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TŌŌÚGBE SKETCH GRAMMAR

1. The language of the shorelines

TŌŋúgbē, written as *Tongugbe* in English, literally means ‘the language of the shorelines’. It is one of the many dialects of the Ewe language. It is spoken by the TŌŋús ‘those who live by the river’ *i.e.* the riverines.

1.1. TŌŋú: the geographical area

TŌŋú ‘by the river’ refers to the lower basin of the Volta River. It refers to the area eastward of the Volta River, after Akuse in the eastern region of Ghana, downstream to the coastal grooves below Sogakope in the south Tongu district of Ghana. Principally lying on the banks of the Volta River, the area can be extended eastwards as far as Dabala. However, in this study, the most eastern community considered is Sogakope.

The TŌŋú area is divided into two major parts by the Volta River: the western side of the river that has the main towns of communities such as Battor, Mepe, some parts of Mafi, Vume, Tefle, Sokpoe; and the eastern side where the main towns of several communities such as Sogakope, Mafi, Volo, and Bakpa are located.

Map 1: The TŌŋúgbē speaking area (<http://verbafricana.org/ewe/c-ewe-language.htm#ewemap>)



The vegetation of the Tɔŋú area is a mix of mangrove, particularly by the banks of the river, and savannah vegetation that runs through much of the communities situated to the east of the river, *e.g.* Mafi, and the overbanks of communities situated on the western side of the river, *i.e.* Mepe, Battor etc.

Map 2: some major Tɔŋúgbe speaking towns (Google Maps)



Traditionally, the people live from fishing on the Volta River; but they also cultivate the lands around the river for agricultural purposes. Recently, sand winning (especially in Battor), tourism and hospitality (Sogakope) and large scale farming (Aveyime, Mafi and Agave areas) have been introduced by private developers as well as state owned institutions who seek to develop the economic potential of the area.

1.2. The people

The Tɔŋús belong mainly to the larger Ewe ethnic group and thus share the culture of the Ewe people. Most Tɔŋús, similar to other Ewe groups, trace their origin back to Ketu, which is situated today in the republic of Benin. From Ketu, they moved to Notsie in present day Republic of Togo. Tradition has it that, due to the brutality during the reign of a king, King Agorkorli, they moved and eventually settled in their present locations. The movement of the Ewes from Notsie took place in three successive waves (Amenumey 1997): the first group

founded major towns such as Hohoe, Peki, Alavanyo in the northern parts of the Ewe speaking area; the second group founded towns such as Ho, Akovia, Takla in the middle belt of the Ewe speaking area; and the third group founded southern settlements such as Añlɔga, Keta, Atiteti on the coast. The core of most Tɔŋú communities is formed by people who were part of the third group of migrants from Notsie (Amenumey 1997).

However, not all Tɔŋús share their ancestry with other Ewes groups. Some Tɔŋús in traditional communities like Mepe, Battor, Mafi, Vume etc. trace their ancestry back to Asante, Denkyira, Akwamu, Ada, and Ningo (Amenumey 1997: 17). Once they arrived in Tɔŋú land, they integrated into their host communities. Thus, present day Tɔŋú is a group of heterogeneous people who, although identified as Ewes, still display traits of other cultures, especially Akan cultures. Indeed, some people in Vume, Battor, and Mepe still have names with Akan origins.

The Tɔŋú people are grouped in thirteen traditional communities (also called traditional states): Agave, Sokpoe, Tefle, Vume, Fieve, Bakpa, Mafi, Mepe, Battor, Volo, Doffor, Togome and Fodzoku (Amenumey 1997). On the basis of information gathered from my fieldwork, it can be noted that the Tɔŋú community is divided into clans (**etɔ**). The clan is further subdivided into gates (**afɛmɛ**) and the gate is subdivided into extended families (**fɔmɛ**). Extended families are composed of several nuclear families (**xɔnúgoé**), also called **evɪwó** in Mepe.

Each traditional state is administered by a paramount chief (**fiɛgã**) and each clan also elects its chief (**etɔfiɛ**). Gates and extended families also elect a head (**afɛtátɔ** and **fɔmɛtátɔ** respectively). Heads of gates and extended families are normally chosen among the oldest males of the gate or family. Presently however, Tɔŋú communities are grouped into three main administrative districts: South Tongu, Central Tongu and North Tongu.

1.3. The Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe dialect

Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe⁵ is spoken by the Tɔ̀ɔ̀ people and is a dialect of the Ewe language. The Ewe language is a Niger-Congo language (Greenberg 1963) of the Kwa group that is a member of the larger unit of closely related languages called Gbe (Capo 1991: 1). As a member of the larger Gbe languages, Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe represents the most south-western dialect of the Ewe cluster. The dialect is spoken by some forty thousand Tɔ̀ɔ̀s spread across the Tɔ̀ɔ̀ area (estimate from Ghana's 2010 housing and population census)⁶. Speakers of Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe understand other dialects of the larger Ewe language and, to various degrees, other Gbe languages, and speakers of other dialects of the Ewe language (and other Gbe languages) likewise understand the dialect (equally to various degrees).

The Ewe language has been the subject of substantial research in linguistics (Westermann 1930; Benveniste 1966; Ameka 1991; Duthie 1996; Rongier 2004 etc.). However, there has been little analysis of dialectal variation in Ewe. Hence, Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe has been an 'unidentified western dialect' (Clements 1974) or has been considered part of the coastal dialects of the Ewe language (Ansre 2000). Throughout this work, it shall be considered that Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe is linguistically neither a coastal dialect nor an inland dialect, although it shares features with both.

Some studies (Westermann 1930, Capo 1991) make nevertheless sporadic references to some of the dialect's specific properties. Westermann (1930: 193-4) offers a first attempt of the description of the definite article of the dialect; Capo (1991:16) involves a Tɔ̀ɔ̀ speaker from Battor in his study of the phonetics and phonology of the Gbe cluster; and Kpodo (2017) offers a description of the third person

⁵ In this study, I do not presume that Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe includes Agavégbe, the Ewe variety spoken by communities to the east of Sogakope. Although Agavégbe is generally considered a 'kind of' Tɔ̀ɔ̀gbe, the observations made in this study exclude Agavégbe. Agavégbe seems to have some distinct properties that will have to be thoroughly investigated.

⁶ This estimate does not take into account the large number of Tɔ̀ɔ̀ migrants upstream of the Volta river and in urban centres of Ghana.

object pronoun of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ⁷. Although their scope is limited, these studies represent the first real attempts at describing the largely distinctive properties of the dialect.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a sketch grammar of the dialect. The chapter offers a survey of the phonetics, morphology and syntax of the dialect. It intends to highlight the features that distinguish the dialect from the other dialects of the Ewe language. This description should also serve as a background for the comprehension of the work I undertake in the subsequent chapters.

2. Phonetics

This section gives a brief overview of the various segmental and suprasegmental elements of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ. It offers an inventory of the vowel phones, the consonant phones and observable tonal realisations. It also presents a survey of some of the phonological processes that occur within and outside the syllable. I use the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (revised 2015) in this chapter.

2.1. Phones of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ

2.1.1. Vowels

The vowel sounds of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ are not different from the vowels present in other dialects of the Ewe language. The table below offers an overview of the vowel sounds of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ:

Table 1: Vowel phones of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ

	<u>Oral</u>			<u>Nasal</u>		
	Front	Center	Back	Front	Center	Back
Closed	i		u	ĩ		ũ
Mid-closed	e		o			
		ə			ẽ	
Mid-open	ɛ		ɔ	ẽ		õ
Open		a			ã	

⁷ Kpodo (2017) describes the vowel height harmony in the third person object pronoun of Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ and rightly observes that the phenomenon in Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ parallels the case of inland dialects, instead of the expected parallel with the coastal dialects. Despite this observation, he follows ‘tradition’, and groups Tɔ̀ŋúgbɛ together with coastal dialects.

Some of these vowel sounds are less common in the dialect as compared to the others. The less common oral vowels are [e] and [ɛ]. The sound [e] can be argued to have merged with the schwa. The sound [ɛ] on the other hand occurs rarely in basic nouns. Both of these vowels *i.e.* [e] and [ɛ], therefore occur only in few basic nouns such as the ones listed in example (1).

1. **ədē** **ablē** **əsē**
 ‘waterpot’ ‘pepper’ ‘conversation’

Apart from [ā] and [ō], all other nasal vowels also rarely occur in Tɔŋúgbɛ. Most often, they are the result of a phonological process. The nasal vowel [ō], for instance, is realized as a result of the elision of the nasal velar [ŋ] in the example below.

