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Thilo C. Schadeberg

A SMALL SKETCH OF EWE
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THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EWE

Map taken from Capo 1982 (SUGIA 4:224)
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. About This Sketch

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

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

2. Selected Bibliography

Grammar:


Herbert F. W. Stahlke. 1971. Topics in Ewe Phonology. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms. [Not used for this Sketch.]


Dictionary:


Practical Course:


Texts:


3. Segment Charts

Vowels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral</th>
<th>Nasal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u̯</td>
<td>u̯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ɛ̯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td>ɔ̯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a̯</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>obstruent</th>
<th>sonorant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>voiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilabial</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labio-dental</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dental</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alveolar</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td>dz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-alveolar</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palatal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>velar</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labial-velar</td>
<td>kp</td>
<td>gb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

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

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

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

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

4. Tone

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

NON-HIGH: low mid
HIGH: high

Rising and falling tones can be analysed as sequences of two different tones.
Systematic-phonemic spelling: NON-HIGH  a
                 HIGH  á

Systematic-phonetic spelling:     low  á
                 mid  a
                 high  á

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

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

5. Syllable

  V e.g. à NEGATIVE marker
  N e.g. á CONTINUOUS marker
  CV e.g. kpó ‘to see’
  CLV e.g. kplé ‘and’
  yrá ‘to bless’
  CiV e.g. fiá ‘to show’

Various vowel sequences occur mainly across morpheme boundaries and
in ideophonic words.
II. CANONICAL VERBS AND NOUNS

1. Verbs

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

ex. si 'to escape'
træ 'to turn'
biá 'to ask'
subô 'to worship'

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

ex. tsi 'to remain'
ğú 'to dance'
wú 'to exceed'

2. Nouns

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>NON-HIGH</th>
<th>NON-HIGH+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[-son]</td>
<td>to 'ear'</td>
<td>tsi 'water'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[-voice]</td>
<td>ati 'tree'</td>
<td>asi 'market'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[-son]</td>
<td>gbó 'goat'</td>
<td>dzo 'fire'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+voice]</td>
<td>abó 'arm'</td>
<td>adzo 'riddle'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+son]</td>
<td>nù 'thing'</td>
<td>nyi 'cow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>anyi 'bee'</td>
<td>ame 'person'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Some Tone Rules

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

ex. dòː 'hole'  
dzò lá 'the fire'

taː 'head'  
tsì lá 'the water'

nuː 'mouth'  
nyì lá 'the cow'

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

ex. gbɔː 'goat'

àbbi 'arm'

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

ex. àtì  àsi lá  àkpaː.

àbbi:  òdzò lá  àziː.

anyì  ame lá  amaː.

cf. àmè

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

ex. kofi kpɔː: kpé  'Kofi saw a stone'

kofi diː: fìa lá  'Kofi sought the chief'

tpled: fu  'pregnant' ("with child")

but: mè gà tsò gó lá ò  'do not take the gourd'

è lì àgòtì á  'he climbed the palm'

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

ex. é kpɔː: kpé  'he saw a stone'

è kpɔː: tsì lá  'he saw the water'

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

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

ex. ta lá 'the head'
dó lá 'the hole'
àbb lá 'the arm'
nu lá 'the mouth'

but: gò: lè xɔ me 'a gourd is in the house'
   gbɔ: sìa fù 'this goat is white'
III. THE COMPLEX NOMINAL GROUP

1. Additive Relationship

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

ex. ene kplè adé kplè ásiéke kpakplè qéká lè bláávé
   'four and six and nine and one are twenty'
   gç kumásí témà kplè támàlè wó nyé dù gàá wó
   'Accra, Kumasi, Tema and Tamale are large towns'
   (Note the exceptional low tones on the foreign place names "Tema" and "Tamale").

2. Alternative Relationship

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

ex. fúfú álóó ábólo álóó gálí álóó ákplè mé lè àsì-wó ो à
   or: fúfú ábólo gálí álóó ákplè mé lè àsì-wó ो à
   'don’t you have fufu or bread or gali or akple?'

