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Aspect and Modality in Kwa Languages

Edited by

Felix K. Ameka

M.E. Kropp Dakubu

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Aspect and Modality in Kwa Languages

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Volume 100

Aspect and Modality in Kwa Languages
Edited by Felix K. Ameka and M.E. Kropp Dakubu

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Abbreviations

ABS	Absolute	IMP	Imperative
ALL	Allative preposition	IMPF	Imperfective
ALTRI	altrilocal	INAN	inanimate
AOR	Aorist	INCHO	Inchoative
ASSOC	Nominal Association	INDEF	Indefinite
CESS	cessative	INF	Infinitive (verb form)
COM	comitative	INT	intensifier
COMP	Complementizer	IRR	irrealis
COMPL	completive	IT	Itive
CONC	concord	JUSS	Jussive
COND	Conditional	LNK	linker
CONJ	Conjunction	LOC	Locative
CONSEC	consecutive	LOCP	Locative phrase
CONT	continuative	LOG	Logophoric pronoun
COORD	Coordinating	LTS	Low tone suffix
	Conjunction	MOD	modal
COP	copula	NEG	Negative
CTR	Counter-Factual	NOM	Nominalizer (including
DAT	Dative preposition		noun class affix used to
DEF	definite		form verbal nouns)
DEIC	Deictic	NP	Nominal phrase
DIST	Distal demonstrative	NPRES	Non-present
DURATION	Durative	OBJ	Object
EMPH	Emphatic contrast	PAST	Past tense
EXCL	Exclamation	PEJ	Pejorative
EXPL	Expletive	PERF	Perfect aspect
FOC	Focus	PFV	Perfective
aFOC	term focus marker	Pfx	Prefix
pFOC	predicate focus marker	PL	Plural
FUT	Future	PN	Pronoun
HAB	Habitual	POSS	possessive
HTS	High tone suffix	POSTP	postposition
ID	Identifiable		

POT	potential
PRED	Predication
PRES	Present
PRIV	Privative
PROG	Progressive
PROSP	Prospective
PROX	Proximal demonstrative
Q	Question marker
QT	quotative
REAL	realis
REC	Recurrent
RED	Reduplicative
REL	Relative marker
REP	Repetitive
SG	Singular
STAT	Stative
SUB	Subject
SUBJV	subjunctive
SUBORD	Subordinate clause marker
SUFF	suffix (of imperfective construction in Dangme)
TAMP	Tense-Aspect-Mood-Polarity
TOP	Topicalizer
TP	Terminal particle
TRANS	Transitive (pre-verb)
TRIP	triplicative
UFP	Utterance final particle
VENT	Ventive
WH	question pronoun
1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person

Preface

Most of the research reported here was carried out under the aegis of the Legon-Trondheim Linguistics Project, and earlier versions of several of the papers were presented to colloquia of the project or in other fora at the University of Ghana, Legon. An exception is Harley's paper on Tuwuli. The editors took the liberty of inviting this contribution in order to provide a slightly broader perspective on the range of structures to be found.

We wish to express our gratitude to Eefje Gilbert for converting the raw manuscripts to a standard style, Mark Dingemanse for preparing the camera-ready copy, and Saskia van Putten for her invaluable assistance in implementing the corrections to the proofs and for compiling the index. Financial support that made some of this assistance possible came from the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (van Putten), for which we are most grateful. The advice and help of the Editors of the *Studies in Language Companion Series*, Michael Noonan and Werner Abraham, as well as the John Benjamins production team, especially Kees Vaes are gratefully acknowledged.

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Felix K. Ameka
Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu

Introduction

Felix K. Ameka and M. E. Kropp Dakubu

The idea that aspect is more important in some languages than in others has been around for some time (e.g. Comrie 1976, Bhatt 1999). Nevertheless, linguistic theory and description continue to be influenced by the tense-aspect systems in “Standard Average European” languages, and especially by the notions of traditional grammar, in which tense is given particular prominence. In many languages, however, and specifically in those known as Kwa, tense is not grammatically prominent, being expressed by adjuncts or interpreted entirely through the pragmatic context. In consequence, many descriptions of African languages have failed to capture the “genius” of these languages in the tense-aspect domain. This volume is intended to correct the situation.

This volume explores the thesis that in the group of West African languages known as “Kwa”, Aspect and Modality are far more central to the grammar of the verb and the clause than Tense. We deal here particularly with systems of grammatical morphemes attached to the verb stem – the languages discussed elaborate their verb morphology to different degrees, but overall it is fair to say that the primary grammatical contrasts are aspectual, especially perfective versus imperfective, and that tense distinctions are secondary if indeed they are made grammatically at all. Where tense marking has most clearly emerged, it is invariably in the expression of the future, and therefore concerned with the impending actualization or potentiality of an event, hence with modality, rather than the purely temporal sequencing associated with tense. Our knowledge of these languages has deepened considerably during the past decade or so and ideas about their structure have changed. The volume is therefore offered as a contribution to the ongoing, intercontinental discussion of the cross-linguistic typology of verb grammar, especially in respect of aspect and modality.

The term “aspect” has been used in several senses. In a recent review, Sasse (2002) divides usage into two basic types: lexical aspect or what is sometimes called *Aktionsart*, concerned with temporal values intrinsic in the verb stem, and aspectual viewpoint or temporal perspective related to the circumstances of the utterance, often expressed in morphological paradigms. In this volume the concern is mainly with the latter: all the papers examine the verb paradigm and

attempt to interpret it, with relatively little attention to features inherent in the verb itself, or the effects of interaction between the two kinds of meaning. However lexical aspect is not and indeed cannot be entirely ignored, for example in the problem of stative vs. habitual vs. progressive in Akan, as discussed in different ways by both Boadi and Osam; of the habitual vs. the recurrent in Dangme as discussed by Ameka and Dakubu; and in the deictic pre-verbs, discussed for all the languages examined here, that inhabit a space somewhere between lexical semantics and pure accidentence.

The functional load that a language accords to tense and aspect has been shown, in recent times, to correlate with certain typological properties of that language. For instance, Stassen (1997) shows that whether a language is tensed or not has a bearing on strategies that the language uses for intransitive predication or more specifically, adjectival predication. Similarly, Bhat (1999) suggests a typology of languages according to the relative prominence that the language gives to tense, aspect or mood. Exciting as these typological claims are, they need to be buttressed with more empirical data. If the descriptions that exist are not adequate, the predictions from the typologies will be shaky. Despite more than a hundred years of descriptive tradition for some of the Kwa languages, the papers presented here represent a quantum leap towards providing the kind of data and analysis needed.

The interaction of modality with both aspect and tense is another area of considerable typological interest. As de Haan (2006: 48) has pointed out, "There are clear interactions between tense and modality. An obvious candidate for such interaction is the future." Traugott (2006) writing in the same volume shows that deontic modality, or to put it very generally an expression intended to bring about or impel the occurrence of an act or an event, that by implication has not yet been carried out or happened, has not infrequently been grammaticalized to epistemic modality, which can include the knowledge or belief that an event will indeed happen. (With particular reference to African languages on this point, see also Heine, Claudi and Hünemeyer 1991:174.) The languages discussed here support these contentions: there is a particular connection between deontic modality and expression of the future, which wherever it occurs is clearly a secondary development. Typically, the verb form is built up with an aspectual marker or a modality marker, and may also carry a negation marker. These may combine with a marker of deixis, which may (but need not, depending on the other markers) give a future reading. Dedicated markers of tense are notably few.

Throughout the twentieth century the Kwa languages have been considered to be fairly closely related in genetic terms. The best known by far are Akan (Twi), Ga and Ewe. In the current literature they and their neighbors, another twenty languages at least, are classified as a grouping within Niger-Congo

called “New Kwa” (Stewart 1989) or simply “Kwa” (Williamson and Blench 2000: 18) see Figure 1.¹ The present geographical distributions of these language groups, converging as they do along the lower reaches of the Volta River, are probably due to relatively recent migrations and internal expansions. However there is no doubt that over the past several hundred years, contact among Akan, Ga and Ewe, and of each of these with other, smaller languages, some of them certainly closely related, has been particularly intense.

The lower Volta basin is therefore a region that can be expected to show typologically interesting interrelationships. Apart from the verb paradigm to which this volume is dedicated, there are other linguistic domains in which typological conformity is more immediately obvious. It appears to be the case, for example, that whether nominalization of a verb is shown morphologically by a prefix or by a suffix, a nominalized verb is everywhere preceded by its Object. This has important implications for the discussion by Ameka and Dakubu in this volume of the imperfective periphrastic construction in those languages that have it (Ewe, Dangme, Tuwuli). The basic functional syntax of the Nominal Phrase can be summarized for all the languages (as far as we know) in the following schema. The noun head of the structure is underlined:

Identifier Possessor Noun-Qualifier Noun Adjective Numeral Determiner
Quantifier Intensifier

On the other hand, there is an interesting division as far as plural formation and nominal classes are concerned. Akan and its Tano relatives each have several pairs of singular and plural prefixes, but while there is usually number concord, there is in general no class concord (anaphors and modifiers do not show agreement with a head noun), while Ewe with the rest of Gbe and Ga-Dangme use the bare noun stem in the singular and a generalized suffix or clitic for the plural. Many of the Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages (The Na-Togo and Ka-Togo groups in Figure 1), have prefixes and also in almost all cases nominal class concord systems (see Heine 1968 for a comprehensive account of these systems).

The aim of this volume is thus to present theoretically informed and detailed descriptions of the tense-aspect-modality systems of some of the best-known Kwa languages of Ghana, namely Akan, Ewe (with attention to the rest of the Gbe cluster), and the two-member cluster that consists of Ga and Dangme. Also included is an examination of Tuwuli (also known in the literature as Bowili or Bowiri), a relatively poorly known language that is traditionally classified genetically as most closely related to the Gbe cluster (Stewart 1989).

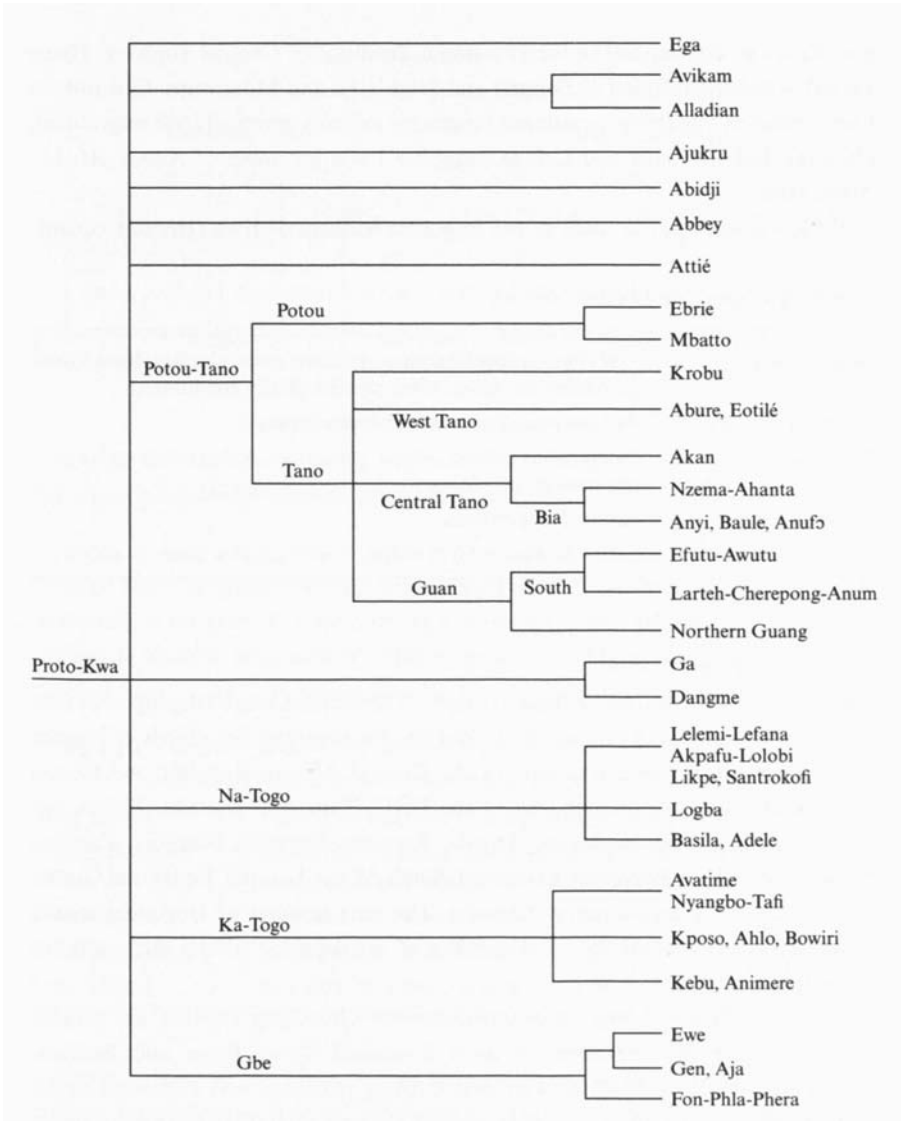


Figure 1: Classification of Kwa languages
(Adapted from Williamson and Blench 2000: 18)

A major theme addressed is, therefore, whether the languages are primarily tense languages or whether aspect and/or mood is/are more prominent. One dimension that has not previously been thoroughly explored is the extent to which modal expressions such as potential or irrealis relate to tense prominent, aspect prominent or mood prominent typology. Several of the contributions relate to this topic. Concerning Ewe, Essegbey argues that the form (*l*)*a* that has been analyzed in some descriptions as a future tense marker is a potential marker, and thus a modal and not a tense operator, while Dakubu writing on Ga as well as Ameka and Dakubu on Dangme show that in those languages the “future” is a composite form based on a combination of modality and deixis. Modality in Akan is treated differently by Boadi and Osam, but both specifically place the “infinitive” (Boadi) or “consecutive” (Osam) form outside the aspectual system. Overall in these languages it seems that the expression of modality is closely intertwined with the expression of aspect, often belonging to the same paradigmatic system.

The nature of tense in Akan is a particularly vexed question. Focusing on different dialect areas, Akyem and Fante respectively, Boadi and Osam again come to different conclusions regarding the relevance of past tense, while agreeing on the primacy of aspect. In all the languages it is determined that contrary to some early analyses, pre-verbs or auxiliaries are distinct from the strictly paradigmatic TAMP markers, introduce different kinds of semantic features, and often appear to be the relics of grammaticized verbs. This seems to be another area where Akan is different from the rest; both Boadi and Osam recognize only two such elements in that language, the deictics. However there are four in Ga (Dakubu), and several more in Dangme (Ameka and Dakubu) and Ewe (Ameka).

Many languages of Africa have a periphrastic imperfective construction in which a verb, usually one of a small set or even unique, carrying TAMP features takes a complement consisting of a non-finite form of the event verb preceded by its Object (Heine and Claudi 2001, *inter alia*). The “Kwa” area is divided according to whether or not this construction is present; it is generally not present in Akan and other Tano languages, and it is also absent from Ga, but present in Dangme, Ewe and other Gbe varieties, and certain of the Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages, including Tuvuli and Likpe. Ewe indeed appears in the literature as a classic illustration of the construction, and the supposed inversion of the standard VO order (all Kwa area languages are basically SVO languages) has been regarded as a major typological and historical problem. Taking the recent characterization by Heine and Claudi (2001) as a point of departure, Ameka and Dakubu provide a close examination of the construction in Ewe and Dangme, to argue that in both cases the AMP bearing element is a true verb, and that since VO throughout the area is nominalized as OV_{NOM}, its

complement is a kind of nominalization and therefore there is in fact no word order change at clause level. They also show that in the languages examined, "progressive" is not an adequate semantic label for all sub-types of this construction, which are more consistently "prospective".

Endnotes

¹ Most recently, however, the late J.M. Stewart voiced strong doubts as to the validity of this classification (Stewart 2002: 205). We suspect his doubts are justified, but that is not our present concern.

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Tense, Aspect and Mood in Akan

L.A. Boadi

The purpose of this paper is to examine the syntactic and semantic functions of the verbal affixes in the Akyem dialect of Akan. It is organized as follows: in the first section we discuss the organisation of the affixes into classes. In the second, the form(s) and functions of each affix are examined in detail; and in the final section, we examine the distribution of three time markers in relation to the tense-aspect affixes.

1 Classes of Verbal Affix

The affixes are divided into those which express mood and those which do not. The latter set constitute the minority, and they are (1) the Negation affix (NEG) realized as a nasal consonant; and (2) the two Deictics *bɛ* and *kɔ*. Below, we comment briefly on each of them and illustrate their use.

1.1 The Non-Mood Affixes

1.1.1 The NEG Affix

The NEG affix expresses the contradiction of the meaning of a whole clause or some of its constituents. Not much will be said about the semantics of negation in this study. Our interest in the affix will be restricted to its distribution and the role it plays in processes leading to the surface phonological realizations of the mood affixes; and in the syntax and semantics of the Serial Verb Construction (SVC), a construction in which all the verbal affixes participate. It occurs in sentences like the following:

- (1) a. *ɔ* *a-n-tɔ* *bɛ*
 he PAST-NEG-buy some
 ‘He did not buy any.’

(1a) is the denial of the proposition contained in (1b):

- b. *ɔ* *tɔ-ɔ* *bɛ*
 he buy-PAST some
 ‘He bought some.’

(1a) and (1b) represent the negative and positive poles of a system of contrasts in the verb. We shall refer to this system as Polarity in the discussion that follows.

1.1.2 The Gressive Deixis

The second of the two non-mood systems which will be considered later in this paper is the Gressive Deixis. This system has two members realized as the prefixes *bè* and *kɔ́*. They express movement towards and away from the speaker's body, and they occur in sentences like (2).

- (2) a. *ɔ́* *bè-fá*
 he DEIC-take
 he move.towards.speaker-take
 'He comes and takes it.'
 b. *ɔ́* *kɔ́-fá*
 he DEIC-take
 he move.away.from.speaker-take
 'He goes and takes it.'

1.2 The Mood System

I use the term 'mood' to refer to a system of contrasts signalled by two inflectional paradigms of the Akan verb: the Jussive-Imperative and the Indicative. The former expresses the will of the speaker; will, here embraces wishes, requests and commands. The latter, on the other hand, expresses facts and assertions.

1.2.1 The Jussive-Imperative

This has two representations: a zero and a nasal. The distribution of these will be discussed more fully in Part 2. For the present it should be enough to say (3a-c) represent the Jussive-Imperative forms of the verb *didì* 'eat'. (Throughout IMP will be used to represent this mood).

- (3) a. *didì*
 IMP.eat
 'Eat!'
 b. *mé* *ń-didí*
 I IMP-eat
 'Let me eat; I wish that I be allowed to eat.'
 c. *ɔ́* *ń-didí*
 he IMP-eat
 'Let him eat; I wish that he eat.'
 d. *mó* *ń-didí*
 you IMP-eat
 'You (pl) may eat.'

1.2.2 The Indicative Mood

The question of what linguistic material represents the Indicative mood in the morphology and phonology of Akan is not a straightforward one. But it is clear that the distinction between

- (4) a. *mó* *rè-dìdì*
 you.PL PROG-eat
 ‘You are eating.’
 b. *mó* *n̄-dìdì*
 you.PL IMP-eat
 ‘I wish that you eat.’

is one of mood. (4a) is in the Indicative mood, and (4b) the Jussive-Imperative. The contrast is brought about by the Progressive affix *re-*, and the Jussive-Imperative *n-*. But, as we shall soon explain, *re-* is a member of the Aspectual system and has been referred to by writers on the verbal affixes as the Progressive Aspect. Where, then, is the Indicative located in the expression (4a)?

To get around this difficulty, it may be argued that the Indicative is unmarked, or is represented by zero. This is the position taken by Osam (1994). Unfortunately, he merely asserts that the Indicative is unmarked without making a case for a zero representation. One could just as well point out that *re-* in (4a) is the Indicative and that Aspect is unmarked. This solution is arbitrary; but so is Osam’s.

A way out of the arbitrariness is to argue that (i) Mood and Aspect are separate systems in Akan; (ii) Mood has two terms as explained above: the Jussive-Imperative and the Indicative; (iii) the Jussive-Imperative is realized overtly; (iv) at the level of expression the Indicative and Aspect are not identified by separate morphemes but form a portmanteau morph (Hockett 1947; 1958). This is an example of Matthew’s “cumulative exponence” (Matthew 1974:147). Following Matthew, we will say that the combinations of the Indicative and Tense-Aspect have cumulative exponents.

In the rest of the paper we shall assume that a sentence like (4a) has the constituents Subject, Progressive Aspect, Indicative-Mood and Verb, and may be glossed as [You.PL PROG INDIC eat]. The Indicative is realized in all sentences containing the Progressive, Habitual, Perfect, Stative, Future and Infinitive (see below). In the rest of the paper the Indicative component of the Verb will not be marked in the glosses unless its marking is crucial to the argument being made.

The Indicative affixes are divided into two: the Non-Finite (Infinitive) and Finite forms.

The Non-Finite Indicative Affix. The Infinitive is a one-member set represented by the prefix *a-*. It differs from the other Indicative affixes in not expressing aspect and other temporal relations. Unlike the finite forms its verb does not occur as the only predicate in independent clauses. It also exhibits peculiar syntactic properties when it occurs in SVCs. Some of these syntactic and semantic peculiarities will be discussed in Part 2 of this study. Below we illustrate the occurrence of the affix in sentences:

- (5) ð rɛ-tɔ bɪ á-kɔ̃
 he PROG-buy some INF-go
 ‘He is buying some to take away.’

The Finite Indicative Affixes. The Finite Indicative forms in Akan are those which can occur alone in independent clauses and participate fully in SVCs, responding to all the syntactic and semantic constraints imposed on this construction. With the possible exception of the Perfect, all the Finite Indicative forms express aspect. The special status of the Perfect will be commented on later.

Two of the Indicative affixes, the Future Aorist and the Past Aorist (realized as prefix *bɛ-* and suffix *-e*, respectively) are tense because they express time, in addition to being aspectual. The non-tense aspectual affixes are the Progressive *re-*, the Habitual and Stative. The latter two of these affixes are non-segmental. Their tonal realisation is incorporated into one of the syllables of the verb stem. Below we illustrate the occurrence of each of the finite affixes:

- (6) a. ð à-tɔ bɪ
 he PERF-buy some
 ‘He has bought some.’
 b. ð bɛ-tɔ bɪ
 he FUT-buy some
 ‘He will buy some.’
 c. ð tɔ̃-ð bɪ
 he buy-PAST.AOR some
 ‘He bought some.’
 d. ð rɛ-tɔ bɪ
 he PROG-buy some
 ‘He is buying some.’
 e. ð tɔ bɪ
 he HAB.buy some
 ‘He buys some.’

- f. ð nàm hɔ
 he STAT.walk about
 ‘He is in a state of walking.’
- g. nà ɔ à-tɔ bì
 so.that he INF-buy some
 ‘so that he may buy some’

The verb *tɔ* has no Stative form. We have substituted the Stative *nam* to fill the gap in the paradigm.

1.2.3 Summary of Classification of Affixes

Table 1 contains a summary of the classification of affixes in Akan. The symbol + placed in the row of an affix indicates that the affix belongs to the category mentioned at the top of the column of the symbol. A blank indicates that the affix is not a member of the category.

As can be seen from the distribution of plus signs and blanks in the cells, affixes are either Mood or Non-Mood. All affixes express Mood except Deixis and Negation. The expression of Mood is obligatory in the morphological structure of all verbs. Deixis and Negation are optional. This optional status is incompatible with the role of Mood in the verb.

Mood affixes are either Indicative or Non-Indicative. All the mood affixes are Indicative except the Jussive-Imperative affixes.

Table 1: Classification of Verbal Affixes in Akan

MOOD AFFIXES				NON-MOOD AFFIXES	
INDICATIVE				NON-INDICATIVE	
Finite			Non-Finite		
Tense		Non-Tense			
HAB: Ø		+			
STAT: Ø		+			
PROG: <i>re-</i>		+			
PERF: <i>a-</i>		+			
PAST: <i>-e</i>	+				
FUT: <i>bɛ́-</i>	+				
INF: <i>a-</i>			+		
JUSS: N, Ø				+	
NEG: N					+
DEIC: <i>bɛ̀, kɔ̀</i>					+

The Indicative mood affixes are either Finite or Non-finite. All Indicative affixes are Finite and Aspectual, except the Infinitive.

The aspectual affixes are non-tense, except the Future Aorist and the Past Aorist.

2 A Description of the Affixes

In this section, we describe the forms and meanings of each of the affixes. Now, as an example of an affixal paradigm of the verb, consider the following:

- (7) *dá* 'Sleep; you sleep; may you sleep.'
- (8) a. *ó n-dá* 'Let him sleep; may he sleep.'
- b. *mó n-dá* 'I request that you (pl.) sleep.'
- (9) *ò dá* 'He sleeps regularly and from time to time.'
- (10) *ò bé-dá* 'He will sleep; he is likely to sleep.'
- (11) *ò dà-è* 'He slept.'
- (12) *ò à-dá* 'He has-slept.'
- (13) *ò dà (hó)* 'He is asleep; he is in a state of lying down; he is in a state of lying down or being asleep.'
- (14) *ò rè-dá* 'He is sleeping; he is in the process of falling asleep.'
- (15) a. *ò rè-bè-dá* 'He is coming to sleep (at a place where the speaker is at the time of speaking); he intends to come to sleep.'
- b. *ò-rè-kɔ-dá* 'He is going to sleep (at a place away from where the speaker is at the time of speaking).'
- (16) *ò à-dà* 'so that he sleeps; in order for him to sleep'
- (17) a. *ò bɛ-dá* 'He comes to sleep (at a place where the speaker is at the time of speaking).'
- b. *ò kɔ-dá* 'He goes to sleep (at a place away from where the speaker is at the time of speaking).'

In the rest of this section, I shall attempt to describe the meanings and uses of the Mood and Aspectual affixes.

2.1 The Imperative

The first listed member of the paradigm for *dá* above is the Imperative form of the verb. The verb is in its bare form, and has a high tone. Although it has no

overt grammatical Subject, there is an understood Subject *wó* ‘you’. It is the form used in commands, wishes, prayers and requests in speech situations involving a speaker and an addressee participant. Further examples are:

- (18) a. *kò* *fie*
 IMP.go home
 ‘I (the speaker) request you (my addressee) to go home.’
 b. *nàntè òtém*
 IMP.walk fast
 ‘I (the speaker) request you (my addressee) to walk fast.’

The Imperative has an overt Subject in its emphatic forms, including topicalised and focus-marked sentences. For example:

- (19) a. *wó* *kó* *fie*
 you.SG IMP.go home
 ‘You go home.’
 b. *wó* *nà* *kó* *fie*
 you FOC IMP.go home
 ‘You go home’

Forms like (8), which are made up of an overt segmental affix, an overt Subject and a verb stem serve a function similar to that of (7). But, in (8), the participants in the speech act differ in number and, in certain situations, role. The speaker expresses his wish, command or entreaty about a third person, who is the referent of the Subject of the sentence. There is generally a physically present addressee, although this is not an essential condition, especially if the wish is expressed as a soliloquy or is put in the form of a private prayer or is a mere velleity. If there is an addressee, he is intended by the speaker either (a) as a mediator of the wish (request or command); or (b) as merely a witness to the expression of the wish or prayer. If (a) is intended, the speaker may optionally introduce the wish (request, command or entreaty) with the indirect causative verb *ma* ‘let’. Thus

- (20) *ó* *ń-dá*
 he IMP-sleep

may be glossed as ‘may he sleep; I want him to sleep’. But it may also be glossed as ‘I (the speaker) request or command you (my listener) to see to it that he (a third person) may sleep’. More specifically,

- (21) *mà* *ó* *ń-dá*
 IMP.allow he IMP-sleep
 ‘Let him sleep.’

It is worth noting that the morphological structure of the causative verb *ma* here is that of (7) above, for an obvious reason: the speaker is engaged in a speech act with an addressee.

The forms (7) and (8) above are clearly inflectionally marked mood forms. Semantically, they express the speaker's mood and attitude and indicate his "commitment with respect to the factual status of what he is saying" (Lyons 1969: 307). Since the two are distinct both semantically and in form, there is probably a case for referring to them separately in the grammar, say the Jussive and Optative moods. As we shall see later, however, on distributional grounds the two might usefully be referred to by one term, say the Imperative.

The forms listed under (7) and (8) are not the only ones available for the Imperative paradigm. Below, we give the full paradigm:

- (22) Singular
- a. (mà) mé ní-dá
cause I IMP-sleep
'Let me sleep.'
 - b. dá
'Sleep!'
 - c. (mà) ó ní-dá
cause he IMP-sleep
'Let him sleep.'
 - d. (mà) Kwàsí ní-dá
cause Kwasi IMP-sleep
'Let Kwasi sleep.'
- Plural
- e. (mà) yé ní-dá
cause we MP-sleep
'Let us sleep.'
 - f. mó ní-dá
you IMP-sleep
'You (pl.) sleep.'
 - g. (mà) wó ní-dá
cause they IMP-sleep
'Let them sleep.'

With the exception of Second Person forms, members of the paradigm can (optionally) occur with the Second Person Causative *ma*.

2.2 The Habitual

The affix in (9), the Habitual, has no segmental representation in surface phonology and is represented in grammatical description as Ø. Its contrastive sta-

tus is indicated by a high tone on the final syllable of verbs. For example: $\grave{\text{à}}$ *kàsá* 'he speaks'; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *dìdí* 'he eats'; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *nànté* 'he walks'; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *fá* 'he takes it'; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *hyé* 'he wears it'. In a complete description, the phonological rules would assign a high tone to the appropriate syllable of the verb. Thus, given an underlying phonological form like

Hab [.. CV +]

Vstem

(where "+" marks the end of a word), a series of phonological rules (including one which changes the tone of the vowel to high if it is non-high) would apply to change the string to Habitual forms like $\grave{\text{à}}$ *dá* 'he sleeps'; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *hyé* 'he wears it'; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *fùrá* 'he wears it' etc. in contrast with the Stative forms $\grave{\text{à}}$ *dà*; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *hyè*; $\grave{\text{à}}$ *fùrà*.

We take the view that the semantic function of the affix is purely aspectual and has no time component (see also Osam 1994). In general, it describes a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time (Comrie 1976: 27). In the words of Christaller, the affix marks "doing or being in the present time, at any indefinite time, or at all times" (1875: 58).

The affix is not a tense-marker since it does not locate events in time and it would be inappropriate to refer to it as the Present Tense as done by scholars like Christaller (1875:59), Dolphyne (1971) and Stewart (1962). But it can be used with one of the Time Markers to express Present Time, represented in our analysis as [Ø]; Past Time *ná* and Future Time *ná*. The surface form $\grave{\text{à}}$ *kàsá* has the grammatical representation

[_{NP} c [Ø [Ø [V *kàsá*]]]]]
PRES HAB

Such sentences are both syntactically and semantically Present Habitual. In a sense, scholars who have referred to forms like $\grave{\text{à}}$ *kàsá*, $\grave{\text{à}}$ *dìdí*, as Present Habitual are not wrong, since that is the meaning of these sentences. The confusion is the result of referring to the Habitual affix by itself as the marker of Present Tense.

In addition to the general characterization given above, the Habitual subsumes timeless, general truths which may have been arrived at inductively or by observation. For example:

- (23) a. *nnípá nyínáa wú*
people all HAB.die
'All people die.'

- b. *̀̀̀́úó* *dú́m* *gyá*
 water HAB.quench fire
 ‘Water quenches fire.’

There are forms in the language which may have both a habitual and a stative meaning. Although there is a clear semantic distinction between *̀̀̀́ dá* ‘he sleeps habitually’ and *̀̀̀́ dà* ‘he is in a state of being asleep, he is asleep’; and although *̀̀̀́ fré né yéré* ‘he calls his wife’ is unambiguously habitual, it is not clear, in the absence of further linguistic or extra-linguistic information, what kind of verbal modification one is dealing with in *̀̀̀́ yàré*, for example. The expression can have a stative reading ‘he is in a state of being ill’; or a habitual one ‘he gets ill from time to time’. It is clear that the two verbs, *fré* and *yare* are semantically different and should be characterized as such in the lexicon.

For purposes of interpreting sentences like *̀̀̀́ fré né yéré* (with a present habitual reading only) and *̀̀̀́ yàré* (with both stative and habitual readings) verbs are classified into two semantic categories. The first includes *yàré* ‘be ill, fall ill’; *tèré* ‘be wide, widen’; *biri* ‘be black, blacken’; *bèré* ‘be red, redden’. The Subject of the Habitual forms of verbs in this subclass can be interpreted as either being in a state or engaged in an activity. The second larger subclass includes *fré* ‘call’; *kúm* ‘kill’; *twá* ‘cut’; *kàsá* ‘speak’. These are always used as activity or process verbs. Very often lexical ambiguity of the kind referred to above is resolved by explicitly introducing an adverbial or some similar phrase whose semantic reading contains information about stativity or non-stativity, regularity or non-regularity. Thus, (to go back to the verb *yare* ‘be ill’) while

- (24) *sèisèi* *̀̀̀́* *yàré*
 now he be.ill
 ‘He is ill now.’

is obviously stative and not generic or habitual,

- (25) *è* *yé* *áà* *̀̀̀́ yàré*
 it come.occasion when he be.ill
 ‘Occasionally/often, he gets ill.’

can be interpreted as habitual only. And so can

- (26) *̀̀̀́* *yàré-yàré*
 he be.sick-sick
 ‘He gets ill often times.’

(in which the verb *yare*, like several others, is reduplicated to express habitual action) and

- (27) è dú ànɔpá áà ò yàré
 it reach morning which he be.ill
 ‘When morning comes, he gets ill.’

The interplay of adverbials and Time-Aspect markers has been noted several times in the literature. It is clear that any serious investigation of the semantic contribution of these affixes to the meaning of the verb phrase should have available at its disposal data on the semantics of adverbials. Regrettably, it has not been possible to draw on information of this kind in this study.

2.2.1 *The Expression of the Present, Past and Future Times with the Habitual Aspect*

As already explained, the Habitual affix by itself does not express present time. However, it always combines with a time-marker in the clause to express Habitual Aspect in Present, Past and Future times. The Time Marker occurs on the left of the Subject of the clause, and is realised by *ná* for Past time and Future time, and by Zero for Present time. In the sentence:

- (28) Kwàsí kàsá
 Kwasi HAB.speak
 ‘Kwasi speaks.’

the speaker presents a situation in which the Subject *Kwasi* habitually engages in an activity of speaking. Although the time of the activity is not expressed in the syntax of the sentence, it is understood to refer to Present Time, or the time of speaking.

In surface syntactic structure Present Time is realized by zero. At a more abstract level (28) may be represented as

- (29) PRESENT TIME Kwàsí HAB kàsá

It is likely that (29) is the kind of representation that scholars like Christaller, Dolphyne and Stewart had in mind when they referred to the Habitual as the Present Tense form of the verb. In the absence of an overt time marker, the Habitual is understood as representing both Present and Habitual. Belonging to the same paradigm as (29) are:

- (30) PAST Kwàsi HAB kàsá
 ná Kwasi HAB.kàsá
 ‘Kwasi used to speak.’

- (31) FUTURE Kwàsi HAB kàsá
 ná Kwàsi HAB.kàsá
 ‘Kwasi will habitually speak; it will be his practice to speak habitually.’

In (30) the Subject is presented as having been engaged in successive activities of speaking prior to utterance time. In (31) the successive activities of speaking are viewed as occurring later than the time of speaking. We return to the role of Time in Part 3. It has been pointed out that in several languages, the Habitual forms of the verb have an iterative reading as well as a progressive one (Giorgi and Pianesi 1977: 152-153). For example, in classical Latin, *laboro* may be glossed as ‘I work’ or ‘I am working’. Similarly, in French and German *je travaille* and *Ich arbeite* mean ‘I work’ and ‘I am working’. Akan is different from these languages but similar to English in this respect: *me HAB.yé adwuma* and *me Prog-yé adwuma* mean respectively ‘I work’ and ‘I am working’, and are used in different situations.

2.2.2 Other Interpretations of the Habitual Affix

In addition to cases of semantic ambiguity, there are other problems connected with the interpretation of the Habitual. For example, it is not clear how the verbs *sé* ‘say’ and *gyé dí* ‘believe’ in the sentences below are to be characterized in terms of the nature of the action or event:

- (32) *Kwàsí sé brà*
 Kwasi HAB.say IMP.come
 ‘Kwasi says come.’
- (33) *Kwàsí gyé-dí sè òbíará bà-è*
 Kwasi HAB.believe that everybodycome-PAST
 ‘Kwasi believes that everybody came.’

The verbs here assume the same shape as other Habitual forms, but they do not express habitual actions or events. In this context, they probably express subjective opinions rather than report habitual events. In a detailed description of Akan verbs including their semantic properties, these and others such as *kã kyérè* ‘tell’; *kyérè* ‘mean, imply’; *sùsùw* ‘suppose’; *srè* ‘beg, request’; *kyérè àsé* ‘explain’; *dwén* ‘think’; would be marked specially in the lexicon as expressing subjective opinions in the Habitual form. Responding to similar restrictions on interpretation are members of the subclass of predicates which, following some writers, we refer to here as performative. These include:

- (34)
- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>hyirà</i> | ‘bless’ |
| <i>tò dín</i> | ‘name, christen’ |
| <i>bò àsù</i> | ‘baptize’ |
| <i>mà nsá</i> | ‘pour a libation’ |
| <i>gù nsá</i> | ‘pour a libation’ |
| <i>mà dí bèm</i> | ‘apologise’ |
| <i>bù fǒ</i> | ‘declare guilty’ |
| <i>bù bèm</i> | ‘declare guiltless, acquit’ |
| <i>fá hyé nsá</i> | ‘entrust to’ |
| <i>sú frê</i> | ‘cry to’ |

As an illustration of the point being made about the Habitual, consider the following. All of them contain performative verbs:

- (35) a. *mè bɔ wò àsù Ìésù dín mú*
 I HAB.touch you water Jesus.ASSOC name in
 ‘I baptize you in Jesus’ name.’
- b. *mè hyirà wó*
 I HAB.bless you
 ‘I bless you.’
- c. *mè mà wò dí bèm*
 I HAB.give you eat guiltlessness
 ‘I apologise to you.’

In none of the above sentences is the verb intended to refer to a habitual or iterative event, although the forms are Habitual. They are certainly not progressive in sense; neither do they express states. Used with these verbs the Habitual affix implies that the uttering of such sentences is accompanied by action. As suggested by Austin, these sentences “do not ‘describe’ or ‘report’ or constate anything at all, are not true or false”, and “the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as saying something” (Austin 1962). Similar comments apply to the forms of the conventional greetings of (36). The Habitual forms of the verbs do not express habitual events.

- (36) a. *mè mà wò àkyé*
 I HAB.give you dawn
 ‘I say good morning to you.’
- b. *mè mà wò àhá*
 I HAB.give you afternoon
 ‘I say good afternoon to you.’

- c. *mè mà wò dùé*
 I HAB.give you condolences
 'I commiserate with you.'
- d. *mè mà wò kòsè*
 I HAB.give you sympathies
 'You have my sympathies.'

Attention should be drawn at this point to one type of conditional sentence in which the verb in the *protasis* (*if*-clause) assumes the Present Habitual form. Consider a sentence like the following:

- (37) *sè ò bá áà yè békó*
 if he HAB.come COND we FUT-go
 'If he comes we shall go.'

In probable conditions like (37), in which the main verb is future both in form and in meaning the verb in the protasis, though Present Habitual in form, does not express a situation of an extended period of time.

2.3 The Future

The fourth listed member of the paradigm asserts that the event described by the verb will occur later than utterance time. Depending upon the lexical meaning of the verb and the semantic-feature specification associated with the adverbial if the sentence contains one, that event may be interpreted as going to occur once (e.g., in the environment of an adverbial like *ðkyéná* 'tomorrow'); or iteratively and 'from time to time' (in the environment of adverbials like *dà bí* 'some day').

Although in most contexts, the affix under consideration has a future time reference, there are sentences in which the future affix does not refer to future time at all. In the sentence below, the main clause is, formally, future. However, it does not refer to future but present habitual time.

- (38) *wó fré nó áà ò be-gyíná hó*
 you HAB.call him COND he FUT-stand there
áá nà ò à-gyè-só
 still COMP he INF-respond
 'If you call him, he will stand still for a long time before he responds.'

In fact, the sentence retains the same meaning if the Future affix is replaced by the Present Habitual:

- (39) *wó fré nó àà ò gyíná hó*
 you HAB.call him COND he HAB.stand there
àà nà ò à-gyè-só
 still before he INF-respond
 ‘If you call him, he will stand still for a long time before he responds.’

The future affix is also used to express probability or likelihood with some verbs. Consider a sentence like:

- (40) *siká nó bé-wó hó árá*
 money the FUT-be.at there just
 ‘The money is most likely there.’

in which the verb contains the affix *bé*. Reference here is not to future time but to the present. The speaker expresses an opinion about the likely location of the referent of the Subject of the sentence at the time of utterance. Here are two more examples:

- (41) *mè gyé-di sé ò bé-té Nkràn sèisèi*
 I HAB.believe that he FUT-live Accra now
 ‘I think he probably lives in Accra.’
- (42) *é bé-só pápáápá*
 it FUT-be.big greatly
 ‘it is likely to be very big’

With verbs like *wó* ‘be located at’; *nim* ‘know’; *só* ‘be big’; *sùà* ‘be small’ and *de* ‘be called, be known as’, Future *bé* has the likelihood interpretation only, and never a future-time reference one. With most other verbs *bé* is to be interpreted ambiguously as having either a future-time reference or a probability and likelihood reading. This is illustrated by (43) – (46) below:

- (43) *ò bé-hyé dán! mú! hó*
 he FUT-be.in room.ASSOC in there
 Either a. ‘He will be in the room there.’
 Or b. ‘He is likely to be in the room there.’
- (44) *ɔ bé-híá sika*
 he FUT-need money
 Either a. ‘He will need money.’
 Or b. ‘He is likely to need money.’

- (45) *ɔ* *bé-yé* *àsɔ́fòɔ*
 he FUT-be priest
 Either a. ‘He will become a priest.’
 Or b. ‘He is probably a priest.’
- (46) *ɛ* *bé-yé* *hú*
 it FUT-be terrifying
 Either a. ‘It will be terrifying.’
 Or b. ‘It is likely to be terrifying.’

The likelihood interpretation of *bé* is possible for sentences of this structure only if the Subject of the verb is Second or Third Person. Thus, although the above sentences are ambiguous (as between future time and likelihood), the verb in the sentence below has the future time interpretation only:

- (47) *mè* *bé-yé* *ɔsɔ́foɔ*
 I FUT-become priest
 ‘I will become a priest.’

The likelihood interpretation is ruled out here for an obvious reason: the referent of the Subject of the sentence is the speaker making an assertion about himself, which he knows to be factually true at the time of speaking. If the likelihood interpretation were intended, the speaker would be required to use an appropriate adverbial like *ébìà* ‘perhaps’. For example: *ébìà mè bé-yé ɔsɔ́foɔ* ‘I am likely to become a priest’.

2.4 The Past and Perfect

The obvious similarity in meaning as well as common phonemic and graphic representation shared by the Past and Perfect provides an opportunity to introduce the two affixes together before proceeding to examine their respective linguistic properties in separate sections.

Both the Past and Perfect depict the event described by a verb as having completed at, and as having occurred prior to, the time of speaking. In both *à-dídí* ‘he has eaten’ and *ɔ didí-ì* ‘he ate’ the Subject of the sentence is understood to have gone through an event prior to the time of speaking. A second similarity shared by the two affixes lies in their representation as well as distribution: they are both represented at the phonological level, sometimes as the prefix [a] and sometimes as the suffix [i] depending upon whether the verb is positive or negative. If the verb is positive (i) prefix *a* is Perfect and (ii) suffix *i* is Past in the orthography. For example:

- (48) a. ð à-*dídí*
 he PERF-eat
 ‘He has eaten.’
 b. ð *dídí-ì*
 he eat-PAST
 ‘He ate.’

(48a) is Perfect Positive. Its negative counterpart is (49b) below and not the negative sentence (49a) as the surface order of constituents would suggest. (48b) is Past Positive. Superficially, its negative form should be (49b), but it is not. Its negative counterpart is (49a) instead. This paradox has been noted independently by various scholars (Boadi 1966; Dolphyne 1971; Essilfie 1977 (quoted by Osam 1994); Osam (*ibid.*); Schachter and Fromkin 1968; Stewart 1962). Curiously, it escaped the attention of Christaller (1875) and Welmers (1946). The paradox exists among all the Volta-Comoe languages that the present author has examined. In the context of the negative morpheme, (a) prefix *a-* is interpreted as Past; and (b) suffix *-i* is interpreted as Perfect. For example:

- (49) a. ð à-*ṇ-dídí*
 he PAST-NEG-eat
 ‘He did not eat.’
 b. ð *ṇ-dídí-ì*
 he NEG-eat-PERF
 ‘He has not eaten.’

For purposes of interpretation I shall assume that the positive paradigms (48a) and (48b) are the unmarked forms and underlying representations. The negative forms are derived. Throughout this paper, the suffix is represented by a variety of graphic symbols as done in the Akan orthography. In sentence-final position the suffix is represented by the letter *-i* if the verb ends in a vowel with the phonetic-feature specification [+Advanced]. The letter *-i* is the orthographic representation of the Akan High Advanced Vowel [i], which harmonises with verb stem-final vowels. For example:

- (50) a. ð *dídí-ì* ‘he ate’
 b. ð *dù-ì* ‘he arrived’
 c. ð *tíé-ì* ‘he listened’
 d. ð *ṇ-dídí-ì* ‘he has not eaten’
 e. ð *ṇ-dú-ì* ‘he has not arrived’
 f. ð *ṇ-tíé-ì* ‘he has not listened’

The suffix is represented by the letter *-e* if the verb ends in a [-Advanced] vowel. The letter *e* is the orthographic representation of the Non-Advanced

vowel [ɪ]. This vowel harmonises with the final vowel of the verb stem. For example:

- (51) a. ð *tè-è* 'he heard it'
 b. ð *tɛ-è* 'he hid'
 c. ð *tɔ̃-è* 'he bought it'
 d. ð *ɲ-té-è* 'he has not heard it'
 e. ð *ɲ-fá-è* 'he has not taken it'

In sentence-medial position the suffix is represented by the same letter as the one that ends the verb stem if the latter immediately precedes a Complement or Adjunct. For example:

- (52) a. ð *dù-ù* *fie*
 he reach-PAST home
 'He reached home.'
 b. ð *ɲ-fá-à* *siká* *nó*
 he NEG-take-PERF money the
 'He has not taken the money.'
 c. ð *dàń-ń* *nè* *hõ*
 he turn-PAST he.ASSOC self
 'He turned himself.'

However, in a serial verb construction of the structure [V+Suff V...] (where Suff is Past or Perfect Suffix) the suffix is deleted. For example:

- (53) ð *tɔ̃-φ* *kɔ̃-è*
 he buy-PAST go-PAST
 'He bought it and left (with it).'

The prefix *a-* has no significant variants in pronunciation and none in the writing system. With these introductory remarks on the morphology and morphophonemics of the Past and Perfect, we now turn to some aspects of their meaning. More will be said about these two affixes in the section on the Negative affix.

2.4.1 The Past

The affix in (11) is the only suffix of the paradigm. The Past Aorist, as we shall refer to it, has two main uses. First, it can assert that the event described by the verb took place at a time earlier than the time of utterance. For example:

- (54) *mbáá* *nó* *nòá-à* *nduán* *pìi*
 women the cook-PAST food many
 'The women cooked several dishes.'

- (55) òbí fré-è mè ànáa
 someone call-PAST me QUES
 ‘Did anyone call me?’

It’s most frequent use is for narrating events in the past. It always applies to completed happenings, and everything it applies to is an event or episode viewed as a total entity (Leech 1971: 9). Nothing in the Past either corresponds to an indefinitely extensive state or makes reference to the duration of the situation in question. Length or duration may be indicated by additional sentence constituents. The commonest markers are adverbials, the Duration marker *aa*, and reduplicated forms of verbs. Thus, the verb in the first of the following sentences is to be interpreted as non-durative, the second, third and fourth as having duration.

- (56) a. ò nòá-à àdùané
 she cook-PAST food
 ‘She cooked food.’
 b. ò nòá-nòá-à ndùané
 she RED-cook-PAST food
 ‘She cooked food several times and for some time.’

(The semantic negation of (b) is ò á- òn-nòá-noa nduané)

- c. ɔ nòá-à ndùané áá
 she cook-PAST food DURATION
 ‘She cooked for a long period.’

(The negation of (c) is ɔ à-òn-nòá adùané áá)

- d. ɔkɔmfɔɔ nó sà-à dà mú nó nyínáá
 priest the dance-PAST day whole the all
 ‘The priest danced all day.’

