ and /tʃ/, /dʒ/ respectively. Tafi has a nine vowel system. All these vowels except /o/ have nasalised counterparts. The vowels participate in ATR vowel harmony. So, they are divided into two sets, [+ATR] and [-ATR]. ATR vowel harmony in Tafi is stem-controlled, thus the vowel of prefixes harmonises with the vowel of the first syllable of the stem. Therefore, depending on the [ATR] value of the initial vowel in the root, a prefix may have varied forms. The /a/ vowel in prefixes occurs with vowels from both sets. Tafi is a tone language with three level tonemes: High, Mid and Low and two gliding tones: Falling and Rising which are phonetically realised on the peak of one syllable. There are three falling tones: High-Mid, High-Low and Mid-Low and two rising tones: Low-Mid and Low-High. The contour tones can be lexical or they can be generated in context.

Chapter Three looks at the noun class system of the language. Nouns in Tafi are classified into ten classes made up of five singular, four plural and one non-count classes on the basis of the prefixes, subject-verb agreement pattern, the pronominal forms of the classes and agreement within the noun phrase. Therefore, it is possible to find a plural noun class which contains the plural forms of nouns belonging to more than one singular class.

The discussion in Chapter Four is devoted to the Noun Phrase. The types and its internal structure are looked at. It became obvious that some modifiers (e.g. quantifiers) show agreement with the head noun while others (e.g. qualifiers), like the adjective, maintain no concord relationship with the head noun. As regards the numerals which consist of both cardinals and ordinals, it became obvious that only the cardinal numerals show concord, and it is numbers one to nine that show agreement with the head noun. The ordinal numerals, on their part, do not show concord with the head noun. Some modifiers can be nominalised through the addition of nominal prefixes and the pronominal forms of the various noun classes. Tafi has, maybe, one non-derived non-ideophonic adjective. However, derived adjectives are formed through reduplication of property verbs. Other strategies for expressing adjectival meanings include relativisation, the use of nominal property words as complements of predicators, and medio-passive constructions. The determiners include the definiteness and indefiniteness markers and the demonstratives. The definiteness marker does not show agreement with the noun head, however, the indefiniteness marker and the demonstratives do. Tafi has a marked kinship possessive grammar. Singular kinship possession is marked with the 3SG independent pronoun **yí** referring to the possessor placed between the possessor and the kinship term. Plural kinship possession is expressed by juxtaposition.

Chapter Five concentrates on adpositions in Tafi. There are two classes of adpositions: prepositions and postpositions. There are two bona fide prepositions, a locative preposition **ní** 'LOC' and a comitative preposition **ni** 'COM'. In addition to these, there are a number of verb forms that are in the process of grammaticalising into prepositions. Tafi has a set of a dozen or so members of the postposition class which are used to denote the parts and regions of objects. Some of these are spatial nominals or body-part nouns which are at different stages in the process of grammaticalisation.

The structure of a simple clause in Tafi, the order of the constituents in the clause and the grammatical relations arguments hold with the predicate are the main focus of Chapter Six. Tafi is a language whose basic constituent order is SV/AVO/AVDO. In double-object (AVDO) constructions, the Goal or Dative precedes the Theme. In locative constructions, the Theme occurs before the Locative. Furthermore, adjuncts may occur after the core arguments in the clause. The subject (S/A) is cross-referenced on the predicate with markers that agree with the class of the subject NP except for the two **bu**- classes. Objects are, however, not cross-referenced on the verb. The subject cross-reference markers are the same as the subject pronominal forms. Two paradigms of subject cross-reference markers can be distinguished. One group is used to cross-reference subjects in independent clauses while the second group which is made up of dependent pronominal forms is used in dependent clauses such as relative, complement and adverbial clauses. The order of constituents in a basic clause can be rearranged for information packaging purposes. In Tafi, this involves preposing elements to the

clause and fronting some clause constituents. The effect of these processes is the creation of three positions in the left periphery of the clause. These positions are filled by constituents that are frame or left dislocated topics, contrastive topics and focalised constituents respectively. This chapter also looks at the structure and function of these constituents. In topic constructions, a fronted noun or postpositional phrase is optionally marked by a form **ní** which is identical in form with the definiteness marker. An out-of-focus part of some focus sentences, are marked by another marker **aní** 'TOP'. This form is the same as the proximal demonstrative. Focus is not marked by a particle but there is a subject vs. non-subject focus asymmetry: a subject argument in focus is referred to by an independent pronoun. The position of a non-subject constituent in focus is marked by a gap. Verbs are focused by nominalising the verb with the class prefix **bu/bu-** of the **bu¹**- class and then placing them before the subject NP of the clause.