3. Possessive Relationship

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

ex. fía fé xà 'the chief’s house'
The IV becomes high after the possessive linker fé.

ex. dàdá fé ámì 'mother's oil'

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

ex. gbɔ́ : kɔfì fé gbɔ́ 'Kofi's goat'
zé : dàdá fé zé 'mother's pot'
dé : fìná fé dé 'the chief's palmnut'
abɔ́ : màwùènà fé ábɔ́ 'Mawuena's arm'
but do' : dà fé do' 'the snake's hole'
azi' : kɔfì fé ázi' 'Kofi's peanut'

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

ex. kɔfì srɔ́ 'Kofi's wife'
kɔfì hà gbɔ́ 'Kofi's front'
yàwɔ́ lè kɔfì gbɔ́ 'Yawo is with Kofi'
sèenyò wò-à do' lè xɔ̀ mè 'Senyo works in the house'

Relational nouns are:

dàdá 'mother'  nɔvì 'sibling'
nɔ 'mother'  tɔsì 'aunt'
tɔ 'father'  sɔ́ 'wife'
vi 'child'

Postpositional nouns are:

mè 'inside'  gbɔ́ 'side'
ŋɔ́ 'front'  dzì 'top'
tɛ́ 'underneath'

Note:

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

There are at least five series of pronouns:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>mā</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>nye</td>
<td>nyè (')</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e/ne</td>
<td>wō</td>
<td>wō</td>
<td>wō (')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>é/wò</td>
<td>né</td>
<td>é</td>
<td>éya</td>
<td>ye/e</td>
<td>ye/e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mié</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi (áwó)</td>
<td>miá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mie</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi (áwó)</td>
<td>mia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wó</td>
<td>wóné</td>
<td>wó</td>
<td>wó (áwó)</td>
<td>wó</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

1. Subject Pronouns

There are two forms for the 2nd and 3rd person singular. According to Clements 1975 they are in complementary distribution: e/é occur generally in sentence initial position, ne/wò occur elsewhere. Ansre notes the occurrence of é in free clauses (i.e. sentence initially), and after co-ordinating and optionally after neutral conjunctions (see Ch. 10). By contrast, wò is used (according to Ansre) after sub-ordinating and optionally also after neutral conjunctions. (Ansre makes no parallel distinction for e/ne.)
2. Jussive Subject Pronouns: see Ch. 5.3

3. Object Pronouns

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

- i after i or u;
- e after e or o;
- e after e, e, or a.

ex. mé wù i 'I killed it'
   mé tó è 'I pounded it'
   mé kpá è 'I saw it'

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

4. Emphatic Pronouns

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

ex. é fo éya 'he beat HIM'
   cf. é fo è 'he beat him'
   wò dékà tsi anyi 'you alone are left'
   nyè à 'I?'
   wo é kpá àdzè lá 'YOU saw the witch'

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

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

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

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

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

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

ex. mia fé ási wò 'our hands'
    nyè ágò 'my coconut'
    nyè: gà bù 'my money is lost'
    wò ábò 'your arm'
    wò ázi:' 'your peanuts'
    mia gbò fà 'our place is calm' (a greeting)

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

ex. gbɔ nyè fà 'my place is calm'
    gbɔ wò fà 'your place is calm'

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

ex. fofó á 'his father'
6. Logophoric Pronouns

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

ex. kofi kpó bè ye xò åbi 'Kofi saw that he (himself) was wounded'
   kofi kpó bè è xò åbi 'Kofi saw that he (someone else) was wounded'

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

ex. (Clements 1975; tones by TCS, but without mid/low alternation:)
   kofi bè ye dzó 'Kofi said that he left'
   e bè ye-á vá 'you said that you (SG) left'
   e bè yewó-a vá 'you said that you (PL) left'
   kofi nyá bè me kpó ye 'Kofi knew that I had seen him'
   kofi wɔwɔ-m bè kɔsi vá ye gbó 'Kofi is arranging for Kosi to come to him'
   (kofi bè) ye fè ga (bú) '(Kofi said that) his money (is lost)'
V. THE VERBAL GROUP