(The negation of (d) is ɔkɔmfɔɔ no á-òn-sá dà mú nó nyínáá)

- (57) a. Àsíèdú kɔ-ò sùkúù ndérá
 Asiedu go-PAST school yesterday
 ‘Asiedu went to school yesterday.’
 b. Àsíèdú kɔ-ɔ sukúù nè mbófra ásé
 Asiedu go-PAST school he.ASSOC child.ASSOC under
 ‘Asiedu went to school in his childhood.’

In (57a) the event is to be interpreted as having occurred once in the past. This interpretation of the sentence is made possible by the meaning of the point-in-time adverbial, *ndera* ‘yesterday’, and not the Past affix -ɔ. In (b), it is understood to have occurred successively over an unrestricted period of time.

This part of the meaning of the sentence is accounted for, not by the Past affix but by the extent-of-time adverbial.

The second use of the Past that should be referred to is found in conditional sentences which express remote possibility with future-time reference. The events described by the verbs in the following sentence refer to future time, although the verb affix is Past:

- (58) *sè* ò *didí-ì* *áà* *ànkà* *mè* *kò-è*
 if he eat-PAST COND would I go-PAST
 ‘If he would eat, I would go; if he ate, I would go.’

The sentence contains a subordinate clause expressing an unreal condition followed by a main clause introduced by the modal qualifier *anka*, which also marks the principal clause as unreal (Christaller 1875: 171). Both clauses contain the Past affix, but they do not refer to events or states in the past. (58) may be paraphrased as follows: “if he were to eat at or before the time of speaking, I would leave. But it is not likely that he will and, therefore, I won’t”. In languages with highly developed inflectional forms the subjunctive forms of the verb would be appropriate in this sentence. (58) can be converted to a non-hypothetical truth-neutral form by making changes in the verb forms, as in (59):

- (59) ò *didí* *áà* *mè* *bé-kò*
 he HAB.eat COND I FUT-go
 ‘If he eats, I will leave.’

Both (58) and (59) refer to future time.

Non-Tense Expression of Past Time. The Past Tense affix *-i* is one way of expressing past events and states. The particle *ná* (at a time in the past, prior to the moment of speaking) is also used in expressing past events and states and occurs in sentences like:

- (60) *ná* ò *kyèréw* *nhómá*
 PAST he HAB.write letter
 ‘he used to write letters’

which contrasts with (61):

- (61) ɔ *kyèréw-w* *nhómá*
 he write-PAST letter
 ‘He wrote letters.’

In both (60) and (61) the Subject went through a period of activity of letter-writing in the past, but whereas in (60) the event is viewed as a succession of two or more similar happenings over the period, in (61) it is presented as neu-

tral with respect to duration. The difference between the Past Time marker *ná* and the Past Tense affix is further illustrated by the sentences below, but in a different way:

- (62) *mè bá-è nò ná ò rè-dìdì*
 I come-PAST the PAST he PROG-eat
 ‘When I came, he was eating.’

- (63) *mè bá-è nò ná ò didì*
 I come-PAST the PAST he HAB.eat
 ‘When I came, he used to eat.’

Each of the sentences consists of two clauses expressing activities referring to past time. In the first clause of each of the sentences past time is realised by the tense affix *-e*, and in the second by the Time marker *ná*. The verb in the second clause of each sentence introduces an event while that of the first gives the background surrounding the event.

The PAST Tense affix *-e* performs an aspectual function corresponding to that performed by the Perfective in the Slavic languages, the Aorist in Classical Greek and the Passé Défini in French. In the words of Comrie, the affix presents “the totality of the situation” without reference to its internal contours or constituency. The event expressed by the verb may be referred to as Aorist in Past Time. The manner of presentation of the situation by the verb in the second clause is different. The event is viewed as being spread over a period of time in phases, and may be referred to as the Imperfective in Past Time.

As would be expected, the Past Aorist affix and the Past Time marker *ná* do not occur in the same clause. This explains the deviance of (64) if *ná* is construed as Past.

- (64) **ná ò didì-i*
 PAST he eat-PAST

(64) should be distinguished from the grammatical (65), its homonym,

- (65) *ná ò didì-i*
 it.follows.from.this he eat-PAST
 ‘It follows that he ate.’

ná in (65) is glossed as “then it follows that” and should be distinguished from Past *ná* in (64). We return to the logical connector *ná* in Part 3.

2.4.2 The Perfect

It has been pointed out by Comrie (1976: 52) that the Perfect gives no information about the internal constituency of situations and, therefore, does not be-

long to the category of Aspect. He argues that it relates two time points: (1) a point in time of the state which results from an earlier situation which is being witnessed at present; and (2) the time of the earlier situation itself. For example, the Akan sentence *mè à-gúaré* 'I have had a bath' encompasses both the present and past: the present state (of the Subject having had a bath) which results from a prior event, and the time of that prior event. There is no hint or indication of the manner of distribution of the event through time.

A similar point of view is expressed by Joos (1964a, b). He prefers to call the Perfect a "phase" rather than an aspect because the specified event and its relevant effects are "out of phase" with each other. And, as claimed by Joos, this "can only be true if those effects are delayed so as to be later than their cause: that event" (1964b: 68). Joos would argue that in the Akan sentence just quoted the event of the Subject having had a bath at an earlier time is "out of phase" with the effects (i.e. the present experience of enjoyment of having had a bath); because the effects are delayed so as to be later than the event (which is the cause of the effects).

The Akan Perfect answers largely to the descriptions given by Comrie and Joos. In spite of this, I have put the Perfect together with the "true" aspects for both semantic and distributional reasons. Of the non-aspectual verbal affixes in Akan, the Perfect is the only one that says something about the time of the event expressed by the verb. Secondly, it belongs to the Finite group of affixes and co-occurs with the particles which express Present, Future and Past Time.

Comrie (1976) refers to different types of Perfect according to the meaning they express. These are (1) the Perfect of result; (2) the Perfect of persistent situation; (3) the Experiential Perfect; and (4) the Perfect of recent past. Of these, the most relevant to Akan are the first two. For purposes of describing the Akan Perfect it would be useful to collapse these two into the Perfect of persistent result. The other two can be illustrated from our data, but they are not central to the system.

The Akan Perfect. Verbs modified by the affix *a-* in (12) above in their affirmative form assert that a state of affairs exists at the time of speaking, which is the result of an event or process occurring in the past time. This echoes Comrie and Joos. But Twaddell's (1960) characterization of the English perfect *have* is equally relevant to the Akan situation. "It signals a persistence of results, a continued truth-value, a valid present relevance of the effects of earlier events...". Thus, the sentence,

- (66) ò à-kyéréw ñhómá nó
 he PERF-write letter the
 'He has written the letter.'

asserts that an event of writing a letter has been accomplished, the state of completion being directly the result of an earlier activity. The most significant feature of the meaning of the affix is probably not so much the completion of an event as the currency of its relevance, interest or truth-value that results from a prior event.

It is important to differentiate between the Perfect and Past Aorist since they are both linked to past events. Consider, for example, the following pair of sentences:

- (67) *ɔhɔhɔɔ nɔ fi-i àdi*
 stranger the go-PAST out
 ‘The visitor went out.’

- (68) *ɔhɔhɔɔ nɔ á-fi àdi*
 stranger the PERF-go out
 ‘The visitor has gone out.’

(67) reports that the event took place in the past and has no current relevance or interest: the visitor went out, but he probably has returned. (68), on the other hand, implies that the effects of the activity are felt to be relevant and to be of interest at the time of reporting; “...there has not been any intervening change to effect importantly the results (or the inference from the report)” of the event which took place earlier. The stranger has not returned yet.

Akan verbs are semantically subcategorisable according to the nature of the resulting state expressed by the Perfect affix. With some verbs the Perfect implies an extended resulting state. For example, in sentences like

- (69) *nè àní á-gyè*
 he.ASSOC eye PERF-glitter
 ‘He is happy.’

- (70) *nè hó á-dwiri nò*
 he.ASSOC exterior PERF-collapse him
 ‘He is dumbfounded.’

the state of happiness and the state of dumbfoundedness have not ceased but continue to be witnessed as results at the time of reporting. The states are temporally unbounded.

In contrast to predicates like *ani gye* ‘be happy’; *ho dwiri* ‘be dumbfounded’ are verbs like *wu* ‘die’; *du* ‘reach’; *kum* ‘kill’; *kyerew* ‘write’, which express unprotracted results with the Perfect.

- (71) *Kòfi á-dù fie*
 Kofi PERF-reach home
 ‘Kofi has reached home.’

In the sentence in (71) there is no implication of an extended result, although the meaning “current relevance” is present.

The Pluperfect and Future Perfect. The Perfect forms exemplified in the foregoing sentences have a present-time reference. For example, in the sentence:

- (72) *Kòfí* *hó á-tò* *nò*
 Kofi.ASSOC exterior PERF-settle him
 ‘Kofi enjoys a state of mental calm.’

the Perfect expresses a relation between a present state and a past situation. The verb in (72) may be described as Present Perfect. In contrast to the Present Perfect are the Past Perfect (or Pluperfect) and the Future Perfect. In

- (73) (*wó bá-é* *nó*) *ná* *Kòfí* *hó á-tò*
 (you come-PAST TOP) PAST Kofi.ASSOC EXT PERF-settle
 nò
 him
 ‘(When you came,) Kofi had enjoyed a state of mental calm.’

the second (main) clause expresses a relation between a resulting past state and an even earlier state. This is the Past Perfect or Pluperfect. In further contrast with the Present Perfect is the Future Perfect exemplified by

- (74) (*wó bé-bá* *nó*) *ná* *Kòfí* *hó*
 (you FUT-come TOP) FUT Kofi.ASSOC EXT
 á-tò *nò*
 PERF-settle him
 ‘(By the time you come back,) Kofi will have enjoyed a state of
 mental calm.’

Here the Perfect expresses a relation between a future state and an event prior to future time; Kofi’s attaining a state of mental well-being precedes some future event; namely, someone’s arrival.

2.4.3 *A Note on the Functions of the Segment **na***

In the previous section reference was made to the Past and Future Time markers *ná* and *ná*. In this section we comment further on these two Time markers and other particles which are phonologically similar, to make the material presented later easier to follow.

The segmental sequence [na] represented in the Akan orthography as *na* may bear a high or low tone depending upon meaning and function. First, low tone bearing *na* functions as a syntactic co-ordinator and occurs in sentences like (75):

- (75) *ɔ bà-à há nà mè à-n-hu nó*
 he come-PAST here but I PAST-NEG-see him
 ‘He came but I did not see him.’

This is the least important of the *na* forms from the point of view of this study. Homophonous with this is the subordinator *nà* which introduces an infinitival clause, as in (76):

- (76) *ɔ bé-ba há nà mè à-hwɛ nó*
 he FUT-come here SUBORD I INF-look him
 ‘He will come here for me to see him.’

We shall have more to say about this particle in section 2.7.2.

In addition to these two particles there occur in the language three homonyms which are also realised by the segmental sequence *na*. They all bear the high tone and we shall refer to them as *ná₁*, *ná₂* and *ná₃*. The first two are Past and Future Time markers, and they form a paradigmatic series with Zero (Ø), which marks Present Time. The third, *ná₃*, is a non-temporal logical connector. We illustrate below the meaning, function and distribution of the Time markers.

- (77) a. *ná₁ ɔ bá / rɛ̀-ba / à-bá*
 PAST he HAB.come / PROG-come / PERF-come
 ‘He used to visit/was visiting/had visited.’
 b. *ná ɔ bá / rɛ̀-bá / à-bá*
 FUT he HAB.come / PROG-come / PERF-come
 ‘He will be visiting regularly/will be in the process of visiting/will have visited.’
 c. Ø ɔ bá / rɛ̀-bá / à-bá
 PRES he HAB.visit / PROG-visit / PERF-visit
 ‘He visits/is visiting/has visited.’

(77a,b) presuppose the occurrence of an immediately preceding subordinate temporal clause or a similar clause occurring earlier in the discourse. The subordinate clause contains the Past or Future Tense and agrees with the time realized by temporal *ná* in the principal clause. Thus, predictably, clauses like (77a) are always preceded by a temporal clause containing a Past Tense affix and those like (77b) by a clause with a Future tense affix.

(77a) and (b) are ambiguous, but the ambiguity is resolved if they are put in the context of a subordinate temporal clause, as in (78a, b). Unlike (77a, b), (77c) is not ambiguous, but it too can be preceded by a temporal adjunct whose sense is compatible with the time expression “AT THE TIME OF SPEAKING”. The facts outlined above are illustrated by (78a-c) below:

- (78) a. *wó bá-é nó ná₁ ò bá / ò*
 you come-PAST the PAST he HAB.come / he
rè-bá
 PROG-come
 ‘When you visited, he used to visit/he was visiting.’
- b. *wó bé-bá nó ná₂ ò bá / ò*
 you FUT-visit the FUT he HAB.visit / he
rè-bá
 PROG-visit
 ‘By the time you visit, he will be visiting regularly/he will be in the process of visiting.’
- c. *sèisèi Ø ò bá / ò rè-bá*
 now PRES he HAB.come / he PROG-come
 ‘As I speak, he regularly visits/he is in the process of visiting.’

That *na₁* and *na₂* are different lexemes is not in doubt (see 761, b). It would be pointless to speculate here about the likely historical processes that must have occurred for two diametrically opposed semantic units to be expressed by the same form *ná*, intriguing though this is. Perhaps, a detailed study of these two forms in related dialects and languages will, one day, give clues.

A third homonym, *na₃*, is as explained above a logical connector. It does not express time at all, and its distribution only partially overlaps with the other homonyms. It may be glossed as: “IT IS TO BE LOGICALLY CONCLUDED FROM X THAT” (where X is a proposition explicitly or implicitly expressed in an earlier clause). The sentence below illustrates the use of the logical connector *na₃*.

- (79) *sé wó hù-ù nó áà (éndèè)*
 if you see-PAST him COND (in.that.case)
ná₃ ò bà-è
 it.follows.from.the.foresaid.that he visit-PAST
 ‘If you saw him, then it logically follows that he visited.’

In addition to the above characterization of *na₃*, the following differences between the logical connector and the Time markers are to be noted:

- (i) Although both sets of particles introduce a principal clause, the logical connector co-occurs with the Past and Future affixes in the same clause, which the Time markers do not.
- (ii) The clauses containing both the logical connector and the Time markers are both preceded by a subordinate clause. However, while the logical connector requires a preceding conditional clause, the latter always presuppose an earlier temporal clause.

- (iii) The logical connector occurs optionally with the expression *endee*, an elliptical form of *énó dèe* ‘in that case’. The two always refer to a preceding conditional clause.

2.5 The Stative

Following Christaller (1875: 60), the form of the verb in (13) was referred to as the Continuative by Boadi (1966) (see also Osam (1994: 54) who uses the same term). I now refer to it as the Stative, which is a much more commonly used term in current discussions of Aspect.

The Stative always describes a state of affairs with unlimited duration. It, thus, overlaps in meaning with the Perfect and the Progressive. The form in (13) may be interpreted as “he is in a state of lying down at the point of speaking and has been in that state from an unspecified point in time in the past and is likely to be in that same state till an unspecified point in time in future”

Not all verbs have morphological Stative forms (Boadi: 1966). Secondly, there are verbs which exist in the Stative only. Thus, on the basis of their distribution with the Stative affix, verbs may be categorised into three groups:

- (iv) Those which form Stative (s) and non-Stative (n-s) pairs e.g.,
- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|---|
| <i>fūrà</i> (s) | <i>fūrá</i> (n-s) | ‘wear; put on; be clothed in’ |
| <i>hyè</i> (s) | <i>hyé</i> (n-s) | ‘wear; put on; be clothed in’ |
| <i>yàn</i> (s) | <i>yán</i> (n-s) | ‘wear something around the neck’ |
| <i>pè</i> (s) | <i>pé</i> (n-s) | ‘like; want; seek; look for; be desirous’ |
| <i>yè</i> (s) | <i>yé</i> (n-s) | ‘become; change to’ |
| <i>dà</i> (s) | <i>hɔ dà</i> (n-s) | ‘be in a prostrate position; sleep; lie down’ |
| <i>hyè</i> (s) | <i>hyé</i> (n-s) | ‘be at’ |
| <i>tè</i> (s) | <i>té</i> (n-s) | ‘be hiding; hide’ |
| <i>sè</i> (s) | <i>sé</i> (n-s) | ‘be like; resemble’ |
| <i>bèn</i> (s) | <i>bén</i> (n-s) | ‘be near; move towards’ |
| <i>wàrè</i> (s) | <i>wàré</i> (n-s) | ‘be long; become long’ |
| <i>bìrì</i> (s) | <i>bìrí</i> (n-s) | ‘be black; blacken, become black’ |
| <i>tùrù</i> (s) | <i>tùrú</i> (n-s) | ‘carry (a child) on the back’ |
| <i>sò</i> (s) | <i>sòá</i> (n-s) | ‘carry (a load) on the head’ |
| <i>kùrà</i> (s) | <i>kùrá</i> (n-s) | ‘hold in the hands’ |
| <i>fùà</i> (s) | <i>fùá</i> (n-s) | ‘hold in the hands’ |
| <i>kyèà</i> (s) | <i>kyéá</i> (n-s) | ‘bend; tilt; incline’ |
| <i>sèn</i> (s) | <i>sén</i> (n-s) | ‘be suspended vertically; hang’ |
| <i>sà</i> (s) | <i>sá</i> (n-s) | ‘suspend or be suspended horizontally; suspend’ |
| <i>siànkà</i> (s) | <i>siànká</i> (n-s) | ‘be stopped or hampered; stop hamper’ |

sò (s) *só* (n-s) ‘be big; be sufficient for purpose; reach the required amount or quantity’

- (v) The majority of verbs which have non-Statative forms only e.g., *kyèréw* ‘write’; *sá* ‘dance’; *twé* ‘drag’; *kàsá* ‘speak’; *fré* ‘call’; *twá* ‘cut’; *wèá* ‘crawl’; *nànté* ‘walk’; *sómá* ‘send’; *má* ‘give’; *màné* ‘remit’; *pòtò* ‘knead’; *sàkrá* ‘change’; *sèsá* ‘change’; *sre* ‘request’; *wàré* ‘marry’; *tòn* ‘sell’; *tò* ‘buy’; *kyèré* ‘show’; *gyé* ‘receive’; *fém* ‘borrow, lend’; *firi* ‘borrow, lend’; *pùè* ‘go out’; *piá* ‘push’; *bá* ‘come’; *dàádàà* ‘deceive’.
- (vi) A few verbs have only Statative forms, e.g., *nìm* ‘know’; *nàm* ‘be in a process of walking’; *nyèm* ‘be pregnant’; *tè* ‘live at’; *dè* ‘be called as, be known as’; *wò* ‘be located at’; *wò* ‘possess, be in possession of’. It will be noticed that, with the exception of one or two verbs, the Statative and non-Statative members of each pair are differentiated by the low and high tone, respectively. Also, in general, Statative verbs have a low tone on the final syllable.

There are a few verbs in sub-class (iii) which pair with semantically related non-Statative verbs to express non-Statativity. Thus, there are pairs of sentences like:

- (80) a. *mè nàm* (s) ‘I have been, and still am, in a state of walking.’
 b. *mè nànté* (n-s) ‘I walk.’
- (81) a. *mè nìm* (s) ‘I know; I am aware or conscious of’
 b. *mè hú* (n-s) ‘I come to know; I come to learn; I perceive.’
- (82) a. *mè tè Òdá* (s) ‘I live at Oda; I am resident at Oda.’
 b. *mè trá Òdá* (n-s) ‘I stay at Oda, I make Oda my residence’

The Non-Statative forms in (80) – (82) represent the Habitual aspect in Present time only. But they also have Non-Habitual and Non-Present forms, e.g. *mè nànté-è* ‘I walked’, *mè à-nánté* ‘I have walked’, *ná mè à-nánté* ‘I had walked’, etc.

The Statative has a special status in the verbal affixal system. For example, it is the only member of the paradigm which is restricted in occurrence. Because of its limited distribution, it may be argued that the Statative does not belong to the same paradigm as the Progressive, Habitual, Perfect and the rest. Rather it may be usefully considered as an inherent semantic property of verbs or as a selectional feature whose legitimate place is the lexicon.

This is the interpretation adopted by Boadi (1966) in which the category Continuative was given the status of selectional feature. If this interpretation was adopted, verbs would be derived into Statative and Non-Statative. On this interpretation, [-Statative] verbs like *kyérew*, *kúm*, *dí*, would constitute the majority

in the lexicon, while [+Stative] verbs like *nàm*, *nìm* would form a minor subset. The members of pairs of Stative and Non-Stative, as presented in this study, would constitute separate verbs in spite of their sharing common phonological stem forms and denotations. This would be counter-intuitive. Another drawback is that it would double the size of this sub-part of the lexicon.

One has to remember that the Stative is an inflectional superfix and belongs with other affixes like the Progressive and Habitual. It is not an accident that it does not co-occur with any of them in a clause. Like the other aspectual affixes (Progressive, Habitual, Perfect etc.) it can occur with the Present, Past and Future Time Markers.

It was pointed out earlier that the Stative overlapped semantically with the Perfect and Progressive (see also Comrie 1976: 57; Welmers 1973: 347). There are, however, good semantic reasons for assigning each of them an independent place in a network of contrasts. For example, they exhibit important semantic contrasts, as exemplified by the sentences of (83).

- (83) a. ò à-dá hɔ́
 he PERF-sleep there
 ‘He has laid down there.’
 b. ò rɛ̀-dá hɔ́
 he PROG-sleep there
 ‘He is in the process of lying down there; he is going to lie down there.’
 c. ò dà hɔ́
 he STAT.lie there
 ‘He is in a state of lying down; he is lying down.’

The meaning of (83b) is clear; the referent of the Subject is viewed as going through a situation or a world which will ultimately find him/her lying on a surface. Unlike in the case of many other verbs, it would be wrong to render the use of the Progressive here with the English *-ing* form of the verb. ‘he is lying down’ in English means he is already in a position of rest.

In (83a) the event is pictured as having (i) a beginning, (ii) an end, which represents the completion of the event, and (iii) a state, which results from the completion. The referent of the Subject of the sentence is viewed as having initiated (or been made to go through) the beginning of a process, and as having brought it to completion. What the reporter is witnessing as a fact is not so much the completion of the event as its result.

The difference between (a) and (c) is much more difficult to describe. (83c) implies that the event is a state and is being witnessed. There is no implied allusion to its beginning or its completion. The speaker’s sole interest is in pointing to an existing state of affairs neither linked to the past nor destined to com-

pletion. In (83a), however, there is an implied reference to the antecedents of the resulting state.

Let us consider examples of a slightly different kind:

- (84) a. $\dot{\text{a}}$ *à-pé* *siká*
 he PERF-see money
 ‘He has sought money and got it.’
 b. $\dot{\text{a}}$ *rè-pé* *siká*
 he PROG-see money
 ‘He is looking for money.’
 c. $\dot{\text{a}}$ *pè* *siká*
 he STAT.like money
 ‘He is fond of money; he likes money.’

With verbs like *pé* in contrast to those in the *dá* class, the Progressive implies that the event has been initiated and is continuing at the moment of speaking. Unlike in the case of *dá* there is no implied suggestion that the activity is going to cease. In (84a), the process is viewed as having come to an end, but unlike in the case of *dá*, the completed event is not viewed as a continuing state. In (84c) there is no such allusion to the beginning or completion of the process. What is being pointed to is the existence of a state.

2.6 The Progressive

To generalize about the meaning of the prefix in (14) or the Progressive, as we shall call it, is an impossible task. A thorough description of the meaning of the affix would require a study of large portions of the lexicon. As a first step towards some kind of generalization, I should observe that its most frequent use is in referring to events and processes which are in progress (and, therefore, have duration) when reference is being made to another event either implicitly or explicitly. Thus, a sentence like (85) not only implies that an event is in progress but it also presupposes that another event parallel to or simultaneous with it (e.g., ‘I am speaking’) is happening.

- (85) *mè* *rè-dìdì*
 I PROG-eat
 ‘I am eating.’

The sentence can occur in the context of a dialogue like the following:

- (86) a. *wó* *rè-yé* *dén* *sèisèl?*
 you PROG-do what now
 ‘What are you doing now?’

- b. *mè rɛ̀-dìdì (béɛ áà wɔ́ há rébísá mè àsém' yí)*
 I PROG-eat
 'I am eating (at this time while you are here asking me a question).'

The force of the presupposition is more apparent in sentences referring to past time:

- (87) a. *ná wɔ́ rɛ̀-yé ! dén*
 PAST you PROG-do what
 'What were you doing?'
 b. *ná mè rɛ̀-dìdì (béɛ áà wɔ́ bá-è nó)*
 PAST I PROG-eat(time which you come-PAST the)
 'I was eating (when you came).'

Here, an event (your arrival) is portrayed as “surrounded” in time by a past state of affairs (my eating)” (Wierzbicka 1980: 198).

Thus, in addition to typifying the kind of event expressed by the verb, namely, duration, the Progressive has also an implied temporal reference. As Jespersen puts it about English: “the essential thing is that the Action or State denoted by the expanded tense [in English] is thought of as a temporal frame encompassing something else” (Jespersen 1931).

It should be emphasised here that duration can be characterized along several dimensions. One such dimension is length; a relevant question here is whether the event “going on” has relatively limited or unlimited duration. Another axis along which duration may be described is iterativity. Does the event “going on” repeat itself several times during a period or it occurs only once? Put slightly differently, can the event be viewed as a series of cycles within a time span or does it comprise only one cycle – a start and a cessation?

To begin with the first dimension, used with some verbs the Progressive implies the absence of practically any length or duration. The verbs I have in mind include the unreduplicated forms of the following: *bɔ́* ‘strike’; *pàé* ‘split’; *gyá* ‘leave’; *kyé* ‘catch’; *trá àsɛ* ‘sit down’; *gyíná hɔ́* ‘stand up’; *twéré* ‘lean against’; *kótów* ‘squat’. In contrast, when used with verbs like *twén* ‘wait’; *yé* ‘do’; *bá* ‘come’; *kɔ́* ‘go’; *sá* ‘dance’, the Progressive either implies long duration or neutrality with respect to duration.

But progress need not be viewed as a continuum: it can be intermittent; hence, the relevance of the second dimension, iterativity. If I say:

- (88) *mè rɛ̀-sí dán sɛ̀sɛ̀i*
 I PROG-build house now
 'I am building a house now.'

assuming that I am a builder, mason, carpenter and all, I do not necessarily intend to be understood that I am, at the moment of speaking, physically and

literally seen engaged in the building of a house. The most natural interpretation that one can put on this sentence is that building a house is one of the principal activities that I am engaged in now. That is, it is a series of discrete events alternating in an unspecified order with other events. Here, the activity is understood to be distributed as several interrupted events along a time scale. On the other hand, if I say the sentence in (89) I intend to be understood by my listener to mean that the event is physically and literally going on at the time of utterance.

- (89) *mè* *rè-didí* *sèisèi*
 I PROG-eat now
 ‘I am eating now.’

Not all the facts about the Progressive are clear, but it is certain that its various meanings can be determined only contextually, the nature of the duration being dictated by the semantics of the verb to which the affix is attached. In a full description of Akan, every verb would be marked lexically according to which combination of readings it imposes on the Progressive affix. It is quite likely that the various readings of this affix are determined by the semantics of whole predicates rather than by verbs. Without making any claims about the nature of the determining factors I would expect that, used with verbs like *srá* ‘smear’, *didí* ‘eat’, *nànté* ‘walk’, the Progressive implies that the event was physically and literally going on at the time when it was referred to. In contrast, when used with the Progressive affix, the following predicates imply that either (1) the event is literally going on at the moment of speaking; or (2) that it is one of several activities which the actor is engaged in: *sí òdán* ‘build a house’, *kyèréw nhómà* ‘write a book’, *kò sùkúù* ‘attend school’, *sùà àdówímá* ‘learn a trade’, *dí páá* ‘work for money’.

To illustrate further the meaning of the Progressive, I should mention here a group of verbs which, far from expressing repeatability or instantaneity, require the interpretation “gradual, imperceptible change from one state to another” when used with the affix. These include: *fú* ‘grow, of hair or plant’, *nyín* ‘grow’, *fón* ‘lose flesh or weight’, *twé* ‘contract’, as in:

- (90) *èwíra* *nó* *rè-fú*
 bush the PROG-grow
 ‘the bush is growing’
- (91) *àbófrá* *nó* *rè-nyín*
 child the PROG-grow
 ‘the child is growing’

Used with such verbs, the Progressive presupposes complete absence of either repetition or instantaneity. In contrast, recall verbs like *twá* ‘cut’, *pém*

'knock', discussed earlier or, even, predicates like *sì ɔ́dán* 'build a house', which require the opposite interpretation when they occur with the Progressive.

There is another much larger semantic class of change-of-state verbs whose behaviour with the Progressive should be contrasted with that of the verbs mentioned in the last paragraph. When used with the process (Middle) verbs, the Progressive implies an activity which is less gradual and imperceptible than what is described above. Consider sentences like

- (92) *ɔ́dán nó rɛ́-hyé*
 house the PROG-burn
 'The house is burning.'
- (93) *dùá nó rɛ́-kyèá*
 tree the PROG-become.not.straight
 'The tree is tilting.'

In the first of these sentences, (92), the various steps and changes comprising the event are perceptible to the human senses. In the second, they may or may not be: the steps making up the physical movement of the tree may be perceptible to the senses, especially if the event occurred within a comparatively short period. Here, too, as in many other areas, the facts are hardly clear. The semantic behaviour of a verb like *pòrɔ́* 'decay', which is one of the process verbs, is different from *hyé* or *kyèá*. It is certainly not the case that a process of putrefaction can be discretised by the human senses. To subcategorise these verbs into smaller classes according to their semantic behaviour in the environment of the Progressive would be pointless. It would be sufficient, I think, to mark the verb as [+Change-of-State] and assume that each lexical item has its idiosyncrasies and contributes uniquely to the semantic reading of the Progressive. To illustrate the complexity of the situation further, consider verbs like *yèrá* 'lose' and *nyìnsén* 'become pregnant'. When used with the Progressive their meaning can hardly be characterized in terms of degrees of instantaneity or repeatability. A sentence like

- (94) *ɔ́báá nó rɛ́-nyìnsén*
 woman the PROG-become.pregnant
 'The woman is becoming pregnant.'

would normally be interpreted to mean that the woman has already begun pregnancy. Unlike in other contexts, the Progressive does not mean that the event is in progress or is going to start. It expresses an already existing state rather than an event in progress; and, for all practical purposes, the sentence has the same factual value as the following:

- (95) òbáá nó á-nyìnsèn
 woman the PERF-become.pregnant
 ‘the woman has become pregnant’

and

- (96) òbáá nó nyèm
 woman the STAT-be.pregnant
 ‘the woman is pregnant’

The use of the Progressive here would seem to suggest that the speaker is not absolutely certain that the alleged situation actually exists. The same comment goes for the sentence:

- (97) ònèémá nó rẹ̀-yẹ̀rá
 things the PROG-be.lost
 ‘the things are getting lost’

and similar others. Here, what the predicate expresses is uncertainty about a state of affairs.

There are a few verbs in the language which do not normally co-occur with the Progressive affix at all. These are mostly verbs which express highly personal beliefs, emotions and judgments. They include *sùsúw* ‘suppose’, *gyé dí* ‘believe’, *wéré fí* ‘forget’, *dɔ* ‘love’, *kyí* ‘hate’, *yé* ‘seem to’. Thus, sentences like the following do not normally occur:

- (98) **me wéré re-fí*
 my heart PROG-go.out
 ‘I am forgetting.’
- (99) **me re-gyé a-dí*
 I PROG-receive INF-eat
 ‘I am believing.’

The English equivalents of these verbs have been referred to by Joos as “private verbs” (see Hill 1958: 207). Quoting Joos, Hill refers to a group of verbs in English which do not take the *-ing* form in habitual action as “private”. According to Hill, “no-one but the speaker himself is a competent witness to such action as [for example] seeing or understanding”. This contrasts with an event like looking at, where the hearer can verify what is happening. Verbs used in such situations are “public” (or “non-private”).

English verbs like *see* have both “public” and “private senses. In *I can see him over there* (Hill *ibid.*), non-progressive *see* has a private interpretation. This is in contrast with its “public” sense in *I am seeing the President at 10*, where *see* has the progressive form.

Worthy of mention in this connection are the impersonal Verbs of Complementation of which *hía* 'be necessary', *sè* 'be an obligation', *siáne* 'be the cause of', are probably the commonest. When used impersonally to introduce sentential complements, these never occur with the Progressive. Thus, a sentence like

- does not occur. The verbs *se* 'say', *kyere* 'mean, imply' and other performative verbs do not normally occur with the Progressive especially when the Subject of the sentence is the First Person pronoun. This restriction is widespread among the languages of the world. Twadell (1960) explains this by saying that these verbs are used to express a proclamation or announcement. "As such, their utterance by a speaker with the subject 'I', 'we' or as a report of the speaker's discovery or judgment, constitutes a unique unrepeatable event". I should point out that there are contexts in which *kyere* and *se* occur with the Progressive:

- These do not weaken Twadell's hypothesis, however, as in such contexts, these verbs are not being used to express an announcement.

I have already referred to the semantic affinity of the Progressive to some of the affixes discussed above. We should note here, in passing, its behaviour in the environment of future adverbials, and its semantic affinity to the Stative and the Perfect (Comrie 1976). The semantic distinction between the Future and the Progressive is clear in most contexts, but in the appropriate context the Progressive may occur in a predicate referring to future time. Thus, in a sentence like

- (102) *mè rɛ-kɔ́ Òdà òkyéná*
 I PROG-go Oda tomorrow
 'I am going to Oda tomorrow'

the normal meaning of the Progressive is either completely neutralized or shifted in emphasis. It would not be accurate to say that the Progressive is here being used to refer to future time. Future time is signaled lexically by the adverbial *òkyéná* 'tomorrow'. The semantic contribution of the Progressive, by itself, if any, is that it adds to the projected event a greater sense of immediacy. In the appropriate circumstance, the sentence above (102) would be felt to be more vivid than

- (103) *mè bé-kɔ́ Òdà òkyènà*
 I FUT-go Oda tomorrow
 'I will go to Oda tomorrow.'

As pointed out earlier, the Stative always expresses a continued state of affairs with unlimited duration. This explains the native speaker's intuitive consciousness of its semantic similarity to the Progressive, which also expresses unlimited duration in several of the contexts in which it occurs. Both (104a and b) imply unlimited duration.

- (104) a. *ò rɛ-dìdì*
 he PROG-eat
 'He is eating.'
 b. *ò dà hɔ́*
 he STAT.lie down
 'He is lying down.'

This shared semantic property explains why one of the Subjects of two conjoined clauses containing the Stative and Progressive, respectively, can undergo ellipsis yielding a variety of syntactic constructions including the serial verb construction, as in (105).

- (105) *ò dà hɔ́ rɛ-dìdì*
 he STAT.lie there PROG-eat
 'He is lying down eating.'

Serialized verb phrases of this kind containing the Future and the Progressive are impossible, which suggests that the Progressive and the Future are not compatible. Nor is it accidental that the Progressive enters into serial verb constructions with the Perfect:

- (106) ò à-dá hɔ́ rɛ̀-dìdì
 he PERF-lie there PROG-eat
 ‘he has laid down eating’

As has been explained, the Perfect expresses “a continued truth-value”, and, therefore, has a duration component.

2.7 *The Infinitive*

The form in (16) which I here refer to as the Infinitive was called the Consecutive by Christaller (1875) and has since been referred to as such by almost all scholars writing on the Akan verbal system (Boadi 1966; 1968; Dolphyne 1971; 1987; Osam 1974; Schachter and Fromkin 1968; Stewart 1962; Welmers 1946). Christaller and almost everyone writing on the subject after him interpret it as part of the Tense-Aspect system. It is also agreed by most contributors to discussions on the subject that the expression of purpose, result or intention is the principal function of the affix.

My reason for calling it the Infinitive is that unlike the other affixes dealt with so far it is non-finite and the verbs to which it is attached behave syntactically and semantically like the infinitives found in some languages. Christaller postulates an infinitive for his verbal system. This may be illustrated with forms like *àdidie* ‘eating’ and *nántèe* ‘walking’. I think these forms are better dealt with under derivational morphology. I call them gerundial forms following generally accepted terminology. It is relevant to point out that in some Indo-European languages the gerund and the infinitive are nominalized forms of verbs and have been described as non-finite forms. In none of the known Akan dialects does the infinitival or gerundial affix either locate events in time or represent a way “of viewing the internal temporary constituency of a situation”.

In this section, I shall be concerned with the following problems:

- (i) the semantic and distributional differences between the Infinitive, on the one hand, and the other affixes discussed so far;
- (ii) an analysis of two constructions in which the Infinitive occurs.

In one of these constructions the Infinitive occurs in a subjectless clause of an adjunct of purpose and is preceded by the Future or Progressive affix. In the second, it occurs in a purpose clause with a Subject.

2.7.1 *The Infinitive in a Subjectless Clause of Purpose/Result/Intention*

As argued elsewhere (Boadi 2005), when the Infinitive occurs in a serial-verb construction it appears at the end of the sentence and falls outside the domain of that construction. It always occurs after the Future or the Progressive. For example:

- (107) $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *rè-fá* *á-kɔ́*
 he PROG-take INF-go
 ‘He is taking it to go away with.’
- (108) $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *bé-fá* *á-kɔ́*
 he FUT-take INF-go
 ‘He will take it to go away with.’

There is no obvious semantic relation between the Infinitive, on the one hand, and the Progressive and the Future, on the other, in sentences like (107) and (108) as would be expected in a true Akan serial verb construction. Indeed, the Infinitive is not subject to any of the semantic compatibility restrictions to which the other affixes are in SVCs.

The affix further differs from the others in not observing the polarity restriction on SVCs, as the following sentences illustrate.

- (109) a. $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *fà-à* *bí* *kyèré-è* *yèn*
 he take-PAST some show-PAST us
 ‘He took some to show us.’ (Positive-Past)
- b. $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *à-m-fá* *bí* *á-à-kyèré* *yén*
 he PAST-NEG-take some PAST-NEG-show us
 ‘He did not take any to show us.’ (Negative, Past)
- (110) a. $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *rè-fá* *bí* *á-kyèré* *yén*
 he PROG-take some INF-show us
 ‘He is taking some to show us.’ (Positive-Progressive and Positive-Infinitive)
- b. $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *rè-m-fá* *bí* *à-kyèré* *yén*
 he PROG-NEG-take some INF-show us
 ‘He is not taking any to show us.’ (Negative-Progressive, Positive-Infinitive)
- c. * $\dot{\text{ò}}$ *re-m-fá* *bi* *a-n-kyere* *yèn*
 he PROG-NEG-take some INF-NEG-show us
 (Negative-Progressive, Negative-Infinitive)

The sentences of (109a) and (109b) are normal SVCs with respect to polarity: the first two verbs in sequence are either positive or negative. (110a) also conforms to the Polarity restriction; but (as pointed out) not because it is a regular SVC; the first verb is Progressive and the second an Infinitive. (110b) is the negation of (110a). It is a grammatical sentence although the second (infinitival) verb is not negative. The status of (110c) is the converse of that of (110b). It is an ungrammatical sentence although it does not violate the Polarity restriction.

The distributional limitations of the Infinitive have been widely commented upon. It never occurs in principal clauses of the structure #NP VP# (where # marks a principal clause boundary). This is because the verb resulting from its attachment is non-finite. A typical position for the Infinitive is illustrated by the pseudo-SVCs (110a) and (110b), with the structure (111).

- (111) [NP_i {FUT/PROG} [PRO_j INF-V]] PURPOSE

The structure (111) is found in several languages. For example, some types of English purpose clauses can be translated into Akan and vice-versa using similar structures. The English and Akan sentences (112) and (113) have similar syntactic structures.

- (112) He is staying there to trade

- (113) ò rɛ-tàá hɔ́ á-dī gúá
 he PROG-stay there INF-engage.in trade
 ‘He is staying there to trade.’

In both cases the empty Subject position is controlled by the matrix Subject NP.

2.7.2 The Infinitive in a Purpose/Result/Intention/Clause With Subject

The Infinitive also occurs in embedded clauses, which express purpose, intention or result. Such clauses are introduced by the purpose-result complementizer *na* (so that, in order that) as in:

- (114) yɛ mè àpédé, nà mè à-dɔ wò
 IMP.do my wishes, in.order.that I INF-love you
 dáá
 forever
 ‘Do my wishes so that I love you for ever.’

The (second) subordinate clause contains the Infinitive and has the structure:

- (115) [_{CP} [COMP *nà* [S mè [INF à-dɔ wò dáá]]]]

This contrasts with the ungrammatical sentence (116), which is a principal clause:

- (116) *mè à-dɔ wò dáá
 I INF-love you forever
 ‘I to love you forever.’

Infinitive clauses like (117) have negative counterparts. For example:

- (117) *nà m̀̀ à-̀̀-dɔ wò d́́́*
 so.that I INF-NEG-love you forever
 ‘in order for me not to love you for ever’

It should be clear that the behaviour of the Infinitive in fully developed purpose-result clauses differs from its behaviour in subjectless clauses with respect to polarity. This is not the whole story, however. In fully developed infinitival clauses, if the first occurrence of the Infinitive is negated, subsequent ones must be negated for the sentence to be grammatical. For example:

- (118) *nà ɔ̀ à-̀̀-kú́m m̀̀ à-̀̀-sèé m̀̀*
 so.that he INF-NEG-kill me INF-NEG-destroy me
à-̀̀-kyèré àmánfòɔ
 INF-NEG-show citizens
 ‘in order for him not to kill me to destroy me for the citizens to see’

(119) is ungrammatical because a negative verb is followed by positive ones:

- (119) **na ɔ̀ a-n-kum me a-see me a-kyerɛ*
 so.that he INF-NEG-kill me INF-destroy me INF-show
amanfòɔ
 citizens

It has been noted above that the Polarity restriction makes at least one exception when it operates on regular SVCs: the Infinitive is not negated even if it follows negated verbs. However, the Polarity rule applies without exception in cases of subordinate infinitival clauses. As an illustration of the different ways in which the Polarity restriction operates in Akan, compare (120), (121) and (122).

- (120) *ɔ̀ à-n-gýe nnéémá nó á-̀̀-hwé*
 he PAST-NEG-receive things the PAST-NEG-look
á-̀̀-kɔ́
 PAST-NEG-go
 ‘He did not receive the things, did not examine them and did not go.’

(120) consists of three uninterrupted verb phrases. The Polarity restriction requires that all of them be positive or negative in a regular SVC like (120). Here they are all negative. However, the polarity restriction is relaxed for sentences like (121) in which the sequence of verbs is interrupted by a coordinator.

- (121) ɔ $\text{à-}\dot{\text{n}}\text{-g}\dot{\text{y}}\text{e}$ nnéémá nó $\text{á-}\dot{\text{n}}\text{-h}\dot{\text{w}}\dot{\text{é}}$
 he PAST-NEG-receive things the PAST-NEG-look
 nà $\dot{\text{ɔ}}\text{k}\dot{\text{ɔ}}\text{-è}$
 COORD he go-PAST
 ‘He did not receive the things and examine them before he left.’

In contrast, consider the application of this rule in relation to (122).

- (122) nà $\dot{\text{ɔ}}$ $\text{à-}\dot{\text{n}}\text{-y}\dot{\text{é}}$ mé $\text{á-}\dot{\text{n}}\text{-s}\dot{\text{é}}\text{e}$ mé ná
 so.that he INF-NEG-insult me INF-NEG-destroy me and
 ámánfóɔ $\text{á-}\dot{\text{n}}\text{-s}\dot{\text{è}}\text{ré}$ mé
 citizens INF-NEG-laugh.at me
 ‘in order for him not to insult me and destroy me and for the citizens to laugh at me’

This is a subordinate purpose clause consisting of infinitival verbs only. The first two verbs are negative, and so is the third although the latter is separated from the former by the coordinator *na* and a new Subject. Yet all the verbs are negative. To change the polarity of the verb after the coordinator will render the sentence ungrammatical. This is the reverse of what happens in regular SVCs.

2.7.3 *The Infinitive and the Perfect*

Attention should be drawn to the similarity between the phonological forms of the Infinitive and the Perfect morphemes. They both have the segmental phonemic form *a* when used in the affirmative. The expression *a-di* can mean both ‘have/has eaten’ (Perfect) and ‘in order to eat’ (Infinitive). The tone on the affix can be high or low depending upon phonological context. It is high in the context of a preceding high tone but low if preceded by a low. For example:

- (123) a. Kòfí á-di
 Kofi PERF-eat
 ‘Kofi has eaten it.’
 b. wó á-fà
 you PERF-take
 ‘You have taken it.’
 (124) a. nà Kòfí á-di
 so.that Kofi INF-eat
 ‘in order for Kofi to eat it’
 b. nà wó á-fà
 so.that you INF-take
 ‘in order for you to take it’

- (125) a. *Yàw à-dí*
 Yaw PERF-eat
 'Yaw has eaten it.'
- b. *ò à-fá*
 he PERF-eat
 'He has taken it.'
- (126) a. *nà Yàw à-dí*
 so.that Yaw INF-eat
 'in order for Yaw to eat it'
- b. *nà ò à-dí*
 so.that he INF-eat
 'in order for him to eat it'

Both affixes can be negated. Note, however, that as stressed earlier, the negative of the Perfect *Yàw à-dí* 'Yaw has eaten it' is *Yàw ò-dí-ì* 'Yaw has not eaten it', and not *Yàw à-ò-dí* 'Yaw did not eat it', whereas the negative of the Infinitive *nà Yàw à-dí* 'in order for Yaw to eat it' is *nà Yàw à-ò-dí* 'in order for Yaw not to eat it'.

2.8 The Negative

In the Akyem and Asante dialects (as well as the better-known of the Fante dialects) the lexical representation of NEG in the synchronic grammar is the syllabic nasal consonant with a low tone. Historically it had an NV structure as attested in Aowin where the form is *nè*. The tone remains stable during morphotonic processes. Underlying [n] changes to [m] and [ŋ] depending upon the point of articulation of the following consonant. In what follows we illustrate its occurrence with the other affixes of the verb.

2.8.1 NEG with the Habitual and Stative

NEG with the Habitual and NEG with the Stative in Akyem and Asante have the same phonetic representation. For example:

Positive Habitual:

- (127) *ò túrù nè bá*
 she HAB.carry.on.the.back her child
 'She carries her child on the back.'

Negative Habitual:

- (128) *ò ò-túrú nè bá*
 she HAB.NEG-carry her child
 'She does not carry her child.'

Positive Stative:

- (129) ò tùrù nè bá
 she STAT.carry her child
 ‘She is in a state of carrying her child.’

Negative Stative:

- (130) ò ò-tùrú nè bá
 she STAT.NEG-carry her child
 ‘She is not in a state of carrying her child.’

Observe that the phonetic form

- (131) [ò ò-tùrú nì bá]

means both ‘she does not regularly carry her child’ and ‘she is not in a state of carrying her child’.

2.8.2 NEG with The Progressive

The pronunciation of the positive forms of the Progressive in the Akyem and Asante dialects is different from that of the corresponding forms in Akuapem and Fante, although the orthography gives all the different pronunciations the same representation, which is *re-*. Tone is not marked in the orthography, but it should be noted that the affix bears a high tone in Akuapem and Fante and a low tone in Akyem and Asante. For example, the following forms occur in Akuapem and Fante:

- (132) a. mè ré-bà
 I PROG-come
 ‘I am coming.’
 b. ò ré-bà
 he PROG-come
 ‘He is coming.’
 c. Àmòàníŋ ré-bà
 Amoaning PROG-come
 ‘Amoaning is coming.’

Respectively, the examples in (132) are phonetically as transcribed in (133).

- (133) a. [mɪ rí-bà]
 b. [ɔ rí-bà]
 c. [àmòàníŋrɪ-bà]

Compare (133) with (134), which are the Akyem and Asante phonetic forms:

- (134) a. [mɪ ɪ-bá]
 b. [ɔ̃-bá]
 c. [àmùàníŋ-bá]

It is not our aim to account for all the differences between the forms of (133) and (134). One should note, however, the difference in the tone on the vowels of the Progressive: a high in Akuapem and Fante and a low in Akyem and Asante. Of even greater importance is the fact that the segmental part of the Progressive was lost in Akyem and Asante. The resulting floating low tone became part of the final segment of the Subject of the verb, which received compensatory lengthening as a result of the loss.

Alternative ways of representing (134) are (a) [mɪ:bá]; (b) [ɔ̃:bá]; and (c) [àmùàníŋː bá].

In Akuapem and Fante the negatives of (132) are formed by the insertion of the NEG morpheme between the Progressive affix and the verb stem, as in (135).

- (135) a. [mɪ rɪ-m-bá]
 I PROG-NEG-come
 ‘I am not coming.’
 b. [ɔ rɪ-m-bá]
 he PROG-NEG-come
 ‘He is not coming.’
 c. [àmuaníŋ rɪ-m-ba]
 Amoaning PROG-NEG-come
 ‘Amoaning is not coming.’