2. *dɛ̀vɪ́ má bō m̀ə dzù*
dɛ̀vɪ́ **má** **bɔŋ** **m̀ə** **dzù**
 child DEM rather PRO.1SG insult
 ‘I insulted that child instead’

2.1.2. Consonants

The consonant sounds of Tɔŋúgbɛ are also not different from the consonant sounds present in other dialects of the Ewe language. The table below lists the consonant sounds of Tɔŋúgbɛ.

Table 2: Consonant phones of Tɔŋúgbɛ

	Bilabi al	Labio- dental	Dent al	Alveo lar	Palat al	Vel ar	Labio- velar
Plosive	p b		t d	ɖ		k g	kp gb
Nasal	m			n	ɲ	ŋ	
Fricative	ɸ β	f v		s z		x h	
Affricate				ts dz	tʃ dʒ		
Lateral				l			
Approx.					j	ɣ	w
Trill				r			

- /d/ is voiced. During production of /d/, the blade of the tongue is in contact with both the alveolar ridge and the upper teeth.

- /d/ is voiced. During production of /d/, the tip of the tongue is on the alveolar ridge.

The standard Ewe alphabet (SEA) largely corresponds to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols used in the tables above. Apart from the schwa which is written in SEA as [e], there are no differences between IPA vowels and SEA vowels. There is however some divergence with respect to the consonants. I therefore present the consonants of the standard Ewe orthography (SEA) and their counterparts in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). I use bold characters for the consonants of the standard Ewe orthography that are different from the consonants of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Table 3: Standard Ewe alphabet and IPA correspondences

IPA	SEA	IPA	SEA	IPA	SEA
p	p	b	b	t	t
d	d	ɖ	ɖ	k	k
g	g	kp	kp	gb	gb
m	m	n	n	ɲ	ny
ŋ	ŋ	r	r	l	l
ɸ	f	β	v	f	f
v	v	s	s	z	z
x	x	h	h	j	y
ʎ	ʎ	w	w	tʃ	ts
				dʒ	dz

For reasons of representation, I continue to use the IPA symbols in the phonetics section. I change to SEA symbols in the section on morphology.

2.2. Tones

Ewe is a tonal language (Odden 1995). Therefore, tones are a very important part of Tɔ̃nɔ̃gbe. Each syllable is underlain by a tone *i.e.* the tone bearing unit (TBU) is the syllable. As tones have a distinctive function, every syllable has a tone. The various examples that are cited in the subsequent chapters therefore have various tonal markings⁸. Tɔ̃nɔ̃gbe has three level tones *i.e.* a high tone, a low tone

⁸ I do not mark short mid tones in the examples cited.

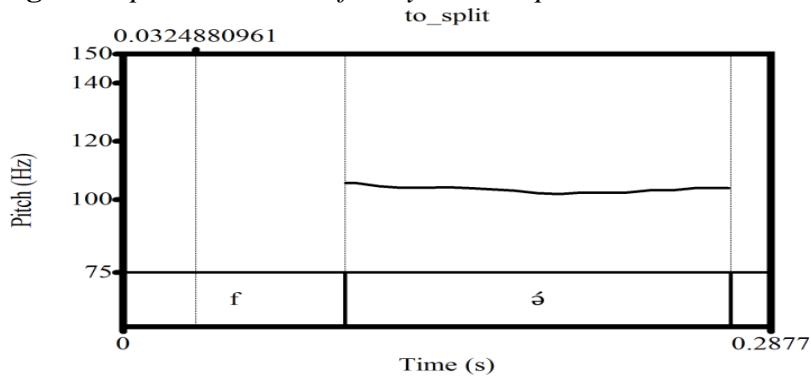
and a mid tone; as well as one contour tone *i.e.* a rising tone. The rising contour tone can be argued to be a combination of a low tone and the high tone on the second part of a semi-long vowel (cf. Ansre 1961).

Some observations must be made in respect of factors that are relevant in the realization of tones in Tɔ̀ɣúgbɛ and the Ewe language in general. In the first place, level tones occur in words of any syntactic category (noun, verbs, adpositions etc.), whereas the contour tone, except in sandhi processes (cf. Clements 1978), occurs only in nouns. Secondly, the mid tone is typically long in root nouns and short elsewhere. I concentrate on the long-mid tone of root nouns. Also, depressor consonants (voiced obstruents, *i.e.* plosives, fricatives and affricates) play various roles. In other Ewe dialects, these consonants, in prevocalic positions, tend to lower the pitch level of tones; in Tɔ̀ɣúgbɛ the effects of depressor consonants is relatively minimal in the tonal realizations of isolated nouns, but very significant in the tonal realizations of words of other syntactic categories, for example verbs. See Kpoglu & Patin (2018) for a useful discussion of the role of depressor consonants in the realization of tones in Tɔ̀ɣúgbɛ.

2.2.1. The level tones

The high tone is a tonal realization with a high pitch level. Hence, the nuclei of syllables realized with a high tone have their pitch levels high. Figure 1 below illustrates the pitch level of the high tonal realization on the nucleus of *fé* ‘to split’.

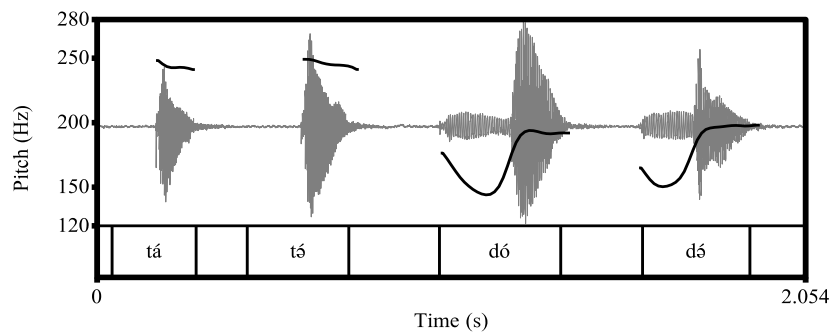
Fig.1-Sample realization of *fé* by a male speaker



In verbs, depressor consonants lower the pitch level. Figure 2 compares the realizations of verbs that involve the voiceless stop [t] (a), with the verbs that involve the voiced stop [d] (b).

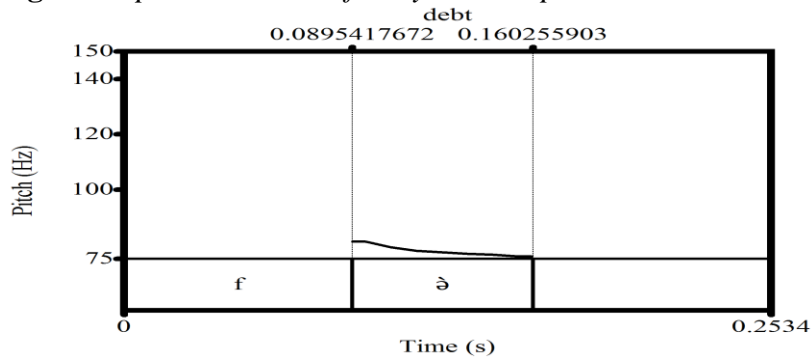
3. a **tá** ‘draw’ b. **dó** ‘lock’
 tó ‘press’ **dó** ‘load’

Fig. 2-Sample realizations of *tá*, *tó*, *dó* and *dó* by a male speaker



The low tone on the other hand is realized with a pitch that is very close to the lowest pitch range. The figure below illustrates the pitch level of the low tonal realization on the nucleus of *fè* ‘debt’.

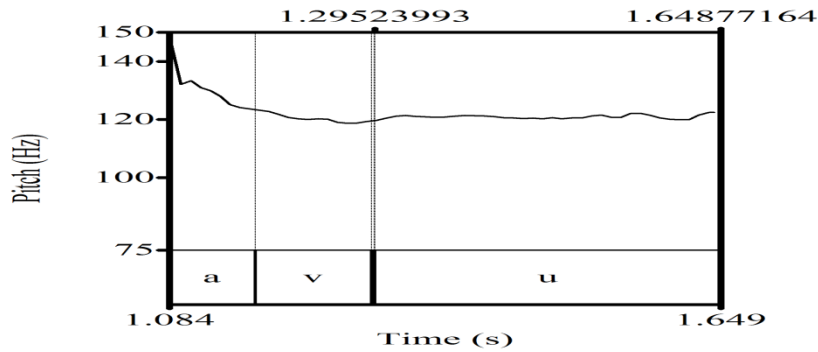
Fig.3- sample realization of *fè* by a male speaker



The last level tone, the long mid tone (and in this case, I concentrate on root nouns), typically occurs as a long stretch of mid tone (with a pitch level that is just higher than the pitch level of low tones of root

nouns). The diagram below represents the long mid tone on the noun **avū** ‘dog’.