1. Reduplication

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

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{C copy} & \text{V copy} & \text{C (L,i) V} \\
\text{[- nasal]} & \text{[- HIGH]} & \\
\end{array}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb stem</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yi yi</td>
<td>yi yi</td>
<td>'the act of) going'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu bu</td>
<td>bu bu</td>
<td>'losing; loss'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vo vo</td>
<td>vo vo</td>
<td>'fearing; fear'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yrâ yrâ</td>
<td>yrâ yrâ</td>
<td>'blessing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biâ biâ</td>
<td>biâ biâ</td>
<td>'being red, redness'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biâ biâ</td>
<td>biâ biâ</td>
<td>'asking, question'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Imperative

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

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

3. Jussive

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

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

4. Aorist

The aorist is formed by the simple verb stem.

ex. kofi tsi nútô 'Kofi has grown very much'
   è tô vù à 'he stopped the vehicle'
   fufu tì m 'I am fed up with fufu'

5. Future

The future tense marker àa is fused with the subject pronoun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>1. màà</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>1. màà</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. (n)àà</td>
<td>2. màà</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. àà</td>
<td>3. wọà</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22

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

6. Habitual

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

ex. mé yi-nà àsi mé gbèsiàgbè  ‘I go to the market every day’
afénà à kpô-à dêvi à dzi nyúié  ‘the lady supervises the child well’
ěkpô-ncè  ‘he usually sees her’

7. Continuous: ě

8. Intentional: gé

(a) present continuous: le (reduplicated verb) -ě
(a) present intentional: le (object + verb) -gě
(b) past continuous: ně (reduplicated verb) -ě
(b) past intentional: ně (object + verb) -gě
(c) future continuous: ěa ně (reduplicated verb) -ě
(c) future intentional: ěa ně (object + verb) -gě

ex. dádí lá le tsitši-ě ‘the cat is growing’
yawà le fufu tó-ě ‘Yawa is pounding fufu’
uu à nà tòtò-ě tókù̀kù̀kù̀ ‘the vehicle was turning slowly’
dêvi à wó à kpé da-ě ‘the children were throwing stones’
maa ně ãgbàlè ọlọ-ě nà mì ‘I shall be writing you letters’
wó le hà dìi-gé fifiá ‘they will sing soon’
nyruè nò ãgbèlè yi-gé háfí miè dè ‘uncle was going to go to the farm when we got there’
wòà nò yi-yi-gé ‘they would be going’
The tones of the transitive verbal noun \( N_{O B + V} \) are problematic; in particular because for many nouns with initial depressor consonant it is not clear whether the basic tone is HIGH or NON-HIGH + HIGH. Compare the following examples from the continuous tense, the first two from Smith 1968, and the third from Ansre 1961:

- ex. da': (dó?) : é lè dà wò m 'he is working'
  da : é lè dà wù m 'he is killing a snake'
  nu' : ... ami le nu' ko m 'oil laughs'

In the continuous and intentional tenses, a pronominal object is represented by the possessive pronoun which follows the verb in the 1st and 2nd person singular and precedes it in the other persons. The form of the 1st person singular pronoun is ye in the continuous and yem in the intentional tenses.

According to Warburton et al. (1968), a HIGH tone verb becomes low before the possessive pronouns of the 1st and 2nd person singular.

- ex. dô 'to send': é le dɔ-ye m é le dɔ-yem gé
  é le dɔ-wɔ gé
  é le é-dɔ gé
  é le mia-dɔ gé
  é le mia-dɔ gé
  é le wɔ-dɔ gé

9. Repetitive

The pre-stem particle ga expresses repetitive action; it is used in combination with different tenses.