A similar word-formation process occurs in Akyem and Asante. The result is:

- (136) a. [mɪ rɪ-m-bá]
 b. [ɔ rɪ-m-bá]
 c. [àmuaníŋ rɪ-m-ba]

The segmental representation of the Progressive was lost in these dialects leaving the high tone, which was then incorporated into the final segment of the Subject. Here, as elsewhere, the final segment is lengthened.

- (137) a. [mɪː m-bá]
 b. [ɔː m-ba]
 c. [àmùàníŋː m-bá]

In normal speech the original low tone in sentences like (137a) and (b) is lost. This results in [mí: m̀-*bá*] and [ɔ́: m̀-*bá*]

As we shall see presently, the forms in (137) representing the Progressive Negative in Akyem and Asante are identical to those representing the Future Negative in the same dialects.

2.8.3 *NEG with the Future*

The underlying Future morpheme is *bé* for Akan and its western neighbours Nzema, Aowin and Sehwi. But it has several phonetic variants. One variant in the Akan dialects is found in the environment of the First Person Pronoun (138). The full form occurs in (139):

- (138) [m é-*bá*]
I FUT-come
'I will come.'
- (139) a. [wú bé-*bá*]
you FUT-come
'You (sing.) will come.'
- b. [ɔ́ bé-*bá*]
he FUT-come
'He will come.'

In (138) the morph-initial consonant [b] is lost. This alternation is found in Akyem, Asante, Akuapem and Fante.

In Akuapem and Fante, the consonant of the morpheme is represented as [r] in negative forms of verbs; the source of this [r] is not clear.

- (140) ɔ́ ré-m̀-*fǎ*
he FUT-NEG-take
'He will not take it.'

Phonetically, (140) is as in (141):

- (141) [ɔ́ rí-m̀-*fǎ*]

In Akyem and Asante [r] doesn't occur as part of the phonemic structure of the Negative Future, although it is represented in the orthography (see 140). The Akyem and Asante equivalent of (141) is (142) for which we posit the underlying form in (143):

- (142) [ɔ́: m̀-*fǎ*]
- (143) [ɔ́ bé-m̀-*fǎ*]

Among the western neighbours of Akan, one of the allomorphs of the Future [bɛ́] is [ɣɛ́]. The unrounded velar approximant [ɣ] often alternates with its rounded counterparts, the approximant [w] and the labial stop [b]. It seems to me that the relation between [bɛ́] and [ɣɛ́] is more phonetically natural than that between [bɛ́] and [rɪ] proposed for Fante and Akuapem, and sometimes for Akyem and Asante. Furthermore, whereas [ɣɛ́] is attested in Nzema, Aowin and Sehwi as a Future allomorph in the environment of NEG, no one has been able to show the source of the phonetically dissimilar [r] occurring in Akan.

We propose that underlying [bɛ́] in Volta-Comoe (the parent language for Akan and its western neighbours) became [ɣɛ́] in the environment of NEG (as happens in the western dialects). (143) became (144) in Akyem Akan.

(144) [ɔ̃ ɣɛ́-m̀-fá]

(The equivalent of (144) in some of the western dialects is [ɔ̃ ɲ-ɣɛ́-fá]). The unrounded approximant [ɣ] is unstable among the western dialects. For example, Nzema [ɲɣɛ́] is reduced to [ɲɛ́] in fast speech. A similar process must have occurred in Akyem and Asante (and we believe in some Fante dialects). The loss of [ɣ] was followed by the loss of the vowel. The resulting floating low tone was incorporated into the final segment of the Subject. The result is (145):

(145) [ɔ̃: m̀-fá]

The lengthening of the vowel has been explained. As often happens, the original low tone on the pronominal Subject vowel is lost. The final result of all these processes is:

(146) [ɔ̃: m̀-fá]

This form also represents the Negative of the Progressive in Akyem and Asante.

2.8.4 *The Negative with the Jussive-Imperative*

The negative of the simple Imperative sentence is formed by attaching NEG to the left of the verb stem. For example:

- (147) a. *kɔ́*
 IMP.go
 ‘Go away!’
 b. *ɲ-kɔ́*
 NEG-go
 ‘Don’t go away.’

In the Jussive the lexical tone of NEG remains low as elsewhere. For example:

- (148) a. *ò nèn-kɔ́*
 he IMP-NEG-go
 ‘Let him not go; I wish he didn’t go.’
 b. *mè nèn-kɔ́*
 I IMP-NEG-go
 ‘Let me not go.’
 c. *Yàw nèn-kɔ́*
 Yaw IMP-NEG-go
 ‘Let Yaw not go.’

The forms of (148) are identical with the Negative Habitual. They are the denials of both the positive forms of the Jussive-Imperative in (149) and the positive Habitual forms of (150).

- (149) a. *ɔ́ n-kɔ́*
 he IMP-go
 ‘Let him go.’
 b. *mé n-kɔ́*
 I IMP-go
 ‘Let me go.’
 c. *Yàw n-kɔ́*
 Yaw IMP-go
 ‘Let Yaw go.’
- (150) a. *ò kɔ́*
 he HAB.go
 ‘He goes.’
 b. *mè kɔ́*
 I HAB.go
 ‘I go.’
 c. *Yàw kɔ́*
 Yaw HAB.go
 ‘Yaw goes.’

2.8.5 NEG with the Past and Perfect

In a previous section we offered comments on the relation between the respective negative forms of the Past and Perfect and the apparent difficulty posed to interpretation of their meaning. Below we provide a table of the positive and negative forms of the Past and Perfect.

It can be seen from the Table that in forming the negative of the Past and the Perfect, the Negative affix is attached to the verb stem on its immediate left (see (1b) and (2b) on Table Two). The Past has two allomorphs. These are the suffix *-e* [ɪ] and the prefix *a-* [a]. The first occurs in positive sentences, and the second in the environment of NEG.

The Perfect also has two allomorphs: a suffix *-e* [ɪ] occurs in the environment of NEG, and a prefix [*a-*] which occurs in positive sentences. The prefix has several other forms. These have already been discussed in an earlier section.

It should be observed that (1b) is the logical negation of (1a): the former denies the proposition contained in the latter. Similarly, (2b) denies the proposition contained in (2a). In spite of the order of constituents in (1a), (2b) cannot be the logical negation of (1a) because both sentences can be true or false at the same time. A similar relation holds between (1b) and (2a). If (1a) is true, then (1b) is false, and vice versa. Similarly, if (2a) is true, (2b) is false.

The relation among the pairs of sentences in Table Two may perhaps be made clearer if we bring into the picture simple sentences containing an affix other than the Past and the Perfect. Consider the sentences (151a) and (b), containing the Habitual affix.

Table 2: Positive and Negative Forms of the Past and Perfect

	Past	Perfect
Positive:	1(a) ð fã-è he take-PAST [ð fã-ɪ]	2(a) ð à-fá he PERF-take [ð à-fá]
Negative:	1(b) ð à-m-fã he PAST-NEG-take [ð à-m-fã]	2(b) ð m-fã-è he NEG-take-PAST [ð m-fã-ɪ]

- (151) a. ò *dīdī* *há*
 he HAB.eat here
 ‘He eats here.’
 b. ò *̀̀n-dīdī* *há*
 he NEG-eat here
 ‘He does not eat here.’

(151b) is the logical negation of (151a). The proposition contained in (151b) is the contradictory of that contained in (151a). It is impossible for both of them to be true at the same time and of the same circumstances; the possibility does not exist for the Subjects of the two predicates ‘to eat here’ and ‘not to eat here’ at the same time. (We assume that the Subjects are referentially identical.)

Alternatively, (151a) entails the logical negation of (151b), and vice versa; the logical negation of (151b) ò *̀̀n-dīdī há* is glossed as ‘he eats here’, which entails (151a). Similarly, the logical negation of (151a), glossed as ‘he does not eat here’, entails (151b).

Now consider, in contrast the pairs (152a, b) and (153a, b) below, which contain the Perfect and the Past.

- (152) a. ò *̀̀a-dīdī* *há*
 he PERF-eat here
 ‘He has eaten here.’
 b. ò *̀̀a-̀̀n-dīdī* *há*
 he PAST-NEG-eat here
 ‘He did not eat here.’

 (153) a. ò *dīdī-ì* *há*
 he eat-PAST here
 ‘He ate here.’
 b. ò *̀̀n-dīdī-ì* *há*
 he NEG-eat-PERF here
 ‘He has not eaten here.’

On the analogy of the syntactic and semantic relation between (151a) and (151b), one would be led to conclude that (i) (152b) was the logical negation of (152a) and (153b) the logical negation of (153a); and (ii) the propositions expressed by (151a) and (151b) on the one hand, and by (152a) and (152b) on the other, were contradictory; ie. it is impossible for the members of each pair to be true or false at the same time and of the same circumstances. But this happens not to be the case at all. (152a) and (b) can both be true (or false) at the same time and of the same circumstances. It is perfectly logical to say that although

someone did not eat here he has (now) eaten here. Similar comments apply to (153a) and (b).

We observe that (152a) does not entail the logical negation of (152b), and (153a) does not entail the logical negation of (153b), just as, on Table Two, 1a does not entail the negation of (1b) and (2a) does not entail the negation of (1b). In other words, the members of pairs (152a, b), (153a, b), (1a, 2b) are not contradictory, as the order of constituents would lead us to conclude.

Equivalently, the second member of each pair is not the logical negation of the first. In contrast, (152b) is the logical negation of (153a), and (153b) the logical negation of (152a).

It should be clear from the above that propositions and their contradictories involving the Past and the Perfect, on the one hand, and those involving the other Aspects, on the other, are mapped onto syntactic units via different paths.

2.8.6 *NEG with the Stative*

In negating the Stative form of the verb, the NEG morpheme is attached to its immediate left. For example:

- (154) a. ɔ nàm
 he STAT.walk
 ‘He is in a state of walking.’
 b. ɔ n-nám
 he NEG-STAT.walk
 ‘He is not in a state of walking.’
- (155) a. ɔ fùrà ntámá
 he STAT.wear cloth
 ‘He is in cloth.’
 b. ɔ m-fùrá ntámá
 he NEG-STAT.wear cloth
 ‘He is not in a cloth.’

It can be seen from (154) and (155) that the lexical tone of NEG does not change but the tone of the Stative verb changes from low to high when NEG is attached to the verb.

As explained earlier, there are sentences like (156) with both Stative and Habitual readings (‘he is in a state of illness’ and ‘he gets ill from time to time’). With verbs in this class, the presence of NEG does not change the tones on the verb. The negative of (156) is (157):

- (156) ɔ yàré
 he STAT/HAB.be.ill

- (157) ð ñ-yàré
 he NEG-STAT/HAB.be.ill

(157) like (156) is ambiguous as between a stative and habitual meaning.

2.8.7 *NEG with the Infinitive*

The Polarity restriction in Akan, which requires that the finite verbs in a serial verb construction be either positive or negative, has been referred to in previous sections. As a further illustration, note that in (158) below all the verbs are positive. In (159), which is a denial of (158), all the verbs are negative.

- (158) ð sèsá-à nnéema nó bà-è
 he collect-PAST things the come-PAST
 ‘He collected the things and brought them.’
- (159) ð à-ñ-sésà nnémá nó à-ñ-bá
 he PAST-NEG-collect things the PAST-NEG-come
 ‘He did not collect the things and bring them.’

This restriction does not apply to the Infinitive when verbs are concatenated, as in (158) and (159). For example, although the first affix in (160) occurs with NEG, the Infinitive does not.

- (160) ð ré-ñ-sésá á-bà
 he PROG-NEG-collect INF-come
 ‘He is not collecting it to bring it.’

However, if the Infinitive occurs in a subordinate clause introduced by the Purpose-Result Complementizer *nà*, it is subject to the restriction. (See 2.7.2.)

2.9 *The Ingressive and Egressive Affixes*

Christaller (1875) identifies an Ingressive tense or aspect (see also Dolphyne 1971 and Stewart 1962), represented as *bè* and *kɔ*. For example:

- (161) ð bè-fá
 he come-take
 ‘He comes to take it.’
- (162) ð kɔ-fá
 he go-take
 ‘He goes to take it.’

The morpheme *bè* should be distinguished from Future *bé*. One has to decide what paradigm the affixes *bè* and *kɔ* in (161) and (162) belong to. There

are two possible interpretations. Either (1) treat *bè* and *kò* as full verbs, in which case they function in (161) and (162) as positional variants of the Motion verbs *bá* ‘come’ and *kó* ‘go’ and participate fully in serial verbal constructions; or (2) treat them as affixes. We shall explore both possibilities in what follows and consider their relation with the other preverbal affixes.

If *bè* and *kò* are verbal affixes, then, they extend the meaning of the verb in some way, just as the Negation affix or Tense-Aspect modifies the meaning of the verb. The possibility of *bè* and *kò* being expressions of polarity is ruled out; positive affirmation is unmarked; and neither of these two forms expresses denial. And since neither form expresses a command, wish, request or any velleity, they cannot be subsumed under the Jussive-Imperative Mood. But, then, are these expressions of the Indicative mood? A salient feature of the Indicative mood affixes in Akan is that they contain a time and/or aspect component. The affixes designated Progressive, Future, Past, Habitual, Stative, Perfect etc. each either expresses a temporal relation or a manner in which an event is carried out through time, or both. I do not see that the prefixes *bè* and *kò* have this semantic property. (161) and (162) above contain a present-time element and an iterative component, but neither of these two meanings is part of *bè* or *kò*. The same is true of sentences like (163) and (164).

- (163) *ná* *ò* *à-bé-fá*
 PAST he PERF-come-take
 ‘He had come to take it.’

- (164) *ò* *kò-fá-è*
 he go-take-PAST
 ‘He went to take it.’

Past and Perfect in (163) are expressed by *ná* and *à*, respectively; not by *bè*. In (164), Past and Aorist are expressed by *-è*, not *kò*.

It should be clear from the above examples that Christaller’s Ingressive does not belong to the same paradigm as the affixes discussed so far; it cannot be called Tense or Aspect. But neither can it be called Negation.

Throughout the data one meets verb phrases in which either the affix *bè* or *kò* occurs in addition to one of the aspectual affixes that we have identified. Below are a few illustrations:

- (165) a. *kò-fá*
 IMP.go-take
 ‘Go and take it.’
 b. *ó* *ń-kó-fá*
 he IMP-go-take
 ‘Let him go take it.’

- (166) a. $\dot{\text{ɔ}}$ *bɛ̃-fá*
 he HAB.come-take
 ‘He comes to take it.’
 b. $\dot{\text{ɔ}}$ *rɛ̃-bɛ̃-fá*
 he PROG-come-take
 ‘He is coming to take it.’
 c. $\dot{\text{ɔ}}$ *à-bɛ̃-fá*
 he PERF-come-take
 ‘He has come to take it.’
 d. $\dot{\text{ɔ}}$ *kɔ̃-fá-ɛ̃*
 he go-take-PAST
 ‘He went to take it.’

Such sentences suggest that *bɛ̃* and *kɔ̃* are not Indicative Mood affixes at all, since no verb contains more than one Indicative affix. If *bɛ̃* and *kɔ̃* are affixes but do not belong to either the Jussive-Imperative or Indicative Mood paradigm, what system do they belong to? Like the lexical items from which they are historically derived, *bɛ̃* and *kɔ̃* express motion “towards” and “away from” the speaker at the time of speaking, and like them, they function as deictics, expressing aspects of the speaker’s spatial orientation.

The data suggest that there is a system of Deixis within the verb phrase, which accounts for the contrast between sentences containing *bɛ̃* or *kɔ̃* and those which do not. Every verb phrase has an obligatory Mood and an optional Negation constituent as well as an optional Deixis constituent. A verb phrase not containing the constituent deixis is construed as being neutral with respect to “movement towards or away from the location of the speaker’s body”. In contrast, a verb phrase which has the Deixis constituent is interpreted as incorporating either the sense of the Ingressive *bɛ̃* or the Egressive *kɔ̃*. The contrasts are illustrated by (167) – (168)

- (167) a. *fá* ‘take it’
 (Imperative Mood; neutral with respect to location of speaker’s body; movement is towards the speaker’s body, i.e., absence of Deixis)
 b. i. *bɛ̃-fá* ‘come take it’
 (Imperative Mood; commitment to location of speaker’s body; movement is towards the speaker; i.e., Ingressive Deixis)
 ii. *kɔ̃-fá* ‘go take it’
 (Imperative Mood; commitment to location of speaker’s body; movement is away from the speaker’s body; i.e., Egressive Deixis)

In (169a) the affix *a* is an expression of Past Time and Non-Durative (Aorist) Aspect. In (169b) the affix *bé* is a combination of Future Time and Non-Durative (Aorist) Aspect.

However, the Past and Future affixes are not the only means of expressing Past Time and Future Time in Akan. In clauses containing non-tense Indicative affixes, Past and Future times may be expressed by the homophonous particles *na*₁ and *na*₂, respectively. In the sentences of (170), *na*₁ realises Past Time:

- (170) a. *wó bá-è nó ná₁ ò túrù nè bá*
 you come-PAST the PAST she HAB.carry her child
 'When you came, she used to carry her child.'
- b. *wó bá-è no ná₁ ò rè-túrù nè bá*
 you come-PAST the PAST she PROG-carry her child
 'When you came, she was in the process of carrying her child.'
- c. *wó bá-è nó ná₁ ò tūrù nè bá*
 you come-PAST the PAST she STAT.carry her child
 'When you came, she was in a state of carrying her child.'

The second clause in (170a) expresses a habitual event in past time (Past Habitual). In (170b) it expresses a progressive event in the past (Past Progressive); and in (170c) it expresses a state in the past (Past Stative). In all these Past Time is realized by the clause-initial particle *na*₁.

Corresponding to (170a-c) and contrasting with them are (171a-c).

- (171) a. *wó bé-bá nó ná₂ ò túrù nè bá*
 you FUT-come the FUT she HAB.carry her child
 'By the time you come she will be in the habit of carrying her child.'
- b. *wó bé-bá nó ná₂ ò rè-túrù nè bá*
 you FUT-come the FUT she PROG-carry her child
 'By the time you come, she will be in the process of carrying her child.'
- c. *wó bé-bá nó ná₂ ò tūrù nè bá*
 you FUT-come the FUT she STAT.carry her child
 'By the time you come, she will be in a state of carrying her child'

In (171a-c) the second clause expresses Future Time with the Habitual, Progressive and Stative, respectively. Future Time is expressed by *na*₂.

We now have to account for Present time. In each of the sentences (172a-c) the time component is identical with the time of the utterance, which is the present:

- (172) a. $\dot{\text{o}}$ *túrù* *nè bá*
 she HAB.carry her child
 ‘She carries her child.’
 b. $\dot{\text{o}}$ *rè-túrù* *nè bá*
 she PROG-carry her child
 ‘She is in the process of carrying her child.’
 c. $\dot{\text{o}}$ *tùrù* *nè bá*
 she STAT.carry her child
 ‘She is in a state of carrying her child.’

It may be argued, as some have done, that in (172a) the Habitual affix expresses both Present Time and Habitual event. This would be consistent with our interpretation of the affixes. The Future and Past have been interpreted as containing both semantic time and aspect. However, if we interpret the Habitual in (172a) as an expression of both Present Time and Aspect, then, for consistency we should interpret the Progressive and Stative in (172b) and (c) as consisting of Present Time and Aspect. But this would be unacceptable. It would allow for the possibility of the presence of two contrastive times in the same clause. Logically, the verbs *túrù*, *rè-túrù* and *tùrù* in (170) cannot be inherently Present and at the same time occur in the environment of Past na_1 . The same event or state cannot be both present and past.

The position taken here is that Present Time is unmarked and is represented by zero, the third member of a paradigmatic set of Time Markers of which na_1 and na_2 are the other two.

Time, then, is expressed by \emptyset , na_1 , na_2 , the Past Tense affix $-i$, and the Future Tense $bé-$. Past Time is realized either as the Past Tense affix as in:

- (173) $\dot{\text{o}}$ *dìdí-ì*
 he eat-PAST
 ‘He ate.’

or as na_1 , as in:

- (174) a. na_1 $\dot{\text{o}}$ *dìdí*
 PAST he HAB.eat
 ‘He used to eat.’
 b. na_1 $\dot{\text{o}}$ *rè-dìdí*
 PAST he PROG-eat
 ‘He was eating’ etc etc.

Similarly, Future Time is expressed either by the Future Tense affix, as in:

- (175) $\dot{\text{o}}$ *bé-dídí*
 he FUT-eat
 ‘He will eat.’

or by *na*₂, as in:

- (176) a. *ná*₂ $\dot{\text{o}}$ *dídí*
 FUT he HAB.eat
 ‘He will be in the habit of eating.’
 b. *ná*₂ $\dot{\text{o}}$ *rè-dídí*
 FUT he PROG-eat
 ‘He will be in the process of eating.’

Neither of the overt Time Markers occurs in a clause containing a tense marker. Thus, the following are ungrammatical:

- (177) * *ná*₁ $\dot{\text{o}}$ *bà-è*
 PAST he come-PAST
 (178) * *ná*₂ $\dot{\text{o}}$ *bé-bà*
 FUT he FUT-come

The various combinations of Time and Aspect are shown on Table Three.

4 **Summary and Conclusion**

We have identified four systems among the verbal affixes of Akan. These are the Deictic system, Polarity, Tense-Aspect and Mood. We offer concluding remarks on each of these. The affixes marking Deixis must have evolved relatively recently out of the Indicative forms of the Deictic Motion Verbs *ba* ‘come’ and *kɔ* ‘go’, possibly via Future *bé* and Fante Future *ké* (as in *ɔ n-ké-fã* ‘he will not take it’). They now constitute a separate system independent of Mood, Tense and Aspect. They are not subject to the Tense-Aspect Mood and Polarity constraints which govern the other affixes. In SVCs the two Deictic affixes respond to a separate set of co-occurrence restrictions involving the Motion Verbs *ba* and *kɔ*.

Not much has been said about the semantics of Negation in the study. However, the importance of Polarity in the morpho-syntax and semantics of the Verb should be clear from the description. One should note, in particular, the relation between the Negation affix and the Infinitive. Attention has been drawn to the operation of the Polarity restriction on SVCs and the fact that the restriction operates differently on two syntactic structures which contain the Infinitive (2.7.1, 2.7.2.).

Attention has also been drawn to the fact that the positive forms of the verbs outnumber their negative counterparts. We note, in particular, the homonymic clash between the Future Negative and Progressive Negative forms, on the one hand, and the Habitual Negative and Jussive-Imperative, on the other.

We have noted the paradoxical relation between the forms of the Past and Perfect and their meaning. This paradox exists in the other sister languages.

While the Jussive-Imperative Mood is marked on the Verb, the Indicative has no separate marking. It may be interpreted as unmarked as proposed by Osam (1994). We have taken the position that semantic aspect and the Indicative Mood are realized on the verb by the same affixes. This interpretation is not new.

It has been argued by Osam (1994) that Akan is basically an aspect language. This is a view we accept. Osam posits one Tense, namely the Future. In our view, there are two tenses in Akan: Past and Future. They both have a deictic function and locate events in time. They are distributionally similar: they do not co-occur with the Time Markers. In addition to being tense, they are aspectually non-durative, non-stative, non-progressive and non-iterative. We have

Table 3: Time and Aspect Conjugation of the Verb *туру*

<i>time</i> → <i>aspect</i> ↓	1 PRESENT	2 PAST	3 FUTURE
HAB	a) <i>ɔ̃ túrù nè bá:</i> she carries her child on her back (habitually)	a) <i>ná ɔ̃ túrù nè bá:</i> she used to carry her child on her back (habitually)	a) <i>ná ɔ̃ túrù nè bá:</i> she will be in the habit of carrying her child.
PROG	b) <i>ɔ̃ rɛ-túrù nè bá:</i> she is in the process of carrying her child on her back.	b) <i>ná ɔ̃ rɛ-túrù nè bá:</i> she was in the process of carrying her child	b) <i>ná ɔ̃ rɛ-túrù nè bá:</i> she will be in the process of carrying her child on her back
PERF	c) <i>ɔ̃ à-túrù nè bá:</i> she has (already) carried her child on her back.	c) <i>ná ɔ̃ à-túrù nè bá:</i> she had carried her child on her back	c) <i>ná ɔ̃ à-túrù nè bá:</i> she will have carried her child
STAT	d) <i>ɔ̃ túrù nè bá:</i> she has her child on her back	d) <i>ná ɔ̃ túrù nè bá:</i> she was in a state of carrying her child on her back	d) <i>ná ɔ̃ túrù nè bá:</i> she will be in a state of carrying her child
AOR		e) <i>ɔ̃ túrù-ù nè bá:</i> she carried her child on her back	e) <i>ɔ̃ bé-túrù nè bá:</i> she will carry her child

for this reason referred to them as Past Aorist and Future Aorist.

The Perfect in relation to the aspectual affixes has been commented upon. It appears that the Perfect does not satisfy the definition of Aspect employed in this study, following Comrie (1976), Hockett (1958) and Joos (1964a; 1964b). One should note, however, that the Perfect behaves essentially like the other aspectual affixes in Akan. In addition to co-occurring with the three Time Markers in independent clauses and across clause boundaries as all the aspectual affixes do, it fully participates in the SVC and features with consistency in semantic compatibility statements about this structure.

We have argued for the exclusion of the Infinitive (or Consecutive) from the Akan Tense-Aspect System. In doing this, we have stressed the following facts about the affix: (1) it neither locates events in time, as do the Past and Future, nor serves their deictic functions. Neither does it describe the internal structure of events or their manner of their distribution through time; (2) it does not share any obvious semantic properties in common with the aspectual affixes such as would facilitate its inclusion in statements of semantic compatibility about SVCs; (3) it is the only mood affix which does not occur in independent clauses. It either occurs last as the predicate of a subjectless purpose clause in an SVC; or, when it occurs in a clause with a Subject, it is introduced by the Complementizer *ná*; (4) its distribution with respect to NEG is highly marked. Its function is to express purpose, results or intention.

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Akan As An Aspectual Language

E. Kweku Osam

Adopting the approach to tense-aspect advocated by Comrie, and set in a context of a theory of grammaticalization, it is possible to describe Akan as a language that primarily marks aspect. However, it can be demonstrated that the language is in the process of developing tense markers. This paper presents the evidence to show that what analysts refer to as tense markers in Akan are at varied stages of development from aspectual sources into full tense forms. The situation currently prevailing in the language therefore is the intermediary stage or grammaticalization from aspectual forms into tense markers.

1 Introduction

One of the areas of Akan grammar that has been the subject of a fair amount of research is the tense-aspect system of the language. These studies include Christaller (1875); Balmer and Grant (1929); Welmers (1946); Stewart (1962, 1966); Boadi (1966, 1974); Schachter and Fromkin (1968); Ellis and Boadi (1969); Dolphyne (1971, 1987, 1988); Essilfie (1977, 1986); Osam (1986, 1994). Except Osam (1994), these studies have generally proceeded from the assumption that Akan has an aspectual as well as a tense system. However, evidence from the language does not support this view. Consequently, there is a basis for describing Akan as an aspectual language. The view that languages accord different degrees of prominence to one of the verbal categories—tense, aspect, and mood—has been noted in the literature. For example, Bhat (1999: 91) asserts that:

The ... study of tense, aspect and mood allows us to arrive at an interesting typological observation, namely that languages generally do not give equal prominence to all these three categories. Instead, they select one of them as the basic category and express distinctions connected with it in great detail; they represent the other two categories in lesser detail and further, they use peripheral systems like the use of auxiliaries, or other indirect means, for representing these latter categories.

Following this postulation, Bhat goes further to argue that the choice of one of tense, aspect, and mood as the prominent category in a language, makes it possible to establish a typology

... especially because in addition to choosing one of the categories as the most prominent one, languages appear to represent concepts or distinctions that belong to the other two categories in terms of their chosen category ... In order to bring out these and other similar interesting differences that co-occur with the relative prominence that languages attach to different verbal categories, it would be helpful to classify languages into tense-prominent, aspect-prominent and mood-prominent language types. (Bhat 1999: 91-92)

The main objective of this paper, therefore, is to show that Akan is primarily an aspectual language, with a two-way tense contrast—future vs. non-future. Following this view, another critical component of the discussion will be to show that what previous analyses have traditionally labelled the past tense is, in fact, essentially an aspect. The overall conclusion of the paper is that the current state of the language demonstrates the development of tense markers from aspectual markers.

The paper is in two parts: part one provides an overview of the relevant aspects and the future tense in the language. Part two is devoted to a discussion of why what has been referred to in the literature as past tense is better treated as the completive aspect. The discussion will draw examples from the three main dialects of Akan—Akuapem (Ak), Asante (As), and Fante (Fa).

2 Definitions

This paper derives its theoretical orientation from Comrie (1976; 1985). The definitions of tense and aspect adopted here, therefore, follow Comrie's views. Regarding aspect, the following statements from Comrie are representative:

... aspects are the different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation. (Comrie 1976: 3)

Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation. (Comrie 1976: 5)

The internal temporal contour of a situation provides the conceptual basis for the notion of aspect, which refers to the grammaticalisation of expression of internal temporal constituency. (Comrie 1985: 6)

On tense, this is what he says:

... tense is grammaticalised expression of location in time.

... we look at a particular form in a language, decide whether it does in fact express location in time and whether it is indeed a grammatical category, and then pronounce it to be tense or not.

... tense does exist, i.e. that there are languages which express location in time by means of grammatical categories.

... all clear instances of tense cross-linguistically can be represented in terms of the notions of deictic centre, location at before, or after the deictic centre, and distance from the deictic centre ... (Comrie 1985: 9)

With this as the background, the following tense and aspectual distinctions are recognised for Akan: Future tense (FUT); Completive (COMPL), Perfect (PERF), Progressive (PROG), and Habitual (HAB) aspects. In addition to these, there are what I prefer to call derived forms — the Continuative (CONT) and Consecutive (CONSEC). In the rest of this section, I will briefly describe each form, starting with the Future tense. These descriptions are restricted to the affirmative forms only.

2.1 *Future*

In the current state of the language, it can be said that Akan makes a distinction between future and non-future tense. Whereas the future is marked morphologically, the non-future is unmarked. The future tense in Akan is marked by the prefix *bɛ-*. The main function of this prefix is to indicate future time reference. This is reflected in the use of the prefix in (1a), (1b), and (1c). Used this way, it means that the event coded in the clause will happen at a time posterior to the time of speaking. Apart from its future time role, the prefix has a number of semantic functions in the language. One of these is prediction (1a). In this usage, it indicates an event which is yet to take place. Secondly, it codes intention (1b). This function is irrespective of whether the action will occur or not. In conjunction with modals like *bi ana* 'may be' and *gyama* 'may be', it can also be used to mark possibility or probability (1c). The prefix *bɛ-* is sometimes also used together with the verb *tum* 'be able' to indicate ability (1d). For example, the sentence 'We can do it' is rendered in Akan as in (1d).

- | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|-------------------|--|------|
| (1) a. | <i>Mboa</i> | <i>bɛ-bá</i> | | (Fa) |
| | Help | FUT-come | | |
| | 'Help will come' | | | |
| b. | <i>Yɛ-bɔ-kɔ</i> | <i>Kumasi</i> | | (Fa) |
| | 1PL.SUB-FUT-go | <i>Kumasi</i> | | |
| | 'We will go to Kumasi' | | | |
| c. | <i>Bi ana</i> | <i>ɔ-bɛ-bá</i> | | (Fa) |
| | may be | 3.SG.SUB-FUT-come | | |
| | 'May be he might come' | | | |
| d. | <i>Yɛ-bɔ-túm</i> | <i>à-yɛ</i> | | (Fa) |
| | 1PL.SUB-FUT-able | CONSEC-do | | |
| | 'We can do it' | | | |

That the Akan future marker has other functions beside future time is not unusual. Dahl (1985) and Bybee and Pagliuca (1985) both show that in various languages “futures often cover meanings that are not strictly temporal ...” (Bybee and Pagliuca 1985: 157).

In terms of the diachronic source of the future prefix, it has been mentioned (Welmers 1973) that it comes from the lexical verb *ba* 'come'. In our understanding of the future, an agent or entity metaphorically 'moves' toward a goal, in this case towards the deictic center. Viewing the verb 'come' as the source for the future fits into the cross-linguistic evidence available. For example, Traugott (1978) has indicated that there are languages which use the motion verbs 'come' and 'go' to express future tenses. Consequently, she talks about languages which use 'go' as the basis of the future marker, and others that use 'come' as the source of the future, resulting in what she calls “go-futures” and “come-futures”, respectively. The observation that motion verbs tend to be used as the source of future marking has also been made by writers such as Givón (1973; 1979), Traugott (1975), Ultan (1978), Heine and Reh (1984), Fleischman (1982a; 1982b), Bybee and Pagliuca (1985), Bybee and Dahl (1989), Bybee, Pagliuca and Perkins (1991), and Heine (1993). Bybee, Pagliuca and Perkins (1991) indicate one type of future that a language may have:

Verbs or constructions that signal movement towards a goal may develop into future grams, with some differences discernible between those using 'come' and those using 'go'. (1991: 19)

They further state that:

... movement constructions that are sources for future grams actually signal that the subject is in the process of moving towards a goal. That is, along with movement as a component of meaning, the source of such futures includes an imperfective ... component and an allative component (1991: 30)

Apart from the form and the supporting cross-linguistic evidence, another reason we can argue that the future prefix derives from the verb *ba* 'come' is that this prefix does not co-occur with the proximal motional prefix, which also derives from the verb 'come'.

In the following discussion, I will briefly outline the argument. There are two contrasting prefixes in the Akan verbal structure which for a long time in the descriptions of the language were referred to as ingressive aspect.

- (2) a. *Araba bè -ténà-à egua no do* (Fa)
 Araba come-sit-COMPL chair DEF on
 'Araba came and sat on the chair'

- b. *Araba kò-ténà-à egua no do* (Fa)
 Araba go-sit-COMPL chair DEF on
 ‘Araba went and sat on the chair’
- (3) a. *Kojo bè-prà-à dan no mu*
 Kojo come-sweep-COMPL room DEF in
 ‘Kojo came and swept the room.’
- b. *Kojo kò-prà-à dan no mu*
 Kojo go-sweep-COMPL room DEF in
 ‘Kojo went and swept the room.’

Previous analyses that characterised these prefixes as aspectual include Dolphyne (1971; 1988), Boadi (1974), and Osam (1986). In Dolphyne (1971), the view that these prefixes are aspectual is clearly stated:

Some of the verbal paradigms have the Ingressive Aspect in addition to the various Aspects... The exponents of the Ingressive Aspect are certain prefixes which occur in the verbal form to indicate previous coming or a previous going required for the action indicated by the verb stem. There are two Ingressive Aspects:

- 1) The “going” Ingressive, indicated by the prefix *kò*-
 e.g. *òkòdà* ‘he goes and sleeps’.
- 2) The “coming” Ingressive, indicated by the prefix *bè*-
 e.g. *òbèdà* ‘he comes and sleeps’ (Dolphyne 1971: 193-194)

In Osam (1994; 2002), however, the point has been made that these prefixes do not have aspectual meaning and so cannot be treated as part of the aspectual system of the language. Rather, these morphemes code the movement an actor goes through in accomplishing an event:

When they are used ... they indicate a movement engaged in for the event coded by the verb to take place. When *kò* ‘go’ is used the implication is that the agent moves to a location away from a deictic center which the speaker assumes. The deictic center may be the current location of the speaker, or it may be a place located in the world of a narrative. In narratives, especially, this location does not coincide with the current physical positioning of the speaker. When *bè* ‘come’ is used, the idea is that the agent moves towards the deictic center assumed by the speaker. (Osam 2002: 114)

Looking at the form of the proximal motional prefix *bè* ‘come’, it is tempting to link it with the Future marker which has the same form. Indeed the similarity in form of the two morphemes is traceable to their common ancestry; that both derive from the verb “to come”. However, these two prefixes are assigned different properties in the grammar of Akan.

One of the features of the motional prefixes is that they can combine with all the aspectual forms of the language except the future marker.

- (4) a. *Kofi bè-fá-à* *bi* [Motion plus Completive]
 Kofi come-take-COMPL some
 ‘Kofi came and took some.’
- b. *Kofi á-bé-fâ* *bi* [Motion plus Perfect]
 Kofi PERF-come-take some
 ‘Kofi has come and taken some’
- c. *Kofi rè-bé-fâ* *bi* [Motion plus Progressive]
 Kofi PROG-come-take some
 ‘Kofi is coming to take some’ / ‘Kofi is about to take some’
- d. *Kofi bé-fâ* *bi* [Motion plus Habitual]
 Kofi come-take.HAB some
 ‘Kofi comes to take some’
- e. **Kofi bé-bé-fâ* *bi* *[Motion plus Future]
 Kofi FUT-come-take some
 ‘Kofi will come and take some’

As the data in (4a-e) show, all the core aspectual forms in Akan can combine with the motion prefix, except the future. As has been stated in Osam (1994; 2002) a possible reason why the motional prefixes cannot combine with the future tense marker could be because “the future marker comes from the same motion verb ‘come’ as the proximal prefix ‘be’.” (Osam 2002:115)

2.2 *Completive*

As indicated in the introduction, the verbal affix I have called completive (or alternatively, perfective) has, in previous analyses, been referred to as the past tense marker. There is clear evidence to show that this morpheme marks aspect, though it has tense as a secondary meaning. In the second half of this paper I will lay out the argument in detail.

I use the term “completive” in the sense in which Comrie (1976) uses the term “perfective”. Following Comrie (1976:3), therefore, I see the completive as the aspectual form that

presents the totality of the situation... without reference to its internal temporal constituency: the whole of the situation is presented as a single unanalysable whole, with beginning, middle, and end rolled into one; no attempt is made to divide this situation up into various individual phases that make up the action...

Echoing the view of Comrie, Bhat (1999: 45) also indicates that the “perfective provides the view of an event as a whole from outside...”. And that the

perfective “is unconcerned with the internal temporal structure of the event”. Furthermore, the perfective “views the situation as bounded, and as forming a unified entity...” (Bhat 1999: 46)

In Akan, the completive morpheme is a suffix. In affirmative constructions, the completive has two realisations depending on whether the verb is followed by another item, either a direct object or an adverbial. When the verb is followed by a direct object or an adverbial, the completive aspect is realised as the lengthening of the final vowel of the verb root. This vowel has a low tone. In the Akuapem (Ak) and Fante (Fa) dialects, the tone of the vowel preceding the completive morpheme is high if the verb root is monosyllabic (5). In contrast, in the Asante (As) dialect, the vowel of the verb root has a low tone (6).

- (5) a. *Kofi hú-ù abofra no* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi see-COMPL child DEF
 ‘Kofi saw the child’.
- b. *Kofi tɔ-ɔ akokɔ* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi buy-COMPL chicken
 ‘Kofi bought a chicken.’
- (6) a. *Kofi hù-ù abofra no* (As)
 Kofi see-COMPL child DEF
 ‘Kofi saw the child’
- b. *Kofi tɔ-ɔ akokɔ* (As)
 Kofi buy-COMPL chicken
 ‘Kofi bought a chicken’.

In most disyllabic roots in all the dialects, the verb root-final vowel has a high tone, compared to the completive suffix which has a low tone.

- (7) a. *Kofi bì sá-à maame no* (As/Ak/Fa)
 Kofi ask-COMPL woman DEF
 ‘Kofi asked the woman’.
- b. *Kofi gyɛná-à hɔ* (As/Ak)
 Kofi stand-COMPL there
 ‘Kofi stood there’

If the verb ends in a consonant and it is followed by a direct object or an adverbial, the completive aspect is marked by the presence of a low tone on the verb final consonant (8). I should point out that in Akan, word final consonants are tone bearing units and are syllabic.

- (8) a. *Kofi tɔ̀n-̀n sekan no* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi sell-COMPL knife DEF
 ‘Kofi sold the knife’

- b. *Kofi* *nóm-m̀* *nsu* *no* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi drink-COMPL water DEF
 'Kofi drank the water'

If the verb occurs in clause final position, the completive aspect is marked by the low tone suffix *-i* or *-ɪ*. The choice of vowel is determined by vowel harmony based on the nature of the vowel of the verb root. If the verb root has an advanced vowel, the suffix is *-i*. On the other hand, if the verb root vowel is unadvanced, the suffix is *-ɪ*. In Akan orthography, this suffix is represented by the letter 'e'.

- (9) a. *Kofi* *hyé-è* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi wear-COMPL
 'Kofi wore (it).'
- b. *Kofi* *tú-ì* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi uproot-COMPL
 'Kofi uprooted (it)'

For some people unfamiliar with the structure of Akan, it is tempting to think that the vowel suffixes in (9a) and (9b) have argument status. The fact, though, is that they do not represent any post verbal NP argument. This is supported by the evidence that comes from intransitive verbs. When an intransitive verb occurs in clause final position not followed by any adverbial, the completive aspect will have the same low tone suffix *-i* or *-ɪ* as it is the case for transitive verbs. This is illustrated in (10) and (11).

- (10) a. *Akokɔ* *no* *wú-ù* *ndeda* (Fa)
 Chicken DEF die-COMPL yesterday
 'The chicken died yesterday'
- b. **Akokɔ* *no* *wú-ù*
 chicken DEF die-COMPL
 'The chicken died'
- c. *Akokɔ* *no* *wú-ì*
 chicken DEF die-COMPL
 'The chicken died'
- (11) a. *Nsu* *tɔ-ɔ̀* *ndeda* (Fa)
 water fall-COMPL yesterday
 'It rained yesterday.'
- b. **Nsu* *tɔ-ɔ̀*
 water fall-COMPL
 'It rained'

- (13) a. *Kofi* *nòm-òò-yè* (As)
 Kofi drink-COMPL
 ‘Kofi drunk (it)’
 b. *Kofi* *kàn-èè-yè* (As)
 Kofi read-COMPL
 ‘Kofi read (it)’
 c. *Kofi* *tòn-òò-yè* (As)
 Kofi buy-COMPL
 ‘Kofi sold (it)’

In Asante and related dialects, if a verb ends in the mid-high front advanced vowel /e/, or the mid-high back advanced vowel, /o/, this final vowel is substituted for by its unadvanced counterpart before the addition of the completive suffix (either the *-i/-ɪ* or *-yɛ*). For example, in (14a) the verb root is *wie* ‘finish’ and in (14b) it is *suro* ‘be scared’. So /e/ is replaced by /ɛ/, and /o/ is replaced by /ɔ/, respectively.

- (14) a. *Kofi wɛ́ɛ̀-è/wɛ́ɛ̀-ɣè* (As)
 Kofi finish-COMPL
 ‘Kofi finished’
 b. *Kofi sùrɔ́ɔ̀-è/sùrɔ́ɔ̀-ɣè* (As)
 Kofi fear-COMPL
 ‘Kofi was scared’

In Akuapem and Fante, if the verb ends in a consonant with no item following it, the completive occurs in the form of a lengthened /i/ or /ɪ/ following the consonant.

- (15) a. *Kofi hwím-ĩĩ* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi snatch-COMPL
 ‘Kofi snatched (it)’
 b. *Kofi tɔ́n-èè* (Ak/Fa)
 Kofi sell-COMPL
 ‘Kofi sold (it)’.

2.3 Perfect

In Comrie's framework, the perfect aspect “indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation”; that the perfect “expresses a relation between two time-points, on the one hand the time of the state resulting from a prior situation, and on the other the time of that prior situation” (Comrie 1976:52). He again states that “The perfect is retrospective, in that it establishes a relation between a state at one time and a situation at an earlier time” (Comrie 1976:64). Bybee and Dahl (1989:66) also say that

Semantically, the most important characteristic of perfects is that the situation described in the sentence is viewed from the perspective of—or described as being relevant at—a later point in time, most typically the point of speech.

Unlike other aspects that deal with the nature of an event, the perfect links a past event to a present situation by showing that an event that took place in the past is of relevance to the present.

The perfect aspect in Akan is marked by the prefix *a-*. In all Akan dialects, this prefix agrees with the vowel of the verb root in tongue root position harmony. Example (16) illustrates the use of the perfect in Fante.

- (16) a. *Mà-á-tò* *bi* (Fa)
 1SG.SUB-PERF-buy some
 'I have bought some'
- b. *Mè-é-bísà* *no* (Fa)
 1SG.SUB-PERF-ask 3SG.OBJ
 'I have asked him/her'

The use of the perfect means that the events took place prior to the time of speaking, but they are of relevance to the present. For example, in (16a) the event of my having bought some took place prior to the time of speech; however, the result of that action persists in the present situation. The way in which the present relevance of that past action is demonstrated is that since I already bought some it is not crucial for me to buy more now.

Even though in the English translations the sentences are presented as being in the present perfect, it should be understood that the perfect in Akan is atemporal by implication. The form of the perfect is the same irrespective of the time of the event.

2.4 *Progressive*

Akan also has an aspectual form that is rightly analysed as the progressive. When an event is marked with the progressive, the understanding is that it is in process or going on. In other words, such an event is treated as 'not done yet'. Another implication that can be read off the Akan progressive is that it stretches over a period of time, though how much time is involved is not crucial. The important point is that since such an act is indicated as ongoing, it is only logical that it is spread over a period rather than a point in time. Since the progressive marks an event that is not yet completed it is an imperfective aspect.

The progressive aspect in Akan is marked by the prefix *re-*, but it has different realisations in the various dialects, as determined by vowel harmony. However, in Akuapem, the vowel of the progressive morpheme has an invariant form irrespective of the ATR nature of the verb root vowel. It is always pronounced with the high front unadvanced vowel /i/ and spelled with 'e'.

- (17) a. *Kofi* *rè-dídí* (Ak)
 Kofi PROG-eat
 'Kofi is eating'.

- These sentences have the reading that the events coded by the verbs occur regularly. I should caution that the English translations of (18) should not be taken to mean that the habitual in Akan necessarily implies present time, since the tonal form of the habitual is the same irrespective of the time of the event.

It was stated earlier that apart from the core aspectual forms, Akan also makes use of what one could call derived forms. I refer to them as such because these are not independent aspectual forms; they are, in some way, related to the core aspects. The derived aspects are the Continuative (CONT) and Consecutive (CONSEC). In addition to these two, the language also has a means of expressing prospective meaning though it cannot be said that the language has a prospective aspect.

The Continuative aspect is restricted to stative verbs. It is used in place of the progressive. Some writers have referred to it as the stative aspect. (Schachter and Fromkin 1968, Boadi 1966). However, since the term “stative” describes a category of verbs, it is more appropriate to use the term “continuative” to describe this aspectual distinction associated with stative verbs.

The continuative aspect indicates a persisting state coded by a stative verb. In Akan, the continuative has no segmental manifestation. It is realised as tonal changes in the verb stem. The tonal change manifests itself as a low tone on all the tone bearing units of the verb word. The basic tone of the verb *hye* 'put on, wear' in (20a) is high as shown by (20c), and *gyina* 'stand' in (20b) has two low tones. It should be noted that in (20b), unlike (20a), the tones of the verb root do not change.

- (20) a. *Mè-hyè* *mpetsea* (Fa)
 1SG.SUB-wear.CONT ring
 ‘I am wearing a ring (and have been wearing it for a while)’.
- b. *Mè-gyìnà* *ha* (Fa)
 1SG.SUB-stand.CONT here
 ‘I am standing here (and have been standing for a while)’
- c. *Hyé*
 wear.IMP
 ‘Wear (it)!’

- d. *Gyìnà* *ha*
 stand.IMP here
 ‘Stand here!’

In (21), the verbs *hye* ‘wear’ (21a) and *gyina* ‘stand’ (21b) are used statively. In this usage, they cannot take the progressive and maintain the stative implication. Grammatically, they can take the progressive marker but with a different meaning. In (21a), the progressive prefix on the verb means that the subject is in the process of putting on the ring, whereas in (20a) where the verb has a continuative reading, the inception of the ring wearing process is over and now the subject has it on. The same contrast applies to (20b) and (21b).

- (21) a. *Mè-ré-hyè* *mpetsea* (Fa)
 1SG.SUB-PROG-wear ring
 ≠ ‘I have on a ring’
 ‘I’m (in the process of) wearing (putting on) the ring’
 b. *Mè-rè-gyìná* *ha* (Fa)
 1SG.SUB-PROG-stand here
 ≠ ‘I’m standing here (and have been doing that for a while)’
 ‘I’m (in the process of) standing here’

The progressive aspect can also be used with stative verbs to indicate intention. For example, one can say:

- (22) *Mè-rè-gyìná* *ha* *ara* *ma* *adze* *asa*
 1SG.SUB-PROG-stand here till that thing finish
 ‘I’m standing here till nightfall’

2.6.2 Consecutive

The consecutive aspect does not have independent existence. Its existence depends on the presence of the future or the progressive. In a construction where there are multiple verbs, as in the case of serial construction or clause chaining, if the initial verb is marked for the future or the progressive, the subsequent verbs are not marked by the forms of the future or the progressive; rather, there is a low tone vowel prefix, *à-*, which occurs on the non-initial verbs. Dolphyne (1987) calls this the consecutive tense; her characterisation, however, is not appropriate because this prefix does not code time. It is also important to point out that even though the vowel of the consecutive aspect is the same as the vowel of the perfect, the two morphemes have different semantic content.