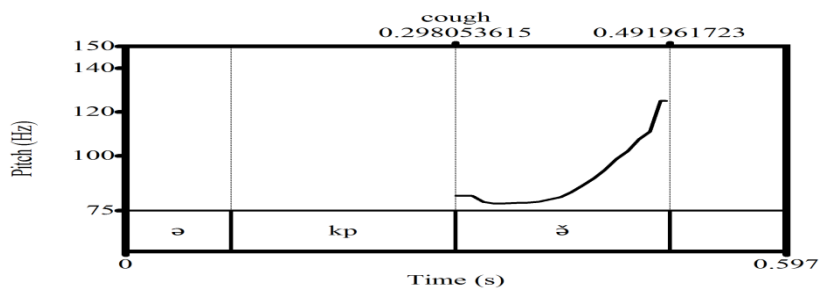
Fig. 4-Sample realization of **avū** by a male speaker



2.2.2. The contour tone

The contour tone in Tɔ̀ɲúgbe is a rising tone. Apart from in sandhi processes, it occurs on nouns that have semi-long vowels. Hence, vowels in syllables on which the rising tone occurs are longer than vowels on which level tones occur (apart from the long mid tone). The tone involves a pitch that rises from its point of departure. The pitch starts from a point close to the level of the low tone pitch, then rises through until the end. The diagram below represents the rising tone on the noun **əkpǎ** ‘cough’.

Fig.5-Sample realization of **əkpǎ** by a male speaker



In this work, I use the following markings for tones. The high tone is marked as [´]; the low tone is marked as [˘]; the long mid tone as [ˉ]

and the rising tone is marked as [˥]. Whenever there is an occurrence of a (short) mid tone⁹ (on verbs and on the initial vowels of nouns for instance), I do not mark it.

2.3. Phonological processes

Different phonological processes take place within and outside the syllable in Tɔ̀nùgbe. Due to the pervasiveness of these processes, some morphemes can be difficult to recognize. In order to facilitate the identification of the morphemes, when phonological processes are very important in the constructions presented, I adopt a four-level gloss: the first level presents the construction as it is realized (with all the phonological processes present); the second level presents the construction free of phonological processes; the third level presents an interlinear morphemic gloss; and the final level presents the free translation in English. Below, I present some of the commonest phonological processes that are attested in Tɔ̀nùgbe.

2.3.1. Elision

Elision involves the omission of certain vowel and consonant sounds, and even of whole syllables, in particular contexts. Vowel elision involves the elimination of certain vowel sounds, in the presence of other vowels. In example (4), the vowel of **lɔ́** is elided in contact with the vowel **a** of **asĩ** ‘hand’.

4. *nàñěá lé kùkú-á lá sĩ*
nàñě-á lɔ́ kùkú-á lɔ́ asĩ
 mother-ART.DEF hold hat-ART.DEF at hand
 ‘Her mother is holding the hat’ (Flex_Ext: Des 26.1)

Vowel elision is very rampant in the presence of vowels that are often referred to as *noun prefixes* in Ewe linguistics (cf. Stahlke 1971: 173). Given that these vowels *i.e.* the noun prefixes, although not instances of prototypical prefixes, in some respects, function similarly as prototypical morphological prefixes, I refer to them as *residue*¹⁰ *noun prefixes*.

⁹ The short mid tone is shorter in duration as compared to the long mid tone.

¹⁰ I refer to the prefixes as such due to the fact that they can be argued to be residues of an archaic system of nominal prefixing.

Tɔ̀ɣùgbe has two residue noun prefixes: **ə** and **a**. The residue noun prefix **ə** is elided in the presence of other vowels while other vowels are elided in the presence of the residue noun prefix **a**. In example (5) for instance, the final vowel [o] of the possessive connective **wó** is elided in contact with the residue prefix **a** in **awù** ‘dress’.

5. *wá wùó*
wó **awù-á**
 POSS dress-ART.DEF
 ‘Her dress’ (Flex_Ext: Des 25.1)

Consonant elision, on the other hand, mainly concerns sonorants. The sonorants that are involved in elision are: the approximants [w], [j], the lateral [l] and the trill [r]. Consonant elision can occur in syntax or during morphological processes (for consonant elision in morphological processes, see section 3.1.1. of this chapter). For instance, in (6), the [w] of the second person singular pronoun **wò** is elided and the vowel attached to the preceding form **ná**.

6. *amìé dó ɣgò náò*
amè-á **dó** **ɣgò** **ná-wò**
 person-ART.DEF ICV front DAT-PRO.2SG
 ‘The person is in front of you’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 1151.1)

2.3.2. Coalescence

A second pervasive phonological process in Tɔ̀ɣùgbe is coalescence. Coalescence refers to the merger of two or more distinct sounds that results in a third sound. In example (7), for instance, the third person singular pronoun **é** fuses with the **ə** of the locative predicate to form the mid-closed front vowel [e].

7. *mí vá lé*
mí **vá** **lè-é**
 PRO.1PL VENT be.at-PRO.3SG
 ‘We existed’ (Flex_Sto: Maw 10.1)

Coalescence concerns mainly vowels. However, a vowel and consonant coalescence also exists in Tɔ̀ɣùgbe. Indeed, the bilabial

nasal [m] can coalesce with the central vowel [a] to form the nasalized close back vowel [ũ]. The example below illustrates this phenomenon.

8. *əwò yé gblǎ́é nṹ*
əwò **yé** **gblǎ́-é** **ná-m**
 PRO.2SG FOC tell-PRO.3SG DAT-PRO.1SG
 ‘You, tell me’ (Flex_Nar: afi 1.2)

There are three very common types of coalescence in Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe, listed below as (a), (b) and (c). Example (8) above illustrates an instance of (a); the examples (9) and (10) below illustrate respectively the case of (b) and (c).

- a. [a] + [m] \longrightarrow [ũ]
 b. [a] + [e] \longrightarrow [ɛ]
 c. [ə] + [o] \longrightarrow [ɔ]

9. *wó ɸò abìē né*
wó **ɸò** **abì-á** **ná-é**
 PRO.3PL beat wound-ART.DEF DAT-PRO.3SG
 ‘They treated the wound for it’ (Flex_Ext: Des 21.1)

10. *kó gbǎ́ǎ eɸù wó kù*
ké-wó **gbǎ́-á** **eɸù** **wó** **kù**
 when-PRO.3PL come-HAB vehicle PRO.3PL drive
 ‘They came in a canoe’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 190.1)

2.3.3. Assimilation

Assimilation is an important phonological process in Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe. In this process a sound becomes more like a nearby sound. I shall illustrate the process with two grammatical items: the negative marker and the habitual marker.

The negative marker in Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe as well as in other dialects of the Ewe language is a discontinuous particle **mə...ò**. The first part **mə** immediately precedes the verb phrase while the last part **ò** follows the verb phrase or occurs after an adverb. In Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe, the second part of

the negative marker is lowered if preceded by [ə] or [ɛ]. As a result, the mid-closed vowel [o] is realized as mid-open [ɔ] in such instances. Observe the realizations of the second part of the negation marker in the following examples:

11. *ɲà mǎ bié tǎtǎɲ*

ɲà	mǎ	bié	tǎtǎ	-ɲà	-ò
PRO.1SG	NEG	ask	father	-PRO.1SG	-NEG

‘I did not ask my father’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 104.1)

12. *ədʒrè alèké mé gé léó dòméɲ*

ədʒrè	alèké	mé	gé	lé	wó
fight	no	NEG	fall	at	PRO.3PL

dòmè-é	-ò
midsection-PRO.3SG	NEG

‘There was no enmity between them’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 533.1)

The habitual aspect marker in Tɔŋúgbè is **á**. The habitual marker undergoes assimilation; it is assimilated to the tongue position of the preceding vowel. As a consequence, it surfaces as **é** before front vowels (13) and as **ɔ** before back vowels (14).

13. *wó mǎ yìé aβàò*

wó	mǎ	yì-é	aβà	ò
PRO.3PL	NEG	go-HAB	war	NEG

‘They do not go to war’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 556.1)

14. *ɛβiɛ́ mǎ dǔɔ́ nò núò*

ɛβà-á-wó	mǎ	dǔ-ɔ	ənò	ənū
Ewe-ART.DEF-PL	NEG	eat-HAB	mother	thing

ò
NEG

‘The Ewes do not inherit maternally’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 276.1)

3. Morphology

This section is dedicated to the study of the strategies involved in word formation in Tɔ̀nùgbe and aims at facilitating the identification of morphemes in the examples cited later on in this thesis. From now, I shall use the standard Ewe orthography (see section 2.1.2 above) in presenting the examples.