- ex. màmì ga kpô àdzé: 'mother again saw a witch'
  ya: gà lè fôfô-m 'the wind is still blowing'
  uù á gà lè zɔ̀zɔ̀-gë 'the vehicle will move again'
  mia ga kpë ètsò 'we shall meet again tomorrow'

10. Augmenting Particles

Several pre-stem "augmenting" particles are used in combination with various tenses.
kâ alleviating
kpó negative
xa frustration
da goal
hé serial

ex. dôlélé à kâ babé viè 'the sickness has lessened slightly'
wô mé kpó vá hàdè ô 'they have not yet come'
mè xà le âïkk wô-m 'I am taking medicine in vain'

The order of the different pre-stem particles is:

FUT - REP - AUG - PRES/PAST - VERB

ex. vi: wô maa ga xa nô nu: fo-m háfí á dži hà ô à
'won't your child be barely talking before it sings?'

II. Negation

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

ex. âtí lá mé kô ô 'the tree is not tall'
nyè mé gà lè tsitsi-m ô 'I am no longer growing'
gà qéké mé lè âsì nyè égbè ô 'I have no money today'
wô mé dà-a tú lè lè àvé. siâ mé ô 'they don't shoot animals in this forest'

mé combines with the future particle àa to form maa:

ex. ñútso ã maa qô gç égbè ô 'the man will not reach Accra today'

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

Aorist:  nye mé fô ô  Future:  nye mâ vá ô
        me fô ô             ma vá ô
        mé fô ô             mà vá ô
        miè fô ô             mà vá ô
        mie fô ô             miá vá ô
        wô mé fô ô             wô mâ vá ô
THE VERBAL GROUP

Compare the following examples from Ansre:

ex. nyè mâa nô fu kpé-m yesiayi ô 'I will not be suffering forever'
mî mâa ga wô âvâ gbêgê ô 'we shall never fight again'
wô mâa ga nô gbêvû wô-m ô 'they will no longer be ruffians'

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

ex. (from Westermann 1961; mid/low alternation not indicated:)
me ga yi o 'don't go' (singular)
mé/mâ/nâ ga yi o 'he should not go'
mî mâ ga yi o 'we should not go'
mî (mâ) ga yi o 'don't go' (plural)
wô mâ ga yi o 'they should not go'

12. Two Complements

(i) two nominal complements:

ex. kofî tô dzô âvô â le xi mê 'Kofi set fire to the cloth in the room'
ñûtsu sia le gà nâ-m kofî 'this man is giving money to Kofi'

(ii) nominal complement + pronominal complement:

ex. kofî tâsi nâ âkutsâ m étso 'Kofi's aunt gave me a sponge yesterday'
é le tô gô-m wô 'he is obeying them'

(iii) pronominal complement + nominal complement:

ex. é fiâ wô fiâ là 'he showed them to the chief'
é le wô fiâ-m fiâ là 'he is showing them to the chief'
VI. SERIAL VERBAL CONSTRUCTIONS

1. General Observations

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

ex. é tró vá tó gbɔ-nyë yi àfé 'he turned, came, passed my place (and) went home'

é nò tsi kù 'he drowned' ("he drank water died")

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

ex. me yó nútʃu lá vá è 'I called the man and came',

or: 'I called the man to come'

2. The Ambivalent Complement

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

ex. mié qà fufu qù 'we cooked fufu and ate it'

nyùnu lá tró nya lá gblò 'the woman changed the news and said it'

3. The Redundant Complement

If the final verb in a SVC is a verb of motion, and if the first verb in this SVC is transitive, then the whole construction is closed with the 3rd person singular object pronoun è è è è.
The following are the verbs of motion:

- bu 'be lost'
- sì 'escape'
- vá 'come'
- dò 'arrive'
- tò 'pass'
- yì 'go'
- dzó 'depart'
- tsà 'wander'
- zò 'walk'

4. Verbal Particles in SVCs

(i) Only one of the post-verbal particles ì [CONT], (n)à [HAB] and gé [INT] can occur in any one SVC.