- (23) a. *Kofi ré-yì sika no à-mà maame*
 Kofi PROG-take money DEF CONSEC-give woman
no (Fa)
 DEF
 ‘Kofi is (in the process of) taking the money to give to the woman’
- b. *Kofi bé-yì sika no à-mà maame*
 Kofi FUT-take money DEF CONSEC-give woman
no (Fa)
 DEF
 ‘Kofi will take the money and give it to the woman’

Even though the consecutive is commonly used in serial verb constructions (Stewart 1962, Dolphyne 1987), it is possible to have it in non-serial constructions. In (24a), I give an example to show its use in a non-serial verb construction. Sentence (24) consists of three separate clauses, each with its own subject and direct object. Definitely, what we have here is not a serial construction. However, it is clear that the future tense is marked on only the verb of the first clause, just as in the case of the serial structure in (23).

- (24) *Kofi bé-prá dan no mu, na Esi*
 Kofi FUT-sweep room DEF in and Esi
à-hòr ndzamba no, na Araba so
 CONSEC-wash things DEF and Araba also
à-yè edziban no (Fa)
 CONSEC-make food DEF
 ‘Kofi will sweep the room, Esi will wash the things (clothes), and Araba will cook (the food)’

2.7 Expressing Prospective Meaning

Even though it cannot be said that Akan has the prospective aspect, the language has a means of expressing prospective meaning. The prospective is “where a state is related to some subsequent situation ... where someone is in a state of being about to do something” (Comrie 1976: 64). In Akan, prospective meaning is expressed through a combination of the progressive and the motivational prefixes. In previous analyses, specifically Dolphyne (1971; 1988), what I am calling the prospective meaning has been referred to as the Immediate Future, contrasting with the Simple Future.

- (25) a. *Wɔ-rè-bé-prá fie hɔ* (Fa)
 3PL.SUB-PROG-FUT-sweep house there
 ‘They are about to sweep the house’

- b. *Nana r̀̀-̀̀-̀̀-kàsà* (Fa)
 chief PROG-FUT-speak
 ‘The chief is about to speak’

The prospective aspect codes the imminence of a future event, something about to happen.

3 The Completive Aspect vs. Past Tense

In the first part of this paper, I have given an overview of the tense and aspect forms in Akan. From that presentation, it can be concluded that Akan is a language that is predominantly aspectual, but with a two-way tense system—future and non-future. As already pointed out, the future is marked but the non-future is unmarked.

In studies that have tackled the tense-aspect system of the language, it has always been assumed that the language has a past tense. It is my opinion that what has been described as the past tense is more insightfully treated as an aspectual form—the completive (or perfective) aspect. The reason behind this position is what this section is about.

It should be kept in mind that I am following Comrie's framework of tense-aspect. In that framework, aspect is defined as the “ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (1976:3), whereas tense is “the grammaticalisation of location in time” (1985:1), or the “grammatical device for expressing location in time” (1985:4). The idea that tense is grammaticalised time is very crucial to a proper appreciation of the view of the completive adopted in this paper.

One reason this suffix is better analysed as the Completive aspect is that it is found only on events that are known to be completed or perfective before the time of speaking. In other words, it is used to code events that have been brought to a closure before the time of speech.

- (26) *Kofi dz̀̀dz̀̀-̀̀*
 Kofi eat-COMPL
 ‘Kofi ate’

In (26), the presence of the suffix indicates that the event of Kofi's eating took place and was brought to a closure prior to the time of speaking.

I should point out that the presence of the completive aspect implies past time. The use of the completive suffix locates the event under consideration in a time frame prior to the time of speaking. In other words, the implication of the use of the suffix is partly that the said event occurred anterior to the time of speech. This is not surprising since the link between the completive/perfective

aspect and past time is generally held to be a cross-linguistic fact (Hopper 1979, Givón 1982). Dahl (1985) attests to this:

There is a strong tendency for PFV [perfective] categories to be restricted to past time reference. I interpret this restriction as a secondary feature of PFV... In other words, for all languages it holds that 'past time reference' characterizes prototypical uses of PFV—single, completed events will in the 'typical cases' be located in the past. (1985: 79)

Despite the fact that past time is implied in the meaning of the completive suffix, my contention is that past time is a secondary meaning of the Akan morpheme. This is because the suffix cannot encode events that are located prior to the time of speech but which are imperfective. In the Akan aspectual forms presented, the Perfect, Progressive, and Habitual are all imperfective. When any past event is marked by any of these imperfective aspects, the coding does not involve in any way the use of the suffix I have called the completive. This is a very strong reason why the suffix does not primarily mark past time.

Let me illustrate this point by using the progressive as an example of an imperfective aspect. If the primary function of the suffix under consideration were to code past time, we should expect to find it used with an event in progress in the past.

In (27a) the verb is marked for the progressive aspect, and in (27b) it is marked for the so-called past tense (what I have called the completive aspect). In order to indicate an event which was in progress in the past, we should, in theory, be able to put the so-called past tense suffix on the verb while maintaining the progressive aspect prefix. However, as indicated in (27c), this is not possible.

- (27) a. *Kofi ré-dzìdzí*
 Kofi PROG-eat
 'Kofi is eating'
- b. *Kofi dzìdzí-ì*
 Kofi eat-COMPL
 'Kofi ate'
- c. **Kofi rè-dzìdzí-ì*
 Kofi PROG-eat-COMPL
 'Kofi was eating'

The suffix in question cannot code any imperfective event that occurs in the past prior to the time of speaking. For me, this is the strongest evidence that the

suffix I am calling the completive is not primarily a tense marker marking past time. When the said suffix is used it is understood that the event is perfective.

Another argument to show that Akan does not have a grammaticalized or morphologised means dedicated to the marking of past time lies in how past imperfective events are coded. The language is able to code such events by using periphrastic expressions and discourse dependent inference of past time.

In a discourse context, the strategy involves using a complex clause in which one clause provides the temporal setting and the other clause reports the imperfective event. The time setting clause would be a dependent clause, and the imperfective event would be in an independent clause. From observations based on discourse patterns, usually the clause that sets the temporal background would contain a verb that codes an event that is marked for the completive or the progressive aspect. In addition, there is a time marker that is used to introduce the independent clause. This marker, in Fante, is *ńńà*; in the Twi dialects it is *ná*. It is often translated as 'then'.

In order, for example, for (27c) to be coded in a grammatically acceptable way, a perfective event coded with the completive morpheme would be used as the temporal background of past time. This would be provided in a dependent clause. This means that a completive event will be used as the temporal background of the event of Kofi's eating. Once again, I should state that this is possible because a secondary meaning of the completive aspect is past time. So the appropriate way to represent (27c) is shown in (28a). Example (28b) is meant to illustrate a situation where the temporal background is set by a clause in which the event is coded in the progressive.

- (28) a. (Abera) Esi dú-ù hɔ no, (Fa)
 (time REL) Esi reach-COMPL there DEF
ńńà Kofi rɛ-dzɛdzɛ
 then Kofi PROG-eat
 'At the time/When Esi got there, Kofi was eating.'
- b. (Aber a) Esi ré-kɔ no, ńńà Kofi rɛ-dzɛdzɛ
 (time REL) Esi PROG-go DEF then Kofi PROG-eat
 'At the time/While Esi was going, Kofi was eating.'

In (28a), the imperfective event of Kofi's eating is set against the temporal background of the event of Esi's arrival. The sentence shows that Esi's arrival took place prior to the time of speech and it is only by knowing this that we know that the event of Kofi's eating took place before the moment of speech. In (28b), the implication of past time is drawn based on the presence of the progressive aspect and the temporal marker *nna*.

It is important to point out that the morpheme *nna* is not restricted in use to past events. It can also be used in similar complex structures to code imperfec-

tive events that are situated posterior to the time of speaking. For example, in sentence (29), the event of Kofi's eating is placed in the future in relation to the time of speaking. It is the presence of the morpheme *nnà* and the future marker on the verb in the dependent clause that make this possible.

- (29) *Esi bó-dú hɔ no, nnà Kofi rɛ-dzɛdzɛ* (Fa)
 Esi FUT-reach there DEF.REL then Kofi PROG-eat
 'By the time Esi gets there, Kofi will be eating'

Past time marking for imperfective events can also be effected through a combination of lexical items and the marker *nnà*. So (30) is an alternative way of marking a past progressive event.

- (30) *Ndeda nnà ɔ-rɛ-dzɛdzɛ* (Fa)
 Yesterday then 3SG.SUB-PROG-eat
 'Yesterday s/he was eating'

4 Conclusion

This paper proceeded on the idea that Akan is an aspect prominent language. I have, consequently, outlined the aspectual system of the language. Essentially, the following aspect forms should be considered relevant in the language: Completive, Perfect, Progressive, and Habitual. Out of these, the Completive is perfective whereas the Perfect, Progressive, and Habitual are imperfective. In addition to these main aspects, we should also recognise the following as derived aspects in the language: Continuative and Consecutive. The language also has a way of coding prospective meaning. I have also established that Akan has a future/non-future tense system.

I have demonstrated in the paper that the morpheme that has previously been treated as the past tense marker in Akan does not primarily mark past time. This is because if an event occurred in the past, at a time prior to the time of speaking, but it is an imperfect one, we cannot code it with what I am calling the completive aspect. This means that the completive aspect is restricted to events that are perfective before the time of speech. Nevertheless, the use of the completive aspect implies past time. Based on the idea that past time reading is deducible from the completive aspect, I would like to posit that we may be seeing a past tense form developing out of the completive aspect in the language.

From the issues dealt with in the paper, it could be concluded that in the structure of Akan, aspect is more prominent than tense. The language makes morphological distinctions in four aspectual forms, but makes a two-way dis-

tion in tense. The distinction is between future and non-future, with the future being morphologically marked and the non-future unmarked.

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Ga Verb Features

M.E. Kropp Dakubu

This paper develops a theory of the morphology of the verb word in Ga, and provides a more complete and at the same time simpler description of the Ga verb than any previously proposed. It begins with remarks on the theoretical status of the set of morphemes involved, and sketches some of the features that make the Ga verb paradigm particularly problematic, before providing an overview of salient aspects of the phonology. The second section gives an exhaustive treatment of the grammatical affix systems of the verb, while the third deals with grammaticalized serial constructions that combine phonologically to form single words. It is argued that the verbal affixes themselves express a combination of atomic features, and the name given to the (phonologically realized) affixes name complex morpho-semantic entities and that in Ga, and probably in other Kwa languages, a term like “habitual” should be treated not as the name of a simple aspect feature but as the name of the combination of features. The paper demonstrates that an adequate description of the verb in this language depends on close attention to phonological detail, and that semantic decomposition of the grammatical markers on the verb allows new insights into the inherent symmetries of the system on the one hand, and its inherent fuzzy areas on the other.

The aim of this paper is to develop a theory of the morphology of the verb word in Ga, and to provide a more complete and at the same time conceptually simpler description of the Ga verb than any previously proposed (see e.g., Dakubu 1970). The paper also proposes a method for exploring the verb grammar typology of Kwa languages. It will be maintained that decomposition of the paradigmatic or grammatical features of the verb, (i.e., of morphologically expressed features that are not lexically or syntactically derivational) into an internally motivated set of atomic features permits important insights into a system that on the surface seems quite irregular, even incoherent. Potentially, it also allows a clearer perspective on the ways in which the Ga verb system is typologically similar to (or dissimilar from) the systems of neighbouring Kwa languages that may otherwise seem to be semantically and morpho-syntactically incongruent. (This includes the system in Dangme, Ga’s only very close relative.) Briefly, it will be maintained that in Ga, and possibly in other Kwa languages, an affix such as the “habitual” is not necessarily a simple aspect feature but is often best viewed as a combination of features, a feature structure, and that the name “habitual” (for example) is the name of a specific

feature path (Shieber 1986: 14). Any verb affix expresses a combination of atomic features, and the names given to the (phonologically realized) affixes name complex morpho-semantic entities.

This is not of course a radically new approach to verb morphology; we are accustomed to the idea that a combination of distinct features, such as number, person and tense, may be expressed by a single indivisible morpheme, say the English third singular present tense suffix. A feature based approach rather different from the present one has been successfully applied to a number of Chadic languages and languages of East Africa, although most of this work is not published (but see Kiessling 1994). However in the discussion of mood and aspect systems of Kwa languages it has not been normal practice to regard names of affixes as naming complex entities. It will be shown that such an approach can have distinct advantages.

1 Preliminary Considerations

This section begins with remarks on the theoretical status of the set of morphemes involved. These remarks are intended to situate the analysis within the structuralist tradition, and to clarify what it is exactly that is being analyzed.

Some of the problematic characteristics of the internal structure of the Ga verb paradigm are then sketched out, to provide a preliminary language-specific motivation for the analytic approach. The Ga verb paradigm is a rather complex affair. A considerable part of the complexity is in fact phonological, not grammatical, but since it is difficult if not impossible to illustrate the grammar and at the same time avoid phonological complications, the phonology must be dealt with. Furthermore, the motivation for an analysis in terms of atomic features in large part derives from the ways in which features are expressed. This section on preliminaries therefore concludes with an account of Ga phonology, particularly as it affects expression of the verb system.

1.1 *Remarks on the Nature of Grammatical Features*

The approach taken in this paper is based on the idea that a morphological grammatical paradigm (set of substitutable morphemes) in a language, such as its verb paradigm, is not merely an ad hoc list of meaningful elements, but a set of meaningful elements that constitutes a system of some kind, in which semantics, or the meanings of the elements, and morpho-syntax, or the phonological shapes by which these elements are expressed and the order in which they are affixed to stems, are closely intertwined. Such a system necessarily has internal structure; I adopt a version of the Jakobsonian view that the elements forming a system within a particular grammatical domain do not merely (or

even usually) have meaning as such, but mean in relation to each other.¹ The structure of meaning contrasts within a morphological system very largely defines that system. This does not mean that such a system is tightly self-contained, or that the meaning of a grammatical morpheme is wholly determined in all instances of its use by its meaning as defined by contrasts with all other members of the system. This is clearly not so, for the obvious reason that a system that was completely internally defined would be static, and verb systems in particular certainly change. However the core or central meaning of a grammatical morpheme at any given time in the life of a language is its meaning as a member of the paradigm, determined in relation to the rest of that paradigm. Any variation related to the semantics of the stem to which it is affixed, for example, or to a specific syntactic structure, includes that meaning.

We therefore expect a degree of semantic coherence in the verb system of a given language, and perhaps morpho-syntactic symmetry as well. If such coherence and symmetry are not obvious, the search for them is a legitimate enterprise. The impetus to symmetry, coherence, or elegance of analysis must not of course be forced beyond what is empirically reasonable for the language. Any living language system will have its fuzzy areas, which are possibly the sites of dynamic development and change. However it is reasonable to suppose that a system must have structure to make it readily learnable, and the more complicated, or the more incoherent, the system appears to be, the more likely it is that undiscovered structure underlies it, and the more urgent the search for such structure. More important, the more elegant the analysis of the system in general, the more light the analysis is likely to shed on the truly fuzzy parts. This is the point of departure for the present paper.

The problem is thus one of the relation of semantic unit to morpho-syntactic expression. Verb features in particular are viewed here as semantic objects, a set of variable features of the lexical head of the expression in which they occur (the VP), that are given phonological substance either singly (simple features) or, much more frequently, in combination with others (complex features). The system of meaning relations expressed through the verb paradigm (or any other morphological system) can be reached by subtraction; these relations consist of the meanings observable through the meanings of words to which the paradigm applies, minus their lexical component(s) and any other elements not under consideration (such as subject prefixes).

Various practical problems arise, but do not pose insuperable difficulties. The distinction between the lexical component and the rest may not always be absolutely clear. Aspect and negation features are normally expressed through choices from the grammatical paradigm, but some lexical verb stems have an inherent aspectual feature, for example the Ga stem *fɔ* 'do often', which is inherently habitual, or are inherently negative, for example *féne* 'untie',

fɔ̃ɔ̃ ‘cease doing’. This may affect the ability of the verb to occur in some paradigmatic aspect forms, or the compositional meaning of the verb in some forms.

It is also true that semantic properties of the lexical verb stem that are not in themselves aspectual (or, like those mentioned above, are aspectual in the *Aktionsart* sense) may affect its grammatical-aspectual interpretation (a topic discussed by Richter 1998 in relation to Ga posture verbs). The perfect form of a verb may be interpreted as primarily denoting an event in the past or a state in the present, depending on the verb and its relations with its arguments. Consider the interpretations of the following expressions, all including the perfect prefix *é`-:*²

- (1) *yoo é!tá shĩ* ‘the woman sat/has sat down’ (and as a result is now sitting)
- (2) *Kofi é!tsũ nii* ‘Kofi worked/has worked’ (and now the work is done)
- (3) *Kofi ébà* ‘Kofi came/has come’ (and is here)
- (4) *wolo le é!dí* ‘the book is black’ (as a result of a blackening process)

It is clear that the perfect verb word minus its lexical semantics does in fact have a constant meaning, namely that an event (denoted by the verb) has been completed, and from the speaker’s point of view has a currently salient outcome. In these sentences the verbs *tá*, *tsũ*, *ba* involve dynamic motion and have agent subjects, but *dí* involves change of state and has a patient subject. The semantic core of a grammatical morpheme may be identified by comparing its use with a range of verbs such as these.

Ga has a number of lexical extensions to the verb stem, some of which are productive, for example the iterative (pluractional) suffix *-mɔ̃* in an expression like *tsũ!mɔ̃ nĩ!ĩ* ‘do several pieces of work’, compare *tsũ nĩ!ĩ* ‘do work’ (lit. ‘work things’). In general, a lexical extension is affixed directly to the root, while a grammatical affix in principle applies to the total lexical stem. A verb word may or may not have a lexical extension, and sometimes has two, but it *must* also enter the grammatical paradigm, and cannot be marked for more than one paradigmatic complex feature. However the distinction is not always clear cut, and it is possible that some of these extensions strongly affect aspectual interpretation. This is certainly the case in Dangme, where one such lexical extension (the recurrent) cannot always be distinguished phonetically from the habitual aspect suffix, which belongs to the grammatical paradigm, and a word cannot carry both the extension and the aspect suffix. In Ga, however, it is generally quite clear which affixes are lexical extensions and which are not (see

Ameka and Dakubu elsewhere in this volume for further discussion of the problem).

There is another set of features of the Ga verb word which poses another kind of problem, namely the features contributed by the dependent, auxiliary or pre-verbs, that occupy a position somewhere between grammatical affix and fully lexical verb stem. Their semantic contribution to the verb word consists of a very limited number of features, i.e., is far simpler than that of the head of the construction, the independent verb stem. A full discussion of their categorial status is deferred to section 3. Suffice it to say at this point that their claim to verb status is based mainly on morpho-syntactic criteria, not semantic.

1.2 *Why a Feature Analysis? Motivating the Proposal for Ga*

In keeping with the principles of system structure outlined above, it is assumed that, if two semantically and phonologically distinguishable forms nevertheless lose contrast (have identical phonological expression) in some grammatically defined situation, those forms must share some grammatically relevant semantic feature. Decomposition into atomic features, constrained by such behaviours, is a method of revealing what that feature is. This principle is the basis of the analysis to be presented, and the specific situations to which it applies in the Ga verb are sketched below.

1.2.1 *Internal Coherence of the Paradigm: Morpho-Syntax*

A methodology involving feature decomposition is strongly motivated by the Ga paradigm, which is rife with apparent asymmetries. The verb paradigm in this language includes six positive forms: aorist, perfect, habitual, progressive, future, and subjunctive.³ The syntactic shape of the simple positive declarative verb is displayed by the schema of Table 1.

The list appears to have considerable internal structure, that is, these forms are inter-related in various ways. The status of the aorist is odd, since it is in some ways a default form, and can often be interpreted as completive. The first four forms at position 1 and the habitual at position 3 occur in declarative expressions, but the subjunctive (at 1) occurs in non-declaratives—except that it always occurs on the non-initial verb(s) in a future declarative serial construction. (In Ga serial constructions, two verbs constituting a series agree by having the same paradigmatic marking, except that a verb marked as future is always followed by one marked as subjunctive, never as future). The subjunctive also occurs in a subordinate clause following the complementizer *ní* in sentences that are globally declarative, for example *etao ní é!bá* ‘he wanted to come’ (lit. ‘he.wanted that he.should.come’), where the high tone on the pronoun prefix *e* of *eba* is the marker for the subjunctive.

In the negative, the contrast among aorist, habitual and progressive disappears, with just one imperfective form negating all three forms. On the other hand, the future and the subjunctive, which do not always contrast in the positive, are distinguished in the negative, and two negative futures, unlike two

Table 1: The Positive Declarative Verb

1	2	3
` - aorist	Verb stem	-ɔ /-a habitual
ê^ - perfect		-v/-mɔ imperative
mĩĩ- progressive		
àá- future		
á- subjunctive		

positive futures, occur in sequence in a serial construction.

Apart from these formal neutralizations, there are structural oddities. All the positive forms take prefixes, with the exception of the habitual, which is formed with a suffix. The negative forms are entirely different; the five declarative affixes are completely replaced by a system of three suffixes: imperfective, perfect and future, but the subjunctive preserves its prefix, and adds a pre-verb to mark the negative. Some, but not all, imperative forms are apparently based on the subjunctive form (both positive and negative). The schema below displays the simple declarative negative verb, omitting the subjunctive, which enters a different kind of structure (see section 3 below).

Table 2: The Negative Declarative Verb

1	2	3
é- negative	Verb stem	-v̂v̂ imperfective
		-kò perfect
		-ŋ future

1.2.2 *Internal Coherence of the Paradigm: Semantics*

One aspect of the problem is that major semantic categories do not appear to be formally distinguished. For example it is difficult, taking the paradigm as a simple list of unrelated unitary features, to discern a formal distinction between the expression of aspectuality and the expression of mood and tense, since the subjunctive is formally involved in both imperatives and future declaratives.

The Ga verb system marks aspect and modality, but not (or only marginally) tense. There is a tendency among speakers to give the aorist a default past tense interpretation, and to interpret the progressive and habitual as present tenses. However, it is not difficult to show that these interpretations in terms of time before or at the point of speaking do not invariably hold, but are governed by context (Lyons 1995: 293). Habituals and progressives often refer to events prior to the act of speaking (or antecedent to the “now” of the written text). It has been seen in section 1.1 that a perfect may be interpreted as describing a state in the speaker’s present, and an aorist may be used for either a present or a past event, depending on the semantics of the verb stem and other contextual features. Thus for example the verb *wo* in the aorist can be interpreted in different situations as ‘wore, was wearing, wears, is wearing (a garment)’ (E.N.A. Adjei, personal communication). There is thus no grammatical distinction between past and present (although they may of course be distinguished by adverbials), so that tense is not relevant to the verb paradigm in any fundamental sense. As long as the only consistent “tense” distinction is between future and any non-future, this is to be regarded (at least in Ga) as a modal distinction between realis and irrealis, a fundamental contrast in the Ga system that will be discussed in section 2.⁴ In section 2 it will also be shown that the “future” and the “subjunctive” are closely related. This being so, one of the most interesting problems is the nature of the aorist, which is phonologically the simplest. It can be argued that the Ga “aorist” is semantically and syntactically a default form (see 3.5.2 below).

Where semantic contrasts are neutralized, we expect that the neutralized meanings will have something in common, a shared meaning that is preserved when the unshared meanings are lost. The desired clarification of the form-meaning relationships can be met, barring the residual irregularities that are inherent in any living linguistic system, by a process of formally motivated semantic decomposition, that proceeds until a level is reached at which it can be shown that forms are related by a shared feature. The list of atomic features derived by this process, together with principles for their combination in complex features, and the combination of the complex features with verb stems in verb words, is sufficient to account for all the simple verb forms of the language in a semantically revealing way.

1.2.3 Typology Considerations

Our ultimate goal for the typology of Kwa languages is to arrive at a list of atomic verb features that will be valid cross-linguistically, although not necessarily universal. Languages will be seen to resemble each other or differ according to the ways in which these features are combined in complex (semantic) feature structures with morpho-syntactic expression. It is of course possible that some languages express features in the paradigm that others do not, so that the ultimate list might be a kind of “master list” from which languages select features. This paper certainly does not meet the goal of cross-linguistic validity, which will obviously require much more research on many more languages of the area. It is offered as a methodological suggestion and a beginning.

1.3 Phonological Foundations

Much of the apparent complexity of the Ga verb paradigm turns out to be phonological, and not grammatical. However this is by no means immediately obvious, and it is therefore useful to give a short account of the phonology of the language as it particularly affects the expression of the verb system. The phonology of Ga tone is crucial. For a more general account of the topics treated in this section see Dakubu (2002).

1.3.1 Segmental Deletions and Contractions

A frequent source of confusion is the fact that a grammatical prefix to the verb generally consists of a segmental syllable when it is initial in the word, but when the prefix is preceded by another element of the verb word, namely an auxiliary pre-verb or a subject pronoun, the prefix is expressed only as the tone of the preceding syllable. For example, in the following sentence the high tone of the pronoun prefix expresses the perfect aspect, as can be seen by comparing it with the same expression when a nominal subject is substituted:

- (5) Perfect: *ó-sèlè* ‘You have swum’
 nuu ko é-sèlè ‘A certain man has swum’

and by comparing it with aorist expressions:

- (6) Aorist: *ò-sèlè* ‘You swam’
 nuu ko sèlè ‘A certain man swam’

On the other hand, high tone on the same pronoun expresses the subjunctive in the following sentence, as can again be seen when a nominal is substituted:

- (7) Subjunctive: *esa ni ó-!bá* ‘You ought to come’
 esa ni Kojo á-!bá ‘Kojo ought to come’

(8) Negative: *àmé-!jó-kò* ‘They have not danced’
 hii le é-!jó-kò ‘The men have not danced’

(9) Progressive: *Kofi mĩ-ba* ‘Kofi is coming’
 òò-bà ‘You are coming’
 Future: *Kofi áá-!ba* ‘Kofi will come’
 èè-!há ‘He will/would come’

(10) Future: *má!ba* 'I will come', compare
 Subjunctive: *mí!bá* 'I should come'

(11) Progressive: *mím-!bá* 'I am coming'

(12) Progressive: *wà-m-bà* ‘We are coming’
 (orthographic “wəmiiba”)
mí-mí-lbá ‘I am coming’
 (orthographic “miiba”)

(13) Future: *wə-àá-sèlè* (*wə́sèlè*, *wə́sèlè*) 'We would swim'
àmè-àá-sèlè 'They will swim'
**àmè́sèlè*

Neither does the transitive auxiliary verb carry the tone of the future prefix (see 3.4 below).

- (14) Future: *wò-kè-àá-!bá* ‘we will come with, bring (it)’
 **wò-kèé-!bá*

On the other hand, the deictic verbs *ba* and *ya* readily carry the tone alternant of the future prefix when one of them precedes it (see 3.2 below), presumably because the vowels are identical. That is, if the series of deictic plus prefix is contracted, one unit of syllabicity but no segmental or tonal feature is lost.

- (15) Deictic Future: *wò-bàá-màjé* ‘we will send (it)’
 **wò-bà-àá-màjé*

Some pre-verb elements, especially those with CV and not merely V structure, thus show a lesser degree of integration into (or greater independence of) the verb word as phonologically defined. This kind of “weight” has nothing to do with tone, for it is only the grammatical prefixes, usually consisting only of vowels, that have specified tones (see 1.3.2 below). Further details relating to the combination of auxiliary verbs with prefixes will be considered in section 3.

Another minor detail is the assimilation of the habitual suffix, usually -ɔ, to a verb stem final -a.

- (16) Habitual: *nuu le sèlè-ɔ* ‘the man swims’,
 nuu le bà-à ‘the man comes’

1.3.2 The Tone System

Ga is a down-stepping (key-lowering) language with two phonemic tones, high (H) and low (L). Some syllables have a high-low falling tone, but such syllables are always word-final, and have simple high tone when not utterance-final. No trace of the low remains, that is, it does not cause lowering of the pitch level of a high tone that may follow. Syllables in which high tone alternates with a high-low fall in utterance-final position occur only in verb stems: the monosyllables *hê*, *hé* ‘buy, get’ and *kwê*, *kwé* ‘look at, look after’, and a number of disyllables in which the second syllable consists only of a vowel, e.g., *tsṵṵ*, *tsṵṵ* ‘teach’, *shwîê*, *shwîé* ‘pour down’. These verbs behave like monosyllabic high and disyllabic low-high verbs in every other respect.

Underspecified and Unspecified Syllables. There are large numbers of monosyllabic lexical minimal pairs among both nouns and verbs but especially among verbs, where minimal tone pairs may be found for a high proportion of the single-syllable segmental shapes possible in the language. However the tone system in general and the tonal behaviour of the verb in particular are cla-

rified considerably if a distinction is recognized between syllables with specified low or high tone and syllables with underspecified non-high tone, which trigger downstep of a following high tone, and then receive the tone of the following syllable, whether high or low. This analysis is based on the observation that low tones in some morphemes are invariably low, while other syllables have low tone in isolation or when part of a series of two or more non-high tone units, but are at the stepped-down level of a following high tone (whether or not a high tone actually follows) when they are not.⁵ Thus the third person singular pronoun *lè* invariably has low tone, whether or not it is preceded and/or followed by another low tone, and thus has a specified low tone. However the nominal plural suffix *-i* has low tone if the noun ends in a low tone, or if the noun ends in a high but a non-high tone follows the suffix, but if the noun ends high and no low tone follows it has the (down-stepped) pitch that a high tone normally has when it follows a low tone. The following examples demonstrate the suffix in these situations.

- (17) Non-high environment: *gbè-ì* 'roads'
 tsù-ì àgbò-ì 'big rooms'
 Non-low environment: *tsù-í* 'rooms'
 tsù-í díjù 'black rooms'

The second syllables of a number of verbs have underspecified non-high tone, for example in *tsí!né* 'sneeze', *shá!né* 'slide'. Since such syllables are always preceded by a high tone, the only kind of non-high environment they occur in is when a low tone follows.

- (18) Non-high environment: *ètsínè-ò* 's/he sneezes'
 Non-low environment: *ètsí!né tsǒ* 's/he sneezed too much'

Most subject pronoun prefixes and the dependent verbs are not merely underspecified, they have no tone specified at all. That is, they receive their tone from some other element in the verb, and any high tone they may receive is not downstepped. Thus in the following example, the ventive deictic *ba* receives high tone from the subjunctive prefix, but is not downstepped from the preceding high, as would be expected if the syllable were lexically low or underspecified.⁶

- (19) *è-sà ní tèté á-bá-nà lè*
 it-necessary that Tettey SUBJV-VENT.SUBJV-see him
 'Tettey should come see him/her'
 **èsà ní tèté á!bànà lè*

If the pronoun prefixes had non-high tone, whether specified low or underspecified, the rules of downstep would be expected to operate when they receive the high tone of a grammatical prefix, but they do not. For example, in

the sentence *esa ní ésèlè* 's/he ought to swim', the high tone of the pronoun *é*, which is attributed to the subjunctive marker, is as high as the high tone particle that precedes it. If the pronoun had a lexical non-high tone this would be manifested by downstepping of the pronoun in this context.

The distinction between lexically specified and underspecified tones is particularly important in the negative forms. We return to this topic in section 2.3.1 below.

Floating Tones. In the alternations discussed in section 1.3.1, each morpheme has a segmental component and a tone component. Both occur when the syntactic conditions for the alternant consisting only of the tone component are not present, but when they are present, the morpheme is realized on the segment immediately before it, which has no tone of its own (is tonally unspecified).

A few prefixes are expressed or partially expressed by a (fully specified) low tone that has no proper segment in any context. This tone is recognized mainly by its effect on the following tone, that is, the tone of the first syllable of the verb stem. Thus the uncontracted perfect prefix consists of a syllable with high tone, followed by a low tone that ensures that, if the first syllable of the verb stem does not have a specified low tone it is realized as low, if it is underspecified, or downstepped from the pitch level of the prefix, if the stem tone is specified high. If the first syllable of the stem has a specified low tone it will be low in any case.

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| (20) | <i>bí</i> (specified high): | <i>yoo ko é!-bí</i>
'a certain woman has asked' |
| | <i>ba</i> (underspecified non-high): | <i>yoo ko é-bà</i>
'a certain woman has come' |
| | <i>nà</i> (specified low): | <i>yoo ko é-nà</i>
'a certain woman has seen (it)' |

The tonal alternant of the prefix consists of the identical tone pattern, but the high tone occurs on the preceding element, as demonstrated in 1.3.1 above, while the low tone affects the pitch of the following element. The perfect prefix may therefore be given the canonical form {*é*'-}.

There is a prefix common to the habitual and the aorist which consists only of a low tone. It has the same effect as the low of the perfect, but since it can be preceded by another low tone, which has the same effect of ensuring that an underspecified stem syllable has low tone, its effect is less often apparent. Because of this morpheme, pronoun prefixes to an aorist or habitual verb are always low, and the initial syllable of the verb invariably has lower tone than any non-low tone that may precede or follow it. It is given the canonical form {*`*-}.

- (21) *bí:* *Kofi !-bí* 'Kofi asked'
 (*okeɛ á!kɛ*) *è-bí* '(you said that) s/he asked'
ba: *Kofi bà bí!ɛ* 'Kofi came here'
 (*ekɛɛ á!kɛ*) *ò-bà* '(s/he said that) you came'
 **Kofi !-bá bí!ɛ*

As a result of these floating tones, the perfect, the aorist, and the subjunctive, which has a prefix with high tone and no floating tone, are distinguished only by tone if the subject is a pronoun prefix. In the following examples the underlying phonological specifications of the prefix and stems are written out below the realized verb forms.

- (22) Aorist: *Kofi !-bí* 'Kofi asked' *e-[̀]bí* 's/he asked'
 [̀]-bí *e-[̀]-bí*
 Perfect: *Kofi é-!bí* 'Kofi has asked' *é!-bí* 's/he has asked'
 [̀]-bí *e-[̀]-bí*
 Subjunctive: *Kofi á-bí* 'Kofi should ask' *é-bí* 's/he should ask'
 [̀]-bí *e-[̀]-bí*

Floating high tones also exist. As far as the verb system is concerned, the only such tone is the high tone associated with negation, which spreads through the stem from right to left. Its realization is discussed more fully in section 2.3.1.

In section 1 some consideration has been given to the theoretical background of the analytical approach, and the status of the proposed objects of study. The internal motivation for this type of analysis of the Ga verb system has been reviewed, and the ground has been cleared for the grammatical analysis by reviewing aspects of Ga phonology that might otherwise cause problems. In section 2, a set of features to account for the shape of the Ga verb paradigm is proposed. In section 3, a subsidiary set of features expressed by a small set of syntactically dependent auxiliary verbs is examined. In section 4, the findings of the paper are summarized.

2 The Features of the Ga Finite Verb

This section exhaustively describes the grammatical paradigms that qualify the Ga simple verb word, that is, the verb containing one lexical stem and no auxiliary stems. It includes the cliticized subject pronoun paradigm (section 2.1). A tree display of the inflectional feature paths of the Ga verb is then provided, and the features are defined and discussed (section 2.2).

2.1 Subject Agreement Features

The grammatical component (INFL) of the verb includes a set of subject agreement features. The pronoun prefixes are considered to express subject agreement features of the verb word because, although they do not normally occur if an NP subject immediately precedes the verb, the pronominal elements are phonologically inseparable from the word, and because agreement between verbs is required in respect of these features in serial constructions.

Two sorts of subject agreement features are recognized: personhood and number. No other features apply to the pronoun that is specified in Diagram 1 as [-PERSONAL]. The use of this pronoun expresses the existence of an unspecified agent subject, often corresponding to an English passive, and it does not occur in any other function, i.e., there is no impersonal object or possessive pronoun. That is, it is characterized in contrast to the [+PERSONAL] prefixes by the *absence* of nominal agreement features.

(23) à-bí mi ‘they asked me/I was asked’

The features PERSONAL, PARTICIPANT and SPEAKER are hierarchically ordered. The complete pronominal system also requires that non-participants be specified as ±HUMAN, because 3rd person reference to non-humans in object and possessive functions is often not expressed. However this feature is not relevant to subject-verb or verb-verb agreement. The usual person numbers are displayed across the bottom as complex feature (end of path) names, above their canonical representations in curly brackets.

The feature [NUMBER] has the [+PERSONAL] pronouns in its domain. Besides the [-PLURAL] forms given above, [+PLURAL] combines with each [+PERSONAL] node to produce the plural pronouns.

Diagram 1: Subject Agreement Features (Singular)

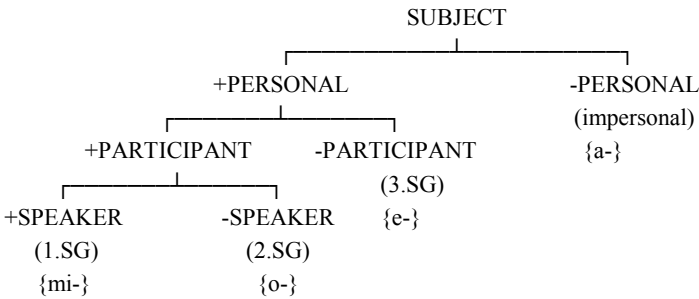
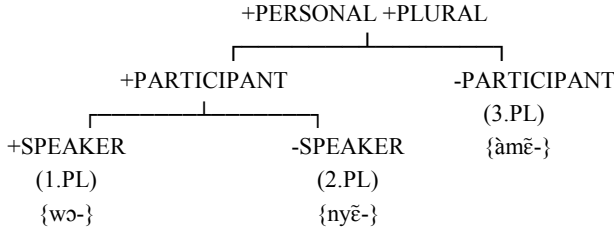


Diagram 2: Subject Agreement in the Plural



As discussed in section 1.3.2, the phonological specification of the pronominal prefixes does not include tone, but the first person singular is a partial exception: unlike all the other pronouns it has high tone in the positive progressive and habitual forms. This could be said to be in accord with its status as the most highly specified of the [-PLURAL] prefixes. It is normally pronounced as a nasal syllabic homorganic with what follows, rather than as the orthographic CV syllable.

- (24) Habitual: *mí-bù-ḡ akɔ̃ntaa* 'I do the accounts'
 ní-jò-ḡ 'I dance'

2.2 Aspect and Modality Features

The Ga aspect and modality features are fully hierarchically ordered, permitting the tree display given below. Every form in the non-negative Ga aspect-modality paradigm is a complex feature, the end point on a feature path, and that end point is named (in parentheses). A non-negative finite verb must be marked by one and only one of these complex features. A generalized representation for each marker is given in curly brackets at the point in the path where it first applies. Both markers and feature values apply to everything below the node at which they appear. Although the number of markers equals the number of path ends or complex features, there is not an exact one-to-one correspondence between complex feature and morpheme.

The \pm value feature convention has been employed simply because it is easier to use one name for a feature and give it + and - values, than to find three suitable names, one for the feature and one for each of its values. It would be quite acceptable for example to call the values of REALIS [aspectual] (+) and [modal] (-).

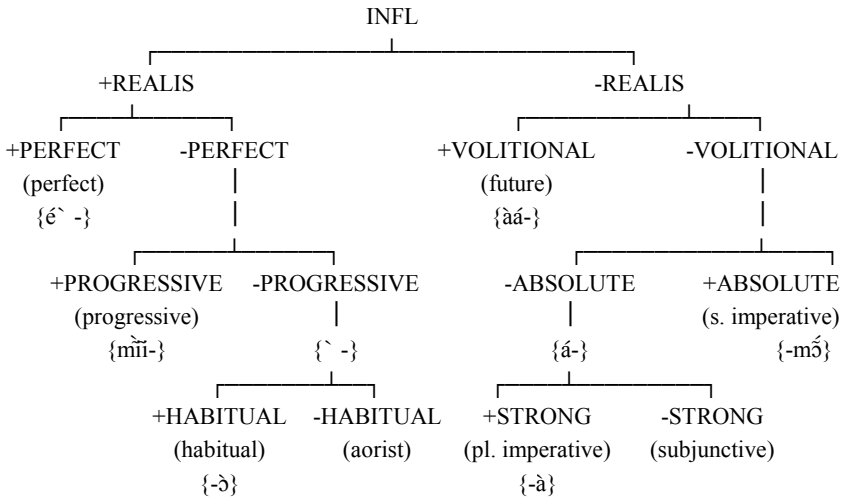
Similarly, no particular value is attached to use of binary rather than scalar features, except that a system of 2-value features, one semantically marked and

the other requiring further specification until the end of the path is reached, seems to fit the Ga situation rather well.

Each feature is now discussed in turn, starting from the top.

REALIS: This is the only feature not marked by an affix for either of its values. Nevertheless it is proposed that every finite verb is either [+REALIS] or [-REALIS]. This feature distinguishes events expressed as actual or concrete from potential events denoted by futures, subjunctives and imperatives, and the feature paths followed by verbs are correspondingly different according to their value for this feature. [+REALIS] verbs take a series of aspectual features, but [-REALIS] verbs are marked for modal features. It is syntactically motivated by the fact that different [-REALIS] forms occur together in constructions requiring grammatical agreement, that is, in serial constructions, but under no conditions do any of them “agree” with a [+REALIS] verb. Thus it is possible to have a series future-subjunctive, or imperative-subjunctive, but never (in a true serial construction) progressive-subjunctive, for example. (In the following example sentences, elements marking modality or carrying a modal marker are underlined.)

Diagram 3: Verb Features



- (25) *Tete bàá-fósé nu le e-shwǐé shi*
 ‘Tetty will pour down the water’
 FUT SUBJV
fósé-mó nu le ó-shwǐé shi
 ‘pour down the water!’
 IMPER SUBJV

PERFECT: Every [+REALIS] verb also has a value for [PERFECT]. A [+PERFECT] verb takes the perfect prefix, and no further features apply; it has reached the end of its path. If a verb is [+PERFECT] the event is viewed as a whole, without any specified internal temporal structure but with an outcome salient at the time of speaking. (This does not foreclose the possibility of internal temporal structure specified by the lexical semantics of the verb stem itself, or some other feature of the context of speaking.) If it is [-PERFECT] it may still be viewed as a whole, but the outcome is not salient.

- (26) a. *nuu ko é-nù daa* ‘a certain man has drunk alcoholic drink, is drunk’
 b. *wó-bà* ‘we have come’

PROGRESSIVE: If a verb is [+REALIS -PERFECT], it must have a value for the feature [PROGRESSIVE]. [+PROGRESSIVE] is marked by the progressive prefix. It means that the event is viewed as having an internal time span, as continuing uninterrupted in time, either beginning and ending in the past, or beginning in the past and continuing at the time of speaking. Although it thus has future implications of a kind, the Ga progressive has no known grammatical or syntactic relations with other futures. That is, what matters is that realization of the event or situation (although not necessarily the activity) has actually begun, in contrast to all [-REALIS] forms.

- (27) *Kofi mǐi-bà* ‘Kofi is / was (in the process of) coming’

Both [-PROGRESSIVE] forms are marked by the non-progressive prefix { - }. Its realization is discussed in section 1.3.2 above.

HABITUAL: If a verb is [+REALIS -PERFECT -PROGRESSIVE] it must also have a value for the feature [HABITUAL]. If it is [+HABITUAL] it takes the habitual suffix as well as the [-PROGRESSIVE] prefix. The suffix indicates that the event is viewed as having some kind of periodicity, or continuing despite interruptions over time.

- (28) *Kofi !-bí-ò ame daa gbi* ‘Kofi asks/asked them every day’

If the verb is not [+HABITUAL] it is called aorist, and is unmarked except for the preceding low tone common to the two [-PROGRESSIVE] forms. Since this prefix has no effect if the verb does not begin in a high or an underspeci-

fied tone, and not even then if the syllable preceding the verb has a specified low tone, and many verbs indeed begin in a specified low, aorist verbs are very often to all intents and purposes unmarked. Since the aorist is also the end point of a path in which every feature is negatively specified, it appears to be a semantic default form, the form employed if no particular aspectual value is selected. It is the form commonly used in narrative, and is most often translated by the English simple past tense, but this only means that it is none of perfect, progressive or habitual. It is thus essentially unmarked both semantically and morphologically.

- (29) a. *Kofi!-bí* 'Kofi asked'
 b. *wò-tsòò amé* 'we taught them'

VOLITIONAL: If a verb is [-REALIS] it takes modal features. The primary semantic distinction among modals depends on whether or not an event that has not been or is not currently being actualized, and therefore must logically begin (if ever) in the future, or after the time of speaking, is to be internally promoted, or is viewed as promoted or impelled by an agent or a force that is not a participant in the projected event. This is expressed by the feature [VOLITIONAL]. If the verb is treated as [+VOLITIONAL], not imposed by some outside agency or will, it is marked by the future prefix. It should be stressed that this "future" is indeed modal, and not a tense. Unqualified by another element (to be discussed in section 3.2 below) it is not interpreted as a simple future, but rather as an unconstrained conditional or subjunctive, that is, as a possible event which is not thought of as subject to or the intended product of an external impulse or force, in contrast to a direct or indirect command.

- (30) a. *gbekèbii lé àá-bí* 'the children might/would/will ask'
 b. *èé-bí* 's/he will ask (of his/her own free will)'

All [-VOLITIONAL] forms (subjunctive, direct singular imperative, direct plural imperative) are sensitive to subject agreement features. The term "imperative" is avoided as an atomic feature name, because in fact all three forms are used in the expression of direct commands.

The [±VOLITIONAL] contrast tends to be neutralized in the presence of a first person singular subject. In the context of an inchoative governing verb (*sa* 'be required') the sentences in (31) seem to mean about the same thing, although the future form is preferred. In all other person-numbers the subjunctive is required in this construction.

- (31) *esa ní má-sèlè* 'I ought to swim'
 1SG.FUT
esa ní mí-sèlè 'I ought to swim'
 1SG.SUBJV

ABSOLUTE: The singular and plural imperatives always express direct commands, while the subjunctive is used in both direct and indirect commands as well as hortatory and subjunctive expressions. However the subjunctive and the plural imperative are both marked by the subjunctive prefix {á-}, and also resemble each other in contrast to the singular imperative in being always marked by at least one other pre-verb element (which may be a pronoun prefix) or an expressed subject. The feature [ABSOLUTE] is proposed to account for the distinction. A verb that is [+ABSOLUTE] has the singular imperative suffix (described in 2.3.1 below) and no other grammatical marker whatsoever; a verb with this suffix is never accompanied by a pronominal prefix or a dependent verb. However it must be considered to have specified subject agreement features, even though these are not directly expressed. These features are usually [-PLURAL +PARTICIPANT -SPEAKER].

- (32) a. *yà-á* ‘go!’
 b. *tsú níí* ‘work!’
 c. *sólé-mǎ* ‘pray!’

This form occasionally occurs with a non-participant subject. In the following sentence, the first verb *ně* ‘to rain’ is in the [+ABSOLUTE] form but nevertheless has a subject, *nugbo* ‘rain’, and is followed by a subordinate clause with its verb *ba*, literally ‘come’, in the subjunctive.

- (33) *nugbo* *něě* *ní* *abele ábá*
 rain rain-ABS that corn SUBJV-come
 ‘let it rain that corn may grow!’

If a verb is [-ABSOLUTE] the verb with modality marker never occurs bare but must be qualified, by a subject and/ or a dependent verb. The feature is thus motivated by the morpho-syntax, but it seems to have a semantic dimension as well. The singular imperative is simply that, but the plural imperative and the subjunctive in varying degrees may express a qualified, more complex attitude to the potential event. It will be shown below that the difference also has implications for negation.

STRONG: If the verb is [-REALIS -VOLITIONAL -ABSOLUTE] it also has a value of the feature [STRONG]. A verb that is [+STRONG] in addition to the prefix of qualification has a suffix {-à} and is sensitive to subject agreement features, which must be [+PLURAL +PARTICIPANT -SPEAKER], expressed by the appropriate pronoun, *nyě*. The high tone on the pronoun in the following sentence is of course the exponent of the subjunctive prefix.

- (34) *nyě-bí-à lē* ‘you (pl.) ask him/her!’

If a verb is [-STRONG], it takes no further marker. A [-STRONG] verb with both subjunctive prefix and an expressed subject is called “subjunctive”,

and occurs mainly in subordinate clauses involving prospective or proposed events, or as the non-initial verb in a serial construction where it functions as the agreement form for any [-REALIS] verb.