3.1. Word formation

Tɔ̀nùgbe, and the Ewe language, is with respect to its morphology, of the isolating type. As characteristic of isolating languages, morphemes are free. In example (15), for instance, all words correspond to free morphemes.

15. **amè búbũ há gá fɔ̀ é-ké**
 person another also REP pick PRO.3SG-DEM
 ‘Another person also took this’ (Flex_Nar: Fam 80.1)

However, though an isolating language, the language does have some agglutinative features (Ameka 1991:7). There are certain words which are composed of two or more morphemes. In example (16), the words **agblènũ** ‘hoe’ and **asìmè** ‘market’ are a combination of independent morphemes that are agglutinated, *i.e.* ‘farm’-‘thing’ and ‘market’-‘inside’.

16. a. **agblènũ** b. **asìmè**
 agblè -enũ **asì -mè**
 farm -thing market -inside
 ‘hoe’ ‘market’

The major strategies of word formation in Tɔ̀nùgbe discussed below are: reduplication, compounding and affixation. In the following sections, I briefly present each of these word-formation strategies *i.e.* reduplication in section 3.1.1; compounding in section 3.1.2; and suffixation in section 3.1.3.

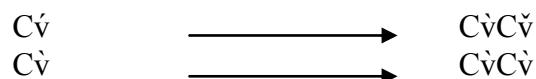
3.1.1. Reduplication

Many words in Tɔ̀nùgbe are formed by reduplication. Reduplication consists in the repetition of a part or the whole of a base in order to

form a new word. In the example below, the noun form **kpàkpă** ‘stoppage’ is formed from the reduplication of the verb **kpá** ‘stop’.

17. **kpá** **kpà~kpă**
 stop RED~stop
 ‘stoppage’

The tone on reduplicated forms depends on the tone of the base. For instance, in monosyllabic bases, tone patterns in reduplicated morphemes can be summarized as follows:



Hence, when the monosyllabic base has a high tone, as illustrated by the example (17), the output has a low tone on the first syllable and a rising tone on the second syllable. When the base has a low tone, the output has a low tone on both syllables, as demonstrated in example (18) below:

18. **kè** **kè~kè**
 ‘open’ RED~open
 ‘open wide’

There are two major patterns of reduplication in Tɔ̀ngugbe: partial reduplication and full reduplication. In partial reduplication, some of the sounds of the base are omitted in the reduplicated part, whereas in full reduplication no sound is lost in the reduplication process. I will illustrate these two types of reduplication by means of examples of the formation of deverbal nouns.

Partial reduplication occurs when the base to be reduplicated has a CCV syllable structure. In the process of reduplicating a verb with a CCV syllable structure to form a noun, the second consonant of the CC onset is omitted in the output. In the examples presented in (19) below, the second consonant of the onset, [l], is eliminated in the first syllable of the reduplicated forms.

- | | | | | | |
|--------|------------|-----------------------|----|-------------|------------------------|
| 19. a. | blá | <i>bàblă</i> | b. | v̀lè | <i>vèvlè</i> |
| | ‘tie’ | bà ~blá | | ‘struggle’ | vè ~v̀lè |
| | | RED tie | | | RED struggle |
| | | ‘the act of tying’ | | | ‘a struggle’ |

Full reduplication occurs elsewhere *i.e.* when the base to be reduplicated is of CV syllabic structure or is multisyllabic. In the example (20), since the base to be reduplicated, *viz.* **kú** ‘die’, has a CV syllabic structure, the whole base is reduplicated. In the case of example (21), as the base to be reduplicated, *i.e.* **háyá** ‘be lively’ is multisyllabic, it is completely reduplicated to form the noun **hàyàháyá** ‘healing’.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|------------------------|
| 20. | kú | kù.kǔ |
| | die | RED~die |
| | | ‘The act of dying’ |
| | | |
| 21. | háyá | hàyàháyá |
| | ‘be lively’ | hàyà ~háyá |
| | | RED ~be adventurous |
| | | ‘a healing’ |

As can be observed from the example (21) above, the tone rules stated above do not hold when multisyllabic bases are reduplicated. Multisyllabic root words are not only rare in Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe, but also, their reduplicated forms are not frequent. A critical examination will have to be carried out in order to identify these bases, their reduplicated forms, and the tone rules that operate there within.

3.1.2. Compounding

Compounding is a very common derivational strategy in Ewe (Ofori 2002); and the process functions according to similar principles in Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe. Compounding consists of the combination of two or more forms in order to form a new lexical item. In example (22.a) two forms, **etɔ̀** ‘river’ and **evū** ‘vehicle’, are combined into a complex word **tɔ̀vú** ‘stream’, while in (22.b) three forms **sùkú** ‘school’, **exò** ‘house’ and **mè** ‘interior.section’ are combined into the complex word **sukúxóme** ‘classroom’.

22. a. *tòvú* b. *sùkúxòmè*
etò - **evū** **sùkú** - **exò** - **mè**
river vehicle school house interior.section
‘stream’ ‘classroom’

Tone change in compounding seems to be less systematic than in reduplication of monosyllabic bases. However, when compounded forms express possessive relations, there are systematic tone changes. I explore this systematic tone changes in chapter 3, section 3.3.

Compounding can be accompanied by phonological processes. In example (23), for instance, the compounding process goes along with nasalization (the insertion of the nasal sound [ŋ]) and coalescence *i.e* the vowel coalescence rule [a] + [ə] = [ɛ] stated in section 2.3.2

23. *asīŋgè*
asī **ŋ** -**gà** -**é**
hand LIG metal -DIM
‘ring’

3.1.3. Affixation

The third and final derivational strategy that is relevant to this work is affixation. Affixation consists in adding affixes to bases, in order to create new forms. In example (24), the diminutive suffix **-é** is added to the noun **atīkpó** ‘wood’ to form the word **atīkpóé** ‘a stick’.

24. *atīkpóé*
atī -**kpo** -**é**
tree -baton DIM
‘a stick’

Affixation can be combined with other derivational strategies. Therefore, suffixes can, for instance, be affixed to nouns that are formed by composition as demonstrated in the example below, in which the possessee pronoun is agglutinated to the noun **bùbù** ‘respect’. The diminutive suffix is then suffixed to the form **bùbùtò** ‘Lit. The one possessed by respect’ in order to form the adverbial ‘respectfully’.

25. **bù** *bùbùtɔɛ*
 ‘respect’ **bùbù** **-tɔ-ɛ**
 respect -PRO.PD-DIM
 respectfully’

4. Syntax

This section presents a survey of the syntax of Tɔ̀nùgbe. A preliminary comment is necessary in respect of constituent order in Tɔ̀nùgbe. The various dialects of the Ewe language (Tɔ̀nùgbe included) have an subject-verb-object (SVO) constituent order, as is illustrated by (26). However, in certain specific circumstances, the construction can for instance have the order Subject-Copular-Verb-Object-Aspectual marker (when the verb is marked as being in the progressive aspect or in the prospective). Example (27) illustrates the latter scenario; in this instance, the verb is marked as being in the progressive aspect.

26. *avū́ dā atī*
 avū-á **dā** **atī**
 dog-ART.DEF throw tree
 ‘The dog threw a stick’ (Flex_Ext: Dzi 4.1)
27. *nỳnū́vīé vā lè enū́ tūtú*
 nỳnū́vī-á **vā** **lè** **enū-á** **tútú-ń**
 girl-ART.DEF VENT COP thing-ART.DEF clean-PROG
 ‘The girl was cleaning the thing’ (Flex_Ext: Dzi 29.1)

As in the sections devoted to phonology and morphology, two major criteria guide the choice of topics for this sub-section.

- I concentrate on the aspects of the syntax that are relevant to the work in the subsequent sections. For instance, the typology of clausal syntax, *i.e.* the distinction between simple, serial, overlapping and minor clauses (Ansre 2000: 36) will not be developed in the present survey.
- The focus is also on those aspects where the syntax of Tɔ̀nùgbe differs from the syntax of other dialects of Ewe.

These differences mainly concern some of the forms that occur in the different slots of the noun phrase, and the different markers that occur in the verb phrase to indicate tense, aspect and mood.

To these ends, I will successively present the noun phrase (section 4.1), the verb phrase (section 4.2), and the adpositional phrase (section 4.3). I will close the sub-section with a presentation of focus markers (section 4.4).