Verbs and verbal modifiers are discussed in Chapter Seven. This chapter looks at the grammar of the argument structure of Tafi verbs in terms of the number of arguments they require semantically, and the argument structure constructions in which they participate. The verbs are classified as one-place, two-place and three-place predicates. Verbs classified as one-place predicates occur in one-place constructions and they take only one argument while two-place predicates occur in two-place constructions and they take two arguments. Three-place predicates are very few. They occur in three-place constructions and they require three arguments. Some verbs can occur in more than one construction thereby participating in various verbal alternations or occur in constructions which add arguments to their frame. In addition, the verbs are classified according to their inherent semantics. Tense, aspect and mood as categories for which verbs can be modified as well as adverbs and adverbial phrases are also examined. Tense, aspect and mood are mainly marked by preverbs in Tafi and there are about a dozen preverbal markers.

Chapter Eight deals with sentence types. Sentences may be classified according to the illocutionary force they are used to express in discourse. The main sentence types discussed are declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives. In Tafi, there is no difference in structure and segmental form between a propositional or polar question and a statement. There is only a difference in pitch. The propositional question ends on a slightly lower pitch than its counterpart statement. There are about eight question words which are used to pose content questions. Two of which are interrogative modifiers (**dúwē** 'which' and **-shĩ** 'how many/much') so they occur after the head noun. Two of the question words (**-shĩ** 'how many/much' and **-nĩ** 'who') show concord with the head noun. When some of the question words are in focus, they are followed by the relative marker **gi** 'REL' or the connector **pi** 'CONN'.

Chapter Nine presents the way in which clauses are combined to form complex sentences. The structure of three main types of subordinate clauses: relative

clauses, complement clauses and adverbial clauses, the markers that assist in identifying them within constructions and their position in a construction are examined. Relative clauses are introduced by the marker **gi** and are optionally marked off by the topic marker **ni** signalling that they convey background information with respect to the head nominal. Complement clauses are introduced by **si** or **ti** or a combination of both. These markers have extended functions which relate to the introduction of adverbial clauses, for example, **ti** is also used to mark purpose clauses. Sometimes, the relation of the adverbial clause to the main clause is not overtly marked and has to be inferred. In dependent clauses in Tafi the subject marker on the verb tends to be a dependent form of the pronoun. The mechanism of combining units (clauses or phrases) of equal rank or coordination is also looked at. Coordination is expressed by overt coordinators and they include **ni** 'COM', the comitative preposition which is used as a conjunction to link NPs, **kilí** 'CONJ' which is another conjunctive marker used to connect clauses, the disjunctive markers **pín33/alo(o)/lo(o)** 'or' and the adversative markers **pɔ́/gake** 'but'. Moreover, the correlative disjunctive marker **o(o)...(o(o))** is used to conjoin clauses that are opposites.

In Chapter Ten, the way in which verbs are integrated in mono-clauses through verb serialization is considered. In Tafi serial verb constructions, two or more verbs occur without any overt marker of coordination or subordination. The verbs share at least one argument and same tense and mood which is marked only once on the first verb. The verbs cannot be independently negated. The verbs can be independently focused or questioned.

The next two chapters are about routine expressions and ideophones, interjections and particles respectively. These topics are aspects of pragmatics and are usually considered marginal to grammar, however, they are essential for communication. Routine expressions as described in Chapter Eleven are expressions used in social interactions and they 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. Furthermore, attention is also drawn to the structure and context within which some of these expressions are used. Chapter Twelve focuses on ideophones, interjections and particles. These word types share some properties. They are all expressive in nature. They are used to express a speaker's perception, mental state and attitudes. Nevertheless, there are differences between them. Ideophones and particles cannot be used by themselves non-elliptically while interjections can be used by themselves as non-elliptical utterances. The final chapter, Chapter Thirteen, comprises transcriptions, interlinear glosses and translations of some recorded texts collected during the fieldwork periods in Tafi from native speakers of the language. The texts include a folktale, proverbs, riddles and procedural descriptions.