(35) Subordinate clause:

- a. *è-sà ní nuu lɛ á-sèlè*
 it.AOR-suit that man the SUBJV-swim
 ‘the man ought to swim’
- b. *mì-tò gbɛjiano ní nuu lɛ á-jò foi*
 I.AOR-do arrangement that man the SUBJV-run OBJ
 ‘I arranged for the man to run’

(36) Serial constructions:

- Future-Subjunctive *Kofi bàá-hé lɛ é-ye*
 Kofi VEN.FUT-take him he.SUBJV-eat
 ‘Kofi will believe him’
- Imperative-Subjunctive *hé-mɔ́ lɛ ó-lyé*
 take-IMPER him you.SUBJV-eat
 ‘believe him!’
- Subjunctive-Subjunctive *Kojo á-hé lɛ é-lyé*
 Kojo SUB-take him he.SUBJV-eat
 ‘Kojo ought to believe him’

Note that when the subjunctive follows a singular imperative the second singular pronoun prefix appears, even though the first, imperative verb has no pronoun. Since verbs in a serial construction must agree in subject agreement features as well as aspect or modality features, and these are determined by the first verb, this is an additional reason why [+ABSOLUTE] verbs must be considered to carry subject agreement features even when there is no expressed subject.

If the subject agreement features are [-PLURAL+PARTICIPANT-SPEAKER] (2nd person singular), and the verb is [-VOLITIONAL] no subject need be expressed, provided that, if the verb is also [-ABSOLUTE], some other pre-verb element is present. Such a verb in which subject features are not expressed is imperative. This means that a subjunctive verb can occur without an expressed subject, as a direct singular imperative. In that case however it must be qualified by an auxiliary verb, as in the example *kɛ kakla á!fó* ‘cut it with a knife!’. The construction is accordingly described in section 3 below.

At this point it is useful to summarize the relations revealed by the aspect-modality feature analysis. Among the aspectual ([+REALIS]) forms, the floating low tone prefix common to the aorist and the habitual expresses a feature [-PROGRESSIVE] common to the two. The presence of this prefix means that, except in the first person singular progressive, the verb stem is immediately

preceded by a low tone in all aspectual forms, in opposition to all [-REALIS] forms, which are invariably preceded by a high tone (except in the [+ABSOLUTE] form, which is the only form in the entire paradigm with no prefix of any kind). Although the feature REALIS has no direct realization, this seems to be a strong indication of its relevance.

It was noted previously that there is a special relationship between the progressive and the habitual, because the first singular pronoun invariably has high tone in these forms, in contrast to the other pronouns, and to other forms, where the pronoun prefixes including this one have unspecified tone. Thus:

- (37) Progressive: *mí-m-bí* 'I am asking'
 Habitual: *mí!-bí-!ó* 'I ask'

The progressive prefix normally has low tone, but since low tone does not appear in the first person progressive form, it cannot be a general affix of [+REALIS]. Since prefixed low tone does appear in the first person habitual (indicated by ! after the pronoun in the example above), and in all other habituals and aorists, the relationship between the habitual and the aorist overrides that between the progressive and the habitual, which only extends to first singulars.

Indeed, if perfect and subjunctive forms are included, a verb with a first singular pronoun always begins in high tone unless it is aorist, the virtually unmarked form. In terms of features, too, the first singular prefix is strongly marked, another reason for supposing that the exceptional high tones of the first singular pronoun must be a feature of the pronoun, and not of the verb paradigm. We have seen that the [-REALIS] forms are closely interconnected. Although the [+VOLITIONAL] form is commonly used in declaratives, as opposed to various kinds of imperative marked by the [-VOLITIONAL] forms, the distinction is not absolute, for there are circumstances in which a [-VOLITIONAL] marks syntactic agreement with it. Since the [-ABSOLUTE -STRONG] (subjunctive) form agrees with any of the others, and can express either a direct or an indirect imperative or even a future depending on the syntactic circumstances, it appears as a sort of default [-REALIS] form, comparable to the aorist among the [+REALIS] forms.

Parallel to the especially marked status of the first singular in the aspectual forms, the second person whether singular or plural has special status in the presence of mood features. In this case it appears that the verb is particularly sensitive to the feature structure of the subject, and that whether or not the subject is actually expressed is in turn sensitive to the feature structure of the verb. A verb that is [+ABSOLUTE] (singular imperative) normally combines with second singular [-PLURAL -SPEAKER] features, which are not expressed. A verb that is [+PLURAL -ABSOLUTE -STRONG] (plural imperative), on the

other hand, combines only with [+PLURAL -SPEAKER] features, and these are always expressed. The “default” form, [-ABSOLUTE -STRONG] (subjunctive) is the only [-VOLITIONAL] form that combines with any possible combination of subject features, and the subject is always expressed (but see 3.5 below).

2.3 *Negation*

NEGATION is an operator whose domain is the features at the level below \pm REALIS, that is, it combines with the values of PERFECT and VOLITIONAL, giving four distinct negative forms. It is expressed by two quite different strategies, which do not exactly coincide with the distribution of REALIS values. The future negative resembles the [+REALIS] forms in its morpho-syntax, in strong contrast to the [-VOLITIONAL] negatives. The latter are built on the subjunctive [-ABSOLUTE] prefix plus a dependent verb of negation, and will be discussed in section 3.3. The agreement relation between future and subjunctive does not hold in the negative; in a serial construction, only another negative future agrees with a negative future verb. The negative aspect system is thus semantically and grammatically quite different from the positive.

2.3.1 *Verb Tone Classes*

At this point it is necessary to return to phonology. There is a considerable difference in the behaviour of verbs in the negative (and also imperative) that derives from the distinction between low and underspecified tones discussed in 1.3.21. Two phonological classes of stem are relevant: those whose initial syllable is lexically specified as low, and those whose initial syllable is not, i.e., is either specified as high or underspecified. Verb stems are normally CV monosyllables or disyllables (CV+CV, CV+V, less commonly, CV+N). Specified L-initial verb stems (class 1) are either L monosyllables or disyllables in which the first syllable is L and the second is H. The other class of stems (class 2) consists of monosyllables that are either H or underspecified, disyllables with both syllables H or underspecified, or disyllables in which the first syllable is specified as H but the second is underspecified. The small number of trisyllabic verbs follows the same pattern; all verbs beginning in a specified Low tone behave alike, in contrast to all others. Some examples are the following. The underlined syllables are underspecified in their underlying forms.

Class 1: Specified L-initial:

bà ‘beg for’, *kè* ‘give, present’, *wîê* ‘speak’, *màjé* ‘send’, *làájé* ‘lose’.

Class 2: Other:

bí ‘ask’, *bà* ‘come’, *sèlè* ‘come’, *fíté* ‘spoil, become spoiled’, *tsí!né* ‘sneeze’.

This division into tone classes makes a considerable difference in the expression of declarative negatives and the direct (singular) imperative. In declarative negatives, class 1 verbs, but not class 2, are preceded by a prefix *e-*. Examples are given in Table 3.⁷

Table 3: Verb Classes in the Negative

		Imperfective	Perfect	Future
Class 1	‘beg’	<i>é-!bá-áá</i>	<i>é-!bá-kò</i>	<i>é-!bá-!ń</i>
	‘send’	<i>é-!májé-éê</i>	<i>é-!májé-ko</i>	<i>é-!májé-!ń</i>
Class 2	‘ask’	<i>bí-íí</i>	<i>bí-kò</i>	<i>bí-!ń</i>
	‘swim’	<i>sélé-éê</i>	<i>sélé-ko</i>	<i>sélé-!ń</i>
	‘sneeze’	<i>tsí!né-éê</i>	<i>tsí!né-ko</i>	<i>tsí!né-!ń</i>

It will be observed that there is a three-way aspectual distinction between the imperfective, perfect and future in the negative, marked by suffixes. These suffixes are invariably accompanied by an H that marks the syllable preceding the suffix, and spreads leftwards until it meets either an (already specified) H or the word boundary. This H of negation is stepped down from any other H specified within the word. Thus the initial stem syllables of class 1 verbs in the examples above have downstepped H, because they are marked by the H of negation and preceded by an H prefix, while their underlying lexical tone is specified as L. If a class 2 verb is preceded by an H, for example in its subject, there is no downstep, as the following sentences show.

- (38) a. *Kwàshí bá!ń* ‘Kwashi will not come’
 **Kwàshí !bá!ń*
 b. *Kòfí sélékò* ‘Kofi has not swum’
 **Kòfí !sélékò*
 c. *Kòjó tsí!nééé* ‘Kojo did/does not sneeze, is not sneezing’
 **Kòjó !tsí!nééé*

Although the second syllable of the verb *tsine* ‘sneeze’ (class 2) is underspecified, its downstepped H in these examples is attributable not to this fact

but to its marking by H of negation, so that it remains at the raised level in the perfect and future, even though the suffixes that follow do not carry H (the perfect suffix has a specified low tone, the tone of the future suffix is underspecified).

Since high tone spread in the verb is associated with all three negative suffixes, which are otherwise phonologically quite distinct, it must (by subtraction) constitute a negation marker in its own right. Since the prefix *é-* is similarly associated with all three negative suffixes, and its presence or absence in these forms is entirely determined by the tone class of the stem, we consider that the Negation morpheme has two alloforms: a prefix plus high tone on the stem (class 1 verbs), and high tone on the stem but no prefix (class 2 verbs). It may be symbolized {*é* '-}.

One interesting result of the tone-class distinction is that a number of non-H monosyllables that are homophonous in the positive forms are distinguished in the negatives. Most non-H monosyllabic stems have specified L tone and belong to class 1, taking the prefix in the negative, but about a dozen very frequent monosyllabic stems are unmarked and belong to class 2, and do not take the prefix. Historically this distinction and indeed the very existence of the classes is rooted in a distinction present in Proto-Ga-Dangme. The underspecified monosyllabic verbs are all cognate with mid tone verbs in Dangme, and specified low tone verbs are cognate with low tone verbs in that language, which has three phonemic tones. Some of these non-H verbs are otherwise homophonous with class 1 verbs, for example *bà* and *nũ* respectively 'beg for' and 'drink', specified low, and *ba* and *nũ*, respectively 'come' and 'hear', underspecified.

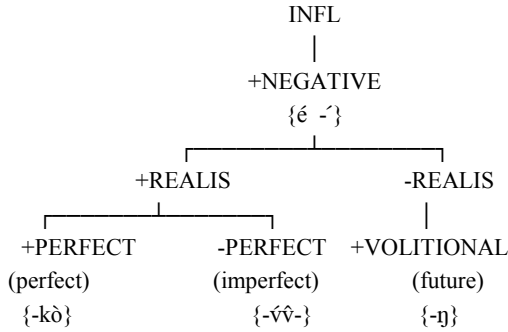
(39) Positive Habitual (homophony):

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Class 1: <i>nuu ko bà-à nii</i> | 'a certain man begs' |
| Class 2: <i>nuu ko bà-à oya</i> | 'a certain man comes quickly' |

(40) Negative Imperfective (distinction by prefix):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Class 1: <i>nuu ko e'-!bá-á nii</i> | 'a certain man does/did not beg' |
| Class 2: <i>nuu ko bá-á oya</i> | 'a certain man does/did not come quickly' |

Diagram 4: Negation of Verb Features Other than [+VOLITIONAL]



(41) Positive Perfect (homophony):

Class 1: *nuu ko é-nũ daa* 'a certain man has drunk alcoholic drink'

Class 2: *nuu ko é-nũ bo* 'a certain man has heard you'

(42) Negative Perfect (distinction by prefix):

Class 1: *nuu ko é-!nũ-kò daa* 'a certain man has not drunk alcoholic drink'

Class 2: *nuu ko nũ-kò bo* 'a certain man has not heard you'

Besides the declarative negatives, the division of verbs into tone classes also makes a difference to the form of the direct singular imperative form (i.e., [+ABSOLUTE], see section 2.2 above). In this case the class distinction is only relevant to monosyllabic stems. All [+ABSOLUTE] class 1 monosyllabic verbs (those specified as low) take a suffix consisting of a copy of the stem vowel, with high tone. All class 2 monosyllables on the other hand, whether specified high or underspecified, simply have high stem tone. All polysyllabic stems, on the other hand, take a suffix *-m̂*, whose high tone spreads leftward to any underspecified stem syllables. As in the negative, tones thus raised are a step lower than a specified high tone within the word, but unlike the high tone of the negative, this one does not cross a lexically specified high tone to raise the specified initial low of a disyllabic class 1 verb. Some examples follow:

(43) Monosyllables:

Class 1: *bà-á* 'beg!' *nũ-ũ* 'drink!'

Class 2: *bá* 'come!' *nũ* 'hear!'

Polysyllables:

Class 1: *màjé-m̂* 'send!' *làájé-m̂* 'get lost!'

Class 2: *sélé-m̂* 'swim!' *tsĩ!né-m̂* 'sneeze!'

In view of their complete phonological complementarity, these three formations are regarded as alloforms of a single morpheme, which is given the canonical form {-mǝ}.

2.3.2 *Aspect and Mood in the Negative*

The [+REALIS] and the [-REALIS +VOLITIONAL] negatives are all characterized by the affix of negation, i.e., high stem tone with or without a prefix, described in 2.3.1 above. In addition, the verb is marked by one of three aspect suffixes.

- (44) Neg. Perfect: *nuu le bí-kò*
 ‘the man has not asked’
 Neg. Imperfective: *nuu le é-!bá-á nii*
 ‘the man did/does not beg, is not begging’
 Neg. Future: *nuu le é-!májé-!ŋ*
 ‘the man will not send (it)’

The fact that there is just one [+NEGATIVE] form semantically corresponding to the positive progressive, habitual and aorist is neatly accounted for by the fact that it is only their shared feature, [-PERFECT], that is negated. The non-declarative ([-REALIS -VOLITIONAL]) negatives involve an auxiliary verb, and are discussed in 3.3 below.

3 **Grammaticalized Serial Constructions: the Auxiliary Verbs**

A number of features of the verb word, including [+NEGATIVE] when the verb is [-VOLITIONAL], are contributed not by affixes belonging to the aspect-mood paradigm but by a small number of verb stems, referred to here as auxiliary verbs, that precede the head or main verb stem and are phonologically incorporated in the same way as the pronoun prefixes. The “verbness” of these morphemes is based on several criteria: syntactic, or whether the element can be said to assign case to one or more NPs; morphological, or the applicability of the aspect-mood paradigm; a combination of syntax and morphology in the applicability of grammatical agreement; and phonological criteria, including relations of homophony with a “normal” (independent) verb stem and also the applicability of verb tone classes. The dependent verbs differ considerably from each other in respect of these criteria, and will be discussed individually, but we note here that three of the four show traces of being marked by the same system of grammatical prefixes as the head verb, and the fourth has both a subject (as they all do) and an object. A single verb word can include up to three of these dependent verbs, and more than one of them can be marked for a feature

of the aspect-modality system. For these reasons they are treated not as another set of prefixes but as verb stems, albeit grammaticalized, that together with the head verb constitute a heavily grammaticalized serial construction.

The dependent verbs are *kɛ*, *ka*, and the two deictic verbs, itive *ya* and ventive *ba*. Semantically they are extremely different from each other. They are discussed below in order of decreasing proximity to the head, i.e., from right to left. This order coincides with the diminishing degree of morphological “verb-ness” attributable to them.

3.1 More on Phonology

All four auxiliary verbs are unspecified for lexical tone. This is indicated by the fact that a high tone incorporated from a following prefix is never downstepped from a preceding high tone, as would be the case if such a high tone replaced a specified low tone, and they are clearly not specified high.

Two auxiliary verbs, the deictics *ba* and *ya*, occur in negative aspectual verbs. Since they have no specified tone they might be therefore expected to behave like class 2 verbs (see section 2.3.1 above), but this does not account for their behaviour. In the negative aspects a deictic verb has both the high stem tone and the prefix *é* of the negative marker, like class 1 verbs, and regardless of the class of the head verb. There is no downstep between the prefix and the high tone, which confirms the absence of specified low tone on the deictic. In the Negative Perfect and Negative Future examples below, the high tone of negation on the main verbs (the Class 1 verbs *nǎ*, *bà* respectively) is downstepped, both because these verbs are lexically specified as low, and because their negative high tone meets another specified high, the high of negation on the deictic, at this point.

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| (45) Neg. Perfect: | <i>Kofi é-ya-!ná-kò</i> | |
| | Kofi NEG-IT.NEG-see-PERF | |
| | ‘Kofi has not gone and seen’ | |
| Neg. Imperfective: | <i>Kofi é-bá-bí-í</i> | <i>mi</i> |
| | Kofi NEG-VEN.NEG-ask-IMPF | 1SG |
| | ‘Kofi is not coming/did not come to ask me’ | |
| Neg. Future: | <i>Kofi é-bá-!bá-!ŋ</i> | <i>nii</i> |
| | Kofi NEG-VEN.NEG-beg-FUT | things |
| | ‘Kofi will not come and beg’ | |

The auxiliary verbs can occur in singular imperative expressions. As will be shown below (section 3.5), three of them, the deictics and the negative verb, take the suffix appropriate to class 1 monosyllables, not the high tone which is of class 2.

It is therefore concluded that the auxiliary verbs constitute a third tone class, of tonally unspecified monosyllables that nevertheless take both a prefix and high stem tone in the negative, and the suffix of vowel copy with high tone in the [+ABSOLUTE] form (like Class 1). This suffix also gives the stem a low tone specification. None of the relevant features apply to the fourth verb, *ke*, which has no specified tone but does not enter the aspect-mood paradigm.

3.2 The Deixis Markers *ba*, *ya*

The deictic verbs are homophonous with the independent stems *ba* ‘come’ (class 2) and *yà* ‘go’ (class 1), except that the tone of both is unspecified. They give the verb word spatial and also temporal deixis (especially in [-REALIS] forms). The itive *ya* specifies event movement away from the deictic centre, which is associated with the spatial and temporal location of the speaking situation, and the ventive specifies such movement towards the deictic centre. DEIXIS is therefore a feature with two possible values: [itive] and [ventive]. In a general way they fit the description of what Osam (2001 and elsewhere in this volume) calls “motional” verbs in Akan, but since the movement involved is not necessarily physical, I shall not use that term.

When deixis of this kind is marked, the verb must also be marked for a (complex) feature of the aspect-modality paradigm. The perfect marker (underlined below) is prefixed to the deictic verb:

- (46) Perfect: *Kofi é-yà-nà* ‘Kofi has gone and seen (it)’

but a future marker is prefixed to the head verb, as is the [-PROGRESSIVE] marker that occurs when the verb is habitual or aorist. The habitual marker is suffixed to the head.

- (47) Aorist: *Kofi yà-nà* ‘Kofi went and saw’
 Kofi bà-bí ‘Kofi came and asked’
 (*ba-` -bí*)
 Habitual: *Kofi yà-nà-à* ‘Kofi goes and sees’
 Kofi bà-bí-!ɔ ‘Kofi comes and asks’
 (*ba-` -bí-ɔ*)
 Future: *Kofi yàá-!ná* ‘Kofi would/will go see’
 (*ya-`´-nà*)

Use of a deictic auxiliary verb, especially the ventive, with the future produces predominantly temporal deixis, so that an English expression like “Kofi will see” is invariably translated in this way, as *Kofi bàá!ná* and most speakers with any knowledge of English grammar regard this form as the “future tense”.

A deictic verb never precedes or is preceded by the progressive prefix. If progressive meaning with deixis is to be expressed a periphrastic construction

(48) Progressive: *Kofi m̀i-yà ní é-yá-!ná*
 Kofi PROG-go COMP 3SG.SUBJV-IT.SUBJV-see
 ‘Kofi is going to see’

(49) Neg. Perfect, head verb class 1:
Kofi é-yá-!ná-kò
 Kofi NEG-IT.NEG-see-PERF
 ‘Kofi has not gone and seen’

If deixis is to be expressed in a singular imperative, the deictic verb takes the [+ABSOLUTE] suffix, and the semantic head verb is in the subjunctive [-ABSOLUTE -STRONG].

(50) Imperative: *yà-á-kwê*
IT-IMP (SUBJV-)look
'go look!'
bà-á-!nú
VENT-IMP (SUBJV-) drink
'come drink!'

(51) Subjunctive: *Kofi á-yá-!ná*
 Kofi SUBJ-IT.SUBJV-see
 ‘Kofi should go see (it)’

- (54) Deictic Negative: *Kofi á-ká-yà-nà* *lɛ*
 Kofi SUBJV-ka.SUBJV-IT.AOR-see 3SG
 ‘Kofi should not see him/her’
nyé-ká-yà-bí-à *lɛ*
 2PL.SUB-ka.SUB-IT.AOR-ask-IMP 3SG
 ‘Don’t (pl.) go ask him/her!’

3.4 The Transitive Verb

The principal reason for treating *kɛ* as a verb is syntactic: it always shares the subject of the head verb (as do the other dependent verbs), and it takes an object. The object of *kɛ* can be instrumental or thematic, depending mainly on the head verb, but never a goal. In a ditransitive expression with or without *kɛ* the head verb most often takes a locative (direct) object, as in the following sentences:

- (55) Ditransitive without *kɛ*:

nuu lɛ ɲmɛ mi gbɛ
 man DEF set 1SG road
 ‘The man gave me permission’

Ditransitive with *kɛ*:

nuu lɛ kɛ tso lɛ ɲmɛ shwiili nɔ
 man DEF move wood DEF set cart’s top
 ‘The man put the stick on the cart’

This item has been treated in the grammaticization literature both as a preposition (Lord 1993: 53) and as an accusative case marker (Lord 1993: 120; Hopper and Traugott 1993: 90).⁸ The label “accusative case marker” begs the category question, since it is a possible function of both verbs and prepositions. Analysis as a preposition is syntactically distinctly odd, since adverbial phrases, which a preposition *kɛ* plus object would presumably constitute, in Ga occur in unmarked position after the VP, or topicalized before the subject, but never between subject and verb. There is in fact a true preposition *kɛ* that takes an instrumental or comitative (never thematic) object and occurs adverbially. This construction is quite different from that in which *kɛ* is part of the verb. They are compared in Table 4.

Table 4: Objects of *ke*

<u>Instrument Object</u>	<u>Theme Object</u>
'I cut the bread with a knife'	'I brought the bread'
Auxiliary Verb:	
<i>mĩ-kè kakla fô brodo</i>	<i>mĩ-kè brodo bà</i>
Preposition:	
<i>mĩ-fô brodo kekakla</i>	<i>*mĩ-bà ke brodo</i>

A further syntactic reason for regarding pre-verb as a verb has to do with pronominalization. If the object referent of any Ga verb is non-human and pronominal, it is not usually expressed. This is also true of objects of pre-head, but not prepositional or post-head, *ke*. If the object is expressed it will appear immediately following *ke*, but if it is not, incorporates the prefix to the following verb, exactly like a pronoun or one of the other auxiliary verbs. This is also true when, in a serial construction, the semantic object of *ke* is not an NP but the event expressed by the preceding VP (see Dakubu 2004).

The item is usually glossed 'take', although there is no particular source for this gloss in the language. The gloss 'move' is preferable, if only to distinguish it from serial constructions with the independent verb *ɣɔ* 'take'. There is no homophonous independent verb, but it is likely that there is an etymological connection with *kẽ* 'move something by the exertion of unaided physical effort'. The tone seems to be unspecified in pre-verb position, but the homophonous preposition has a specified low tone.

As far as the grammatical paradigm is concerned, *ke* is completely unmarked.⁹ The head verb can carry any features except [+ABSOLUTE]. If the head verb is aorist or habitual, the low tone of its [-PROGRESSIVE] prefix ensures that the tone of *ke* is low.

- (56) Perfect: *Kofi ké-bà*
 Kofi move.PERF-come
 'Kofi has brought (it)'
 (Compare *Kofi kè adeka é-bà* 'Kofi has brought a box')
- Progressive: *Kofi kè-mĩ-bà* 'Kofi is bringing (it)'
 Aorist: *Kofi kè-bà* 'Kofi brought (it)'
 Subjunctive: *Kofi ké-!bá* 'Kofi is to bring (it)'
 Kofi move.SUBJV-come
 (Compare *Kofi kè adeka á!bá* 'Kofi is to bring a box')
- Neg. Imperfective: *Kofi kè-bá-áá* 'Kofi didn't/doesn't bring (it)'

However *ke* 'move', like the plural pronouns, does not incorporate the future prefix.

- (57) Future: *è-kè àá-!bá* 's/he might bring (it)'

Unlike the other auxiliary verbs, *ke* 'move' has no [+ABSOLUTE] form. A singular imperative that includes it is simply a subjunctive form with no expressed subject.

- (58) Singular Imperative: *ké-!bá* 'bring (it)!'
 move.SUBJV-come
 (Compare *kè adeka á!ba* 'bring a box!')

3.5 Auxiliary Verb Sequences

Any combination of auxiliary verbs can occur, except that there can be only one deictic in a word. They always occur in the same order, and all restrictions indicated in the preceding sections apply, so that any verb that includes the negative verb *ka* will be [-VOLITIONAL].

It may sometimes appear as though the ventive verb appears twice, or followed by the itive, but such expressions are in fact two-clause constructions in which a head verb *ba* 'come' or *tee* 'go' is followed by a purpose clause that includes a deictic, to emphasize that deixis is spatial.¹⁰ In the sentences in (59) the first verb in each is aorist, but the second, which includes a deictic and has no expressed subject, is subjunctive. (In general, the verbs *tee* and *ya* may be considered syntactic alloforms. *Tee* occurs as an independent verb in the positive perfect and aorist, and *ya* in every other form. There are exceptions to this rule, but the problem is beyond the scope of this paper.)

- (59) a. *amè-bà* *á-bá-nà* *mi*
 3PL.AOR-come SUB-VEN.SUB-see 1SG
 'They come/came to see me, will see me'
 b. *amè-tèè* *á-yá-nà* *mi*
 3PL.AOR-go SUB-IT.SUB-see 1SG
 'They go/went to see me'

Sentence (60) displays a coordinate structure, with the same kind of recapitulation and both verbs perfect:

- (60) *Kofi é-tèè (nì) é-yà-yè nii*
 Kofi PERF-go (COMP) PERF-IT.AOR-eat things
 'Kofi has gone and eaten'

However it is symptomatic of the increasing grammaticization of the ventive that this type of construction with *ba* as the first head verb can be interpreted as a particularly definite future, rather than specifically spatial, so that

the first sentence above is likely to be interpreted as ‘you (came and) will see me’, and either of the two deictic verbs may occur in the purpose clause following *ba*.

- (61) ò-kè-bà á-yá-hǎ lɛ
 2S-move.AOR-come SUB-IT.SUBJV-give 3SG
 ‘You brought it (and so) will go give it to him’

If there are two auxiliary verbs, then if the one closest to the verb carries a prefix of its own, the prefix will be incorporated into the initial verb, just as it is when a pronoun prefix precedes. Thus in (62) the perfect prefix to the deictic verb *ya* is realized by the high tone of *kɛ* and the low tone of *ya*. Since *kɛ* itself is unmarked, the preceding syllables have default low tone.

- (62) *amè-kɛ- yà-hǎ lɛ*
 3PL-move. PERF-IT.AOR-give 3SG
 ‘They have taken (it) to him’

The negative prefix is similarly absorbed. In the following examples, the high tone of *kɛ* is the prefix, and the high tone on *ya* is the rest of the negation marker. (The head verb *hǎ* is a class 2 verb with specified high tone.)

- (63) a. *Kofi kɛ-yá-hǎ-ǎ lɛ*
 Kofi move.NEG-IT.NEG-go-IMPF 3SG
 ‘Kofi didn’t take and give (it) to him’
 b. *wɔ̃-kɛ-bá-hǎ-ɛ̃ lɛ*
 1PL-move.NEG-VEN.NEG-give-FUT 3SG
 ‘we will not come give (it) to him’

The other situation in which this incorporation occurs is in the [-VOLITIONAL] forms. However, if two or more auxiliary verbs are present, the head verb is not marked as subjunctive. Since *kɛ* is unmarked, this means that only the second and third of a possible three dependent verbs are marked as [-VOLITIONAL], and the head is a default aorist, carrying only the [-PROGRESSIVE] marker. Thus in the following sentences, *ka* and *ya* are each preceded by a subjunctive marker, but the head verb (*nǎ* ‘see’, *bí* ‘ask’) is in the aorist.

- (64) a. *yoo lɛ á-ká-yà-nǎ lɛ*
 woman DEF SUBJV-NEG.SUB-IT.AOR-see 3SG
 ‘The woman should not go see him’
 b. *nyé-ká-yà-bí-à lɛ*
 2PL.SUB-NEG.SUB-IT.AOR-ask-IMPER 3SG
 ‘Don’t (pl.) go ask him!’

Similarly, when all three auxiliary verbs are present, *kɛ* and the negative verb have high tone representing the subjunctive marker for the following verb, but the deictic verb does not, because the head verb is not marked as subjunctive. This is true whether or not there is an expressed subject.

- (65) a. *Kofi kɛ-ká-yà-hǎ́ lɛ*
 Kofi move.SUB-NEG.SUB-IT.AOR-give 3SG
 ‘Kofi should not take and give (it) to him/her’
 b. *kɛ-ká-bà-hǎ́ lɛ*
 move.SUB-NEG.SUB-VEN.AOR-give 3SG
 ‘Don’t come give (it) to him/her!’

An alternative to the above has the negative verb marked as [+ABSOLUTE]. The verb immediately following the negative, whether the head or a deictic, is [-VOLITIONAL], as in the examples above, and if present has default low tone.

- (66) a. *kà-á-yà-ba nii*
 NEG-IMPER.SUB-IT.AOR-beg things
 ‘don’t go beg!’
 b. *kɛ-kà-á-bà-hǎ́ lɛ*
 move-NEG-IMPER.SUB-give 3SG
 ‘don’t bring it to him!’

This is in fact the general rule for serial constructions that are also negative imperatives. If a series begins with the [+ABSOLUTE] negative verb followed by two lexical head verbs, the first is [-VOLITIONAL -ABSOLUTE -STRONG] (i.e., subjunctive) and the last verb is aorist, which here seems tantamount to unmarked, hence the low tone on the pronoun *o-* in (67a), and the low tones on the pre-verb in the second and third verbs of (67c).¹¹

(67) Negative Imperative Serial Constructions:

- a. *kà-á (á-)hé lɛ ò-yè*
 NEG-IMP. SUBJV-take 3SG 2SG.AOR-eat
 ‘Don’t believe him!’
 b. *hé-mǎ́ lɛ ó-yé*
 take-IMP 3SG 2SG.SUBJV-eat
 ‘Believe him!’
 c. *kà-á (á-)jò foi kè-jè shia*
 NEG-IMP.SUBJV-run speed move.AOR-leave house
kè-tèè ɲmɔ lɛ mli
 move.AOR-go farm DEF in
 ‘Don’t run from the house to the farm!’

It has been noticed (section 1.2.1, and note 4) that in ordinary serial constructions, the future prefix is followed by a subjunctive prefix on the following, “agreeing” verb. The same rule applies within the verb: in the following sentence the deictic verb has the future prefix, but the head verb has the subjunctive prefix, expressed by the high tone on the deictic *yá*.

Table 5: The Maximally Expanded Verb

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sub- ject	<u>Tran- sitive</u>	Mo- dality	Nega- tion	Mo- dality	Mo- dality	<u>Deictic</u>	Modality	<u>Independent</u>	Modality
PN		SUBJV		SG.IMP	SUBJV	(VENT)	(FUT)		SG.IMP
						(IT)	(SUBJV)		PL.IMP
					Aspect		Aspect		Aspect
					(PERF)		(PERF)		(HAB)
					(AOR)		(AOR)		(NEG.PERF)
							(PROG)		(NEG.IMP)
									(NEG.FUT)
							Negation		

- (68) *è-kè* *àá-yá-há* *ame*
 s/he-move FUT-IT.SUBJV-give3PL
 ‘s/he will go give (it) to them’

The summary schema of Table 5 shows the maximally expanded Ga verb, with the grammatical feature paths that potentially apply at each point within it. Only one stem or grammatical feature complex is permitted at each position. The verb stem positions (2, 4, 7, 9) are underlined. Positions 6, 8 and 10 are host to two mutually exclusive feature systems, namely Modality and Aspect. The actual features or feature combinations that are potentially manifested at each position are given in brackets.

3.6 Remarks

3.6.1 Auxiliary Verbs and Nominalization

The four auxiliary verbs are clearly in some sense grammaticalized, in the diachronic sense but also in the synchronic sense, in that they have a number of the characteristics of the independent verb but not all of them. They do not be-

have identically, and even the two deictics, which belong to one syntactic class, show grammatical and semantic variation. Nominalization patterns indicate further variation, and strengthen the case for considering the deictic expressions the least grammaticalized.

In Ga, a VP is nominalized by preposing the object (if any) to the verb, which takes a gerundive suffix. This suffix consists of a copy of the stem vowel if the stem is a non-high monosyllable, or *m̃* (underspecified non-high tone) otherwise (except for a few irregular forms). Thus an expression like *há shika* ‘give money’ is nominalized as *shika há!m̃* ‘giving money’. When a two-verb serial construction is nominalized, the verbs with their preceding objects are joined by the NP linker *kɛ* which is not to be confused with the pre-verb. The first of the following sentences involves an idiomatic serialization, in which only the first verb has an object. In the nominalized version that follows, this object precedes its nominalized head verb. Sentence (69c) is a non-idiomatic benefactive serialization, in which each verb has its own object. In the nominalization (69d) each object precedes its nominalized head.

- (69) a. *am̃-hé* *lɛ* *am̃-yɛ*
 3PL.AOR-get 3SG 3PL.AOR-eat
 ‘They believed him’
- b. *am̃-bɔ̃* *lɛ* *hé-m̃ kɛ* *yɛ-lí*
 they.AOR-begin 3SG take-NOM CONJ eat-NOM
 ‘They began to believe him’
- c. *ɛ-shí* *fufui* *ɛ-há* *mi*
 3SG.AOR-pound fufu 3SG.AOR-give 1SG
 ‘S/he made fufu for me’
- d. *ɛ-bɔ̃* *fufui* *shí-m̃* *kɛ* *mi* *há-m̃*
 3SG.AOR-begin fufu pound-NOM CONJ 1SG give-NOM
 ‘S/he began to make fufu for me’

A verb word that includes the negative verb *ka* cannot be nominalized at all. A verb word including a deictic can be nominalized, but only by nominalizing the deictic and the head individually, just as in the nominalization of a serial construction. Thus a verb with a deictic, as in (70), is nominalized to serve as a complement of the verb meaning ‘begin’ in (71), in a manner entirely comparable to serial constructions:

- (70) *am̃-yà-sɛ̀lɛ̀* ‘they went to swim/went and swam’,
- (71) *am̃-bɔ̃* *yà-à* *kɛ* *sɛ̀lɛ̀-m̃*
 3PL.AOR-begin go-NOM CONJ swim-NOM
 ‘They began going to swim’

Although *kε* takes no gerundive suffix, its serial nominalization is possible after a fashion. In the sentences of (72), *kε* is used with instrumental and comitative objects, and the head also has an object. When nominalized, each object precedes its own head, as demonstrated in (72b, d) below. However, not only does *kε* not take the suffix, the NP linker does not appear, which might be attributable to the fact that if it did, “*kε*” would appear twice in succession. As it is, the first of the two nominalizations illustrated below, (72b), is considered somewhat awkward, presumably because of the possible ambiguity of *kε*.

(72) Instrumental:

- a. *e-kε kakla lε fō brodo*
 3SG-move knife DEF cut bread
 ‘S/he cut the bread with a knife’
- b. *?e-bɔi kakla lε kε brodo fō-o*
 3SG-begin knife DEF move bread cut-NOM
 ‘S/he began cutting the bread with a knife’

Comitative:

- c. *mi-kε lε wie sane lε he*
 1SG-move 3SG speak matter DEF LOC
 ‘I discussed the matter with him/her’
- d. *mi-ka lε kε sane lε he wie-mɔ̃*
 1SG-try 3SG move matter DEF LOC speak-NOM
 ‘I tried discussing the matter with him/her’

Although this structure is thus not identical with the usual nominalized serial construction, the fact that its object precedes it in this instance is a further argument for the fundamental syntactic verb-ness of pre-verb *kε*.

3.6.2 Headedness in Verbs

In an expression with no auxiliary verb, the head of the morphological construction is of course the lexical stem. When the word includes auxiliaries, the lexical stem continues to be the semantic head, but its status as the morpho-syntactic head is less obvious, because it is not invariably the verb most closely associated with the grammatical head. That is, in the Perfect and in the [-VOLITIONAL] forms, the deictic and the negative verb compete for head status with the lexical stem. The nominalization behaviour discussed in section 3.6.1 is further evidence of this for the deictic, as it confirms that deictic use can indeed be viewed as a type of serial construction. In the negative direct imperative, not only is the grammatical head (the [+ABSOLUTE] marker) as-

sociated with the negative auxiliary, it is marked by a suffix, -`á, the only instance of a suffix on a pre-verb (see example set 66).

It was noted that in [-VOLITIONAL] verbs with both a negative and a deictic, the auxiliary dependent verbs are marked, but the head is in the aorist form (examples 64, 65). In this case, the aorist can hardly be regarded as semantically [+REALIS]. It has also been observed that in all [+PERFECT] verbs extended by an auxiliary, either the head or an auxiliary verb carries the marker and the other is aorist (46, 60). It seems unwarranted to consider the aorist verb in these cases as “agreeing” with the other(s). Rather, the aorist marker in these verbs seems not to carry any grammatical semantic features at all, that is, it is simply a default form.

It is relevant that the Ga verb system seems to have been extremely innovative. For example, the positive future marker (*àá*) and the negative future (*-ŋ*) are both innovations specific to Ga, and they also represent disjunctions in the Ga system; the positive because it is the only [-REALIS] form that occurs in declaratives, and the negative because not only does it occur in declaratives, it never shows agreement relations with other irrealis forms. As indicated by Ameka and Dakubu elsewhere in this volume, the perfect, progressive and future forms are not shared with Ga’s only close relative Dangme, and the expression of the non-volitionals is significantly different. In the absence of the Ga contrast between perfect and aorist, in Dangme the perfective form of the verb is completely unmarked morphologically, without a prefix (or suffix) of any kind, and semantically unmarked as well. It is therefore likely that the occurrence of the Ga aorist in non-realis contexts dates from before the development of the Ga morpho-semantic feature [PERFECT].

3.6.3 Phonology

Although the simplification gained by recognizing that some verb stem syllables have underspecified non-high tone, or even no lexically specified tone is considerable, it should be noted that a few problems remain. The dependent verbs behave like normal unspecified syllables in positive realis forms, but their behaviour in negatives and imperatives is such that they must constitute a third tone class. *Kɛ* in particular is a problem, because it tends to have low tone even when an underspecified syllable normally would not. In the sentences of (73) it occurs between two high tones: the final lexical tone of the subject and the high tone of negation on the verb stem in the first sentence, and the lexically specified final high tone of its subject and initial high tone of its object in the second.

- (73) *Kofí kè-bá-áá* ‘Kofi did/does not bring, is not bringing (it)’
 Kofí kè shító !bá ‘Kofi brought the pepper’

On the other hand, the absence of downstep that might result from a displaced specified low on *kɛ* in a sentence like (74), where it has the high tone of the subjunctive prefix to *ka*, requires that it be treated as unspecified.

- (74) *Kòfí kéká!bá* ‘Kofi should not bring (it)’
 **Kòfí !kéká!bá*

There is also a problem with class 1 monosyllabic verb stems, those with a lexically specified low tone. The division into tone classes outlined in section 2.3.1 would lead us to expect that when such a verb has a high tone prefix, as in the subjunctive, and occurs at the end of an utterance or before a lexical high tone, then if it has a lexically specified low tone it would have low tone, but if it is underspecified it would get downstepped high. However this is not the case: both are pronounced at the downstepped high level.

- (75) Underspecified: *Esa ni Kofi á-!bá shí!á* ‘Kofi ought to come home’
 Specified Low: *Esa ni Kofi á-!bá ní!í* ‘Kofi ought to beg’
 **Esa ni Kofi á-bà ní!í*

Since the context for this neutralization is provided only by the [-REALIS] prefixes, perhaps this feature includes the removal of low tone specification.

There are thus problems with the behaviour of non-high tones whose solution is beyond the scope of this paper. They are undoubtedly related to the process of elimination of the contrast between Proto-Ga-Dangme mid and low tones. In grammatical contexts in which there is no trace of the contrast, as in the subjunctive above, the merger is complete. The tone classes are a trace of the contrast that remains in the negative aspects and in the absolute imperative.

4 Conclusion

As stated at the beginning of this paper, a major aim has been to arrive at a theory of the Ga verb word. The theory achieved is fundamentally phonological, since it depends on a pattern of contractions according to which grammatical prefixes lose their segments, and grammatical suffixes tend to assimilate features of the verb-stem-final vowel. That is, the verb word in Ga is bounded on both the left and the right by silence or by a phrase (VP, NP, DP), for phrases are not affected by these processes. Internally, it consists of a verb stem marked by a set of AMP affixes (described in section 2) preceded by one or more of a subject prefix and three auxiliaries, which to varying degrees may be marked by their own set of AMP affixes (see section 3.5, Table 5). The left-most possible morpheme in the verb word is a subject pronoun, because it takes the tone

of a grammatical prefix, but no part of an NP subject is affected in this way. Seeming irregularities in tone have thus been crucial.

In particular, tone variations have been crucial to the definition of the auxiliary particles (*ke*, *ka*, *ba*, *ya*) as grammaticized verb stems. These items, like the subject pronouns, assimilate the tone of a prefix to the next particle or verb stem. However there are a few fuzzy areas, all involving one or more of the plural pronoun prefixes, the future prefix, or *ke* (see sections 1.3.1, 3.5), where a prefix sometimes keeps its segments. Like the status of the future itself, this is a true fuzzy area, a part of the grammar where innovation has occurred and grammaticization is either incomplete or changing.

There is reason to think that tone variation resulting from loss of segments occurs in other languages that have serial verb constructions, and that these languages therefore may have pre-verb particles or affixes derived from verbs that bear traces of their former status. That is, the tones of pre-verb particles may be evidence of old verb status. In Kasem, a Central Gur (Grusi) language, for example, Awedoba (1989) has shown that tone variation in pre-verb particles can be attributed to old subject pronouns. At the strictly synchronic level, recognition of a kind of verb stem status for such elements in Ga, including pre-verb *ke* allows us to find system and symmetry in an otherwise incoherent set of forms.

Certainly the description of Ga verbs presented here is more comprehensive than any previously presented. It is also inherently simpler. Feature decomposition has allowed an elucidation of the difference between the positive and negative aspect systems, showing that far from being an arbitrary loss of contrast, the three positive forms that correspond to a single negative, the Imperfective, share a single feature, [-PERFECT], and that throughout the system negation operates at a very specific level of the feature tree, namely at the first set of nodes below [\pm REALIS]. It similarly allows us to define the occurrence of the subjunctive in the non-initial verbs of all SVCs that begin in a [-REALIS] verb in a simple and semantically satisfying way as INFL agreement at that level. The Janus face of the positive and negative futures, then, constitutes another genuine fuzzy area of the verb grammar: in the positive forms the future aligns with the [-REALIS] forms, but in the negative with the [+REALIS]. This is a disjunction at the level of the differentiation of [\pm VOLITIONAL], an area where there has clearly been innovation.

The Ga system that at first glance seemed to be morphologically simple, but semantically assymetrical and phonologically especially tonally irregular, has turned out to be syntactically and semantically fairly elaborate, but remarkably symmetrical. This insight was only achieved by taking account of all tonal variations, and by picking forms apart both grammatically and semantically. I submit that in the long run this is the way to reach the kind of understanding of

basic structure that will allow comparison of languages in a really interesting way, but a demonstration of this thesis must await further research.

Endnotes

¹ See Bybee (1998) for a useful critical exposition. I differ in my view of the necessary implications of this approach.

² Tones are marked as follows: high with an acute accent *á*, low with a grave accent *à*, and ! before the syllable to indicate lowering of high tone level. The transcription *é`* - means that a low tone, or the tonal effect of a low tone (ie. downstep, immediately follows the syllable *e*. The letter “v” with a tone mark means a copy of the preceding vowel. In most examples tone is marked on the verb word only. For further details see note 6.

³ The terms perfect, progressive, habitual and future have been used by most writers on Ga, for the same forms. There has been disagreement on what to call the other two. Dakubu (1970) used “imperfect” and “intensive” for what are here called respectively the aorist and the subjunctive. Okunor (1968) called these forms the “aorist” and “consecutive”, while Wilkie (1930) called them respectively “past” and (in different contexts) “indirect imperative” and “consecutive”. Zimmermann (1858) used “aorist” and “potential mood”. The term “aorist” is not entirely satisfactory as a name for the Ga form, mainly because past tense is not central to its interpretation, more like a default. A possible alternative is “non-perfect”, provided it is understood that it is not imperfective either.

⁴ I follow Lyons (1995: 179) in considering that “...mood is best defined as that category which results... from the grammaticalization of subjective modality and other kinds of expressive meaning...” In the Ga paradigm the salient subjective modality has to do with whether or not the agency of the event is viewed as being under some kind of compulsion or external conditioning.

⁵ I owe this insight, that Ga non-high tones are either marked Low or are underlyingly neither High nor Low, to Wentum (1996), which develops the approach in connection with an analysis of the Ga nominal. She does not investigate the phenomena discussed here.

⁶ A suitable method of representation of tone contrasts for this paper presents a problem. For avoidance of ambiguity, surface tones (not underlying or lexically specified tones) in verbs will be indicated, and no syllables in the verb left unmarked. Therefore all low syllables, whether lexically specified L or not, will be given the grave accent, and all high syllables will have the acute. Syllables that are lexically underspecified thus have either the acute accent preceded by !, indicating that they are at the downstepped H level of a following H, or the grave accent. Ga has a few words with an unalterable downstepped H, but none are included in this paper, so that a syllable with an acute accent immediately preceded by an exclamation point is always lexically underspecified. In sentences, only the verb will be tone-marked, and occasionally a high tone preceding the verb where this is relevant to the realization of the verb. For more detail on the Ga (and Dangme) tone systems see Dakubu (1986; 2002).

⁷ The negative imperfective suffix consists of two vowels that copy the stem-final vowel. The first vowel has high tone. The final vowel has high-low falling tone but occurs only in utterance-final position, see section 1.3.2 above.

⁸ The discussion in Hopper and Traugott (1993), based on Lord (1982), suffers from inadequate data and a misunderstanding of the function of *shí*. However it is probably true that the nature of the transitivity introduced by *ke* depends largely on the head verb.

⁹ The cognate item in Dangme can occur in the Subjunctive, see Ameka and Dakubu in this volume, example (25a).

¹⁰ I am indebted to E.N.A. Adjei for useful discussions of this topic. We disagree on the analysis, and he is in no way responsible for any problems with mine.

¹¹ A head immediately following the imperative negative cannot be considered aorist for phonological reasons, as an initial high tone would then have to be down-stepped. It must be either subjunctive or completely unmarked. The first solution has been chosen as according better with serialization patterns in the language generally. See further the discussion below.

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Aspect and modality in Ewe: a survey

Felix K. Ameka

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the expression of aspect and modality in Ewe, a Gbe variety spoken in Ghana and Togo as far as and just across the Togo-Benin border. I strive to augment the existing descriptions of aspect and modality in Ewe and to present new analyses for some old phenomena. A fresh and systematic analysis of markers in the verbal cluster is presented (section 2). A striking relationship between the subjunctive, the third person imperative marker and a consecutive clause marker as manifest in Ewe is examined leading to new hypotheses about their heterosemic relations to the hypothetical conditional introducer and the marker of apodosis in counterfactual conditionals. Some of the Ewe empirical facts that bear on current concerns in linguistic theorising such as the relationship between the habitual and the progressive and whether imperatives in West African languages have overt subjects are addressed. An incipient grammaticalization of a proximal aspectual category is also documented. This chapter together with Essegbey's (this volume) on the potential, and the analysis of the imperfective aspect constructions in Ewe in the chapter by Ameka and Dakubu (this volume) constitutes a complete description of aspect and modality in Ewe.

1 The non-prominence of tense in Ewe

In Ewe, like in many other Kwa languages of West Africa, there is no overt marking of a grammatical category tense in the clause. The point in time at which a particular situation occurred is inferred from other material in the linguistic context. For example, from temporal nominals and adverbials, e.g., *tsá* 'formerly', interpreted as having (remote) past time reference, or *fiíá* 'now', interpreted as having present time reference. However, some spatial verbs could be interpreted as having a lexicalised time component. A locative verb suppletive set *le~no* 'be.at' manifests a present/non-present contrast as illustrated below:

- (1) a. *É-le* *aǵě*
3SG-be.at:PRES home
'S/he is at home'

- b. *É-nɔ* *aǣ*
 3SG-be.at:NPRES home
 ‘S/he was at home’

Similarly, a pair of motion verbs *yi* ‘go’ and *de* ‘reach’ have developed conventional interpretations where the former has a non-past orientation while the latter has a past interpretation. Compare the following:

- (2) a. *É-yi* *aǣ*
 3SG-go home
 ‘S/he has gone home’
 b. *É-de* *aǣ*
 3SG-reach home
 ‘S/he has been home’ (i.e. S/he went and is no longer there)

In addition, the Potential marker can be interpreted as ‘future’ in context (see Essegbey this volume). Thus Ewe is not a tense-prominent language.