(ii) The pre-stem particles le [PRES], na [PAST] and ga [REP], and the post-stem particle ì [CONT] can occur in one or more or all verbal groups of a SVC.

ex. wò fo uu: dzì hà lè yè dú-à 'they have drummed and sung and are (now) dancing'

wò le uu: fo-à le hà dzì-à le ye dú-à 'they are drumming, singing and dancing'

(iii) The FUTURE particle áa may occur in the first verbal group of a SVC; if it does then all subsequent verbal groups get the marker á except a verbal group following the verb vá 'to come'.

ex. àvu là áa no tsi à kú 'the dog will be drowned'

áa tró à vá tò àfiì á yì àfe 'he will return and come via here and go home'

(iv) The HABITUAL particle (n)à may occur in any one of the verbal groups of a SVC; it is then repeated in all subsequent verbal groups.

(v) The INTENTIONAL particle gé may occur in any one of the verbal groups of a SVC; all subsequent verbal groups are then marked by the particle á.

ex. wò lè gbà fle-gé à tso à qa à dú 'they will be buying a goat to slaughter, cook and eat'
(vi) The augmenting particles qa [GOAL] and hé [SERIAL] occur only (?) in SVCs, but only once and never in the first verbal group. In the future tense, hâ is used instead of hé.

ex. wó yì qà flè tê 'they went to buy yams'
    miè qa nú qù lè tsi; hé míi anyí 'we cooked food, ate, bathed and lay down'
    wòà lè tsi; á qu nú á há mló anyí 'they will bathe, eat and lie down'

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

ex. yàwò xa zò vá kpó amegá lâ à 'did Yawo come to see the great man?'

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

ex. dàdì lâ mé nò tsi; kú ó 'the cat did not drown'

5. Discontinuous Verbs

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

ex. kofí dzra-na dò kábá 'Kofi gets ready quickly'
    òèvi à nò nákè tu-m dò 'the child was piling up firewood'

Some examples of discontinuous verbs:

    dzra-dó 'to prepare, get ready, hide'
    dò-dá    'to send'
    dò-dó    'to correct'
    kpó-dó    'to go after'
    kpó-dá    'to visit, look at'
    nò-bè    'to forget'
    tu-dó    'to pile up'
VII. THE ADVERBIAL GROUP

Adverbial groups occur either clause initially (before the subject) or clause finally. In both positions, several adverbial groups may follow each other.

1. Simple and Derived Adverbs

(i) Simple Adverbs:

ex. kâbâ 'quickly'

fuụụ 'plenty'

Ideophones are a phonologically and semantically special subgroup of simple adverbs. Simple adverbs are often reduplicated.

ex. Hearing

of a slap: kpà
of a fall: kplà
of whispering: bútúbútú

Taste

sweet: ṇānāngānā
sour: yàà
bitter: dihādihā

Sight

someone smart: dýú
someone dull: dýú
careful walk: dzádzá

Smell

sweet: lìlìlì
bad: lìlìlì
bad: sràmàsràmà

Touch

smooth: tsínítsíni
soft: bílóbóló
rough: klítsàà

(Westermann 1930 lists 37 seven ideophones all describing different ways of walking.)

ex. é zò kâbâ-kâbâ  'he walked very quickly'
wô tó hë njutsu lá kplù-kplù-kplù  'the man was stabbed many times'
kofi dzó kànxànxà  'Kofi left long long ago'
(ii) Derived Adverbs:

- from noun: ṃụtsu-tɔ́e ‘in a manly way’
- from verb + noun: ákpé-dá-tɔ́e ‘gratefully’
- from neg. verbal noun: màqimàqí-lí ‘without burial’
  ákpé-madámádá-lí ‘ungratefully’

Diminutive: high tone = smallness/lower tone = largeness

Ex. è ɔ̀-ná hlóyí-hlóyí ‘he walks clumsily/is large’
è ɔ̀-ná hlóyí-hlóyí ‘he walks clumsily/is small’

2. Intensifiers

Intensifiers can qualify nouns or function as adverbs.