4.1. Noun Phrase structure

The noun phrase in Tɔ̀ɣúgbe, and other dialects of the Ewe language, is composed of one or more nuclei optionally accompanied by other elements. The nucleus can be a noun, a pronoun or a quantifier. Modifiers and determiners include adjectives, quantifiers, demonstratives, articles and intensifiers (Duthie 1996: 44). Ameka (1991: 45) represents the internal structure of the noun phrase in Ewe as:

$$(INT) \left\{ \begin{array}{c} N \\ PRO \\ QT \end{array} \right\} (ADJ) *(QT) (DET) (PL) (INT)*$$

The noun phrase pattern in Tɔ̀ɣúgbe is identical to the noun phrase pattern as detailed by Ameka (1991) for standard Ewe. However, the various elements that enter the positions of the pattern in Tɔ̀ɣúgbe can manifest different characteristics from the forms that occur in other dialects of the language. The major divergences concern intensifiers (section 4.1.1), pronouns (section 4.1.2), demonstratives (section 4.1.3) and articles (section 4.1.4). The noun phrase, its nominal nucleus, and the elements that can occur to modify or determine it, will be crucial in understanding the relations that are examined later on in attributive possessive constructions and external possessor constructions *i.e* the discussions in chapter 3 and chapter 5 respectively.

4.1.1. Intensifiers

Intensifiers (in noun phrases) are morphemes that are used to characterize or emphasize aspects of the head of the noun phrase (Konig & Siemund 2000: 45). Intensifiers of Tɔ̀nùgbe include words such as **alé** ‘such’, **nènié (neném)** ‘such’, **fòmèví** ‘type’, **tɔ̀ngbé** ‘type’, **kóŋ** ‘especially’, **pé** ‘only’, **dèdè** ‘only’ etc. The intensifiers **nenié (neném)** ‘such’ and **alé** ‘such’ occur in pre-nucleus slot of an expanded noun phrase (28), whereas all other intensifiers occur in post-nucleus slots of an expanded noun phrase, as is illustrated by the intensifier **tɔ̀ngbé** ‘type’ in (29).

28. *nènié nú má-wó mè wò-é-a*
nènié **nú** **má-wó** **mè** **wò-é-a**
 INT thing DEM-PL PRO.1SG do-PRO.3SG-PART
 ‘It’s those things that I am referring to’

29. *kɔ̀fé gá kiyíé tɔ̀ngbé*
 village big DEM type
 ‘This kind of big village’

4.1.2. Nouns

Some morphological aspects of nouns in Tɔ̀nùgbe have been presented in the subsection on morphology (see section 3). In the framework of this study, it is important to focus also on some semantic sub-types of nouns. The two semantic sub-types of nouns that are relevant for this work are relational nouns and locational terms, labeled as ‘substantives of place’ by Westermann (1930: 51).

A relational noun is a noun that has an argument position, which can be saturated by an implicit or explicit argument (De Bruin & Scha 1988). In other words, relational nouns are nouns that evoke an association with some other nominal referent. For example, the English word **mother** entails **mother of someone**. In Tɔ̀nùgbe, body-part terms, kinship terms, spatial orientation terms and some socio-culturally important terms (which I refer to as socio-culturally relational terms) such as **wife** and **friend**, are construed as relational nouns.

The second semantic sub-type of nouns, locational terms, is used to denote parts or areas of another nominal referent. They can also be used to indicate spatial relations. Originating from nouns referring to body-parts, they have grammaticalized into adpositions (Ameka 1991: 243). The following table lists some of the commonest locational terms in Tɔ̀ngugbe and their body-part sources:

Table 4: Locational terms and their body-part sources

Body part	Locational term
etá ‘head’	tá ‘top’
ɲutí ‘skin’	ɲutí ‘by’
así ‘hand’	sí ‘space’
etō ‘ear’	tó ‘edge’
enú ‘mouth’	nú ‘entry’
axá ‘side’	xá ‘side’

The following examples illustrate the use of the noun **etá** ‘head’ as a body part (30) and as a locational term (31) that indicates the place or region considered the **western direction** relative of the Volta **river**.

30. **é yì wó tá**
 PRO. 3SG go POSS head
 ‘It goes towards his head’ (Flex_Arr: Afi 14.1)
31. **é yì tsì-tá**
 PRO.3SG go water-head
 ‘Lit. It goes to water’s head’
 (It goes towards upstream direction)’ (Flex_Arr: Afi 10.1)

The distinction between the body-part terms and locational terms (which I refer to in the later chapters as spatial orientation terms) shall feature prominently in the study of attributive possessive constructions and the analysis of the concept of alienability (see Chapter 3, section 2.4.2.1). It will also be crucial for understanding the relations expressed in predicative possessive constructions (chapter 4) and locative constructions (Chapter 6, section 3).

4.1.3. Pronouns

The nucleus of the noun phrase can be a pronoun (*i.e.* they can be accompanied by modifiers). Pronouns of Tɔ̀ṣúgbe can be divided into four series: subject pronouns, object pronouns, independent pronouns and logophoric pronouns. The table below lists the pronominal forms available in Tɔ̀ṣúgbe.

Table 5: List of pronouns in Tɔ̀ṣúgbe

	SINGULAR			PLURAL		
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Subject	mè	è	é (wò)	mí	mì	wó
Object	m̀	wò	é (í,é)	mí	mì	wó
Independent	enyè	ewò	yé	mié(ó)	miè(ó)	woóó
Logophoric		yè	yè		yèó	yèó

The pronouns that are most relevant in this work are the independent forms. Independent pronouns are pronouns that are used in emphatic contexts or in appositions. As can be observed from the table, Tɔ̀ṣúgbe has no possessive pronouns. The independent pronouns are therefore used in possessive constructions as well. The independent pronouns that occur in possessive constructions are the first and second person singular and plural forms.

Moreover, two other pronoun types, the third person singular subject pronoun and the logophoric pronoun, also occur in possessive constructions. With respect to the subject pronoun, only the form **é** occurs in possessive constructions.

The logophoric pronoun occurs in complement clauses introduced by the quotative marker **bé** (which can translated into English as ‘say’). It is used when an argument of the complement clause is coreferential with the subject of the quotative marker (typically in indirect speeches). In example (32), since the subject of the complement clause is the same as the subject of the quotative marker *i.e.* **avùó** ‘the dog’, the logophoric pronoun is used.

32. *avùó bé eyè mè lè lólò gèò*
avù-á **bé** **yè** **mè** **lè** **lólò**
 dog-ART.DEF QUOT PRO.LOG NEG COP agree
gé **ò**
 PROSP NEG
 ‘The dog said it will not agree’ (Flex_Ext: Viv 19.1)

4.1.4. Demonstratives

The next slot in the noun phrase structure presented above is the Determiner (DET) slot. This slot can be filled by demonstratives or articles. Demonstratives are presented in the present section. Articles will be analyzed in section 4.1.5 below.

Demonstratives of Tɔ̀ngugbe in the noun phrase are post-head (nucleus) modifiers. They are of two major types: proximal and distal. In addition to this binary referential division, the demonstrative system of Tɔ̀ngugbe exhibits a five-term deictic opposition¹¹, which is person-oriented (speaker-anchored). The demonstrative can denote a referent (i) in the proximity of the speaker, (ii) away from the speaker (iii) further away from speaker (iv) far away from the speaker (v) very far away from the speaker. Witness the following examples:

33. **enū** **yíé**
 thing DEM:PROX
 ‘This thing’
34. **amé** **má-é** **tsó** **agbālē-á**
 person DEM:DIST1-FOC take book-ART.DEF
 ‘Its that person who took the book’ (Flex_Nar: Afi 47.1)

¹¹ The two competing forms for proximal referencing in table 6 do not differ in terms of deictic distance. Instead they differ in terms of their pragmatic values *i.e.* Prox A= ‘this’, Prox B= ‘this very’.

35. *amé kémúí, wó sú mé dèdè*

amè **kémú-í,** **wó** **sùsù** **mé** **dè**
 person DEM:DIST2-FOC POSS brain NEG reach
ò
 NEG

‘That other person is not intelligent’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 546.1)

36. *wó vá lé amé kēmē-wó*

PRO.3PL VENT catch human DEM :DIST3-PL

‘They caught those other people’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 271.1)

37. *é yì nyìnòè-á kēmēhē gbó*

PRO.3PL go uncle-ART.DEF DEM:DIST4 vicinity

‘Lit. He/she has gone to that other other uncle’s end’

‘(He/she has gone to that other uncle’s)’

Table 6: List of demonstratives in Təṇúgbe

	Prox 1	Prox 2	Dist 1	Dist 2	Dist 3	Dist 4
A	yì	ké	má	kém(ú)	kēmē	kēmēhē
B	yié	kíyié	kámá			

To form demonstrative pronouns, the third person singular subject pronoun (see section 4.1.3. above) is prefixed to the demonstrative such as **é-kámá** ‘that one’.