2 **Aspect and modality in the verb cluster**

Notions pertaining to aspect, mood and modality are expressed using various structures in Ewe. In the verb cluster, they are expressed by a verb suffix and a series of preverbal markers. In examples (3a, b) the verbs are marked by the habitual suffix. The linear order of the elements in a verb cluster is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Ewe verb complex

Preverb markers						Verb	
Modal 1	Aspect	Directional 1	Modal 2	Modal 3	Directional 2	Verb root	Aspect Suffix
Potential (l)a	Repetitive ga	Itive hé	Certainty nyá	Immediate gbé	Ventive vá		Aorist Ø
Subjunctive ná-		Altrilocal da	Voice nyá	Bother xa			Habitual -(n)a
Etc.							

There are various co-occurrence restrictions among the verb markers. The forms in column 1, the irrealis markers, are mutually exclusive with each other and also with the Habitual marker in the final column. A value of the realis/irrealis domain has to be expressed in each verbal clause in Ewe. As such these markers belong to the obligatory categories in the verb cluster and are

discussed in section 2.1. Several of the preverb markers have developed from verbs and have a heterosemic relationship with the verbs. Anyone familiar with earlier descriptions of Ewe would immediately realise that the number of slots proposed here for the verb markers is different. One major difference is that the slot immediately preceding the verb word in previous works labelled the *Augment* by Ansre (1966) and later called *Modal* by Duthie (e.g. 1988, 1996) and others (e.g. Ameka 1991, Essegbey 1999, Ansre 2000:41) has been subdivided into four slots. This is meant to reflect not only the possible co-occurrence and sequencing of these forms, but also the heterogeneity within the Augment forms in terms of the categorial notions they encode.

Negation is a clausal operator with bipartite marking: *mé=* occurs just before the verb cluster and *o* occurs in the penultimate position in the clause before any clause final utterance particles (example 3b) but after any adverbials (example 3a). E.g.:

- (3) a. *atsú-fě mé-nyé-á dzidzɔ tefě dǎá o*
 husband-place NEG-COP-HAB happiness space always NEG
 ‘Wifehood is not always full of happiness’ (Fiawoo 1990 [1408])
- b. *nyatefě lá mé-tsɔ́-ná o hee*
 truth DEF NEG-perish-HAB NEG UFP
 ‘The truth never perishes, I advise you’ (Fiawoo 1990 [1509])

The *mé=* part could be seen as a proclitic on the verb cluster and marking, where available, the beginning of the verb cluster, while the *o* is an independent particle.

2.1 *Obligatory categories in the verb cluster*

2.1.1 *The Habitual*

A morphological defining feature of verbs in Ewe is that they can take a habitual suffix *-na~a*. The Habitual suffix is a toneless morpheme which gets its tone value from the preceding syllable, that is, the last syllable of the verb stem. A prescriptive rule about the alternation between *-na* and *-a* is that the full form *-na* occurs if there is no complement following the verb and *-a* is used if there is a complement, as illustrated from the writing of one of the proponents of the prescriptive rule, Obianim (1990 [2153]):

- (4) *É-ḡ-ná ᵑdi yi-a agble*
 3SG-rise-HAB morning go-HAB farm
 ‘He gets up in the morning and goes to the farm’

Examples (3a, b) show that the Habitual can be used for generic statements and (4) shows that it also signals customary regular occurrences. The habitual

implies a potential for the state of affairs to occur it does not therefore co-occur with the irrealis markers.

The habitual can have a motion-in-progress reading when it is used with two motion verbs: *yi* ‘go’ and *gbɔ* ‘come back’. There is cross-linguistically an affinity between the progressive and the habitual which is evidenced in the interpretation of the habitual forms of these two verbs. However, all the cases that have been noted in the literature are situations in which the progressive marker in a language receives a habitual interpretation. This has been explained or accounted for in terms of the two categories being instances of imperfective aspect (e.g. Comrie 1976, Bertinetto et al. 2000).

- (5) a. *Nye kplé da-nye yé yi-na núgbé éye*
 1SG LINK mother-1SG aFOC go-HAB journey and
míe-dze adzodalá vǔǔqí etǔ sia-wó sí
 1PL-contact robber evil three PROX-PL HAND
me
 containing.region
 ‘My mother and I were going on a journey and we fell into the
 hands of these three evil robbers.’ (Obianinm 1990[650])
- b. *Dadá gbɔ-na ɖá*
 Mother come.back-HAB in.the.distance
 ‘Mother is on the way coming back (do not cry).’ (A children’s
 rhyme)

The Ewe situation noted is one in which the interaction between a set of lexical items and the habitual yields ‘motion in progress now’ interpretation. Some analysts would rule out such an interpretation of the habitual since “[I]t does not imply that an instance of the event is taking place ‘now’” (Payne 1997:241). It remains to be seen whether such situations occur in other languages as well.

The behaviour of the habitual marker in Ewe differs in some respects from that of the habitual marker in the Eastern Gbe varieties such as Gungbe and Fongbe (cf. Aboh 1998, 2004 Lefebvre et al 2002). First, unlike the eastern Gbe forms which are preverbal markers and have the form *nɔ*, the Ewe form is a suffix. Example (7) below, from Gungbe (Aboh 1998:61), shows the preverbal position of the habitual marker in one variety of Eastern Gbe. Second, Lefebvre et al (2002:95) report that *nɔ* ‘HAB’ in Fon does not occur with individual level or stage level stative predicates like ‘to know’. In Ewe all verbs can take the habitual including the equivalents of forms that do not co-occur with the habitual in the Eastern Gbe lects. For example,

- (6) *É-nyá-á nú ɣútɔ* (Ewe)
 3SG-know-HAB thing very
 ‘S/He is very clever’
- (7) *Kofi nɔ sa agásá* (Gun)
 Kofi HAB sell crab
 ‘Kofi habitually sells crab(s)’

2.1.2 *The irrealis markers*

The irrealis markers are incompatible with the Habitual. The Potential (see Essegbey this volume) is used to indicate the possibility of something happening. It has a non-high tone which may be realised in context as low. In some varieties it is realised as *la* and in many cases realised as *-a-*. It has been erroneously characterised as the future tense marker (e.g. Westermann 1930, Clements 1972; Duthie 1996), but it is better viewed as a modality or mood marker (cf. Ameka 1991). The Subjunctive, on the other hand, has an underlying High tone and the variants *ná* and *á*. It is used to express wishes. As such it occurs in main clauses as well as the complement clauses of desiderative verbs and in other irrealis complements. Compare the following minimal pair which shows the differences in tonal realisation between the Potential and the Subjunctive and their interaction with the 1SG subject pronoun:

- (8) a. *M-à-ɖe wò*
 1SG-POT-remove 2SG
 ‘I would marry you’ i.e. It is possible that I will marry you’
- b. *M-á-ɖe wò*
 1SG-SUBJV-remove 2SG
 ‘I should marry you’ i.e. I want to marry you’¹

In some contexts, such as after a low tone pronoun, the surface distinction between the Potential and the Subjunctive is neutralised, especially when expounded by the onsetless form *-a-*. For this reason I have sometimes glossed such forms as just Irrealis.

In sum, a Verb + Habitual structure means roughly ‘situation happens (every time)’; the Potential + Verb form means roughly ‘situation can happen’ and Subjunctive + Verb form means ‘someone wants situation to happen’.

2.1.3 *The aorist*

A verb that is not marked for the Habitual nor accompanied by one of the irrealis markers can be considered a bare verb that is in the aorist. Another way of viewing this is to say that the habitual and the irrealis are in opposition to the aorist. The aorist form indicates that the state of affairs encoded in the verb oc-

curred at a time prior to the reference time. Hence in the case of inchoative verbs the post-state is interpreted as having present time reference while dynamic and action verbs have a past time interpretation. Compare:

- (9) a. *Me-lɔ̃ wò kplé dzi*
 1SG-come.to.love 2SG COMheart
 'I love you with my heart' (A line from a popular song)
- b. *Kofi fò dɛví-á*
 NAME strike child-DEF
 'Kofi hit the child (before now)'

Welmers (1973:346-7) suggests the term 'factative' for this form of the verb. He writes:

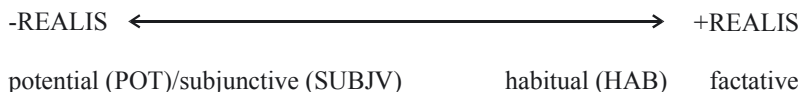
"A better label might be "factative"; the construction expresses the most obvious fact about the verb in question, which in the case of active verbs is that the action was observed or took place, but for stative verbs is that the situation obtains at present".

What is referred to as stative here can be read with respect to Ewe as inchoative since there are only these two types of verbs: action and inchoative (cf. Essegbey 1999). Thus a bare verb form just says roughly speaking 'Verb happened before now'.

To sum up so far, in Ewe a verb cluster must obligatorily be marked for the habitual, or the irrealis or it should be the non-overtly expressed factative. Each of these morphological markers can be viewed as selecting a value on the scale from irrealis to realis where the most realis is the factative followed by the habitual which is less of a realis than the factative and then the irrealis markers which are more irrealis than the habitual. The categories are mutually exclusive with each other.

What I am suggesting here is that a verbal clause in Ewe has to expound one of the grammatical categories in Fig 1. That is to say that the language forces its speakers to select a value for the realis/irrealis for every verb in a clause. This is comparable in a way to the requirement in Russian for example where every verb has to be marked for either perfective or imperfective aspect (cf. Apresjan 2000). In terms of the features of the Ga verb presented by Dakubu (this volume) it would appear that a similar choice for the realis category is operative in Ga grammar. What seems to be different is that in Ewe in terms of the linguistic marking, the realis/irrealis feature has four values as opposed to two for Ga.

Figure 1: Obligatory categories of the Ewe verb on a realis continuum



The central role of the Habitual in Ewe can speak to some of the debates in the typological literature on this category. One of the disputes concerns whether it is a tense, mood or aspect category (Bhat 1999). The aspectual character of the Habitual in Ewe, I believe, is not in doubt. However in context it has some mood and temporal or tense features. I have shown above that in combination with certain verbs it has a present progressive interpretation, which means that it encodes a meaning of the kind ‘the motion happens now’. In this usage it has affinities with both tense and aspect categories. Similarly, I have demonstrated that the habitual is mutually exclusive with the irrealis markers. I suggested that this may be because of the meaning component of possibility: something can happen. If this is true then the habitual connotes a mood feature. In any case the obligatory marking of a realis/irrealis value whose exponents are either aspectual or modal suggests that Ewe is an aspect/modality prominent language and not a tense prominent language (cf. Bhat 1999).

2.2 *The non-obligatory preverb markers*

The grammar requires the choice of the realis or irrealis markers in each verbal clause. The use of the other preverb markers shown in Table 1 depends on the choice of the speaker and the meaning they want to convey. The forms, functions and meanings of these preverb markers are outlined below.

2.2.1 *The repetitive*

The Repetitive marker is *ga*. It can co-occur with any of the other elements in the verbal cluster. It is used to indicate the repetition or iteration of a state of affairs or the restitution of a state of affairs to its former state (cf. 10b). It can thus be interpreted as ‘again’. The repetitive sense of the *ga* morpheme may be reinforced by an adverbial intensifier *áké* which may be optionally added to a sentence in which it occurs, e.g.:

- (10) a. *Me-ga-vá yi áké*
 1SG-REP-come go again
 'I have passed again'
- b. *ékemá súbólá-wó ga-kó-ne yi-a nú.du.xɔ.me*
 then servant-PL REP-carry-HAB:3SG go-HAB dining-room
 'Then the servants carry him back to the dining room' (Obianim 1990 [81])

The repetitive can also be interpreted as a persistive, in which case it translates as 'still' in English. The persistive interpretation could also be reinforced by the intensifier *ko* 'just, only' or its triplicated counterpart *kokooko* 'just, only'. The persistive reading derives from the interaction of the repetitive marker and a factative verb that has present interpretation. Consider the following example:

- (11) *égbe lá, é-fě ykó ga-li kokooko*
 today TP 3SG-POSS name REP-be.at:3SG TRIP:just
 'Today, his name still exists' (Obianim 1990 [51])

When it co-occurs with the negative, it translates as 'no longer, any more'. It is used in combination with the imperative and the negative to express prohibitions (see below). Together with the verb *wú* 'surpass, exceed' it has formed a discourse connective *gawú* 'furthermore, moreover'.

2.2.2 The directional preverbs

The directional preverbs *hé* 'ITIVE' and *da* 'ALTRILOCAL' have been analysed as serial connectives (Ansre 1966; Ameka 1991) and as verbal coordinators (Dzameshie 1998). These analyses are influenced by the fact that the directionals are frequently used in multiverb constructions. They are analysed here as directional preverbs on the basis of their syntagmatic distribution. They occur typically after the irrealis markers, and after the repetitive marker. In some contexts they can precede the repetitive marker. They can occur in the same slot as *vá* 'VENT' when they occur in an SVC as in (12):

- (12) a. *É-yi asi.me hé fle avɔ*
 3SG-go market IT buy cloth
- b. *É-yi asi.me da fle avɔ*
 3SG-go market ALTRI buy cloth
- c. *É-yi asi.me vá fle avɔ*
 3SG-go market VENT buy cloth
 'S/he went to the market and bought (a piece of) cloth'

It seems counterintuitive to give a different analysis to forms that occur in the same paradigmatic slot and since nobody ever analyses *vá* ‘VENT’ as a connective, I think it is better not to analyse the directionals also as such. The form *hé* ‘ITIVE’ must have evolved from the verb *hé* ‘go away, disappear’. It is used to indicate the simultaneity or sequential in time of the state of affairs characterised in the verb relative to the rest of the discourse. For instance in (12a) above, the buying of the cloth was subsequent to the going to the market.

The form *ɔa* ‘ALTRILOCAL’, which Westermann (1930:133) surmises also evolved from a motion verb, but whose verbal counterpart is lost in the present day language, is used to indicate that the state of affairs characterised in the verb occurred in a place different from the deictic centre. Thus in (12b) above, the buying of the cloth occurred in a place different from the deictic centre. The two directionals can co-occur and they can co-occur with other preverb elements so long as the combinations make sense. These forms are similar to the Ventive *vá* (see section 2.2.5) in having a spatial motion flavour, and all three are similar to the forms called the GRESSIVES in Dangme (Dakubu this volume) and Akan (Boadi this volume). Osam (2002) proposes to analyse the Akan forms as Directionals. The use of the label Directional for the ITIVE and the ALTRILOCAL forms is inspired in part by this suggestion. Consider the following example:

- (13) *ési wò-hé-ɔa-nyá gbé vá ɔó ko-a*
 when 3SG-IT-ALTRI-CERT MODVENT arrive only-TP
 ‘as soon as he eventually did arrive ...’

2.2.3 The *nyá* modals

The two *nyá* modals—one for epistemic certainty and the other for marking Undergoer Voice—bear a heterosemic relation to the verb *nyá* ‘come.to.know’. The two modals are mutually exclusive. However they can each co-occur with the main verb form *nyá* ‘come.to.know’ as in:

- (14) *É-nyá nyá tsi-ńń-ńń*
 3SG-CERT know water-RED-move.limbs
 ‘S/he does know how to swim’
- (15) *é-dó viviti; mé-nyá nyá-ná o*
 3SG-put.on darkness 3SG:NEG-VOICE know-HAB NEG
 ‘[A person’s interior is like the barrel of a gun] It is dark; it is not knowable’ (i.e. one cannot know it) (Ayeke 1974 [2251])

There is a formal difference between the two *nyá* modals as well: The epistemic certainty *nyá* modal can occur in one, two or three place constructions (see 14 above where it occurs in a two place construction). The Voice modal

marker, on the other hand, participates in a one-place construction in which the single argument is an Undergoer as in (15). An effector–experiencer argument can be expressed as a dative object. Because of this it has been said that such *nyá* constructions are syntactically like passives (Essegbey 1999, Collins 1993, Duthie 1996). The semantics of the construction is not an agent passive one. Rather it is more like that of a facilitative or potential or capability passive.

The two *nyá* modals seem to form a paradigmatic set that is why they are placed in a slot by themselves. The epistemic certainty marker can co-occur freely with other modals and tends to precede them. However, it can also occur after some members of the second modal class such as *gbé* ‘just’. The voice marker, however, does not easily collocate with other modal markers (see the next section).

2.2.4 *The other modals*

As indicated above, the epistemic certainty marker can collocate freely with the other modals. One of the modals that enters into construction with it is *gbé* ‘just’, as we have seen. It is hard to say what the origin of this *gbé* ‘just’ form is. Example (13) illustrates its use with other preverbs. In the rest of this subsection the form, meaning and use of the other preverb modals are described.

(a) *The counter-expectation marker kpó*. This marker, grammaticalized from the verb *kpó* ‘see’ in a serial verb construction (cf. Heine et al 1991:199–202), is used to indicate that one would have expected the state of affairs encoded in the verbal clause should have occurred by the reference time, but this is not the case. It always occurs in a negative clause. For this reason, I think, Ansre (1966) called it the negative augment. Westermann (1930:138) characterises it in the following way: “The verb *kpó* ‘to see’ is often immediately followed by a second verb and then means: “to have opportunity, time””. From this, it can be inferred that its equivalents in other languages may be the ‘not yet’ tense or aspect forms. To emphasise the ‘not yet’ sense, it tends to collocate with the adverbial *haḍé* ‘yet’. Consider the following examples which show that the subject in such clauses can be abstract or animate, it is a speaker’s judgement or expectations that matter.

- (16) a. *susú sia mé-kpó gé ḍé wó-fě ta.me háfí ...*
 thought PROX NEG-CE drop ALL 3PL-POSS head before
 ‘This idea hardly got into their heads before [they ran home]’
 (Gadzekpo 1982:11)
- b. *Ameewú mé-kpó tsi xɔ fě bláeve gɔ̃ hã...*
 NAME NEG-CE grow get year twenty even also ...
 ‘Ameewu was not yet even twenty [before the parents were tired of the suitors]’ (Dogoe 1964: 9)

(b) *The ability and possibility marker té ɣú*. Ability and possibility are expressed by the verb noun collocation *té ɣú* ‘press body’. As a preverb modal expression, the form *té* does not take the Habitual marking for verbs. When it occurs with the Habitual then it is unambiguously a verb. In many other cases, it functions as a modal. In the example below the form *té* may be marked for the Habitual in which case the utterance is a serial verb construction (SVC) or it may not, in which case the utterance is a monoverbal clause with a preverb modal of ability.

- (17) *dɛvi-á mé-té(-á) ɣú dɔ-a nú o*
 child-DEF NEG-press-HAB BODY eat-HAB thing NEG
 ‘The child is not able to eat (customarily)’

Some speakers tend to create a distinction between the verb form and the preverb modal form. Such speakers compound the predicate and the nominal constituents and then delete the final vowel leaving the velar nasal as a syllabic segment. It should not be long before one can definitively say the verb form is *té ɣú* ‘press body’ and the modal form is *téj* ‘CAN’.

(c) *The DARE modal katse*. The form *katse* ‘dare’ seems to have developed as a single word from the verb noun collocation *ke* ‘open (body part) and *atse* ‘jaw’. This form does not function as a verb but only as a preverb. It is used to challenge and dare someone to do something. For example,

- (18) *né è-katse dɛ así le ame sia ɣú lá...*
 if 2SG-DARE remove hand LOC person PROX POSTP TP
 ‘If you dare release this person’

(d) *The IN VAIN marker xa*. The preverb marker *xa* ‘in vain, bother’ is used to express a frustrative meaning. It is probably related to the verb *xa* ‘suffer’. The grammaticalization of this form as a preverb marker is still in progress and is evident from the fact that the complement of the main verb can intervene between the preverb marker and the main verb or come after the main verb. Compare the following sentences which are by and large synonymous:

- (19) a. *me-xa vá aǝ*
 1SG-bother come home
 ‘I came home in vain’
 b. *me-xa aǝ vá*
 1SG-bother home come
 ‘I home-came in vain’ literally

It can be argued that in the cases where the *xa* form is not immediately followed by a verb as in (19b) the form is still a verb and the *xa* Object V structures are instances of SVCs with shared objects.

(e) *The marker **ká** ‘different from the norm’.* The marker *ká* ‘a little different from the norm’ is a modal that probably grammaticalized from the verb *ká* ‘break off’. In context, *ká* as a modal can be interpreted as a little less, as in (20), or a little more than the expected norm. The norm in this case is the state of affairs denoted by the verb and its complements.

- (20) *wó-fě* *vevése* *dzí* ***ká*** *de-na* *yeyiyi*
 3PL-POSS pain surface MOD remove-HAB time
 ádé
 INDEF
 ‘Their suffering reduces a little bit for some time’ (Obianim 1990
 [1966])

2.2.5 *The Ventive vá*

The ventive *vá* preverb is used to express the idea of a state of affairs eventually happening. It is in a heterosemic relation with the verb *vá* ‘come’. Both forms can co-occur. It is assigned to the slot immediately before the verb because it tends to be the last of the preverb markers if more than one of them occurs. Thus even though it is a directional and can be in paradigmatic opposition to the other directionals we saw in section 2.2.2, when it cooccurs with them it always comes after them. This is the reason it is treated separately here. (For a full discussion of the differences between the auxiliary and the main verb forms of *vá* ‘COME’ see Essegbey 2004).

- (21) ***É-vá*** *vá* *é-me* *béná* ...
 3SG-VENT come 3SG-containing.region COMP
 ‘It came to pass that ...’

Thus far the markers on the verb and the categories and meanings that they express have been surveyed. We have seen that there are four obligatory values of the realis/irrealis continuum one of which must be selected in every clause in the clause. We have also seen the full range of markers of different kinds of modality or quantificational, i.e., repetitive, aspect that occur as preverbs on the verb. In the subsequent sections we will examine other markers and constructions that pertain to aspect and modality but which do not occur within the verb cluster. The rest of the discussion begins with modality-related forms— periphrastic modal constructions, utterance final particles and imperative constructions. This is followed by a discussion of the aspect-related structures beginning with adverbial particles and concludes with periphrastic aspectual constructions, namely the phasal aspect constructions and the proximative.

3 Periphrastic modal constructions

Modality meanings of obligation, necessity and evaluation are expressed in structures that can schematically be represented as *É*- '3SG Expletive' Verb *bé* 'COMP' clause.

The construction is made up of the expletive (or cataphoric) 3SG pronoun as subject followed by a verb (chosen from a semantic class) followed by the quotative or complement clause introducer *bé* followed by a clause expressing the proposition that must happen or is being evaluated. Necessity and obligation meanings are expressed using *le* (*vévié*) 'be.at:PRES (important)', *dze* 'be fitting' and *hiá* 'need' as matrix verbs in these structures.

- (22) a. *é-le bé lã-wó ná-qu fia vǝǝi sia*
 3SG-be.at:PRES COMP animal-PLSUBJV-eat chief bad PROX
 'Beasts must devour this evil chief' (Bidj Setsoafia 1989:16)
- b. *é-dze bé ná-vá kpó-m*
 3SG-fit COMP 2SG:SUBJV-VENT see-1SG
 'You must come to see me'

As is evident from the examples, the complements of these verbal expressions are irrealis complements with the verb marked for the subjunctive.

Emotional and attitudinal predicates such as *nyó* 'become.good' *sé* 'become.hard /strong', *so* 'be.equal' *vívi* 'be sweet, tasty' and the transitive verb *vé* 'be painful' are used in a closely related construction to express evaluative modality. With these predicates, an Experiencer can be added and coded as a dative prepositional object as in (23b) or a direct object, or as the dependent NP in a postpositional NP (see Ameka 1990a). Unlike the necessity and obligation structures, the complement clauses of the evaluative predicates need not be in the irrealis (see 23a).

- (23) a. *é-nyó bé mí katá mie-fò fũ dé afi sia*
 3SG-good COMP 1PL all 1PL-hit bone ALL place PROX
 'It is good that we all have gathered here'
- b. *é-sé ná-m bé má-gblé wò dí*
 3SG-hard DAT-1SG COMP 1SG:SUBJV-spoil 2SG down
 'It is hard for me to abandon you'

4 Utterance particles

Apart from the preverbal markers, some meanings that relate to mood and modality are expressed by items that operate at the clause or utterance level. Propositional and speaker attitudes are expressed by a set of utterance particles displayed in Table 2 below (see Ameka 1986, 1998 for a description of these particles). In brief, Ewe utterance particles are a closed class of little words that occur as the outermost peripheral elements of utterances, be they words, phrases, clauses or sentences, grammatically speaking. They are used to signal, attenuate or boost the illocutionary forces of the utterances in which they occur. Thus they convey various attitudes of the speaker towards what is being communicated, i.e. the propositional content, or towards the elements in the communicative context such as towards the addressee or towards other observers (Ansre 1966, Duthie 1996:51). From this point of view they are expressions of modality. They can be classified according to their position in the utterance as either utterance-initial or utterance-final as shown in Table 2. They can also

Table 2: Ewe utterance particles

Function	Utterance initial	Utterance final
QUESTION	<i>dě</i> ‘emphatic question introducer’	<i>à</i> ‘ignorative marker’
		<i>dé</i> ‘topic-only question marker’
		<i>lòo</i> ‘alternative question marker’
ADDRESSIVE/ ATTITUDINAL	<i>ô</i> ‘vocative initial particle’	<i>à</i> ‘ignorative marker’
		<i>dé</i> ‘agreement seeking marker’
		<i>là</i> ‘urgent imperative’
		<i>ló</i> ‘I advise you’
		<i>hee</i> ‘I advise you’
		<i>lòò</i> ‘I am surprised!’
		<i>lòò</i> ‘pay attention to what I say’
		<i>sèà</i> ‘you hear’
		<i>ɔ̀ɔ̀</i> ‘dear, endearment’
		<i>gòò</i> ‘I feel good towards you’
		<i>(l)ée</i> ‘hailing particle’
		<i>òo</i> ‘vocative final particle’

be classified according to their function or the clause type in which they occur. Those that have a question function are mutually exclusive with those that have an attitudinal marking function.

Consider the uses of two of the particles in the following question and answer pair:

- (24) GB *È-se gbe lá máhã-a*
 2SG-hear voice DEF at.all-UFP
 ‘Have you heard the message at all?’
 EG *Me-se-e tɔɔ, tɔgbúi-nye*
 1SG-hear-3SG UFP grandpa-1SG
 ‘I have heard it, my dear grandpa.’ (Fiawoo 1990 [1612-13])

Since some of the particles, such as the ignorative *à* ‘I don’t know something about this’, can be used with different sentence types—declarative, imperative and interrogative—it can be assumed that they do not specifically encode these moods. Rather they modify the illocutionary force of utterances. Compare the following near minimal pairs:

- (25) a. *dévi-á fɔ*
 child-DEF rise
 ‘The child got up.’
 b. *dévi-á fɔ-a*
 child-DEF rise-UFP
 ‘Did the child get up?’
 c. *fɔ-a*
 2SG:rise-UFP
 ‘Why don’t you get up?’

The sentences show that when the ignorative is added to an otherwise declarative statement it adds the force of a propositional question. When it is added to an otherwise imperative utterance it signals the speaker’s exasperated criticism of the addressee’s negligence in carrying out the state of affairs represented in the clause. It has been speculated in the literature that markers of interrogativity should not occur with explicit imperatives (cf. Chisholm et al eds 1983). If the analysis proposed here for Ewe is correct, then the ignorative utterance final particle provides counter evidence to such a claim.

5 Imperative constructions

5.1 The second person imperative

The second person imperative has the form *Subject [2nd Person] Verb X*. The verb is not modified by any markers of the verbal complex. The illocutionary point of the construction is ‘I want you to do something’. If the subject is instantiated as a 2SG, it is only realised tonally as Low. The effect of the low

tone is evident when the verb is inherently high and its initial consonant (or onset) is a voiced obstruent; the low tone is linked to the high to yield a rising tone (cf. Ansre 1961, Duthie 1996). The rising tone may be realised as mid tone in some dialects and contexts. In (25c) above, an instantiation of a singular imperative construction, the tone on the verb is high because the initial consonant 'f' is a voiceless obstruent. Compare that with the form in (26a) below.²

- (26) a. *vǎ* *afí*
 2SG:come here
 'Come here.'
- b. *dzǒ* *vá* *afí*
 2SG:leave come here
 'Leave (and) come here.'
- c. *mi-vá* *afí*
 2PL-come here
 'You (PL) come here.'

In (26a) the tone of 2SG is evident in the rising tone of the verb *vǎ* 'come'. In (26b) however, there is no manifestation of a 2SG subject on the same verb *vá* in the imperative when it occurs as the second verb phrase in a serial verb construction (SVC). This is because the subject is expressed only once in an SVC. The first verb in the imperative SVC in (26b) has rising tone because the initial consonant is a voiced obstruent and the verb stem tone is high (cf. Ameka 2006).

As is evident from (26c) above, a second person plural imperative construction is minimally made up of a 2PL pronoun followed by the verb phrase. The subject pronoun is obligatory. In fact, the plural structure in (26c) is ambiguous between an imperative reading and a declarative reading, namely '(You) come here!' vs. 'You came here.' The source of the ambiguity is in the form of the pronoun which is the second person plural pronoun. However, the two readings could be disambiguated: the imperative form will always have the short pronoun form *mi* '2PL' whereas the non-imperative forms can take the longer form *mie* '2PL'. Compare the following forms:

- (27) a. *mi-vá* *afí*
 2PL-come here
 'You (PL) come here.' / 'You (PL) came here.'
- b. *mie-vá* *afí*
 2PL-come here
 'You (PL) came here.'
- c. *mia-vá* *afí*
 2PL:POT-come here
 'You (PL) would come here.'

A similar indeterminacy has been observed for Fongbe (Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002:110).

The imperatives can also be preceded by vocative or topic phrases distinct from the subject pronouns in the imperative construction, as in the following excerpts from the famous advisory speech of Tɔgbe Sri, a revered Anlo chief:

- (28) a. *Ví-nye-wó mi-ga-ɲlɔ-e bé o ...*
 child-1SG-PL 2PL-REP-forget-3SG VS NEG
 ‘My children, do not forget ...’
 b. *Mi ɖɛví-wó lá mi-ɖó tó mia dzilá-wó*
 2PL child-PL TP 2PL-set ear 2PL parent-PL
 ‘You children, obey your parents.’

(28a) is a negative imperative which is discussed below. As noted above, the illocutionary force of the imperative constructions can be modified by several utterance final particles. Other speech formulae of the *please* type such as *mede kúkú* ‘I remove my hat’, *taflatsé* ‘please’ and *káfra* ‘please’ can be used to attenuate the force of imperative utterances (Ameka 1991, 1994 and see also Keleve 2002). Typically such forms occur preposed to the imperative construction.

5.2 First person imperative (*Hortative*)

Like the second person imperatives, the first person plural imperative has a 1PL pronominal subject followed by the verb phrase. Like the second person plural, the minimal imperative structure involving the 1PL pronoun *mí* can be interpreted either as an imperative or a non-imperative. Structures of the kind with a non-imperative can be paraphrased using the extended forms of the pronoun. Compare the following utterances which differ in their illocutionary point, due in part to the form of the subject pronoun, but which take the same illocutionary force modifiers:

- (29) a. [An invitation to join in a meal]
me-ɖe kúkú mí-ɖu nú sea
 1SG-remove hat 1PL-eat thing UFP
 ‘Please let’s eat, y’hear’ / ‘please we have eaten, y’hear’
 b. [A response to a question about whether they have eaten]
me-ɖe kúkú mié-ɖu nú sea
 1SG-remove hat 1PL-eat thing UFP
 ‘Please we have eaten, y’hear’

- c. [A request to a waiter at a restaurant]
me-dé kíkú míá-dú nú sea
 1SG-remove hat 1PL-eat thing UFP
 ‘Please we would eat, y’hear’

The utterance in (29a) is a commonly heard invitation that is extended to people around when one is about to have a meal. However, it can also be interpreted as a statement of something that has happened. The ambiguity is absent from the sentences in (29b, c) where they can only be interpreted as statements and not as a ‘mand’ to use Lyons’ (1977: 745) term. Roughly speaking, the illocutionary point of the first person imperative or hortative is ‘I want us (you and I) to do something (together)’. Like the second person imperatives, the first person plural imperative can co-occur with topic and/or vocative phrases.

5.3 Third person imperative: the jussive

Third person imperatives are marked by a form *né* ‘let, JUSSIVE’ that occurs between the Subject and the verb complex. This marker occurs in many routine expressions such as the response to the introductory phrases for the performance of different genres of verbal arts. Consider the following adjacency pair:

- (30) a. *mi-se gli loo*
 2PL-hear folktale UFP
 ‘(I want you to) listen to folktale’
 b. *gli né-vá*
 folktale JUSS-come
 ‘Let folktale come’

Similarly, an elaborate response to *agoo*, the expression used to request access or entry to a place, makes use of the third person imperative as illustrated in (31).

- (31) *agoo né-nɔ kpó gódo ame*
 ‘agoo’ JUSS-be.at:NPRES fence outside person
né-gé dé me
 JUSS-fall ALL inside
 ‘Let *agoo* stay outside (the fence/wall) and let a human being enter.’

The subject NP can be marked for plural as in the phrase in (32) used during a cleansing ritual.

- (32) *gbɔgbɔ vɔ́-wó né-do*
 spirit bad-PL JUSS-exit
 ‘Let evil spirits come out.’

If the subject is a third person plural pronoun, it is overtly realised. However when it is the third singular pronoun, it is not expressed. For example

- (33) a. *wó-né-blá* *wò*
 3PL-JUSS-tie 2SG
 ‘They should tie you.’ (Bidj Setsoafia 1989: 16)
- b. *né-ga-tu* *mí*
 JUSS-REP-meet 1PL
 ‘Let it come to meet us again.’ (response to New Year wish)³

Two features of the jussive are its irrealis nature and the desire (want or wish) of the speaker for a state of affairs to occur. As such the jussive is closely related to the subjunctive and, in some contexts, the two forms are interchangeable as shown in the example below.

- (34) *Máwú ná- / né-yrá* *wò dǎá*
 God SUBJV-/ JUSS-bless 2SG always
 ‘May God bless you forever.’

(This intersubstitutability has led to the situation in some dialects such as Kpele where the distinction between the subjunctive *ná* and the jussive *né* is lost, Chris Collins p.c. See also Westermann 1930:76-7 who suggests that *né* and *ná* are alternates for the third person imperative.) The jussive form *né* plays a crucial role in multiclausal imperative constructions. These structures are discussed after a description of the prohibitive.

5.4 The prohibitive

The negative imperative or the prohibitive is formed by the negative marker plus the verb marked by the repetitive preverb marker *ga* ‘REP’. It is as if to say ‘I want you not to do something again’. For example:

- (35) a. *me-ga-fá* *aví o*
 2SG:NEG-REP-emit cry NEG
 ‘Don’t cry.’
- b. *mi-(mé)-ga-fá* *aví o*
 2PL-NEG-REP-emit cry NEG
 ‘Don’t cry (you plural).’
- c. *né mé-ga-ɖu* *dze o*
 JUSS 3SG:NEG-REP-eat salt NEG
 ‘Let him/her not eat salt.’

The low tone of the subject in (35a) has been absorbed by the inherent tone of the negation marker *mé* which shows that the subject is indicated just as in the positive imperative. In 2PL, the negation marker is enclosed in optional

brackets because in some dialects it is elided. The interaction between the second person pronouns and the negative in this context is not unique. It applies across the board and is not restricted to the imperative context (see e.g. Duthie 1996).

5.5 *Embedded imperatives*

When a 2SG imperative is quoted there is no difference in form. The 2SG imperative structure is merely embedded in the quotative phrase, as in (36a). However, when such an imperative is reported, it is optionally introduced by *né* 'JUSS' after the quotative complementiser *bé* 'QT' and the verb is marked for the subjunctive or more generally, the irrealis (see e.g. 36b). Similarly, for embedded 2PL and 1PL imperatives, the jussive *né* form is optional and the 'mand' may be in the imperative form or it may be expressed using the subjunctive, see the examples in (37).

- (36) a. *É-bé* *vă*
 3SG-QT 2SG:come
 'S/he said: come.'
- b. *É-bé* (*né*) *na-vă*
 3SG-QT JUSS 2SG:SUBJV-come
 'S/he said you should come.'
- (37) a. *É-bé* (*né*) *mí-vă/* *mia-vă*
 3SG-QT JUSS 2PL-come 2PL:SUBJV-come
 'S/he said come, (you plural) / you (plural) should come.'
- b. *É-bé* (*né*) *mí-vă/* *mía-vă*
 3SG-QT JUSS 1PL-come 1PL:SUBJV-come
 'S/he said come (to us) / we should come.'

In the sentences above, where the jussive is absent and the verb form is not marked for the subjunctive, the form could be interpreted as a quotative as I tried to capture in the free translations.

A third person imperative can also be embedded either without modification or it may be expressed using the subjunctive. Consider the following text example in (38) and its subjunctive counterpart in (39):

- (38) *é-gblɔ* *nɛ* *bé* *né-gé* *dé* *káa* *lá* *me* ...
 3SG-say DAT:3SG QT JUSS-fall ALL car DEF inside
 'He said to him get into the car...' (Hlomatsi 1994 [1291])

- (39) *é-gblɔ ne bé (né) wò-a-gé dé kaa lá*
 3SG-say DAT:3SG QT JUSS 3SG-SUBJV-fall ALL car DEF
me
 inside
 ‘He said to him that he should get into the car...’

The example in (38) is a quoted 3SG imperative and the jussive marker cannot be left out. If the ‘mand’ was expressed using the subjunctive it would be optional and if the jussive *né* form is present, it would occur just after the quotative *bé* and before the subject pronoun. The sentence in (39) is a reported paraphrase of the embedded imperative in (38).

We note, firstly, that the form *né* ‘JUSS’ is optionally used to introduce embedded imperatives. Secondly, the use of the *né* form is not restricted to third person environments. Thirdly, in these embedded imperative contexts where *né* can be used, the clauses that can be introduced by it are either imperative or subjunctive clauses, both of which *grosso modo* can be understood as irrealis. It is shown in the next section that *né* is used as a connector in multiclausal imperatives. Like the embedded contexts, the structures involved are irrealis clauses.

5.6 Multiclausal imperatives

The most common imperative structures that are combined into multi clausal structures involve different persons. Typically a second person imperative is combined with a first person plural imperative, or a third person imperative with that of a first or second person plural. In all these cases, the constructions are either just juxtaposed or they are linked by the form *né*, which, I would argue, is related to the jussive marker. In what follows, I illustrate the various kinds of multiclausal imperatives and develop the claim that the jussive marker has evolved into a consecutive connector.

A common multiclausal imperative that is often heard is the invitation to join a meal where the first part is a second person imperative and the second part is a first person imperative. The connection between the two can be overtly marked by *né* ‘LINK’.

- (40) *vă / mi-vá (né) mí-dú nú*
 2SG:come 2PL-come LINK 1PL-eat thing
 ‘Come (sg/pl) let’s eat.’

In (40) the subsequent clause is in the imperative. The ‘mand’ in the second clause can, however, also be expressed as a subjunctive, as illustrated in (41). Note that the overt connector *né* is optional.

- (41) *mi-vá (né) mí-a-ḍu-i*
 2PL-come LINK 1PL-SUBJV-eat-3SG
 ‘Come let’s eat.’ (a line from a children’s play song)

There is a restriction on second person imperatives in these multiclausal structures, namely that a second person imperative cannot occur as the subsequent clause to another imperative or even subjunctive clause. In other words, second person ‘mands’ in non-initial position in complex structures have to be marked for the subjunctive. The use of *né* ‘LINK’ although not obligatory is highly preferred in such structures.

- (42) *wɔ kábá né mi-*(a)-yi agble*
 2SG:do quickly LINK 2PL-SUBJV-go farm
 ‘Hurry up (sg) and you (pl) go to the farm.’ (A mother to a child)

- (43) *xɔ atikekú sia-wó né na-mi*
 2SG:get pill PROX-PL LINK 2SG-SUBJV-swallow
fi fi laa
 now INT
 ‘Take these pills and swallow them right now.’ (A doctor to a patient)

In (43) the two commands are addressed to the same person, nevertheless the second is expressed as a subjunctive clause. The first is in the imperative form and both are linked by the connector *né*. Recall however that an SVC can be used to package two or more second person imperatives that are construed as belonging together more tightly. Thus the same scenario represented in (43) could be packaged in an SVC as in (44).

- (44) *xɔ atikekú sia-wó mi fi fi laa*
 2SG:get pill PROX-PL swallow now INT
 ‘Get these pills and swallow them right now.’

It is evident from the examples discussed so far that the form *né* is used as a linker of clauses expressing ‘mands’ which are coded either as imperatives or as subjunctives. In the case of embedded imperatives, the *né* form is followed by a clause that is either an imperative or a subjunctive. This restriction does not apply to the matrix clause. The *né* form is optional in such a context except when the 3SG imperative is being quoted. In the case of the multiclausal structures, the clauses being connected have to agree in irrealis, that is, either, all imperative, all subjunctive or the first one an imperative and the subsequent one a subjunctive. Furthermore, the presence of *né* as a linker is preferred in second person structures. This is coupled with the restriction that a second person imperative cannot occur in non-initial position in these multiclausal struc-

tures. I suggest that these structures provide the bridging context for the grammaticalization of the jussive marker as a consecutive linker. In the next section, I show that the clauses that are linked by the form *né* outside the imperative domain are irrealis clauses—a feature that is common to the clauses in the multiclausal imperatives.

Before turning to that, the question may be asked what kind of nexus is between the clauses linked by *né*. These clauses are non-embedded but they seem to be dependent on each other in terms of a mood operator. That is, the clauses have to agree in the feature irrealis-broadly defined. This kind of non-embedded operator dependent relationship has been called co-subordination in Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997).

5.7 *Connective function of né in non-imperative contexts*

The contexts in which *né* is used that have been considered so far all involve a ‘mand’. The combined clauses discussed in the immediately preceding section have in addition to this, two other features. They are all irrealis as mentioned above. However, they also all involve an iconic ordering of the sequence in which the states of affairs are to be manifested. That is to say, apart from the irrealis operator dependence between the clauses they also have an ‘after’ relation. A rough paraphrase of the relation between two clauses of the kind described above could be something like this:

I want you to do something (e.g. come here in example 40 above)
 After you have done this (after you come here)
 I want you to do something else (I want you to eat with me)

The two features of irrealis and ‘after’ underlie the use of the *né* connector in non-imperative contexts. In these contexts, *né* can occur as the sole connector of two or more irrealis clauses. The clauses are interpreted as having a sequential relation and can be paraphrased as having an ‘and then’ (45a) or a purposive ‘so that’ relation (45b).

- (45) a. *éya-é nyé bé ye-a-dó afě.me né*
 3SG-aFOC COP COMP LOG-IRR-reach home LINK
ye-a-dí náné á-da ná ye srõ
 LOG-IRR-want something IRR-cook DAT LOG spouse
kplé ye ví-wó
 COM LOG child-PL
 ‘That is that she should get home and find something to cook for
 her husband and children.’ (VLB no date: 1)

- b. *mía-nyrɔ-e* *dě* *tɔ-a* *me*
 1PL:IRR-immersed-3SG ALL river-DEF containing.region
né *wò-a-no* *tsi* *kú*
 LINK 3SG-IRR-drink water die
 ‘We should immerse him in the river so that he would drown.’

The common denominator of the linked *né* clauses is that there is a relation of consecutiveness or sequence between them: one follows the other and the purpose reading is an implication derived from this iconic ordering. It seems as if the first state of affairs occurs to enable the other state of affairs to take place.

In the examples discussed here, the *né* form occurs as a connector between two or more clauses and each of them is a kind of irrealis. In other contexts the linker *né* functions to introduce other clauses. It seems as if this is another stage in the grammaticalization which is linked both to the embedded imperative uses and to the consecutive connector functions in the following sense. The clauses that are introduced by the linker are irrealis clauses or the contexts are unreal situations. This is consistent with the uses that have already been outlined.

The apodosis clause of a counterfactual conditional is introduced by the *né* linker. Even though the clause it introduces need not be marked for the irrealis the context of the state of affairs being characterised in the sentence cannot occur. The protasis clause of a counterfactual conditional in Ewe is introduced by *dě* ‘COND’.⁴ It is sometimes left out in more routinized expressions such as proverbs, as shown in (46b).

- (46) a. *dě* *me-nye* *bé* *á-nɔ* *áléá*
 COND 1SG-know:3SG QT 3SG:IRR-be.at:NPRES thus
né *me-gbugbɔ* *dě* *megbé*
 LINK 1SG-return ALL back
 ‘Had I known that it would be like this, I would have withdrawn.’
- b. *te-tí-tu-gbe-é* *wó-ɖu-a* *te* *lá,*
 yam-stick-fix-day-aFOC 3PL-eat-HAB yam TP
né *gbɔ* *má-kpɔ* *tsyró-á* *á-ɖu* *o*
 LINK goat NEG:IRR-see skin-DEF IRR-eat NEG
 ‘Were yams eaten on the same day as the day for fixing poles for the yam plant, the goat would not even get the skin to eat.’ (a proverb)

It is plausible that from its use as introducer of counterfactual apodosis, the *né* linker came to be used as the introducer of the protasis of simple conditional clauses. I suggest that the bridging context of this could have been the prepos-

ing of the *né* introduced clause as a scene-setting clause and marked by *lá* ‘terminal topic particle’.

Adverbial or dependent clauses expressing condition, time, reason, purpose etc. can either be preposed or postposed to the matrix clause. When they are preposed to the main clause they have a scene-setting or framing function and they are marked by the terminal backgrounding particles *lá* or *dé* (see e.g. Ameka 1990b). The suggestion here is that when the counterfactual apodosis occurs initially, followed by another clause introduced by *né*, this gave rise to a hypothetical conditional reading. It is such a clause with a hypothetical reading that provided the context for the specialisation of *né* as a conditional marker.

Another context in which the connective marker occurs is as the introducer of complement clauses of the verb *susɔ* ‘remain’ and its synonym *kpɔtɔ* ‘remain’ when they occur with an expletive or cataphoric pronoun as in expressions used in telling the time.

- (47) *é-susɔ mínti ewó né ga enyí ná-fò*
 3SG-remain minute ten LINK metal eight SUBJV-hit
 ‘Its ten minutes to eight’

In such structures, the complement is always marked for the subjunctive and the linker can be elided. These features are consistent with the features we have seen so far for the connective function of the linker.

Similarly, *né* ‘LINK’ can optionally double with other connectives when they introduce irrealis complements. Thus it co-occurs with *bé* ‘QT/COMP’ when it introduces purpose clauses as in (48a) and with temporal connectives such as *háfi* ‘before’, *káká* ‘by the time’ or *kásiá* ‘just then’ when they introduce irrealis clauses as in (48b). Consider these examples:

- (48) a. *é-tsó atí bé (né) ye-a-fò-e*
 3SG-take stick COMP LINK LOG-SUBJV-strike-3SG
 ‘S/he took a stick in order to hit him/her’
 b. *háfi (né) yu ná-ke lá, wó-dzó xóxó*
 before LINK eye SUBJV-open TP 3PL-leave already
 ‘Before it was dawn, they left already’

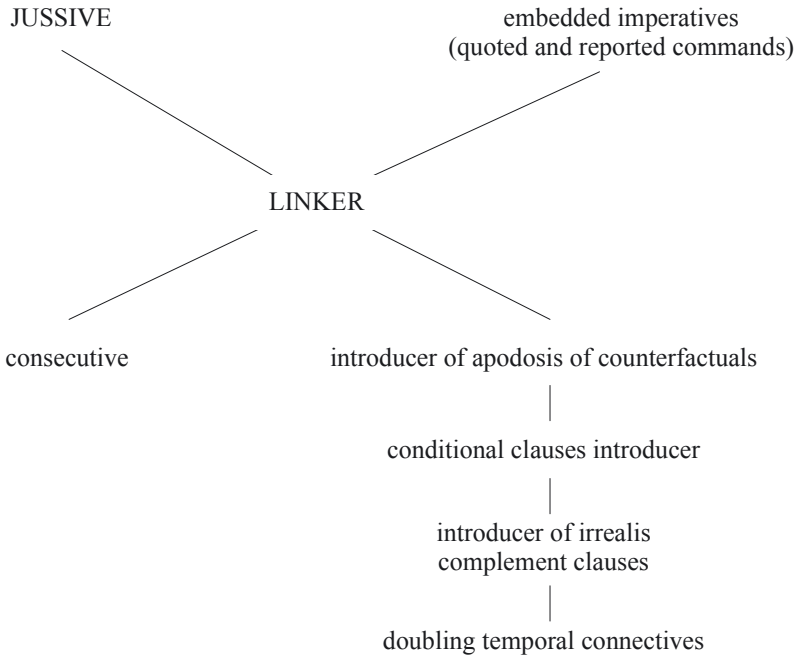
It is probably the irrealis feature that is drawing the *né* connective into these connective doubling environments. The reason for saying so is that when the connectives that *né* ‘LINK’ doubles are not introducing irrealis complements, *né* cannot optionally occur with them. A sentence initial *háfi* ‘before’ clause of the kind in (48b) will always be an irrealis clause hence *né* can also occur in such clauses. When the *háfi* clause is postposed however, it need not be an irrealis clause and hence *né* is ruled out if the clause is not explicitly marked for the irrealis (see Clements 1972). Sentence (48b) can be re-expressed as (49)

where the *háfi* clause is postposed. Notice that the linker *né* is unacceptable since the clause is not irrealis.