Some reduplicable intensifiers:

- òntó ‘very (much)’
- sóh ‘plenty’
- kátá ‘all’
- ké ‘exactly’

Ex. kofi wó-à dò ṃụtsù-ŋụtsù-ŋụtsù ‘Kofi works very very hard’

Some non-reduplicable intensifiers:

- hà ‘also’
- dzaa ‘exclusively’
- dè ‘only, single’

Ex. kofi wó-à dò hà ‘Kofi works also’

3. Adverbial Adjectives

A subclass of adjectives can function as adverbs.

Ex. dèvì ̀Álè ìgbàò-à ńyúiè ‘the child is walking well’
è và dzódzróó ‘he came in vain’
4. Temporal Nouns

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

ex. maa dzô égbè 'I shall leave today'
ètsô dôn ná mé fô ó 'yesterday the patient did not get up'
but: égbè fá 'today (it) is cold'

5. The Verbid Construction

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

kplé 'with'
le 'at, in, ...'
tsô 'from'
ná 'to, for'
dé 'towards'
tó 'through'

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

ex. sényô wô-à dà: le gé 'Senyo works in Accra'
afênc lá xc amedrzô lá kplé lêlô géâéê 'the lady received the guest with much kindness'
mè xô-à ågbâle tó kofí dži 'I receive letters through Kofi'

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

ex. kôkô le kútefé mé nyô ô 'laughing at funerals is not good'
kpédada té tsi me dó-à dzidzô ná dëvi wô 'throwing stones in water gives joy to children'
VIII. THE NOMINAL GROUP

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

(1) one or more adjectives:

ex. vi nyúié fáfáá dzéq'ékkáá lë ási-wô 'you have a nice, gentle, good-looking child'

(2) a quantifier:

ex. dëvi évè mlô àbàti qéká dzì 'two children lay on one bed'

(3) a specifier:

ex. dëvi á wô dô: sia nyúié 'the child did this work well'

(4) the pluralizer:

ex. måê kpó kesé wó le mó á tô 'we saw monkeys by the roadside'

(5) one or more intensifiers:

ex. änà nú tô kúráá gã hãã se nya lá 'even Ama herself also heard the news'

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

ex. átí gãã évè áqé wó hãã mu dze mó á mê

ADJ QNT SP PL INT

'some two big trees also fell on the road'
1. Adjectives

simple:  
gé 'big'
féé 'young'

Adj + é (diminutive): loloé 'fairly large' < loloó 'large'
yiboé 'small and dark' < yiboó 'dark'

V + V + ū:  
tsitsií 'old' < tsí 'to grow'
kúkúú 'dead' < kú 'to die'
babíqá 'red' < bia 'to be red'
but: loloó 'large' < lóló 'to be large'

V + N + ū:  
nyá-núú 'wise' < nyá nú 'know thing'

V + N + V + ū:  
qù-nú-kpóčó 'wealthy'
< qú nú kpóčó 'eat thing leave (some)'

2. Quantifiers

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

1 - qéká  
2 - évè  
3 - étţi  
4 - ènè  
5 - âtţi  
6 - adé  
7 - adré  
8 - enyí  
9 - âsiéke  
10 - ewó  
11 - wúíqéké  
12 - wúievê  
20 - bläävé  
21 - bläävé-vó-qéké  
22 - bläävé-vó-vè  
23 - bläävé-vó-tţè  
25 - bläävé-vó-âtţè  
30 - blää-étţè  
50 - blää-âtţè  
100 - alafá (qéká)

Ordinal numerals:

gbá(tó) 'first'  
ètólóá 'third'
èvëliá 'second'  
etc.