In addition to this, Təṇúgbe also has a set of forms that function as adverbial demonstratives. These forms are compounds, resulting from the combination of the noun **gā** ‘place’ and the demonstratives presented in table 6 above. Table 7 lists the forms that function as adverbial demonstratives in Təṇúgbe.

Table 7: Forms that function as adverbial demonstratives

FORM	MORPOLOGY	PHONO. PROCESS
gíyié	gá + yié	gí + yié
gámá	gá + má	gá + má
gém(ú)	gá + m	gé + m
gēmē	gá + mē	gé + mē
gēmēhē	gá + mēhē	gé + mēhē

In terms of deictic reference, the forms listed above exhibit a similar five-term deictic opposition as the demonstratives. In the following examples, for instance, the form **gíyíé** ‘here’ functions as a proximal demonstrative adverb; the form **gámá** ‘there’ functions as a distal demonstrative adverb that refers to a place away from the speaker; and the form **gámēhē** ‘that other place’ functions as a distal demonstrative adverb that refers to a place that is very far away from speaker.

38. *gíyíé dèvié tó*
gá-yíé **dèvī-á** **tó**
 place-DEM child-ART.DEF stop
 ‘Here the child stops’ (Flex_Ext: Dzi 47.1)
39. *avūó vá gámá*
avūá **vá** **gá-má**
 dog-ART.DEF come place-DEM
 ‘The dog came there’ (Flex_Ext: Des 8.1)
40. *etsié yì tsí gámēhē*
etsi-á **yì** **tsí** **gá-mēhē**
 water-ART.DEF go stay place-DEM
 ‘The stream is blocked at the other end’
 (Flex_Sto: Azi 179-180.1)

4.1.5. Articles

Tɔŋúgbé and other dialects of the Ewe language have two articles: the indefinite article and the definite article. In order to understand the meanings expressed by articles, information will have to be provided on the definiteness that is associated with the meanings of bare nouns. Therefore, before I detail the two types of articles, I present the bare noun.

The bare noun in Tɔŋúgbé, though without determiner, is not devoid of specificity. Indeed, the bare noun in Tɔŋúgbé as well as in other Ewe dialects refers to “instances of a substance or members of a class as well as generic reference” (Essegbey 1999: 43). For instance, in (41), the bare noun ‘dog’ refers to an instance of the class ‘dogs’.

41. *avū lè nyànùví-á sí*
 avū lè nyànùví-á sí
 dog be.at girl-ART.DEF hand
 ‘The girl has a dog’ (Flex_Ext: Des 3.1)

The indefinite article denotes ‘a certain’ member of the class known to the speaker, but presented as unknown to the hearer. In Tɔ̀ṣùgbe, the indefinite article is **álé** and it occurs after the nominal head of the noun phrase in an expanded noun phrase.

42. *..wò lé kùkú álé lá si*
 ..wò lé kùkú álé lé asī
 ..PRO.3SG hold hat ART.INDF at hand
 ‘He had a hat in hand’ (Flex_Ext: Des 15.1)

The indefinite article can be pluralized with the plural marker **wó** to refer to ‘certain’ members of a group known to the speaker. But the plural marker suffixed to the indefinite article undergoes various phonological processes (elision and coalescence) and thus surfaces as **áló**.

The definite article evokes the idea that the object being referred to is ‘a certain’ member (of a class) known to both speaker and hearer. The definite article in Tɔ̀ṣùgbe is **á**. It is cliticized to the noun phrase that it determines, as demonstrated in example (43).

43. **agbàlè agbàlè-á**
 ‘book’ ‘the book’

The definite article can however occur in different forms due to its assimilation to the tongue position of the preceeding vowel. Therefore, if the final vowel of the noun to which the definite article is cliticized is [i] or [e] the definite article surfaces as **é**; and if the preceding vowel is [u] and [o] it surfaces as **ó**. However, the article occurs as **ó** and **á** when the preceding vowel is the same vowel. Finally, when the preceeding vowel is the schwa, the definite article can be involved in a double process of assimilation and dissimilation and surfaces as **é** (for instance when the definite article occurs with

amè ‘person’) or it surfaces as **á** (for instance when the definite article occurs with **akplě** ‘akple’). Witness the following examples:

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 44. | děvǐ
‘child’ | děvǐ-ě
‘the child’ | dókoé
‘self’ | dókoé-ě
‘the self’ |
| 45. | nyànù
‘woman’ | nyànù-ǔ
‘the woman’ | fófó
‘brother’ | fòfò-ǔ
‘the brother’ |
| 46. | esrǔ
‘spouse’ | esrǔ-ǔ
‘the spouse’ | agbà
‘load’ | agbà-á
‘the load’ |
| 47. | amè
‘person’ | amìé
amè-ě
‘the person’ | akplě
‘akple’ | akplě-á
‘the akple’ |

In the analysis of attributive possessive constructions, the role of definite articles will be discussed with respect to the third person singular pronominal possession (chapter 3, section 2.2.1). Also, I refer to the definite article and demonstratives to illustrate the syntactic features that characterize predicative possessive constructions, external possessor constructions, locative constructions and the existential construction (Chapter 6).

4.1.6. Coordinate noun phrases

Two processes are used in coordinate noun phrases in Tɔ̀ṣúgbè: conjunction and disjunction.

In conjunctive coordinate noun phrases, two morphemes, **kplí** ‘and’ or **kpakplí** ‘and’ are used as coordinating conjunctions. While the form **kplí** is used before the second of two noun phrases (48), the form **kpaplí** is used to introduce the last noun phrase of a series of more than two noun phrases (49).

48. **avū** **kplí** **tòdzó**
 dog and cat
 ‘A dog and a cat’ (Flex_Ext: Dzi 2.1)

49. **sùkúdzíkplá** **dàrékta** **kpákplí** **másta**
 school administrator director and headmaster
 ‘School administrator, director and headmaster’
 (Flex_Sto: Azi 430.1)

In dysjunctive coordinate noun phrases, two markers, **aló** ‘or’ and **ló** ‘or’ are used as coordinating conjunctions. Example (50) illustrates a dysjunctive coordinate noun phrase in Tɔ̀nùgbe.

50. **etòlía** **aló** **enèlía-á-wó**
 third or fourth-ART.DEF-PL
 ‘The third or the fourth ones’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 656.1)

4.2. Verb Phrase Structure

Verbs feature prominently in chapters 4, 5 and 6, which deal with clausal constructions. Different kinds of verbs are to be noted in Tɔ̀nùgbe (from one place to multiple place verbs). However, one opposition needs to be noted in relation to this work: the opposition between inherent complement verbs (or inherent object verbs) and simple verbs.

Inherent complement verbs (ICV) are verbs that, independent of their objects, are semantically generic. They therefore rely for their interpretation on their complements (for a useful discussion on inherent complement verbs in Ewe, see Essegbey (1999, 2010)). The meaning of the verb **fú** in example (51) below cannot be determined independent of its complement **tsì** ‘water’. Such a verb is thus referred to as an Inherent Complement Verb.

51. **Kofi** **fú** **tsì**
 Kofi ICV water
 ‘Kofi swam’

Simple verbs, as opposed to inherent complement verbs are bare verbs that are semantically specific. Some bare verbs also participate in, especially predicative possessive constructions. To this end, some preliminary comments need to be made about verbs of Ewe in general.

First of all, bare verbs are in the aorist *i.e.* they typically express a completed action. Secondly, in Ewe, verbs do not convey inflection. Instead, free morphemes mark aspect, tense and mood. Ameka (1991, 2008) defines the structure of the verb phrase in Ewe as follows:

(IRR) (REP) (MOD/LOC) (TENSE) VERB (ASPECT)

The Tɔ̀nùgbe verb phrase structure does not differ from the structure stated above. However, the various elements that fill the various slots can differ from the elements that occur in other dialects of Ewe. This section will deal with modals (section 4.2.1), locatives (section 4.2.3) and aspectual markers (section 4.2.3).