- (49) *wó-dzó* *xóxó* *háfi* (**né*) *ɣu* *ke*
 3PL-leave already before LINK eye open
 ‘They left long before day break’

To sum up, I have tried to argue that the varied uses of the form *né* in Ewe grammar are all linked heterosemically. I have in the course of the discussion suggested a grammaticalization chain with different stages from a jussive–a third person imperative–to a consecutive connector. This scenario for the relations is displayed in Fig 2.

Figure 2: relations between the various functions of *né*



This development is of theoretical interest both for the study of clause combining and for grammaticalization. Verstraete (2002) hypothesises that interactional meaning is the most crucial functional principle for understanding clause combining. The development of a jussive–a clause type or mood indicator to a clause connector, in a way, would appear to give *prima facie* support to

such a hypothesis since the jussive involves a speaker-locutor interaction. From the point of view of grammaticalization, I am not aware of instances of such a development being noted in the literature. Of course, the development type itself is not unexpected: from a more interpersonal marker to a textual meaning indicator (cf. e.g. Traugott 1988).

6 Adverbial aspectual constructions

After surveying various aspect, mood and modality markers inside the verb complex, we now turn to the markers and constructions that encode aspectual meanings largely outside the verbal complex. These include adverbial aspectual markers, discussed in the present section, periphrastic phasal aspect constructions, described in section 7, and the proximative construction presented in section 8.

There are three adverbials that pertain to the terminal viewpoint of situations or the coda. These are *vɔ* 'COMPL', *sé* 'CESS' and *kpɔ* 'PFV'. The completive *vɔ* signifies that something has happened or has been done completely. When it is used with instantaneous actions and developments or with triplication, it indicates that a situation is about to be completed. By contrast, cessative *sé* indicates that a situation has been terminated and it is incomplete, while the perfective *kpɔ* symbolises the existential and experiential status of situations. To emphasise the non-manifest status of situations *kpɔ* may be triplicated in a negative clause (see section 6.3). The difference between the completive *vɔ* the cessative *sé* and the existential perfective *kpɔ* in terms of the coding of the terminal viewpoint of situations can be seen in the different contexts in which the utterances in (50) can be used.

- (50) *nyɔnu* *má* *dzi* *ví* *sé* / *vɔ* / *kpɔ*
 woman DIST bear child CESS COMPL PFV
 CESS: 'That woman has stopped having children.'
 COMPL: 'That woman has finished having children.'
 PFV: 'That woman has given birth to children before'

The cessative version is used in a context where there is nothing biologically to prevent the woman from having children, but she has decided not to have any more children. The completive version, however, is used to indicate that the woman has exhausted her capacity for having children and therefore cannot have any more children. She is probably past her menopause. The existential perfective version indicates that the woman has had the experience of bearing a child before; she is not barren.

Each of these adverbials has a verbal counterpart from which it has grammaticalized in the context of multiverb constructions (cf. Lord 1993, Heine and

Reh 1984 and Ameka 2006). The form *vɔ* 'COMPL' has developed from an overlapping biclausal construction of the kind illustrated in (51b) where it functions as the main verb in the second clause (Ameka 2003). In such an overlapping clause the subject of the subsequent clause is coreferential with a non-subject argument in the first clause. The other forms *sé* 'CESS' and *kpɔ́* 'PFV' seem to have grammaticalized in final position in serial verb constructions (Ameka 2006). The instances of the forms *vɔ*, *sé* and *kpɔ́* which function as aspectual adverbials are those where they i) occur after another verb, i.e. as post-verbal modifiers, and ii) do not occur with preverbs or the habitual suffix *-na*. Thus *vɔ* 'COMPL' occurs in a monoverbal clause in (51a) and functions as an adverbial that marks completive aspect and it cannot be marked for any verbal categories, but the same surface form occurs in the second clause in the overlapping clause structure in (51b) and is a full verb. It is marked here for the potential by a preverb. Consequently, the two sentences have slightly different meanings, as the English equivalents suggest:

- (51) a. *ɔ́eví-á-wó á-ɖu nú-á vɔ háfí*
 Child-DEF-PL POT-eat thing-DEF COMPL before
á-yi suku
 POT-go school
 'The children will eat the food (completed) before they go to school.'
- b. *ɔ́eví-á-wó á-ɖu nú-á wò-a-vɔ háfí*
 Child-DEF-PL POT-eat thing-DEF 3SG-POT-finish before
á-yi suku
 POT-go school
 'The children will eat the food and it will be finished before they go to school.'

Similarly, the occurrences of *sé* 'CESS' and *kpɔ́* 'PFV' in (52b) and (53b) respectively are the exponents of the perfective category, and are the instances of concern to us:

- (52) a. *m-a-xlě agbalě sésě má á-sé ɖé afi*
 1SG-POT-read book hard DIST POT-stop ALL here
 'I will read that difficult book and I will stop here.'
- b. *m-a-xlě agbalě sésě má sé ɖé afi*
 1SG-POT-read book hard DIST CESS ALL here
 'I will read that difficult book and stop here.'

- (53) a. *kofi â-liá gemí-tó á-kpó tógó*
 NAME POT-climb NAME -mountain POT-see NAME
dá
 in.the.distance
 ‘Kofi will climb Mt.Gemi and will look at Togo (from there).’
- b. *kofi â-liá gemí-tó kpó*
 NAME POT-climb NAME -mountain PFV
 ‘Kofi will climb (try to climb) Mt Gemi (and see).’

The forms are considered to be adverbials for two reasons: firstly, these items can occur after other adverbials. In (54) *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ occurs after an adverbial phrase of comparison.

- (54) *áma kɔ abé fofó-á ené vɔ*
 NAME become.tall as father-DEF as COMPL
 ‘Ama is almost as tall as the (=her) father.’

Secondly, the forms *kpó* ‘PFV’ and *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ can be triplicated as discussed in sections 6.1 and 6.3. Triplication is a feature of adverbials (and nominal intensifiers, see (55)), but not of verbs and preverbs. Hence these forms are adverbials.

- (55) *dɛví má ko-koo-ko-é tsó-e*
 child DIST TRIP-TRIP-only-aFOC take-3SG
 ‘ONLY THAT CHILD took it.’

Moreover, *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ and *kpó* ‘PFV’ can co-occur with their verbal counterparts as illustrated in (56 a, b).

- (56) a. *atíke-a vɔ vɔ*
 medicine-DEF finish COMPL
 ‘The medicine is almost finished.’
- b. *me-do dɔmedzui nenémá me-kpó kpó o*
 2SG:NEG-put anger such 1SG-see PFV NEG
 ‘I have never seen you that angry.’
 Lit: ‘You have not been that angry I have seen before’

Such sequences are indicative of the ‘deverbal’ status of the dependent instances of forms (see discussion of *nyá* modals in section 2.2.3).

6.1 The completive marker *vɔ*

The situations that *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ co-occurs with must be segmentable into temporal phases. Consequently, it does not occur with states or with ‘sharp’ achievements (Dillon 1977: 36), as the ungrammaticality of (57a) and (58a)

show respectively. By contrast, it occurs with change of state situations (57b) as well as gradual achievements (58b) which can be temporally segmented. In these contexts, as the translations indicate, the marker has two possible interpretations: total completion and imminent completion.

- (57) a. **ga le así-nye vɔ*
 money be.at:PRES hand-1SG COMPL
 ≠ ‘I have money.’
- b. *ga dɔ́ así-nye vɔ*
 money reach hand-1SG COMPL
 ‘I have got (acquired) money’ / ‘I am about to have money.’
 (lit. Money has/ is about to reach my hands.)
- (58) a. **nya lá lílí mí vɔ*
 word DEF surprise 1PL COMPL
 ‘We were taken by surprise’ / ‘The case happened unexpectedly.’
- b. *nya lá dzɔ́ vɔ*
 word DEF happen COMPL
 ‘The case happened/ is about to happen’.

As just indicated, the completive marker *vɔ* has two readings. One factor that determines the interpretation in a particular usage is the type of situation characterised by the verb phrase or clause it modifies. When *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ modifies homogeneous activities, i.e. processes, it has a total completion or accomplishment reading, namely, all of the process occurred by the reference time, see (59a). When it occurs with bounded events, i.e., instantaneous actions, as in (59b), and developments, it has an imminent completion reading, namely, the last part or moment of the situation is about to happen.

- (59) a. *áma du nú vɔ*
 NAME eat thing COMPL
 ‘Ama has finished eating.’
- b. *míe-dɔ́ kpándo vɔ*
 1PL-reach NAME COMPL
 ‘We have almost reached Kpando’. ≠ ‘We have reached Kpando.’

For both interpretations, the situations are perceived in their entirety as a whole. This is the feature that distinguishes the completive *vɔ* from the cessative *sé* marker. The latter does not co-occur with totality expressions such as *kátã* ‘all’, *kéy* ‘completely’ and *blíbo* ‘whole’ while the former does, as illustrated in (60).

- (60) *wó-no de-ha lá kátã vɔ / *sé*
 3PL-drink oil.palm-alcohol DEF all COMPL CESS
 ‘They drank up all the wine’ / ? ‘They stopped drinking all the wine’

Strictly speaking, the description of *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ as a marker of an ‘accomplished action’ as reflected in statements such as Pazzi’s (1970:117) “*action achevée*” and Westermann’s (1930) glosses of ‘finished up, that’s all’ are only appropriate for characterising the form when it occurs with processes.

The two interpretations of *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ described so far can be related to the temporal phases of situations. With processes, for instance (59a), *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ codifies the attainment of the last moment of a situation. With punctual occurrences, as in (59b), *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ indicates that the preparatory stage is taking place, while with developments, it shows that the last moment leading up to the total accomplishment of the situation is in progress. The reality of these readings is evidenced by the fact that when *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ occurs with some events which could be thought of as having relative terminal points, the two interpretations are possible. With events involving predicates such as *tsi* ‘grow up’, *ɖi* ‘ripe’, *vó* ‘rot’, the judgement of individuals with respect to the point at which they have become accomplished could vary. This leads to ambiguous utterances such as those in (61).

- (61) a. *akɔɖú lá ɖi vɔ*
 banana DEF become.ripe COMPL
 ‘The banana is completely ripe.’/‘The banana is almost ripe.’
 b. *ɖeví síá tsí vɔ*
 Child PROX grow.up COMPL
 ‘This child is quite grown.’⁵
 ‘This child is perfectly mature.’/ ‘This child is almost of age.’

One of the uses of the completive *vɔ* form in connected discourse is the sequencing of events or propositions: that is, to mark situations that are prior in time to the other situations to which they are linked. In (62) the abusive behaviour towards the speaker happened prior to the request for marriage.

- (62) *ǎ-dzu-m le ame dome vɔ,*
 2SG:POT-insult-1SG LOC people among COMPL
háfi á-vá ɖe-m=a
 before 2SG:POT-VENT marry-1SG=Q
 ‘Would you have finished swearing at me in public before coming to marry me?’

In sum, the completive marker *vɔ* occurs with non-static situations and has two senses: one of total completion and the other of imminent completion. In context, the interpretation depends on the semantic and aspectual properties of the situation involved. The first interpretation, which I assume to be the primary one, applies to homogeneous activities, i.e. processes, whether they are bounded or not. The second one applies to bounded events i.e. instantaneous actions and developments.

A further means of indicating that a non-static situation is about to be completed is by the triplication of the completive marker *vɔ* (see Ameka 1999 on the mechanisms of reduplication and triplication in Ewe).⁶ Thus for either processes or events one can triplicate *vɔ* to express the idea that a situation is very close to completion. In one sense, the triplication of *vɔ* with events emphasises the very imminent nature of the achievement of the terminal point of such situations (see 64). With processes, the triplication of *vɔ* indicates that a situation is going through the last part of its evolution (see 63):

- (63) *áma* *no* *de.tsi-a* *vɔ-vɔɔ-vɔ*
 NAME drink soup-DEF TRIP-TRIP-COMPL
 ‘Ama has almost finished/is on the point of finishing eating the soup.’
- (64) *mamá-nye* *háya* *vɔ-vɔɔ-vɔ*
 grandmother-1SG recover TRIP-TRIP-COMPL
 ‘My grandmother has nearly recovered from her sickness.’
- (65) *awu-a-wó* *fú* *vɔ-vɔɔ-vɔ*
 garment-DEF-PL become.dry TRIP-TRIP-COMPL
 ‘The garments are almost dry.’

The imminent completion reading of the completive marker when it occurs with developments and punctual situations as well as when it is triplicated suggests that linguistic indicators of perfectivity may also encode the meaning of imminent completion in a language. Cross-linguistic surveys of the perfective category have noted ingressive or inceptive meaning as one of the senses of perfective forms (see Comrie 1976, Bybee 1985, Chung and Timberlake 1985, Dahl 1985). Imminent completion as an aspectual meaning does not seem to have been recognised for perfective categories in the literature. However, this is clearly the case in Ewe, as we have shown, and in some other languages such as Turkana, a Nilotic language of N.W. Kenya, and Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language of Rwanda (Botne 1983). According to Dimmendaal (1983:150ff) Turkana has a morphological aspect marker *-it`* which indicates perfectivity and has the meaning of totality of completion with its focus of attention on completion. This sense is exemplified in (66) taken from (Dimmendaal 1983:150):

- (66) *è-à-dòk- it̃* *ɲɛsɪ e-mor-u`* (Turkana)
 3-PAST-climb-PFV he mountain
 ‘He climbed the mountain (and came down again).’

However, with “ingressive” verbs, “[T]he semantics of these completive constructions is not always present” (Dimmendaal 1983:151). Notice that in (67) the event has not been accomplished. I suggest that in this case the perfective marker indicates imminent completion.

- (67) *è-à-twà-n-it̃* *ɲɛsɪ* (Turkana)
 3-PAST-dead-SG-PFV he
 ‘He almost died.’ (Dimmendaal 1983:151 ex 8)

Thus perfective aspectuals, not only in Ewe, but also in Turkana (and Kinyarwanda and perhaps many more languages) are used to express imminent completion, especially of events – developments and punctual occurrences.

6.2 The cessative marker *sé*

The main difference between the completive marker *vɔ* and the cessative marker *sé* lies in completeness: the former presents a situation as complete, while the latter presents a situation as incomplete. The cessative *sé* marks a situation as one which is not necessarily completed but is no longer happening and will no longer occur. Typically, it is used to describe habits or repeated actions or durative situations that have been stopped. Consider example (68):

- (68) *kofi no sigaréti sé*
 NAME drink cigarette CESS
 ‘Kofi has stopped/quit smoking.’

The situation characterised by *sé* ‘CESS’ is perceived as having the potential to go on beyond the point at which it has been stopped. Thus it is not appropriate to describe punctual occurrences with *sé* ‘CESS’, as shown in (69):

- (69) **atí-á kú sé*
 tree-DEF die CESS
 ?‘The tree has stopped dying.’

However, the marker could occur with punctual occurrences if the subject is plural, indicating a kind of distributed cessation. Contrast (69) with (70a):

- (70) a. *atí-á-wó kú sé*
 tree-DEF-PL die CESS
 ‘The trees have stopped dying.’

- b *atí-á-wó kátã kú sé
 tree-DEF-PL all die CESS
 ‘The trees have stopped dying.’

The implication of (70a) is that some members of the group or class of trees have not yet died, but none of them will die any more. Compare this with (70b) which contains a totality expression implying that the whole situation of all the trees dying has been completed and since the cessative marker entails incompleteness, it is unacceptable in this context:

The abrupt ending of a situation due to natural causes can also be described with the cessative marker, but not with the completive as illustrated in (71).

- (71) ési lóygɔ do ta lá tsi lá dza sé /
 when rainbow appear reason TP water DEF fall CESS
 *vɔ
 COMPL
 ‘Because a rainbow has appeared, the rain has stopped /
 (*finished).’

To sum up, the cessative marker *sé* is used to mark situations that are terminated abruptly. It implies incompleteness. It is different from the other perfective markers – *vɔ* ‘COMPL’ and *kpɔ* ‘PFV’ – in that it is not triplicated to express any nuance of meaning. This is probably due to its intrinsically abrupt nature. The abrupt cessation of a situation could not be construed as happening repeatedly or evolving to its terminal point.

6.3 *The existential/experiential perfective kpɔ*

The marker *kpɔ* ‘PFV’ is very commonly used to describe situations that have existed before or will have existed after the moment of utterance. Thus in (72a) the situation has obtained before the speech time while in (72b) the situation will become manifest some time after the speech time:

- (72) a. fɔfɔ-nye gblɔ ná-m kpɔ bé
 father-1SG say DAT-1SG PFV COMP
 lã si nyá zɔ-zɔ lá fě dzo-é
 animal REL know RED-walk TP POSS horn-aFOC
 tró-ná
 curl-HAB
 ‘My father once told me that the animal which knows how to be-
 have itself is the one whose horns curl.’ (Dogoe 1964:23)

- b. *dzi.lá-wó â-ga -fó nu ná wó ví lá kpó*
 parent-PL POT-REP-strike mouth DAT 3PL child DEF PFV
 ‘The parents will (try to) speak again to their child.’ (Dogoe 1964:13)

Previous descriptions of the form *kpó* ‘PFV’ have focused on its use with respect to past actions. Thus Pazzi (1970:117) observes that *kpó* ‘PFV’ is used to characterise “*action déjà accomplie autrefois*” ‘an action that has been completed once already’. English writers gloss the form as ‘ever’, ‘once’ and ‘sometime’ (in positive sentences), and as ‘never’, ‘never as yet’ (in negative sentences) (Warburton et al 1968:249, Westermann 1930:131). These glosses are not adequate for the use of *kpó* ‘PFV’ in contexts involving unrealised situations such as with the potential, as in (72b) or with imperatives, as in (73a) or progressive (73c) or prospective (73b) constructions.

- (73) a. *no aha sia kpó*
 drink alcohol PROX PFV
 ‘Have some of this wine (and see)’/‘Try some of this wine.’
 b. *me-le é-du gé kpó*
 1SG-be.at:PRES 3SG-eat PROSP PFV
 ‘I will eat it and see.’/‘I will try it.’
 c. *me-le atike-a wɔ-mí kpó*
 1SG-be.at:PRES medicine-DEF do-PROG PFV
 ‘I am taking the medication to see.’/‘I am trying the medicine.’

With these not-yet-realised situations, as the glosses suggest, *kpó* ‘PFV’ has an attemptive sense: ‘try X and see’. The attemptive sense of *kpó* ‘PFV’ is not surprising from a cross-linguistic perspective. In many languages of the world, the verb ‘see’ or its grammaticalized form tends to be used for the expression of such a meaning. For instance, “conative modality (the actor *tries* to perform the action) is almost universally signalled in Papuan languages with a serial verb construction involving the verb stem *see*” (Foley 1986:152).

The use of *kpó* ‘PFV’ can be summarised as follows: it indicates a situation that has obtained prior to the moment of utterance. It can also have an attemptive sense with not-yet-realised situations, and indicate that some situation will have occurred after the moment of utterance. It seems that what is common to both readings is that at a certain time, specified by linguistic (temporal) markers, one can know something about the historical status of a situation. This is obvious for actions in the realis mode. For situations in the irrealis mode, in which the form has an attemptive sense, it can be argued that the main point about trying something is that at the end of it the one who performs the trial will have had the experience of the event. Furthermore, the expectation is that

at the appropriate time the situation will have been accomplished and its existence established.⁷

In negative utterances *kpó* 'PFV' is used to indicate the non-existence of a situation, either before the speech time or after the speech time, as in (74a, b) respectively.

- (74) a. *dɛví- á-wó mé-nyá kpó gĩ hã bé tó*
 Child-DEF-PL NEG-know PFV even also COMP father
le ye-wó sí o
 be.at:PRES LOG-PL hand NEG
 'The children never knew that they even had a father.'
 (lit.: The children did not even know for once that a father was in their hands.) (Matabiala Newspaper)
- b. *nye ma-wɔ-ε kpó o*
 1SG NEG:POT-do-3SG PFV NEG
 'I will never do it.'/'I will never try it.'

To emphasise that a situation has never obtained and will never obtain, one can triplicate the form *kpó* 'PFV' in a negative clause, as in (75). The strategy of *kpó* 'PFV' triplication, unlike that of *vɔ* 'COMPL' triplication, is pan-dialectal; that is those dialects that do not triplicate *vɔ* triplicate *kpó* in this context. However, unlike *vɔ* triplication which can be either in positive or negative clauses, the triplication of *kpó* is restricted to negative sentences. Thus the triplicated form is unacceptable in (75b) which is the positive counterpart of (75a) where both the non-triplicated and the triplicated forms are acceptable.

- (75) a. *nye-mé-se nya má tɔgbi kpó / kpó-kpó-kpó o*
 1SG-NEG-hear word DIST such PFV TRIP-TRIP-PFV NEG
 'I have never/ never, never heard such a thing before.'
- b. *me-se nya má tɔgbi kpó / *kpó-kpó-kpó o*
 1SG-hear word DIST such PFV TRIP-TRIP-PFV NEG
 'I have heard such a thing before.'

Many of the examples given so far involving the marker *kpó* 'PFV' have an animate entity filling the subject function in the clause. This could give the impression that the form is an experiential perfective marker. However, the subject argument in such clauses can be an inanimate entity as well, as in (76).

- (76) *kú mé-ɖi áléá kpó o*
 drought NEG-shine such PFV NEG
 'There has never been such a drought before.'

In such cases it is the existence or historical status of the situations which is being talked about, not the experience of some particular entity or sentient be-

ing. It seems that a true experiential should go only with sentient beings. Hence it is more adequate to think of *kpɔ* 'PFV' as an existential perfective (cf. Johnson 1981 on existential status and Whorf 1956 on manifest/non-manifest status in Hopi).

6.4 *Summary of perfective markers*

The use and meaning of three Ewe adverbial forms that code perfectivity or the terminal viewpoint of situations have been explored in the preceding sections. It has been argued that *vɔ* is a completive marker in the sense that it marks the total or imminent completion of a situation. By contrast, *sé* is a cessative marker that indicates the termination of a situation. The form *kpɔ*, on the other hand, is an existential perfective marker that signals the existence or historical status of situations. These three forms codify the semantic space of the end point of situations. Nevertheless each is a code for a specific part of that domain, as the labels and the analyses suggest.

The imminent completion reading of the completive marker *vɔ* 'COMPL and of perfective markers in other languages like Turkana (Nilotic) and Kinyarwanda (Bantu) need to be integrated in cross-linguistic investigations of the meanings of perfective markers. In this connection it is worth noting that in English, imminent accomplishment of events is coded by the progressive (see Dillon 1977:126; Vlach 1981, and Bland 1988). Consider the examples in (77):

- (77) a. Mary is dying.
 b. John is winning.
 c. The ship is arriving.
 d. The plane is landing.

The progressive in these cases focuses on the onset or the moment that leads to the culmination of the events. It is significant that the verbs involved in the English progressive, are punctual verbs with onset just like those that trigger imminent completion when they combine with perfective markers in the African languages mentioned above. Further research might lead to the understanding of how the meaning of imminent completion of a situation is encoded in many more languages by aspectual markers, especially of progressive and perfective markers.

Furthermore, the semantics of the Ewe forms gives support to the claim that grammaticalization has a semantic basis—the sorts of meanings the Ewe aspectualisers have are deducible from the meanings of the lexical verbs from which they evolved. Indeed, it does not seem to be an accident that a verb meaning 'finish' should develop into a marker of the completion of situations. Nor is it strange, semantically, that a verb meaning 'stop/end' should become a marker of the termination of situations. Similarly the development of an existential

perfective marker from a verb meaning ‘see/experience’ would appear to be fully motivated semantically.

7 Phasal aspect constructions

This section is concerned with linguistic expressions in Ewe used for characterising distinct intervals in the temporal development of situations. Following Freed (1979:30ff) it is assumed that situations (i.e. events, processes, actions and states, cf. Comrie (1976) and Mourelatos (1981)) are temporally segmentable into an *onset* – a first moment, which is a necessary and an obligatory preparatory stage in the ontogeny of every situation, a *nucleus* – a main part, and a *coda* – a final temporal phase. The nucleus can be further decomposed into an *initial* period, a *middle*, and a *final* part. Whilst it may be hard, in reality, (and perhaps impossible) to draw a line between the successive temporal phases of a situation, languages tend to provide linguistic forms for the description of such stages in the evolution of a situation. Thus English, for instance, has the aspectual verbs *start* and *begin* which are used to refer to the *onset* and the *initial* period of the nucleus of situations respectively (Freed 1979, Wierzbicka 1988). Similarly the verbs *finish* and *end* are used to code the final part of the nucleus and the coda respectively (Wierzbicka 1988:77-78, Dixon 2005). The markers of the *onset*, *nucleus*, and *coda* phases of a situation may be described as ingressive/inceptive, progressive/continuative, and egressive respectively.

The Ewe phasal aspect constructions all involve an operator verb (in one case an operator verb and a nominal obligatory complement) and a postpositional phrase complement. The dependent NP in the postpositional phrase is typically a referential event expression which is realised as a noun or a gerundive nominal (or nominalized verb or VP). The dependent NP can also be represented by a situational anaphor (a 3SG pronominal form) or as a null pronoun if the event is recoverable from the context. Table 3 provides a summary of the various phasal aspect (sub-) constructions in Ewe with their lexical and structural fillers.

Table 3: Phasal aspect constructions

Aspectual Phase	Operator	Event expression	Postposition
Inceptive	<i>dze</i> ‘become.contacted’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)	<i>dzi</i> ‘upper.surface, top’
	<i>dze</i> ‘become.contacted’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)/gerund	<i>ɔme</i> ‘under, bottom’
	<i>tó</i> ‘bring.into.vogue’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)	<i>ɔme</i> ‘under, bottom’
	<i>lé</i> ‘hold, catch’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)	<i>me</i> ‘containing.region’
	<i>dé así</i> ‘put hand’ [Verb Noun]	gerund	<i>me</i> ‘containing.region’
Durative	<i>le</i> ‘be.at:PRES’ <i>nɔ</i> ‘be.at:NPRES’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)/gerund	<i>dzi</i> ‘upper.surface, top’
Continuative	<i>yi</i> ‘go’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)/gerund	<i>dzi</i> ‘upper.surface, top’
Egressive	<i>wú</i> ‘exceed, surpass’ [Verb]	noun (phrase)/gerund	<i>nu</i> ‘mouth, entrance, end-point’

The forms specified for the constructions—the verbs and the postpositions—especially those for the inceptive, continuative and egressive can serve as input to various morphological processes, as shown for gerund nominalization in (78).

- (78) a. *dze* (X) *ɔme* → (X) *ɔme-dze-dze*
 contacted bottom bottom-RED-contacted
 ‘begin’ ‘beginning (X)’
- b. *wú* (X) *nu* → (X) *nu-wú-wú*
 exceed endpoint endpoint-RED-exceed
 ‘end’ ‘ending (X)’

This indicates that the verbs together with the postpositions co-lexicalise the aspectual meaning.

7.1 Inceptive aspect constructions

As is evident from Table 3, the verbs involved in the inceptive constructions are roughly speaking “contact” verbs. The semantics of the postpositions which head the event phrases are instructive: the major ones are *ɔme* ‘under, bottom’ and *me* ‘containing region’. The combination of the verbs and the postpositions

literally generate underlying schemas of the inceptive constructions which can be stated as: ‘make contact with the bottom/containing region of a situation’.

7.1.1 Constructions involving the verb *dze*

There are two constructions involving the verb *dze* ‘become接触ed’: the major one takes the postpositional phrase event complement headed by the postposition *gɔme* ‘under, bottom’. The minor construction takes *dzi* ‘upper.surface, top’ as head of the event phrase postpositional phrase. The event expression in the former, i.e. the dependent constituent of the postposition, can be a noun such as *agbe* ‘life’, (see 79b) *suku* ‘school’ (80a) or a noun (phrase), as in (79a) or a gerund nominalization.

- (79) a. *éye wò-dze é-fé nya-wó gɔme álé ...*
 and 3SG-contacted 3SG-POSS word-PL bottom thus
 ‘and she began her words like this’ (Hlòmatsi 1995: [2863])
- b. *ame áǎǎ-wó dze-a agbe gɔme nyiue*
 person INDEF-PL contacted-HAB life bottom well
gaké nu-wí-wú vá gblě-ná
 but endpoint-RED-exceed VENT spoil-HAB
 ‘some people begin life well but the end gets destroyed’ (Hlòmatsi 1995: [154])

That *dze* ‘become接触ed’ is a bona fide verb in these constructions is evidenced by the fact that it can take the habitual as in (79b). In addition, it also occurs as a verb in a serial verb construction as in (80 a, b). In (80a) it occurs as head of the initial VP and in (80b) it functions as head of the second VP.

- (80) a. *ǎeko wó-dze suku gɔme yi-na sěě*
 only 3PL-contacted school bottom go-HAB a.little
 ‘They only just started schooling moving on a little.’ (Hlòmatsi 1995 [2609])
- b. *wó-tsó nɔnɔme má dze mǎá-wó hǎ nyi-nyi*
 3PL-take manner DIST contacted 1PL-PL also RED-raise
gɔme
 bottom
 ‘With that same manner they began raising us also’ (Hlòmatsi 1995 [2789])

As the examples so far illustrate, the *dze X gɔme* construction is used to signal the start (beyond the preparatory stage) of a situation. It implies that the situation has temporal extent beyond the initial stage and that it is going to be

carried through various temporal phases or become a habit, as in the case of starting school, for example.

The *dze X dzi* construction is different from the *dze X gɔme* construction in a number of respects. First there is the formal difference in relation to the different postpositions and also the fact that the dependent constituent in the postpositional phrase in the *dze X dzi* construction can only be a noun and not a gerund. The event expression in the *dze X gɔme* construction can be either a noun or a gerund. Second, the *dze X dzi* construction, unlike the *dze X gɔme* construction, can be used and interpreted literally as the referent of the subject argument ‘made contact with the surface of X’. Third, for the inceptive reading of the *dze X dzi* construction, the dependent constituent nominal in the postpositional phrase typically refers to a place (a location) rather than to an event. All the instantiations of the construction that I have found in a corpus study have a noun that relates to *mó* ‘road, way’. It seems that the construction is used to signal that the referent of the subject argument sets off on a way (to somewhere), a journey so to speak. Consider these examples:

- (81) a. *wó-dze* *aǝ-mó* *dzi*
 3PL-contacted home-road surface
 ‘[They packed his baggage into the vehicle and] they set off for home.’ (Hlɔmatis 1995 [2280])
- b. *mie-bu-i* *wò-de* *ná* *mi* *háfi*
 2PL-think-3SG 3SG-reach DAT 2PL before
dze *mó* *ǵǵ* *sia* *dzi* *kplɔlá* *ma.nɔ.me-e*
 contacted road big PROX surface leader without-PRED
 ‘You thought it through before you set off on this big road without a leader.’ (Fiawoo 1105)

There is a reduced form of the construction where the object complement of the verb *dze* ‘contacted’ is just a locative NP without the postposition *dzi* ‘upper.surface’. Both forms can be used interchangeably. In fact, the postposition can be left out in the sentences in (81) without any appreciable difference in meaning. An example of the reduced construction is given in (82).

- (82) *ɖevi-á-wó* *dze* *mó* *qó ta* *kɔbɔ* *nú*
 Child-DEF-PL contacted road sethead Krobo thing
me
 containing.region
 ‘The children set off on the way headed for the Krobo region.’

The *dze X dzi* structure does not always have an aspectual interpretation, as noted earlier. In one use, where the subject function is filled by an event referring expression, the expression signals that the event is successful. The one for

whose benefit such an event is successful is coded as the object of the dative preposition, as the sentence in (83) shows.

- (83) *dɔ-wɔ-wɔ dze é-dzi ná wó*
 work-RED-do contacted 3SG-upper.surface DAT 3PL
 ‘Work was successful for them.’ (Hlòmatsi 1995 [342])

Typically the dependent constituent of the postposition in such structures tends to be a situational anaphor or a null pronoun.

The distinguishing feature of the aspectual interpretation of this construction is that the dependent constituent of the postposition is filled by a locative nominal. Another filler of the dependent constituent that yields an inceptive aspectual interpretation is an event referring expression as in (84) below.

- (84) *wó-dze dɔ-a dzi*
 3PL-contacted work-DEF upper.surface
 ‘They started the work’

7.1.2 The *tó X gɔme* construction

The *tó X gɔme* construction is a dialect variant of the *dze X gɔme* structure. The verb *tó* ‘bring into vogue’ has an inceptive feature lexicalised in it. Hence its use in an inceptive aspect construction is well motivated. As far as I can determine, the event expression is realised as a noun (as opposed to a gerund). An example is given in (85).

- (85) *éya-é tó nú-á gɔme*
 3SG-aFOC bring.into.vogue thing-DEF bottom
 Lit: ‘HE brought the thing into vogue’, i.e. ‘HE started the thing’

7.1.3 The *lé X me* construction

The *lé X me* construction is also used to signal the start of a situation. The verb *lé* ‘hold, catch’ takes as its complement a postpositional phrase headed by *me* ‘containing.region’ and the dependent constituent of the postposition is an event denoting action nominal such as *avĩ* ‘cry’, *du* ‘race’ or *ylĩ* ‘shout’, as illustrated in (86).

- (86) *nyónu-a lé avi / ylĩ me*
 woman-DEF hold cry shout containing.region
 ‘The woman started to cry/shout’

Interestingly, nominals referring to more durative events like *suku* ‘school’ or *agble* ‘farm’ do not participate in this construction as the unacceptability of the sentences in (87) shows.

- (87) ?? *é-lé agble / suku me*
 3SG-hold farm school containing region
 ‘She started farming/schooling’

The HOLD verb is a source of grammaticalization of aspectual meanings like the progressive crosslinguistically. It is therefore not strange that a construction involving the verb can be specialised for the expression of inceptive meaning. A structure with the verb HOLD as the predicate where it takes a noun phrase complement as opposed to a postpositional phrase also gets an inceptive interpretation. This structure is like the reduced *dze X dzi* construction that is described in section 7.1.1. In this case too, the noun phrase complement involves the word *mó* ‘road, way’. Here too, the interpretation is that the referent of the subject argument sets off or takes the road, hence they start on an event, as illustrated in (88).

- (88) *é-lé tóme-mó / agble-mó*
 3SG-hold river.side-road farm-road
 ‘She has set off on the riverside road / the farm road’

The implication of the sentences in (88) is that she is going to the place to engage in the activities normally associated with that place. For instance, if she sets off on the road to the river side then she is either going to draw water or wash clothes or fish in the river.

There is a lexicalised multiverb expression involving the verb *lé* ‘hold’ and an event nominal *du* ‘race’ and a second verb *tsó* ‘take’ which has the meaning ‘start running’ (see 89a). This expression is synonymous with an instantiation of the *lé X me* construction where X is filled by *du* ‘race’. Consider these examples:

- (89) a. *éye wò-lé du tsó*
 and 3SG-hold race take
 ‘and he started to run’
 b. *éye wò-lé du me*
 and 3SG-hold race containing.region
 ‘and he started to run’

The inceptive aspect interpretation here as elsewhere derives from the interaction between the semantics of the operator verb, the event referring expression and the postposition.

7.1.4 The *dé así X me* construction

The literal meaning of *dé así X me* is ‘put hand in X’ which conjures up an underlying image of putting one’s hands into something to do something with it,

hence specialised for inceptive meaning. The structure is used to signal the first moment of an unfolding situation. One difference between the *dé así X me* construction and the *dze X gɔme* constructions is that the situation whose evolution in time is being described must be expressed as a gerund, i.e. a nominalized VP. For example, even though a stative nominalized form of VP *fɔ nu* ‘strike mouth’ is *nu-fɔ* ‘talk, speech’ and its action nominalization form *nu-fɔ-fɔ* ‘talking, speaking’ can both fill the X slot in the *dze X gɔme* construction, as in *dze nu fɔ/ nu-fɔ-fɔ gɔme* ‘begin (a) talk, speech/ talking, speaking’, it is only the action nominalization form that is acceptable in the *dé así X me* construction, as in (90).

- (90) *nyɔnu-a* *dé* *así* *nu-fɔ-fɔ* *kpli-i*
 woman-DEF put hand mouth-RED-strike with-3SG
 me
 containing.region
 ‘The woman started talking with him.’ (Hlɔmatsi 1995 [584])

This restriction pre-empts the *dé así X me* structure from being ‘physically’ interpreted as putting one’s hands into some object. Because such an interpretation is available if the X slot is filled by a concrete object referring NP such as *tsi* ‘water’ as in *dé así tsi me* ‘put hand in water’.

Another difference between the *dé así X me* and the *dze X gɔme* constructions is that the latter implies that the situation would develop through other temporal phases. The former, by contrast, does not have such an inference associated with it, it focuses on the initial starting stage of a specific situation.

The *dé así X me* construction can be seen as a specialisation of a three place construction involving the verb *dé* ‘put’ in which the THEME or first object is lexically filled by *así* ‘hand’ and the GOAL or LOCATIVE complement filled by a postpositional phrase whose head is filled in by *me* ‘containing.region’. The verb *dé* ‘put’ in this construction can be marked for the habitual, as in (91a) and it can take preverbs, as in (91b).

- (91) a. *sélɔm* *vá* *dé* *así* *ɲgɔ-yi-yi* *me*
 name VENT put hand front-RED-go containing.region
 ‘Selom eventually started making progress.’ (Hlɔmatsi 1995 [1883])
 b. *éye* *wó-dé-á* *así* *mɔnu-dí-dí* *me*
 and 3PL-put-HAB hand way-RED-look containing.region
 ‘and they start looking for ways (to obtain riches).’ (Hlɔmatsi 1995[2898])

To sum up, Ewe has a number of constructions which characterise the preparatory and first temporal segment of situations. They are specialisations of the use of contact verbs with their complements.

7.2 *The durative aspect construction*

The durative aspect construction has the form *le ~ nɔ X dzi* ‘be.at X upper.surface’. It is based on a specialisation of the basic locative construction with the postposition specified as *dzi* ‘upper.surface, top’ (see Ameka and Essegbey 2006). The operator verb is the suppletive locative verb set *le* ‘be.at:PRES’ and *nɔ* ‘be.at:NPRES’. The complement of the verb is a postpositional phrase whose dependent constituent is a noun, as in (92a) or a gerund, as in (92b), which refers to an event.

- (92) a. *yɔxɔme nɔ-a aví dzi*
 name be.at:NPRES-HAB cry upper.surface
nú-ma-ɖu-i
 thing-PRIV-eat-PRED
 ‘(For days) Yɔxɔme keeps crying without eating’ (Hlɔmatsi 1995 [475])
- b. *ɖevi-á ga-le gbeví-wɔ-wɔ dzi*
 child-DEF REP-be.at:PRES rogue-RED-do upper.surface
 ‘The child still keeps behaving as a rogue’
- c. *nɔ é-dzi ko*
 be.at:NPRES:IMP 3SG-upper.surface only
 ‘Just keep doing it’
- d. *mia-wó-é le (dɔ) dzi*
 2PL-PL-aFOC be.at:PRES work upper.surface
 ‘You keep working’ i.e. Courage!

As is evident from the examples, the non-present form of the verb can be marked for the habitual (92a) and it can also occur in the imperative (92c). Similarly, example (92b) shows that the present form of the verb can occur with preverbs. All these are indications of the verbal status of the operator in the construction. An instantiation of the construction represented in (92d) has been routinised for acknowledging people at work and for urging them to do more work. As indicated in (92d) the dependent constituent of the postposition can be omitted in this routinised expression since it is recoverable from the interactional and cultural context (see Ameka 1991 for a discussion of the routine).

As will become evident in the next section, the formal difference between the durative and the continuative constructions is in the verbs that fill the operator slot. The structural properties as well as the filler for the postposition are

the same for both constructions. The semantics of the operator verbs provide important clues to the semantics of the constructions. For the durative, the verb is a stative (locative) verb as such it has more stable temporal extent. For the continuative, however, the operator is a motion verb which is dynamic and this is predictive of its contexts of use.

7.3 The continuative *yi X dzí* construction

The continuative phasal aspect is expressed by the motion verb *yi* ‘go’ as the operator and its locative complement headed by the postposition *dzí* ‘upper.surface’. The literal meaning then of the expression is ‘go on doing something (X)’. The event expression which occurs as the dependent constituent in the postpositional phrase complement can be realised as a gerund, as in (93b), or a noun phrase, as in (93a) or a situational pronoun, as in (93c) or a null pronoun as in (93d).

- (93) a. *kúgblenú yi é-ǰé ɣútinya lá dzí bé*
 NAME go 3SG-POSS story DEF upper.surface QT
 ‘Kugblenu continued his story that ...’ (Ayeke 1974 [1524])
- b. *é-le bé ye-a-yi nú.gɔme.ku.ku lá*
 3SG-be.at:PRES COMP LOG-SBJV-go investigation DEF
dzí kplí-i
 upper.surface with-3SG
 ‘(He planned firmly that) he must continue the investigation with him’ (Ayeke 1974 [521])
- c. *agbezugé ga-yi é-dzí bé*
 NAME REP-go 3SG-upper.surface QT
 ‘Agbezuge continued again saying ...’ (Obianim 1990 [1365])
- d. *é-yi dzí hé-biá amúzu bé*
 3SG-go upper.surface IT-ask NAME QT
 ‘He went on and asked Amuzu that ...’ (Ayeke 1974 [1146])

As the examples illustrate, the operator in the construction, *yi* ‘go’, can occur with preverb markers such as the subjunctive (93b) and the repetitive (93c). Furthermore, it can head VPs in serial verb constructions, as in (93d) where it heads the first VP in the series. These patterns of collocation show that the operator has the status of a verb in the construction.

The continuative is used to signal that something that is happening should continue. In many cases it is used to indicate that a situation that was no longer occurring for some time has been resumed and will continue for some time. The subtle difference between the continuative and the durative in Ewe is that the latter relates to the situation enduring over the reference time and is equiva-

lent to ‘keep (on)’ in English. The former is equivalent to ‘go on’ and may just be starting at the reference time.

7.4 The egressive *wú X nu* construction

The construction *wú X nu* literally means ‘exceed/surpass the mouth, i.e., the endpoint of X’. It is used to signal that a situation has passed its last moment or temporal segment in its evolution, i.e. it has ended. Like in the other constructions, the dependent constituent of the postposition *nu* ‘mouth, endpoint, extremity’ can be a noun (94a) or a gerund (94b) or a pronoun, as in (94e), where it is anaphoric to the subject of the clause which is a referential event expression. The expression representing the event can also be null when it is recoverable from the immediate linguistic context. In (94c) the event denoting expression is null and it is linked to a shared object in an SVC. Similarly, in (94d) the event expression is null, but here it is coreferential with the subject of the clause.

- (94) a. *sélɔm wú suku nu éye mé-ga-nyé*
 NAME exceed school mouth and 3SG:NEG-REP-be
suku.ví fífiá o
 pupil now NEG
 ‘Selom finished school and he is no longer a pupil’ (Hlɔmatsi 1995 [1287])
- b. *é-si akpéne wú nya sia gbɔ-gblɔ nu lá,*
 when NAME exceed word PROX RED-say mouth TP
 ‘when Akpene finished saying this word, (she intoned a song)’
 (Hlɔmatsi 1995 [1125])
- c. *dó vevie bé na-de-e á-wú*
 put importance COMP 2SG:SUBJV-reach-3SG POT-exceed
nu
 mouth
 ‘Strive so that you will attend it (=medical school) and finish it’ (Hlɔmatsi 1995 [1946])
- d. *mɔ́keke lá á-wú nu le dzodá si*
 vacation DEF POT-exceed mouth LOC Monday REL
gbɔ-na gbe
 come-HAB day
 ‘The vacation will end next Monday’
- e. *ta.kpé.kpé-á wú é-nu*
 meeting-DEF exceed 3SG-mouth
 ‘The meeting ended (when the sun went down)’

That the verb with its postpositional complement in this construction can occur in an SVC (with shared object) as in (94c) where it is the second VP in the series, as well as the operator being marked for the potential is evidence of the bona fide verbal status of *wú* 'exceed' in this construction.

The difference between the completive, which was discussed in section 6, and the egressive is that the former focuses on the last part of the nucleus of a situation whereas the latter focuses on the coda, the last moment in the evolution of a situation. Part of the evidence for this comes from the fact the completive can collocate with the egressive to express the idea of imminent completion of the ending of a situation as in (95).

- (95) *mié-wú* *ta.kpé.kpé-á* *nu* *vɔ*
 1PL-exceed meeting-DEF mouth COMPL
 'We have almost finished the meeting'

While some of the expressions that are dedicated to the expression of phasal aspect in Ewe would seem to follow universal tendencies in the grammaticalization of verbs for these functions, I am not aware of any mention in the literature of the grammaticalization of an exceed verb grammaticalizing to an egressive phasal aspect marker. The motivation is quite transparent especially in combination with an endpoint signifying postposition: the situation has gone beyond its end point. This implies that it has ended. It is this which has become entrenched as the meaning of the construction.

7.5 *Lexicalisation of phasal aspect in verbs*

In the immediately preceding sections, we have described periphrastic constructions in which the phasal aspect meanings derive from the compositional semantics of the operator verb and its postpositional phrase complement. In addition to such constructions, there are also instances where phasal aspect readings are derived from the lexical semantics of verbs, that is, verbs which wear, so to speak, phasal aspect meanings on their sleeves. Such verbs have been called aspectual verbs or aspectualisers (Brrinton 1989). There are other instances where phasal aspect meanings are context-induced interpretations from the lexical semantics of the verb. In this section we briefly outline some of these verbs.

I will start with some aspectual verbs that we have already encountered in the preceding sections and continue with those we have not yet seen:

7.5.1 *The verb **tó** 'come into vogue'*

We have seen this verb in section 7.1.2 where it occurs in construction with a postpositional phrase headed by the postposition *gome* 'under' in a two place

construction. This verb can also occur with a single argument which is an event referring expression to signal the start of a situation. A common expression in which one finds it is: *dɔ tɔ* ‘famine has started’ (literally: stomach come.into.vogue).

7.5.2 The ‘finish’ and ‘end’ verbs

Two verbs which relate to the terminal viewpoint of situations are *vɔ* ‘finish’ and *sé* ‘end’. We have already seen the grammaticalized forms of these verbs as adverbial aspectuals—the completive *vɔ* and the cessative *sé*—in section 6. In spite of having been grammaticalized the verb forms are still used as verbal aspectualisers when they occur in one-place constructions to encode the idea of a situation having been finished or having been terminated (see 96 a, b)

- (96) a. *ga vɔ*
 Money finish
 ‘The money is finished’
 b. *nya má né-sé dɛ́ afi.ma*
 word DIST JUSS-end ALL there
 ‘Let that matter end there’

In addition, the verb *sé* ‘end’ can also occur in a two place construction and take a locative complement, as in (97).

- (97) *é-sé du-a me*
 3SG-end village-DEF containing region
 ‘It ended in the village’

7.5.3 The ‘stop’ verbs

Two other verbs, which we have not yet seen, also focus on the ending of situations. These are *dzudzɔ* ‘stop, rest’⁸ and *tási* ‘stop, cease’. These verbs can occur in a one-place or a two-place construction. In other words they are S=O ambitransitive verbs. They are largely synonymous. The former is the preferred form in the southern and standard dialects while the latter is more favoured in the inland dialects. The two verbs differ slightly in content as well: *tási* ‘stop’ relates to the abrupt ending of a situation while *dzudzɔ* ‘stop, rest’ implies the ending of a situation as a result of it having reached a natural point where one can stop it, even if just for a short time. Notice that the verb *dzudzɔ* ‘stop, rest’ is also used to describe a period of taking rest from some activity. Consider these examples:

- (98) a. *tsi-a* *tási*
 water-DEF stop
 ‘The rain stopped’
 b. *ɖɛví-á-wó* *tási* *ɣlí-á* *dó-dó*
 child-DEF-PL stop shout-DEF RED-send
 ‘The children stopped shouting’
- (99) a. *avi-a* *dzudzɔ*
 cry-DEF stop
 ‘The cry stopped.’
 b. *wó-dzudzɔ* *konyí. fū. fū*
 3PL-stop mourning
 ‘They stopped mourning’

Note that the event denoting expression can be a noun or a gerund, as the examples illustrate.