Non-numerical quantifiers:  
gèdéé 'many'
3. Specifiers

The complete list of specifiers is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specifier</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lâ/â</td>
<td>'the'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñqé</td>
<td>'a certain'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maâ</td>
<td>'that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qêkê</td>
<td>'none'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

4. Pluralizer

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

ex. dèví â wó 'the children'

Generally, the pluralizer does not immediately follow a quantifier.

ex. dèví nyüié èvè lè xá á mè 'two good children are in the room'

But: nyónu enyí á wó kën gu-á ye nukútç 'all the eight women dance marvellously'

5. Intensifiers

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

ex. kofi ṉútö lè àfili 'Kofi himself is here'
    kofi ṉútö-ńútö lè àfili 'Kofi HIMSELF is here'
    kofi hâq lè àfili 'Kofi is also here'
IX. THE FORMATION OF NOUNS

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

Some underived nouns are:

- xɔ 'house'
- ñdî 'morning'
- asî 'market'
- ñkâ 'name'
- ta 'head'
- akpøkplɔ 'frog'

1. Derivation Not Involving Verbs

N + là : àdëlå 'hunter' < àdè 'hunting'
èvêå 'an Ewe person'

N + é : gôé 'small gourd' < gô 'gourd'
tsìì 'soup' < tsi 'water'

N + N : nyìvî 'calf'
èvêtî 'an Ewe man'
àfè tô 'mister, sir, Mr.'
ñkûnô 'a blind person'
fômê 'family'

N + N + . : gà-kpɔ̀ 'metal fence' < gà 'metal', kpɔ 'fence'
anyì-glií 'mud wall'
nyì-vïi 'little cow'

Adj + à/tɔ : nyùíé-ã/nyùíé-tɔ 'the good one' < nyùíé 'good'
tsïtsï-ã/tsïtsï-tɔ 'the old one' < tsïtsï 'old'

Nominalized specifiers:

é-siá 'this one'
é-maá 'that one'
é-kaa 'which one'
è 'some'
é-kê 'that one over there'
dêkê 'none'
2. The Verbal Noun

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

\[ V^2 \]

- tsôtsô ‘getting up’
- nônô ‘drinking’
- gbôgblô ‘saying’

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

\[ N + V^2 \]

- dôwôwô ‘work’
- lôvnôvô ‘fear towards an animal’
- qêvîwô didî ‘seeking for children’

\[ F + V^2 \]

- êfôfô ‘the striking him’
- tôqôqô ‘the obeying him’

The negative verbal noun:

\[ (ma + V)^2 \]

- màkûmakû ‘immortality’< ku ‘die’

\[ N + (ma + V)^2 \]

- âkpé-madâmâ ‘ingratitude’< dà âkpé ‘to thank’

\[ N + (ma + V)^2 + N \]

- gâ-maîûnâ-dêvî ‘not giving money to a child’

3. Derivation Involving a Verbal Noun

\[ V^2 + lâ \]

- sisi-lâ ‘fugitive’
- dzi-lâ ‘parent’

\[ V^2 + fê \]

- kûkû-fê or kû-fê ‘place/manner of dying’

\[ V^2 + γi \]

- tsôtsô-γi or tsô-γi ‘starting time’

\[ V^2 + me \]

- kôkô-me ‘height’

\[ V^2 + N + \]

- tôfô-nû ‘toy’
- tsîtî-têfê ‘position of honour’
N + V + là : àgbélè-dè-là 'farmer'
N + V + fé : àgbélè-dè-fé 'farming area'
N + V + γi : àgbélè-dè-γi 'farming season'
(N + V) + N + ' : àgbélè-dè-wùù 'farming clothes'
N + (V + N) + ' : taá-qu-améé 'headache'

4. Derivation Involving Several Verbs

V² + V : zbzb-vá 'coming by walking'
V² + V + V : gbgb-vá-gó 'returning and arriving'
(ma + V)² + V : màmatà-gbà 'without returning'
V + N + V + V : qù-ämè-tsà-tó 'tarantula'
< 'bite - person - wander - tell'
V + N + V + N : nà-afè-dè-du 'telephone; gossiper'
< 'stay - home - go - town'
V + N + V + N + é : mè-vi-me-no-é 'a stinging insect'
< 'sting - child - sting - mother - DIM'
V + N + N + V + é : qù-ämè-dzi-hlu-i 'centipede'
< 'bite - person - heaven - roars - DIM'
N + (ma + V) + N + V : kon3-many-vi-kú 'an unloving barren woman'
< 'childless woman - not know - child - die'
X. THE SYNTAX OF SENTENCE AND CLAUSE