4.2.1. Modals

In addition to the modal **nyá**, which marks epistemic possibility, Tɔ̀nùgbe also has the modal **ɖá**, which expresses probability. The following examples illustrate the use of both modals:

52. *mé nyá ỳyɔ̌ né míó*
mé **nyá** **lè** **ỳyɔ̌-m** **né** **mí**
 3SG.NEG possibly COP call-PROG DAT PRO.1PL
ò
 NEG
 ‘We found it difficult to pronounce’ (Flex_Sto:Azi 247.1)

53. *é ɖá dzó*
 PRO.3SG probably go
 ‘He probably should have left’

Also the modal **ténú** ‘can’ marks ability and root possibility. The modal however has two allomorphs: **té** and **tá**. The form **té** surfaces in the absence of irrealis markers (the subjunctive or the potential marker) in the verb phrase (54); the form **tá** surfaces when any of the irrealis markers is present, such as the potential marker (55)

54. *è té vá*
 PRO.2SG can come
 ‘You are able to come’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 1544.1)

55. *mí àtá xlà gbālě́*

mí	à-tá	xlè	agbālě-wó
PRO.1PL	POT -can	read	book-PL

‘We can read books’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 1155.1)

Tɔ̀nùgbe modals that express the idea of ‘attempted action’ are also fascinating. In addition to **kàtsè** (the most common of the two), which is present in other dialects of Ewe as well, and which expresses the idea of ‘daringness’ (Ameka 2008: 145), Tɔ̀nùgbe has the form **dzèhā** (grammaticalized from the verb **dzè** ‘to be in contact with’ and the noun **ehā** ‘crowd’) which communicates the idea of ‘someone being daring’. Examples (56) and (57) demonstrate the use of **dzèhā** and **katse** in Tɔ̀nùgbe respectively.

56. *mè dzèhā tró*

mè	dzèhā	tró
PRO.1SG	dare	return

‘I dared return’

57. *kàtsè ná trɔ̃ yì*

kàtsè	né-è-á	tró	yì
2SG.dare	IMP-PRO.2SG-SUBJ	return	go

‘Don’t even dare trying to go again’

4.2.2. Locatives

The most intriguing difference between the verb phrase stated in section 4.2 and the verb phrase of Tɔ̀nùgbe concerns the locative particles (LOC). In Tɔ̀nùgbe, the particles can be grouped into two sets: **hé** and **yì** on one hand, **vá** and **váyì**, on the other hand.

Hé and **yì** are used to indicate motion away from deitic centre *i.e* the itive. However, they also express the manner in which events are ordered with respect to each other. **Hé** is used to indicate the simultaneity of the event of the verb in respect of other events in the speech context while **yì** (which can be argued to have grammaticalized from the verb **yì** ‘go’) describes the sequentiality between the event expressed by the verb and another event in the preceding context. Due

to the ‘simultaneity’ signaled by **hé**, sentence (58) can be paraphrased as ‘the mother beat her and asked her to, at that very moment, go to Eso’. Sentence (59) in which the form **yì** is used, could also be glossed as ‘he did an activity, (then) he went to the farm and now he is back’.

58. *nànéá fòé vùuu bé né hé yì sò gbó*
nàné-á **fò-é** **vùuu** **bé** **né**
 mother-ART.DEF beat-PRO.3SG much QUOT IMP
hé **yì** **sò** **gbó**
 IT go thunder.god vicinity
 ‘The mother beat her well and asked her to eventually go to Eso’
 (Flex_Sto: Maw 38.1)

59. *é yì yì agblè -mè vá*
 PRO.3SG IT go farm inside -come
 ‘He went to farm and came back’ (Flex_Nar : Afi 3.1)

The second set of locative particles is **vá** and **váyì**. The form **vá** (which can be argued to have grammaticalized from the verb **vá** ‘go’) is used to express motion towards deictic centre or source *i.e* the ventive. It also expresses the idea that the state of affairs or event expressed by the verb is eventually happening. The sentences in example (60), can therefore be paraphrased as ‘this thing that eventually came to pass’.

60. *enù yíé vá dzò*
 thing DEM VENT happen
 ‘This thing came to pass’ (Flex_Ext: Viv 12.1)

The second morpheme of the second set *i.e.* **váyì**, is a combination of the verbs **vá** ‘come’ and **yì** ‘go’. As a locative particle, **váyì** is used to express the idea that, the event expressed by the verb occurred at a place distinct from deictic center *i.e* the altrilocal. Thus the meaning of the sentence in (61) can be paraphrased as ‘the dog went, and when there, picked it.

61. *avũó yì váyì tsóé*

avũ-á **yì** **váyì** **tsó-é**
 dog-ART.DEF go ALTR take-PRO.3SG
 ‘The dog went and picked it’ (Flex_Ext: Dzi 6.1)

4.2.3. Aspectual markers

Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe exhibits specific features with respect to the progressive and habitual markers. In Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe as well as in other Ewe dialects, the progressive marker is **m̃**. It co-occurs with the copular **lè/nɔ̀**, which can be elided in rapid speech. In other Ewe dialects, the progressive marker **m̃** is attached to the verb. In Tɔ̀nɔ̀gbe the marker **m̃** either participates in resyllabification or it is elided, in which case the preceding vowel is nasalized.

The marker participates in resyllabification when the following element is a vowel. Thus, in example (62), the progressive marker becomes the onset of the newly constituted syllable **mé**.

62. *è nyàá mè se méà ?*

è **lè** **nyàá** **mè** **sè**
 PRO.2SG COP issue-ART.DEF inside hear
m-é-à
 PROG-LIG-Q

‘Are you following what I am saying?’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 64.1)

The progressive marker is elided in the following contexts: when the following word begins with a consonant (63), when it is in sentence-final position (64) or when the verb is reduplicated (65). In these instances, the preceding vowel is nasalized. The nasalized vowel has a low tone when the verb is a low tone verb (63); the nasalized vowel has a high tone (64) or a rising tone (65) when the verb is a high tone verb.

63. *enyà dzrò mí lè*

enyà **dzrò-m̃** **mí** **lè**
 issue discuss-PROG PRO.1PL COP
 ‘We are just having a discussion’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 262.1)

64. *wó nò wò vòvòvò atsà vòvòvòwó dũ*
wó **nò** **wò** **vòvòvò** **atsà**
 PRO.3PL COP:PST dance different style
vòvòvò-wó **dũ-m**
 different-PL dance-PROG
 ‘They dance in different styles’ (Flex_Sto: Fam 20.1)

65. *é lè vîvî né*
é **lè** **vî-vî-m** **ná-é**
 PRO.3SG COP RED~sweet-PROG DAT-PRO.3SG
 ‘She was enjoying the thing’ (Flex_Nar: Fam 69.1)

Finally, the Tɔŋúgbɛ verb phrase exhibits a difference with respect to the form of the habitual marker. In other Ewe dialects, the habitual marker is **a** (the tone is underlyingly non-high). In Tɔŋúgbɛ, the marker is **á** (the tone is typically high); and it is assimilated to the tongue position of the preceding vowel. The marker therefore occurs as **á** when the last vowel of the verb is [a] (66); It occurs as **é** when the last vowel of the verb is a front vowel, *i.e.* [i], [e], [ɛ] or the schwa, [ə] (67), (68); and it surfaces as **ɔ́** when the last vowel of the verb is a back vowel, *i.e.* [u], [o], [ɔ] (69), (70). Observe the following examples:

66. **wó** **dzrá-á** **lã**
 PRO.3PL sell-HAB animal
 ‘They sell animals’
67. *wó vá yîé beach*
wó **vá** **yî-á** **beach**
 PRO.3PL VENT go-HAB beach
 ‘They go to beach’ (Flex_Sto: Fam 32.1)

68. *é là bé mé lé-á bē né nū-ò*
 PRO.3SG POT QUOT 3SG.NEG hold-HAB care
 DAT thing-NEG
 ‘he will say that she is careless’ (Flex_Nar: Fam 115.1)

69. *azàá mèá, wó váyì fòó ahà dè*
 festival-ART.DEF inside-TOP PRO.3PL ALT
 beat-HAB drink at-PRO.3SG
 ‘During the festival, libation is poured’ (Flex_Sto: Fam 5.1)

70. *efiē mí tsóó dè*
 chief-ART.DEF-PL PRO.1PL take-ART.DEF some-PL
 ‘We carry some of the chiefs’ (Flex_Sto: Fam 19.1)

4.3. Adpositional phrases

The adpositional phrase involves prepositions, postpositions or both. Prepositions in Ewe are argued to have developed from verbs (Ameka 1995), while some postpositions have developed from body-part nouns (see section 4.1. above). The example (71) below illustrates the occurrence of a preposition as the head of an adpositional phrase; example (72) demonstrates the use of a postposition as the head of an adpositional phrase; and example (73) illustrates the occurrence of both a preposition and a postposition in an adpositional phrase.