1. Constituents of Sentence and Clause

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

ex. ési me kpô qêvî à / éye wô trô mëgbé lâ / me yô è / élâbênà me nyâ e nyuiè / ésime miè nô âfë qêkâ më lë kpândo / hàfi wô dzô vá âfîì

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

A bound clause is always introduced by a CONJUNCTION.

Co-ordinating conjunctions:

élâbênà 'because'  gâké 'but'

Subordinating conjunctions:

ábé (âlësi/qê) 'as'  éye 'and'
ési(me) 'when'  kàsiåå 'just before'
ési ... nûti/tâ 'because'  hàfi 'before'
vasé (qê) (ésime) 'till'  têtè 'suddenly'

Neutral conjunctions:

álé (bê) 'so that'  nê 'if, when'
bê 'that'  tògbòbé 'although'
éyaâta 'therefore'

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

ex. àfi kaà ne gblé qêvî à qô hàfi vá le ye qû-mó:

'where did you leave the children before you came to dance?'

nûfiålè yô kofí à 'did the teacher call Kofi?'
A MAJOR CLAUSE has the following structure:

$$(L)((A)S)P(C_1(C_2)))(A)$$

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

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

2. Rank Shifting

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

ex. bé wò yì sukúu kábá lâ nyé nú nyúlé âqé 'that he went to school early is a good thing'  
me wù i klóè mé fô-à detsii ô 'I almost killed it' does not make soup'

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

ex. atî si me do lâ kú 'the tree which I planted is dead'  
amé si kpó dâ lâ lá nê vá wù i 'the person who saw the snake should come and kill it'

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

Each of the primary elements of clause structure, i.e. S, C, A and P, can be emphasized, but one element only in one clause.

(i) Emphasized S is marked by clause initial position and by the final emphasizing particle é.

ex. kwasi é lé kokló lá 'KWASI caught the chicken'
    éya è yò è 'it was he who called me'

(ii) Emphasized C is marked by front-shifting and optionally followed by the particle é.

ex. nyónu lá (é) mié kpó lè àsi mè ètsò 'it was the woman whom we saw on the market yesterday'
    gà è papa ná kofí égbè 'it was money what Daddy gave Kofi today'
    kofí è papa ná gà égbè 'it was Kofi whom Daddy gave money today'

When the C element is a pronoun it is emphasized by using the absolute pronoun, without front-shifting and without the particle é.

   á fo éya 'he beat HIM'; cf. é fò è 'he beat him'

(iii) Emphasized A is restricted to the temporal noun and the verbid construction. An emphasized temporal noun is shifted to the front of the clause and optionally followed by é.

ex. gbésiàgbè é àsitsalá sia wó zo-a mì à 'is it every day that these merchants travel?'

The emphasized verbid construction is discontinuous: its nominal group is shifted to the front of the clause and followed by é, the verbid follows the S, P and C elements.

ex. fèfèfè é kofí kpó áma lè 'it was in the playground that Kofi saw Ama'
    kofí é áma dó gbè ná dzidzotbé lè fèfèfè ètsò 'it was Kofi that Ama greeted joyfully at the playground yesterday'
(iv) Emphasized P is marked by the particle ðé plus a repetition of S in the form of a subordinated pronoun. The preceding S is deleted if it consists only of a pronoun.

ex. kofí ðé wò kó 'Kofi IS tall'
    ðé wò kpó gà 'he IS rich' ("he DID see money")

4. Minor Clauses

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

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

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

ex. anutí é '(it's) an orange'
    nyònu lá é 'it's the woman'
    miá fé àgbì ë '(it's) our farm'

dôna ná mi kéng (salutation to people at work)