71. *tsiē xá lé tēfē álé*
 water-ART.DEF gather at place ART.INDF
 ‘The water gathers somewhere’ (Flex_Ext: Des 5.1)

72. *é lè é mè*
 PRO.3SG be.at PRO.3SG inside
 ‘Lit.It is inside’
 ‘(It’s true)’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 1184.1)

73. *mè vá sè kúlá lé dùó mè*

mè **vá** **sè** **kúlá** **lé** **dù-á**
 PRO.1SG VENT hear even at town-ART.DEF

mè
 inside

‘I came to hear it in town’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 1168.1)

Adpositional phrases are very important in the analysis of predicative possessive constructions, external possessor constructions, locative constructions and existential constructions because they occur in all these constructions.

4.4. Focus marking

The different constituents of the Tɔ̀ngúgbè sentence can be highlighted by focusing. Although the focus markers in Tɔ̀ngúgbè can vary from the makers in other Ewe dialects, the focused constituents are the same across Ewe dialects. Therefore, following from Ameka (1991), I present focus particles highlighting either the arguments of the verb (section 5.1) or the verb and the event it evokes (section 5.2).

4.4.1. Argument focus marking

Argument focus marking refers to the focusing of any of the verb’s arguments in the clause. Thus, all arguments in the clause can be focused. I start with focus markers in verbless constructions, and then continue with focus markers in clauses in which verbs occur.

The focus marker in the minor clause (clause without a verb) is **yó**. It occurs after the focused argument. Example (74) illustrates how arguments in the minor clause are focused.

74. *ɲùtsu-á wó núdùgbá yó*

ɲùtsu-á **wó** **núdù-gbá** **yó**
 man-ART.DEF POSS food-bowl FOC

‘It’s the man’s dinning plate’ (Flex_Atr: Fam 10.1)

Turning attention to focusing the arguments of verbs, the focus marker that is used for the subject is **é**.

- a) When the argument to be focused is a noun, the focus marker is subject to assimilation. The marker is assimilated to the height of the preceding vowel. Therefore, if the last vowel of the focused noun is a close vowel, *i.e.* [i], [u], the focus marker occurs as **í**; if the vowel is a mid-close vowel, *i.e.* [e], [o], [ə], the focus marker surfaces as **é**; and if it is a mid-open or open vowel, it occurs as **é**; witness, in the following examples, how the focus marker is assimilated to the height position of the final vowel of the focused nouns.

75. *Kofí fò Amá*

Kofí-é **fò** **Ama**
 Kofi-FOC beat Ama
 ‘It was Kofi who beat Ama’

76. *avuí dù Amá*

Avu-é **dù** **Amá**
 dog-FOC eat Ama
 ‘It was a dog that bit Ama’

77. *wó srònyíwoé yé wò yó*

wó **srònyí-wo-é** **yé** **wò** **yó**
 POSS nephew-PL-FOC PRO.3SG PRO.3SG call
 ‘It was his nephews that he took along’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 114.1)

78. *ñìtsuó sròóé ñkíyíé*

ñìtsu-á **srò-á-é** **nyé** **kíyíé**
 man-ART.DEF spouse-ART.DEF-FOC be DEM
 ‘Lit. It is the man’s wife this’
 ‘(This is the man’s wife)’ (Flex_Atr: Jul 2.1)

- b) If the subject that is focused is a pronominal, the focus marker is not assimilated to the height of the last vowel of the pronoun. When pronouns are to be focused, independent pronouns occur. Thus, the focus marker remains as **é** before all the focused pronominal forms. The following examples illustrate that whatever the independent pronoun, the form of the focus marker is same.

79. *enyèé dzùí*
enyè-é **dzù-é**
 PRO.1SG-FOC insult-PRO.3SG
 ‘It was I who insulted him’
80. *yé -é sí dzó*
 PRO.3SG-FOC run go
 ‘Lit. It was he who run away’
 ‘(He was the one who fled)’
81. *mió-é tsó*
 PRO.1PL-FOC get.up
 ‘Lit. It is us who got up’
 ‘(We are the ones who got up)’
82. *wóé gblé nūó*
wó-é **gblé** **nū-á**
 PRO.3PL-FOC spoil thing-ART.DEF
 ‘Lit. It is them who spoilt the thing’
 ‘(They are the ones who spoilt the thing)’

When the argument to be focused is an object, in Tɔ̀nùgbe, there is no focus marker involved. Focusing is done by constituent order. Hence, the item to be focused (*i.e.* the object) is simply clause-initialized: it is moved from its position within the clause and placed in front of the subject. In example (83) the object of the verb is **Kofi**. In example (84), in which **Kofi** is focused, it occurs clause-initially.

83. **Ama** **dzù** **Kofi**
 Ama insult Kofi
 ‘Ama insulted Kofi’
84. **Kofi** **Ama** **dzù**
 Kofi Ama insult
 ‘It was Kofi that Ama insulted’

Finally, if the item to be focused is an adverbial or an adpositional phrase, focusing is also done by constituent order. However, contrary

to what pertains in object focusing, the constituent order change for focusing adjuncts can be accompanied by the use of the marker **yé** (which is homophonous with the third person singular independent pronoun). In example (85), for instance, the adjunct position is filled by the adverb **etsò** ‘yesterday’. When **etsò** ‘yesterday’ is focused, it assumes clause-initial position. In clause initial position, **etsò** ‘yesterday’ can be accompanied by the focus marker (86) or not (87).

85. **Adzó vá etsò**
Adzo come yesterday
‘Adzo came yesterday’
86. **etsò yé Adzó vá**
yesterday FOC Adzo come
‘It was yesterday that Adzo came’
87. **etsò Adzó vá**
yesterday Adzo come
‘It was yesterday that Adzo came’

4.4.2. Verb focus marking

Verb focus marking involves highlighting the verb and the event it evokes. There are two strategies for focusing the verb in Təṇúgbe: reduplicating and copying the verb to the clause-initial position and the use of the marker **dè**. Example (88) illustrates verb focusing by reduplication, whereas example (89) shows the use of the verb focus marker.

88. **dzò~dzò Kòwù dzó kò mí vá**
go~go Korwu go then PRO.1PL come
‘We came just as Korwu left’
89. *etòó dè wò avē*
etò-á dè wò avē
river-ART.DEF FOC do forest
‘The stream had a lot of mangrove’ (Flex_Sto: Azi 183.1)

5. Conclusion

This chapter has offered a survey of the phonetics, morphology and syntax of Tɔ́nùgbe. Two types of phonetic elements have been distinguished: segmentals and suprasegmentals. The segmentals consist of vowels and consonants while the suprasegmentals consist of tones. In all, sixteen vowels and twenty-nine consonant sounds have been recognized in the dialect. Concerning the suprasegmentals, four tones have been observed for Tɔ́nùgbe: a high tone, a low tone, a (long) mid tone and rising tone. The segmental and the suprasegmentals combine into syllables. These syllables are also the tone bearing units. The syllable can however be subject to certain phonological processes. Some of the phonological processes surveyed in this section were elision, coalescence and assimilation.

The morphology section surveyed various morphological strategies that are available in Tɔ́nùgbe. Three morphological strategies were identified: reduplication, compounding and affixation. The tone rules that characterize the reduplication of monosyllabic verbs to form nouns were also specified. Of the various morphological processes surveyed, the compounding and affixation strategies shall be of prime importance in the descriptions of attributive possessive constructions. Therefore, in the subsequent chapters, I make frequent references to them.

With respect of syntax, three different phrase types have been described: noun phrase, verb phrase and adpositional phrase. The various word classes that occur in each of these phrase types, were equally studied. Particular attention was given to the word classes that manifest variation in relation to the other dialects of the Ewe language. Therefore, focus was placed on demonstratives, articles, pronouns (independent pronouns), modals, locatives and aspectual markers of the verb, and adpositions. A final section has been devoted to focus marking.

The description of Tɔ́nùgbe, as detailed in this chapter highlights some of the differences between Tɔ́nùgbe and other dialects of Ewe. The chapter did not have the ambition of capturing all aspects of the grammar of Tɔ́nùgbe. Rather, it is meant to be a sketch grammar that should serve as a background to analysis undertaken in the subsequent

chapters. Consequently, in the next chapters, where necessary, I refer to some of the items that have been developed above. More importantly however, this survey constitutes the very first attempt to describe Tɔ̀ṣúgbè and thus serves as a basis for further research.