7.5.4 *Non-aspectual verbs used to express phasal aspect*

In addition to these verbs with an inherent aspectual meaning, there are a handful of verbs which when they collocate with some specific event denoting nominal expression are conventionally interpreted as signalling a temporal phase in the evolution of the situation being characterised in the clause. Three of such verbs are: *ke* ‘open without exerting force’, *do* ‘exit, appear, emerge’ and *tso* ‘cut’.

The verb *ke* ‘open’ in its use as a separation verb is applied to situations involving the opening of body parts like hands, thighs, mouth and eyes. In this usage the body part occurs as an obligatory complement of the verb in a two-place construction.⁹ The verb can also occur in a one-place construction and when its single argument is realised as a nominal that denotes a state of affairs, it is interpreted as the situation has come to an end. The nouns that typically collocate with the verb yielding such an aspectual interpretation include *tsi* ‘water, rain’, *dɔ* ‘hunger, famine’, *ava* ‘war’ and *dzre* ‘quarrel’. For example:

- (100) a. *tsi-ɛ* *ke*
 water-DEF open
 ‘The rain has stopped/cleared’
 b. *dzre* *ke*
 quarrel open
 ‘The quarrel has ended’

Perhaps the motivation for this use and interpretation is that the parts that were involved in the bringing about of the situation have come apart, just as the

two parts of the body parts come apart when one separates them. Hence the situation no longer holds, i.e. it has ended.

The verb *do* ‘move out from a place thought of as a container, i.e. exit’ as a boundary-crossing verb occurs with a Theme argument in subject function and at least another obligatory constituent whose function is either a locative object or adjunct. The latter is introduced by a spatial preposition (see 101a, b). The verb can also occur in a one-place construction where its single argument is realised as an event denoting nominal, especially meteorological entities and events referring expressions such as *tsi* ‘water, rain’, *dzinú* ‘moon, month’, *ɣdo* ‘sun’ and *te* ‘yam’ when used metonymically to represent the season of new yams. A context-induced interpretation of such structures is the inception of the event/situation (see 101 c)

- (101) a. *wó-do go*
3PL-exit outside
‘They exited outside’
- b. *kokló-á-wó do le kpó-á me*
chicken-DEF-PL exit LOC coop-DEF containing.region
‘The chooks have exited from the coop’
- c. *tsi / dzinú/ te do*
water moon yam exit
‘The rain has started’ / ‘The (new) moon / (new) yam has appeared
i.e. ‘the period of the new moon and new yam has started’

As the translations in (101c) indicate, the structures involving *do* ‘exit’ and a situation denoting nominal tend to mark the beginning of an event or a period. It seems as if the beginning is construed as coming about through the movement of the event across a boundary – a kind of fictive boundary – crossing motion. The inceptive reading thus seems to be motivated.

The separation verb *tso* ‘cut’ also has a terminative aspect interpretation when it occurs in one place construction in which the single argument involves a situation referring expression. The event denoting nominal can be realised as a noun (phrase) on its own, as in (102b), or as a dependent nominal phrase in a postpositional phrase headed by the postposition *nu* ‘mouth, endpoint’ as in (102a),

- (102) a. *fěfě lá / trú-á nu tso*
play DEF vomit-DEF endpoint cut
‘The play / the vomiting has ended’
- b. *tsi-a tso*
water-DEF cut
‘The water has stopped (running)’

We have already seen the use of the postposition *nu* ‘endpoint’ in the coding of the egressive phasal aspect (Section 7.4). It appears the schema underlying the expression involving the verb *tso* ‘cut’ is that the endpoint of the event has been severed, which is interpreted as the end of the situation. It does not have to be an abrupt end though, as a separation verb might imply. It just means the occurrence has stopped.

Thus phasal aspect meanings in Ewe are expressed through a number of formal means. They can be expressed using dedicated periphrastic constructions or they may be derived from the lexical semantics of aspectualisers. In addition they may also arise through context-induced readings of specific verbs in collocation with situation referring expressions as we have demonstrated in this last section. We turn now to an emerging periphrastic construction which can be interpreted as proximative aspect in the next section.

8 The proximative

The proximative is an aspectual notion that seems “to define a temporal phase located close to the initial boundary of the situation” characterised in the rest of the clause expressing a notion like ‘on the verge of V-ing’ (Heine 1994:36; see also Heine 1992:339, König 1993:85, Kuteva 1998:127 and Romaine 1999). There seems to be a conventionalised expression for such a meaning in several languages including Maa, Swahili, Zulu as well as Tok Pisin. Furthermore, such expressions involve a form meaning or related to a verb meaning ‘want’, ‘desire’, ‘love’, ‘like’, ‘seek’, or ‘look for’. Romaine (1999) suggests that the proximative is one of the meanings that Talmy (1985) surmises would not be coded grammatically. However, there is growing evidence that such a meaning is being grammaticalized in several languages such as those mentioned above as well as in Ewe.

The Ewe verb *dĩ* ‘want, like, seek, look for’ occurs in several syntactic environments which are associated with particular interpretations. It is bivalent. The constituent that fills its subject slot can be animate or inanimate. When it is inanimate and the object slot is filled by an NP, the verb has the interpretation of ‘seek’. The same interpretation can also be generated when the subject argument is animate, as the words from a popular song in (103) in which the two clauses mirror each other attest.

- (103) *nya mé-dĩ-á ame o ame-é*
 word NEG-want-HAB person NEG person-aFOC
 dĩ-á nya
 want-HAB word
 ‘Trouble does not seek people, PEOPLE look for trouble!’

The constituent that fills the object slot can be an NP (103, 104a) or a complement clause. If it is a complement clause, the verb must be marked for an irrealis category: the subjunctive or the potential, as illustrated in (104b).

- (104) a. *áma dī ga*
 NAME want money
 ‘Ama wants money’ / ‘Ama looked for money’
 b. *agbezugé dī bé ye-a-gbé nyónu-a*
 NAME want COMP LOG-SUBJV-refuse woman-DEF
 ‘Agbezuge wants to divorce the woman’ (Obianim 1990 [2217])

In a specific context, the sentence in (104b) can be interpreted as ‘Agbezuge was about to divorce the woman’. This is the proximative interpretation of the *dī* ‘want’ + complement construction. This reading is coerced when the subject function in the matrix clause is filled by an NP that is inanimate as in (105). In such contexts the volition sense of the wanting verb is backgrounded and an aspectual interpretation of the construction as a whole is foregrounded.

- (105) a. *tsi dī bé ye-a-dza*
 water want COMP LOG-SUBJV-ooze
 ‘Rain wants to fall’ i.e. ‘it is about to rain’.
 b. *dɔ dī bé ye-a-lé-m*
 sickness want COMP LOG-SUBJV-catch-1SG
 lit: ‘Sickness wants to catch me’, i.e. ‘I am about to become sick’

Thus an instantiation of a WANT complement construction is interpreted as proximative, depending on the fillers. Unlike some of the languages described by Heine and his colleagues such as Maa or Zulu, the verb *dī* ‘want’ in Ewe has not grammaticalized into a proximative marker. It is the structure as a whole that has the interpretation. In fact, the verb *dī* ‘want’ can be omitted from the sentences containing the *bé* ‘QT/COMP’ clause and the same patterns of readings are applicable, as the free translations of the sentences in (106) show.

- (106) a. *siká bé ye-a-kpó wò*
 NAME QT LOG-SUBJV-see 2SG
 ‘Sika wants to see you’ lit: ‘Sika says she would see you’
 b. *dzɔgbevɛ́é bé ye-a-dé go.me ná-m*
 misfortune QT LOG-SUBJV-enter pants DAT-1SG
 ‘Misfortune is about to come upon me’
 lit: ‘misfortune says it should enter pants for me’

Thus far it would appear that the interpretation of the *dī* ‘want’+ *bé* ‘QT/COMP’ clause construction as desiderative or proximative or both de-

depends on the animacy of the matrix clause constituent. In contexts where it is inanimate, the interpretation tends to be proximative. In those contexts where it is animate, the interpretation tends to be desiderative or vague. However, in some instantiations of the construction involving constituents in subject function which at first glance might be considered inanimate the interpretation is rather vague. One such context is where the subject of the matrix clause is realized as a possessive NP involving a human (animate possessor) and a possessed part as illustrated in (107).

- (107) *É-ǰě gbe dí bé ye-a-de dzi vié*
 3SG-poss voice want COMP LOG-SUBJV-reach sky a.bit
 ‘Her voice wanted to rise /was rising a bit’
 ‘She wanted to / was about to raise her voice a bit’ (Ayeke 1974 [1889])

In this and similar examples, it could be argued that since the NP refers to part of a human, it is not entirely void of animacy, hence the vagueness in interpretation.

Conversely, there are contexts in which the subject of the matrix clause is animate and yet the proximative reading is more focal. This is the case when the dependent clause relates to a property or quality, as in (108).

- (108) *é-dī bé ye-a-biã*
 3SG-want COMP LOG-SUBJV-become.macro.red
 ‘She is almost copper-coloured’

It would not be unfair to claim that there is a (sub) construction in Ewe which is being specialised for the expression of proximative aspect. Its features can be represented as:

- (109) The proximative aspect construction
 Form: NP [_{±animate}] (*dī* ‘want’) *bé* ‘COMP/QT’ clause [_{-realis}]
 Meaning: a short time after t, the first parts of something can happen because of something that is happening at t
 (t = reference time)

Because the interpretation of the instantiations of this construction depend to a large extent on the contextual fillers, it is fair to say that its grammaticalization is in progress. One can still derive the interpretations from an interplay between the semantics of the individual items and the context of use. For instance, by virtue of the fact that inanimate entities are not sentient, one does not expect them to be able to have wants, desires and volition (except when they are personified). Such a feature will thus trigger a suppression of the volition feature in the verb, flagging that some other feature be foregrounded. This is

what can give rise to the proximative interpretation. The same can be said for contexts where the want verb is omitted. In such cases, the quotative could be interpreted as the inanimate entity saying something and the incommensurability of such an interpretation coerces the proximative reading. In fact such matrix verbless sentences with inanimate subjects have a strong preference for the proximative interpretation. Such structures could thus ultimately become the grammaticalized proximative aspectual constructions in the language.

9 Concluding remark

In this chapter, I have surveyed the forms used in Ewe to express aspect, mood and modality meanings. By way of conclusion, I want to draw attention to two organising principles of the system. First, I claim that Ewe forces its speakers to express with every utterance a feature related to the realis/irrealis continuum. Second, there is an elaboration in Ewe grammar of the expression of the degree of “imminence” of the realisation of situations. Thus a number of the forms we have described have a meaning component of “something about to happen”. The prospective construction has imminent future as one of its primary meanings. A reading of the progressive in certain contexts also involves imminence (see Ameka and Dakubu this volume). Furthermore, the completive marker has an imminent-realisation reading when it collocates with punctual predicates, as well as when it is reduplicated or triplicated (see section 6.1). Moreover, the grammaticalization of a proximative construction is in progress (section 8). A question for future research is whether these features of the system have cognitive salience in discourse practice and whether these are aspects of situations that Ewe speakers attend to in discourse production or in “thinking for speaking”.

Endnotes

¹ This example is taken from a line of girls’ puberty love songs. The desiderative sense implicit in the subjunctive is derivable from the continuation of the song:

<i>Má-dɛ</i>	<i>wò</i>	<i>nè-bé</i>	<i>yi-má-dɛ-m</i>	<i>o</i>
1SG:SUBJV-take	2SG	2SG-QT	LOG-NEG.SUBJV-take-1SG	NEG
<i>Máwúdɔlá</i>	<i>dɛ</i>	<i>gé</i>	<i>nè-le=a</i>	
angel	take	PROSP	2SG-be.at:PRES=Q	

‘I wanted to marry you, you say you don’t want to marry me,
is it an angel who is going to marry you?’

² There seems to be an Anlo specific imperative construction which is getting out of use. It involves the suffixing of the form *-ní* to the verb (cf. Westermann 1930:76 who says the form is obsolete). For instance, in the TV drama “Tɔnyeko”, when the father, Ganyo, was presenting

a letter he had received concerning his son Tɔnyeko to him, he said: *xɔ-mí* ‘2SG:get-IMP’ ‘Take (it)’. One could speculate that the *mí* form is the distal deictic that is also used in presentational constructions in Anlo. For example, *yémí* ‘3SG-DISTDEIC’ ‘That’s it’ (see Ameka and Essegbey 2006)

³ The illocutionary meaning of the simple jussive construction can be roughly paraphrased as follows, inspired by The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach of reductive paraphrase (see e.g. Wierzbicka 1988):

3rd person Subject **né** VP

I want something to happen

(e.g. I want someone to come into this place, example (31))

I cannot do it

I think someone else can do it (i.e. the referent of the subject)

I know if someone did something it would happen

I say it because I want this person to do it

⁴ This counterfactual protasis introducer is identical in form and related, in origin and semantics, to the emphatic question introducer (see Table 2). I have suggested that the two forms come from the predicate focus marker (Ameka 1986 chapter 2). Briefly the scenario for development is that the predicates in the scope of conditional clefts are marked by the predicate focus marker and then these sentences became abridged leaving the predicate focus marker as the introducer of conditions, hypothetical propositions that one wants to have confirmed or disconfirmed. It is conceivable that a full form of a counterfactual conditional is as follows.

né-nyé *dɛ* *mɛ-kpɔ́-e* *lá* *á-nyé* *né* *mɛ-gblɔ́-e* *nɛ*
COND-be pFOC 1SG-see-3SG TP IRR-be LINK 1SG-say-3SG DAT:3SG

‘If it were that I saw him/her, it would have been that I would have told him/her’

Here the apodosis is also contained within an irrealis clause which is consistent with the use of *né*. Such forms are still used but the more common are the abridged forms:

⁵ Notice that this sentence is ambiguous in English between ‘The child is almost mature’ and ‘The child is very mature’. I am grateful to Alan Duthie for drawing my attention to this ambiguity.

⁶ This strategy is employed only in some dialects, most notably the northern dialects. Some other dialects, for instance the Ho dialect, just reduplicate the form. It appears that the Anlo dialect does not make use of any of these.

⁷ An utterance containing a proposition modified by the adverbial aspectual *kpɔ́* can be paraphrased along the lines of reductive paraphrase of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage framework as:

One can know this of some time *t* (not this time now):

X (= proposition) happened by *t*

⁸ This verb could be historically the intensive form of the verb *dzo* ‘wait’. It would have been derived by reduplication with the vowel in the reduplicative specified as a high counterpart of the stem vowel (see Ameka 1999 for further elaboration).

⁹ The lexicalised expression *ɣu ke* ‘eye open’ meaning ‘it is day break’ is the only usage in which the verb occurs intransitively with a body part. This body part term however does not have physical reference. It has a psychological function.

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The potential morpheme in Ewe

James Essegbey

It has been claimed that Kwa languages in general do not have grammaticalized tense. This claim has been validated for such languages as Dangme, Ga and Akan. Osam (1994), for example, argues that what was traditionally considered to be tense in Akan is actually an aspectual category which is in the process of being grammaticalized as tense. There is a morpheme in Ewe (the *a*-morpheme) which has, however, been analysed as the future morpheme. This analysis does not only suggest that Ewe is an exception to the generalisation concerning tenselessness in Kwa languages, but is also portrays the language as possessing a rather marked future/non-future opposition; Ewe does not have past tense. In this paper, I argue that the *a*-morpheme, whose cognate has been treated as an aspectual morpheme in Ga, does not have the semantics of future tense in Ewe either. This is because it does not have temporal deixis as its primary function. I propose that it be treated as a modal morpheme instead, which marks potentiality. Such an analysis aligns it with the distributional patterning of other modal morphemes in the language.

1 Introduction

The term [tense] is employed more loosely in traditional grammar where it covers not only what is here classified as tense, but also a range of other time-related distinctions which linguists now tend to subsume under aspect (Fleischman 1982:11).

The aim of this paper is to argue that the *a*-morpheme which has been analysed as an exponent of the future morpheme in Ewe (cf. Westermann 1930, Clements 1972) is not a grammaticalized tense category. Instead it is a modal morpheme with the semantics of potentiality. Although potentiality is irrealis, I do not refer to the morpheme as irrealis, as has been proposed for a similar morpheme in Fon, another Gbe language (cf. Avolonto 1995). Instead, I refer to it as the potential morpheme. The reason is because it is not the only form with an irrealis meaning in the language. Since Ewe does not have grammaticalized past or present time reference either, I conclude that it is a tenseless language. The essence of my claim is not new even for the Ewe language. Clements (1972) for instance, writes that there is little semantic basis for a distinction between tense and aspect in Anlo (a dialect of Ewe). He also states in a foot-

note that “there are no forms which can properly be called ‘tense’” (fn2:N-7). Despite these observations, Clements decides to use the term “future tense” as a “mnemonic device”. One gets the impression that Duthie (1996:40) is not committed to a tense-semantics of the morpheme either when he writes “the future, *as we may call it..*” (emphasis mine). One problem with this ambivalence is that the morpheme sometimes ends up being attributed more tense-semantic value than may be actually intended by the authors. For instance, even though Clements (1972:42) states explicitly that the categories which include tense are “set up [by him] on the basis of syntactic criteria alone and are not intended as direct semantic representations”, he comments elsewhere, on the inability of the morpheme to occur with the habitual or progressive, that it is “an arbitrary fact of Anlo syntax, *since future time is not semantically incompatible with the habitual (or progressive)*” (1972:50, emphasis mine). Such a comment gives the impression that the term future tense means more than a simple mnemonic device.

Another problem with such terminology is that it does not allow for cross-linguistic comparison. The TAM system that has been described for other Kwa languages appear to be similar to the situation in Ewe. For instance, Dakubu (1987:60) writes on Dangme, another Kwa language of Ghana:

In the Dangme verb system, tense is of secondary importance. Of course, it is perfectly possible in the language to indicate whether an event took place in the past, is taking place in the present or is to happen in the future, for example by using adverbial expression of time, like **mwɛnɔ** ‘today’, **hwɔɔ** ‘tomorrow’. However, in the structure of the VP itself, it is not relations of tense or time sequence that are important so much as relations of the kind commonly called *aspectual*; whether or not an event or action is (or was or will be) actual and/or continuing or not (emphasis mine).

Osam (1994) also argues that what was traditionally considered tense in Akan is actually an aspectual category which is in the process of being grammaticalized as tense (cf. also Osam, this volume). These claims fall in line with Manfredi’s (1991) observation that Kwa languages are tenseless. I show that data from Ewe support the above observations.

The paper is organised as follows: in section 1, I distinguish between the potential and the subjunctive morphemes, both of which are irrealis and can be represented by the segment *a-*,¹ albeit with differences in tone. Subsequent reference to the *a*-morpheme will then involve the one which has a potential meaning. In section 2, I discuss what I mean by such terms as tense, mood and modality. I also introduce the monosemy principle which I adopt in my analysis of the *a*-morpheme. In section 3, I discuss my methodological assumptions. Section 4 discusses the various uses of the potential morpheme. I show that the morpheme has several uses that are not compatible with a future-tense analysis.

In a subsection, I show that the morpheme is not necessary for expressing futurity in some dialects of Ewe. I therefore conclude that the future is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for the use of the morpheme. Section 5 discusses a variant of the potential which occurs in serial verb constructions. I conclude the paper in section 6.

2 Distinguishing between the potential and the subjunctive

There are two morphemes in Ewe which express irrealis. These are the potential, *(l)á*, and the subjunctive, *(n)á*. As I have stated, both notions *can* be represented by the segment *a-*. In spite of this, there is evidence that the two are different, evidence which has not always been recognised. Clements (1972:166) points out that “the subjunctive was ignored in early descriptions of Ewe by Westermann and others, and considerable confusion resulted from the consistent failure to distinguish it from the future”. One result of the failure to distinguish between them is that Westermann sometimes uses the wrong examples to represent what he takes to be a future property. For example, in order to show that the morpheme expresses what he refers to as “future actions, or conditions and qualities which are yet to come” (1930:118), he provides the example below which has a subjunctive rather than the so-called future:

- (1) *má-flá* *dzatá* *lá* *wò* *etsɔ*
 1SG-SUBJV-show lion DEF 2SG a.day.removed
 ‘Let me show you the lion tomorrow’

Although Westermann translates the sentence as ‘I shall show you the lion tomorrow’, the appropriate translation, which I have provided above, is ‘let me show you the lion tomorrow’. This is because of the high tone on the *á*-form. By contrast, the potential, in the above context, would have a low tone, as the sentence below illustrates:

- (2) *mà-flá* *dzatá* *lá* *wò* *etsɔ*
 1SG-POT-show lion DEF 2SG a.day.removed
 ‘I may show you the lion tomorrow’

What sentences (1), with the subjunctive *á*, and (2), with the potential *à*, show is that both morphemes can occur in the same environment, albeit with important differences in meaning. These differences are missed in an analysis that fails to identify the differences in the tone of the morphemes.

A more serious problem with Westermann’s failure to distinguish between the subjunctive and the potential is that he attributes some wrong properties to the latter morpheme. For instance, it is also the subjunctive, not the potential, that he refers to when he writes that “we also find the future in all objective

phrases introduced by **bé** ‘to say’, provided that the objective phrase expresses something which is to occur in the future” (Westermann 1930:120). As to be expected, it is the *á*-form with a high tone which is used in this example too:

- (3) *me-dí* *bé* *m-á-flé* *só*
 1SG-want that 1SG-SUBJV-buy horse
 ‘I want to buy a horse’

So how does one distinguish between the subjunctive and the potential? According to Clements (1972) the subjunctive is the form characteristic of clauses expressing necessity, purpose, volition, etc. It is realised as **á-** when it follows a pronoun, and **ná** elsewhere. The underlying tone of the subjunctive is high but it becomes low when preceded by a pronoun with a low tone. This is illustrated by the examples below:

- (4) a. *é-le* *bé* *wó-á-vá* *kpó-m*
 3SG-be.at:PRES that 3PL-SUBJV-come see-1SG
 ‘They have to come and see me’
 b. *é-le* *bé* *wò-a-vá* *kpó-m*
 3SG-be.at:PRES that 3SG-SUBJV-come see-1SG
 ‘S/he has to come and see me’

In (4a) the subjunctive has a high tone but in (4b) where it is preceded by a low-tone pronoun, the tone is low.

The potential differs from the subjunctive both in its variant and in tone. Some dialects of Ewe have *la-* as the variant of the potential, as opposed to the *ná-* of the subjunctive. Secondly, the potential has a basically non-high tone which is often realised as low. Consider the examples below:

- (5) a. *wó-à-vá* *kpó-m*
 3PL-POT-come see-1SG
 ‘They may come and see me’
 b. *à-vá* *kpó-m*
 3SG:POT-come see-1SG
 ‘S/he may come and see me’

Note that in spite of the high tone of the pronoun in (5a), the tone of the potential remains low. In (5b), on the other hand, it has a falling tone. This is a compound tone comprising of the high tone of the pronominal prefix *é-*, which gets elided, and the low tone of the potential morpheme. The intriguing thing is that the tone of the potential remains falling even when there is a lexical noun in subject position, as illustrated below:

- (6) *Kofi á-vá kpɔ-m*
 Kofi POT-come see-1SG
 'Kofi may come and see me'

Because of sentences like (6), Clements (1972) posits two forms for the potential, namely *áa-* which occurs after nouns and *a-* which occurs before pronouns. However, it is not necessary to posit two forms because the presence of the falling tone is easily explained.

The source of the falling tone can be traced to the convention in Ewe to use pronominal prefixes even where the sentence has a lexical subject. Consider the example below:

- (7) *nye kplé Kofi *(míé)-yi Gɛ*
 1SG LINK Kofi 1PL-go Accra
 'Kofi and I went to Accra'

Although there is a conjoined NP in subject position, the sentence will be wrong without the pronominal prefix. While the prefix is obligatory in the above example, it is optional when the pronominal prefix is the third person plural, as illustrated below:

- (8) *Kofi kplé Ama (wó)-yi tɔ lá dzi*
 Kofi LINK Ama (3PL)-go lake DEF top
 'Kofi and Ama went on the lake'

It is usually assumed that the third person singular pronominal prefix is not used at all. However, the sentence below which comes from elicited data shows that it does occur in the Anlo dialect of Ewe:

- (9) *évo atsiáfũ é-gblě-è*
 but sea 3SG-spoil-3SG
 'but the sea has destroyed it' (a recorded conversation on the location of a concert hall called Rose Pavilion)

The third person singular pronoun in the sentence refers to *atsiáfũ* 'sea'. Note that there is no topic marker on the nominal, or a comma indicating a pause after the nominal. The pronoun therefore behaves like the one in (8).

It is clear that the origin of the compound tone on the third person singular form derives from this convention. The inland dialects also have a compound tone when the potential represents the second person singular morpheme, and is followed by a verb which has a low tone. This is illustrated below:

- (10) *ǎ-yi*
 2SG:POT-go
 'You may go' (epistemic)

The segment *è* which represents the second person singular pronoun is elided and the tone gets transferred onto the potential. It has been observed that inland dialects raise a low tone when it occurs between two low tones (cf. Smith 1968, Clements 1972). This explains the rise in the tone of the segment. In other words, we have a sequence of three low tones, i.e., those of the pronominal prefix, the potential and the verb. The low tone of the potential which is sandwiched between the other two low tones is raised, giving rise to the compound tone. This raise does not occur when the verb has a high tone, as the example below shows:

- (11) *à-vá*
 2SG:POT-come
 'You may come'

What the discussion shows is that the tone of the potential, unlike that of the subjunctive is basically non-high. It is therefore possible to tell the two morphemes apart even when they are represented with the same segment.

3 On tense, mood and modality

To say that a language is tenseless does not mean that it does not express time relations. In this section, therefore, I state my assumptions on what I take to be tense and modality. Following Fleischman (1982), I assume that a tensed proposition necessarily contains a reference to some period of time (R) which cannot be identified except in terms of the zero-point of an utterance.² For instance, to state that a morpheme represents future tense is to suggest that it serves the primary deictic purpose of locating a state of affairs in a time posterior to the moment of speech. "Primary" because it is possible for a morpheme with a modal or aspectual meaning to be exploited for expressing futurity. According to Comrie (1985:46), therefore, in order to establish that a grammatical form is the future form, one has not only to establish that it is used for future time reference but also that its use "*cannot be treated as a special use of a grammatical category with basically non-tense meaning*" (emphasis mine). For instance, concerning what he considers to be the future tense in English, Comrie (1985:44) writes:

[It] makes a clear prediction about some future state of affairs, and is in this way clearly distinct from modal constructions that make reference to alternative worlds. Thus *it will rain tomorrow* is a very definite statement about a state of affairs to hold at a certain time subsequent to the present moment, and its truth can be tested at that future time by seeing whether it does in fact rain or not. This can be contrasted with *it may rain tomorrow*, which is simply a claim about a possible world in which there is rain tomorrow.

In order to establish that a form has a future tense reference, one has to ascertain that it does not have other uses which are not related to futurity and also that there are no instances of future time reference that do not require the use of the morpheme. This is because such instances, according to Comrie, would be an indication that future time reference is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the use of the morpheme. In what follows, I show that this is indeed the case for what I call the potential morpheme. I now take a brief look at the issue of mood and modality.

Mood, according to Fleischman (1982) is the formal (morphological) category of the verb which has a modal function, while modality, as traditionally defined, has to do with the speaker's attitude toward the propositional content of his utterance. The latter involves a broad range of semantic nuances, among which are potential, intensive, hypothetical, necessitative. Modality can be realised morphologically, lexically, syntactically, or even intonationally. In the present paper, I will be concerned with modality which is realised morphologically and which, according to the definition provided at the beginning of the paragraph, therefore, is mood. Bhat (1999) identifies three parameters for establishing modal distinctions, the first of which is the speaker's opinion or judgement regarding the actuality of an event. He writes:

Judgements can be of different types depending upon the confidence that the speaker has in asserting the occurrence of an event. He may consider the event to be real or unreal (imaginary or hypothetical) and further, he may be sure or unsure about his own judgement in this regard (Bhat 1999:63).

This is epistemic mood, being knowledge based, and one important type is the distinction between *realis* and *irrealis*. It represents "a distinction between events that are portrayed as actually occurring on the one hand, and the ones that are portrayed as still within the realm of thought, on the other" (Bhat 1999:65). It has been observed that this distinction characterises what is sometimes supposed to be a future/non-future tense opposition in some languages. One such observation is Comrie's (1985:49) that "in Dyirbal, for instance, although it would at first appear that there is a split between future and non-future, investigation suggests rather that there is a distinction between *realis* and *irrealis*". There are different kinds of semantic nuances that constitute *irrealis* and some of them may be expressed by a single mood. For instance, the subjunctive mood in Latin expresses the jussive, optative and potential (cf. Fleischman 1982) all of which are *irrealis*. It is known, however, that languages differ in terms of what is coded as *irrealis* and how this meaning is represented (cf. Mithun 1995). A language may therefore have more than one mood expressing *irrealis*, as the discussion in the previous section shows to be the case

for Ewe. In that case, one does not simply refer to one of the moods as an irrealis mood.

Fleischman (1982) discusses Mattoso Camara's (1956:33, 1957:223) three grades of future. These are "modal, modal-temporal, and temporal". Each of these supposedly corresponds to a different level of grammar:

- (i) future as pure mood, with time being either past or present (=non-past),
- (ii) future as tense with a modal coloration that allows it to substitute for non-past forms (including the future)
- (iii) future as a pure tense on an equal footing with past and present.

I argue that Ewe belongs to the languages which express future as pure mood. Before getting into the discussion of the morpheme, I state my methodological assumptions.

4 Methodological assumptions

As a general methodological approach, I adopt the monosemy bias of Ruhl (1989:4) which is provided below:

First Hypothesis: A word has a single meaning

Second Hypothesis: If a word has more than one meaning its meanings are related by general rules.

I assume that this principle applies to grammatical items as well and, therefore, that the potential *a*-morpheme has a single invariant meaning. As a natural consequence of this, I assume, following Wilkins and Hill (1995) that there are two levels of semantics, the first of which is concerned with "stored communicable information associated with conventional signs" and the second of which is concerned with "the information derived online as the final interpretation of utterances (and their parts) in particular contexts". The former is more representative of the invariant meanings of linguistic signs while the latter accounts for the particular interpretations that derive in part from contextual factors. One type of meaning that I discuss is default meaning. This is a semantics 2 interpretation which uses a general or standard context (given other items in the utterance) to derive an understanding of what might be intended by an utterance. Following Levinson (1995, 2000), I assume that default meanings are merely preferred interpretations which are due to a general conversational implicature and, as such, are not entailed. For instance, the potential *a*-morpheme which I discuss can be used with present, past and future-time interpretations. In some contexts, the future-time interpretation is the preferred interpretation.

What I show is that such preferred interpretations can be defeated and, hence do not constitute the meaning of the morpheme.

5 On the potential nature of the morpheme

In this section, I show that the *a*-morpheme cannot be a future-tense morpheme. The section is divided into two subsections. In the first subsection, I show that future-time reference is not a necessary condition for the use of the morpheme. In other words, it has many other uses that are not related to future. In the other subsection, I show that future is not a sufficient condition for the use of the morpheme since there are other ways of expressing futurity in some dialects of Ewe.

5.1 *Future is not a necessary condition*

In this section I show that while some of the uses of the *a*-morpheme can be interpreted as future, this is really due to an interpretation derived from its potential meaning. Besides, it has several uses that are not compatible with a future-tense analysis. I begin by showing the irrealis nature of the morpheme.

There are two morphemes, *ési* and *né*, which are sometimes translated as ‘when’ in some contexts (I however gloss *né* as ‘if’ owing to reasons provided below). While *ési* represents states of affairs that have occurred, *né* represents possibilities. Consider the examples below:

- (12) a. *Ési me-kpó Ama lá me-yó-e*
 when 1SG-see Ama TP 1SG-call-3SG
 ‘When I saw Ama, I called her’
 b. *né me-kpó Ama lá me-yó-nê*
 if 1SG-see Ama TP 1SG-call-HAB:3SG
 ‘whenever I see Ama I call her’

While (12a) expresses a state of affairs that has occurred, (12b) has a conditional nuance (I only call Ama if and when I see her). As a result of the difference, only *né* can co-occur with constructions containing the potential *à*-morpheme, as the sentences below illustrate:

- (13) a. **ési me-kpó Ama lá m-à-yó-e*
 when 1SG-see Ama TP 1SG-POT-call-3SG
 ‘When I see Ama, I will call her’
 b. *né me-kpó Ama lá m-à-yó-e*
 if 1SG-see Ama TP 1SG-POT-call-3SG
 ‘If I see Ama I will call her’

- c. *né m-à-kpó Ama lá m-à-yó-e*
 if 1SG-POT-see Ama TP 1SG-POT-call-3SG
 'If I saw Ama, I would call her (but I doubt that I'll see her)'

Sentence (13a) shows that it is not possible to have *ési* in constructions containing the potential *a*-morpheme. Sentence (13b) is a simple conditional sentence that has the potential *a*-morpheme in the main clause. Such constructions give the impression that the morpheme expresses future time. However, as we see in (13c), it can also occur in the *né*-clause and when it does, it does not express a state of affairs that is going to happen. Instead, it refers to a remote condition. The sentence would therefore be used by a person who has little hope of seeing Ama. It shows that the semantics of the morpheme is rather potential.

There is enough evidence to suggest that the *a*-morpheme deals primarily with the modal meaning of potentiality rather than tense (or aspect). For example, the sentence below refers to ability, not futurity:

- (14) *à-xlē agbalē má bɔbɔe*
 2SG:POT-read book that easily
 'You can read that book easily'

This sentence does not make predictions about a state of affairs to come. Instead, it suggests that the addressee is in a position to read the book without difficulty, an interpretation made all the more evident by the presence of the adverbial *bɔbɔe* 'easily'. The *a*-morpheme therefore behaves in (14) like an existential quantifier over a set of possible worlds which states that a state of affairs can come about.

The morpheme also combines with the progressive morpheme to open the window to the inner structure of a potential state of affairs. This is represented below:

- (15) *tsi á-nɔ dza-dza-m'*
 water POT-be.at:NPRES RED-fall-PROG
 'It may be raining'

This sentence does not situate the state of affairs it represents in any deictic-time frame. As a result, either a temporal adverb may be used to situate it in time, or a subordinate clause containing a similar mood can be used to represent it as a hypothetical situation without temporal reference, as illustrated below:

- (16) a. *tsi á-nɔ dza-dza-m' fɪfɪa*
 water POT-be.at:NPRES RED-fall-PROG now
 'It may be raining now'

- b. *tsi á-nɔ dza-dza-m'*
 water POT-be.at:NPRES RED-fall-PROG
gaké wò-à-mlɔ gota
 but 3SG-POT-lie outside
 'It might be raining but he would sleep outside'

Sentence (16a) does not refer to a state of affairs that is yet to occur. Instead, it refers to a state of affairs that could be taking place, at the moment of enunciation, in a possible world outside the area where the speaker and addressee are located. Sentence (16b), on the other hand, does not make reference to any reference time at all; the state of affairs represented could occur at any time.

Westermann also discusses some functions of the potential *à*-morpheme that do not involve tense. He characterises one such function as probable, approaching, approximate, and provides the example below, among others:

- (17) *éya á-sɔ gbɔ*
 3SG POT-be.equal excess
 'This may be a lot'

Nothing about this sentence suggests prediction. Instead, it refers to a potential state of affairs *in the present*.

Considering the non-tense uses of the *à*-morpheme discussed above, the question arises as to why it often receives future-tense analyses. The answer is that the occurrence of the morpheme in some contexts does invite "yet-to-occur" interpretations. As I will show, however, such interpretations are merely preferred interpretations and, therefore, do not constitute the meaning of the form. Consider the sentence below:

- (18) *Kofi á-qu mɔ́lu le ye-trɔ́ me*
 Kofi POT-eat rice LOC sun-turn containing.region
 'Kofi "will" eat rice in the late afternoon'

This sentence illustrates a tendency in Ewe, which is to ascribe a yet-to-occur interpretation to activity predicates when they occur with the *a*-morpheme. The adverbial phrase *yetrɔ́ me* 'in the late afternoon' does not resolve the issue since it could refer to a time that is either anterior or posterior to the moment of utterance. As shown by the translation, however, the preferred interpretation is that Kofi will eat in a time to come. That the interpretation is merely a preferred one is brought out by the fact that the sentence can be embedded in a past situation, as the sentence below illustrates:

- (19) *me-gblɔ ná wò bé Kofi á-ɖu mɔ́lu*
 1SG-say to/for2SG that Kofi POT-eat rice
le fiẽ me me-xɔ-e se
 LOC evening containing.region2SG:NEG-receive-3SG hear
o Ama bé é-ɖu-i
 NEG Ama say 3SG-eat-3SG
 ‘I told you Kofi might eat rice in the evening but you didn’t believe me. Ama says that he ate it’

Next, *etsɔ* in Ewe means ‘a day removed from today’. This could either be the day after (i.e., tomorrow) or the day before (i.e., yesterday). Aboh (1998) has observed that when this word occurs in a clause which has the *a*-morpheme, the preferred interpretation is “tomorrow” rather than yesterday. This is illustrated below:

- (20) *Kofi á-fũ du etsɔ*
 Kofi POT-move.limbs course a.day.removed
 ‘Kofi “will” run tomorrow’

The translation is a preferred interpretation because *etsɔ* could be made more specific in which case it would refer to the day before the time of utterance, as shown in the example below:

- (21) *Kofi á-fũ du etsɔ si vá yi*
 Kofi POT-move.limbs course a.day.removedREL come go
 ‘Kofi might have run yesterday’

What this shows is that the “yet-to-occur” interpretations are merely preferred ones which can be defeated. As such, they do not constitute the invariant *meaning* of the morpheme. The question then is why is it that activity predicates invite this “yet-to-occur” interpretation which is usually taken to represent a future tense?

Activity predicates without overt marking express states of affairs which are completed, as the sentence below illustrates:

- (22) *Kofi ɖu mɔ́lu*
 Kofi eat rice
 ‘Kofi has eaten rice’

This sentence refers to an unspecified eating state of affairs that has taken place. The use of the potential suggests that the speaker is not in a position to assert that the state of affairs has occurred. This in turn leads to the assumption that the state of affairs has not yet taken place. The most likely interpretation

that is given to such uses then is a “yet-to-occur” interpretation, hence the future. However, as has been shown, this is merely a default interpretation.

While activity predicates invite a “yet-to-occur” interpretation, achievement and state predicates do not. Consider the examples below:

- (23) a. *fôfô-nye â-nya ɲútsu má*
 father-1SG POT-know man that
 ‘My father may know that man’
 b. *ga lá â-sue ákpá*
 money DEF POT-be.small too.much
 ‘The money may be too small’

Nyá ‘to know’ in Ewe is not stative. Instead, it is an achievement verb which best translates as “get to know”. It can therefore occur in the progressive. *Sue* ‘small’, on the other hand, is a true stative and, hence, cannot occur in the progressive (cf. Essegbey 1999). The default interpretations of the two sentences above are not about states of affairs that are yet to occur. Sentence (23a) represents a situation in which the speaker believes that it is possible that his/her father knows the person at the time of enunciation. Sentence (23b) also means that it is possible that the money is enough. Both sentences therefore refer to possible state of affairs in the present.

The final evidence that the *a*-morpheme does not express future tense is the fact already shown in some of the above examples that it can refer to possible states of affairs that are past as well. Consider the example below:

- (24) *Kofi â-yi Ge xóxó*
 Kofi POT-go Accra already
 ‘Kofi may have gone to Accra already’

This sentence refers to a state of affairs which could have occurred in a possible world. It could be uttered by someone who knows that Kofi had planned going to Accra *before* the moment of utterance. It therefore indicates that, all things being equal, Kofi is likely to be in Accra.³

What the discussion in this section shows is that the *â*-morpheme occurs with past, present and future interpretations. However, none of these temporal interpretations constitute the invariant meaning of the morpheme. Instead, they are preferred interpretations that arise from the combination of the type of verb and adverbial with which the morpheme occurs. The only analysis that is compatible with this wide range of uses is one of potentiality, which is the meaning that runs through all its uses.

5.2 *On why future is not a sufficient condition*

As I have already stated, the *à*-morpheme is not the only one used to express futurity. In this section, I take a look at another morpheme that is also used for that function.

The morpheme *gé* (with its variant *gbé*) has been referred to in traditional analysis as the ingressive morpheme. Ameka (1991:123) states that a construction containing this morpheme is “used to indicate planned, intentional or imminent future action”. The sentences below illustrate the construction:

- (25) a. *Kofi le Gε yi gé*
 Kofi be.at:PRES Accra go PROSP
 ‘Kofi is going to go to Accra’
 b. *kpɔ́-a le mu-mu gé*
 fence-DEF be.at:PRES RED-collapse PROSP
 ‘The fence is going to collapse’

In (25a), the complement of *yi* ‘go’, *Gε*, is preposed. The verb in sentence (25b) does not have a complement so it is reduplicated instead (see Ameka and Dakubu, this volume, for a detailed discussion of this construction).

As noted above, the morpheme has been referred to as the ingressive. The semantics of the two sentences show, however, that that is not an appropriate characterisation. Sentence (25a) expresses Kofi’s plans and, consequently, an expected state of affairs while (25b) simply expresses an imminent state of affairs. None of the sentences asserts a pre-state of the state of affairs encoded by the verbs. The morpheme does not, therefore, express an entry into a state that is characteristic of ingressives. Instead, its closest equivalent is the “be going to + infinitive” construction in English and Romance languages that is referred to as the prospective (cf. Comrie 1976, Klein 1994). In Essegbey (1999) therefore, I propose that the morpheme be analysed as the prospective morpheme.

In addition to using the morpheme to refer to states of affairs that are imminent or planned, the Anlo use it to express states of affairs that have a higher chance of occurrence and, hence, could be said to be future. Thus while the other dialects will use the potential morpheme in the context represented by (26a) below, Anlo uses the prospective:

- (26) a. *Kofi le nú ɖu gé etsɔ*
 Kofi be.at:PRES thing eat PROSP day.removed
 ‘Kofi is going to eat tomorrow’

- b. **Kofile* *nú* *ɖu* *gé*
 Kofi be.at:PRES thing eat PROSP
 etsɔ *sí* *vá* *yi*
 day.removed REL come go
 'Kofi was going to eat yesterday'

Unlike the potential in sentence (20) discussed earlier, (26a) means that the state of affairs is going to occur a day after the time of speech. This explains why sentence (26b) is unacceptable. To that extent, therefore, the construction could be said to represent the future in Anlo. This, however, is only one of the uses of the construction (see Ameka and Dakubu this volume for other uses).

What this discussion suggests is that there are other strategies for expressing futurity in Ewe. While the Anlo dialect makes more use of the prospective when the future is more certain, the other dialects also use it to express immediate future. However, since they prefer to use the potential to express future in contexts where the Anlo would use the prospective, one can foresee a time when the morpheme would become grammaticalized into a future morpheme. For the moment however, its several uses rather express states of affairs that occur in a possible world. In the next section, I consider a variant of the *a*-morpheme which occurs in serial verb constructions.

6 On the variant of the potential morpheme

The *a*-morpheme has a variant which occurs with the non-initial verb in serial verb constructions. It differs from the one discussed above in that it has a high tone which is not affected by the tones of surrounding segments. Consider the example below:

- (27) *m-à-vu* *á-yi* *fɔfɔ-nye* *gbɔ́*
 1SG-POT-move POT-go father-1SG place
 'I may move to my father's place'

In this sentence the tone of the potential morpheme on the second verb is high even though the tones of both segments before and after it are low.

This morpheme has been referred to by Clements (1972) as the consecutive morpheme. Its cognate has been widely discussed in the Akan literature (cf. Boadi 1994, Dolphyne 1987, Osam 1994, Saah 1994, *inter alia*). Osam (1994:75-76) writes on its distribution:

In a construction where there are multiple verbs, as is the case of serial construction or clause chaining, if the initial verb is marked for the future or the progressive, the subsequent verbs are not marked by the forms of the future or

the progressive; rather, there is a low tone vowel prefix *a-* which occurs on the non-initial verb.

The distribution of the morpheme in Ewe is somewhat similar to that in Akan. When either the prospective or potential is used in an SVC, the subsequent verb has to occur with this variant of the potential, as the examples below illustrate:

- (28) a. *Kofi le tso-tsó gé á-yi fofó-á gbó*
 Kofi be.at:PRESRED-get.up PROSP POT-go father-DEF place
 'Kofi is going to get up and go to his father'
- b. *Kofi á-tso á-yi fofó-á gbó*
 Kofi POT-get.up POT-go father-DEF place
 'Kofi may get up and go to his father'

However, unlike Akan, the progressive in Ewe is not followed by the potential. Consider the sentences below the first of which is in Akan:

- (29) a. *Kofi re-sɔre á-kɔ né papá hó* [Akan]
 Kofi PROG-get.up POT-go POSS father place
 'Kofi is getting up in order to go to his father'
- b. *Kofi le tso-tsó-m' né wò-à-yi* [Ewe]
 Kofi be.at:PRESRED-get.up-PROG CONSEC 3SG-SUBJV-go
fofó-á gbó
 father-DEF place
 'Kofi is getting up in order to go to his father'

In Ewe, the purposive state of affairs that is expressed with the potential on the second verb in Akan is expressed by a different clause consisting of *né* 'CONSECUTIVE' and the subjunctive. Interestingly, when the states of affairs expressed by all the verbs in an SVC are progressive, all the verbs take a progressive morpheme in the two languages. The difference is that Akan requires a conjunction. The contrast is illustrated below

- (30) a. *Ama re-tó dwom na ɔ-re-sa* [Akan]
 Ama PROG-bring.out song and 3SG-PROG-dance
 'Ama is singing and dancing'
- b. *Ama le ha dzi-ní le ye*
 Ama be.at:PRES song give.birth-PROG be.at:PRES dance
dú-m' [Ewe]
 spin-PROG
 'Ama is singing and dancing'

What the morphemes have in common is that they express a state of affairs that has not occurred in reality. Thus, in both Ewe and Akan, if the sentence refers to a state of affairs which has already taken place, the potential is not used, as the sentence below illustrates:

- (31) *me-vu* *yi* *fɔfɔ-nye* *gbɔ*
 1SG-move go father-1SG place
 ‘I moved to my father’s place’

Although the morpheme has been referred to as the consecutive morpheme, this description is not appropriate because it also expresses simultaneous states of affairs. This is shown by the example below:

- (32) *Kofi á-dó* *ylí* *á-yɔ* *Ama*
 Kofi POT-cause shout POT-call Ama
 ‘Kofi may call Ama shouting’

In (32) both the act of shouting and calling Ama occur simultaneously, thereby showing that the *á* variant which occurs in SVCs is not a consecutive morpheme.

7 Conclusion

What the discussion has shown is that the *à*-morpheme does not make the kind of prediction which Comrie (1976) says is characteristic of the future tense. Instead, it has an invariant potential meaning which can be used to express a state of affairs that is past, present or future. Rather than considering the morpheme as being polysemous in expressing the three different temporal senses, we should rather consider it as being non-specified in that regard. Bhat (1999:99) puts this very nicely thus:

[W]e must be aware of the fact that distinctions occurring in the translations of forms or sentences do not necessarily indicate distinctions in the languages that are being translated. For example, when a grammarian writes that a particular verbal form can be used to denote past as well as present tense, the language may, in actual fact, be leaving that distinction unspecified.

Since the morpheme represents a proposition as occurring in a possible world, it could, depending on the type of verb or adverb it occurs with be given a default future interpretation. I have shown that such interpretations can be defeated and hence, do not constitute the meaning of the morpheme.

As I stated earlier in the paper, Mattoso Camara (1956, 1957) cited in Fleischman (1982) identifies three grades of future one of which is future as

pure mood. He notes that when the future is expressed as pure mood, time is either past or present. I have already shown that Ewe does not have grammaticalized past or present tense. Instead, unmarked verbs can depending on their aktionsart be taken to express completed states of affairs. The result is that activities have a past tense interpretation while achievements have present interpretations derived from their post-state.

I also stated in the beginning that the cognate of the *a*-morpheme has been analysed by Avolonto (1995) as irrealis in Fon. Some examples from his discussion show that unlike Ewe, Fon does not have distinct potential and subjunctive morphemes. Two such examples from Avolonto (1995:31) are provided below (the complement of [33a] has been changed for ease of translation):

- (33) a. *Asiba ná ɖa mólɔ*
 Asiba IRR cook rice
 'Asiba will cook rice'
- b. *un tén kpón nú Arinɔla ná wá*
 1SG try see that Arinhola IRR come
 'I tried (everything) in order that Arinhola comes'

The Ewe equivalents of (33a) and (33b) are (34a) and (34b) respectively:

- (34) a. *Asiba â-ɖa mólɔ*
 Asiba POT-cook rice
 'Asiba may cook rice'
- b. *me-te kpó bé Arinɔla ná-vá*
 1SG-try see that Arinhola SUBJV-come
 'I tried in order that Arinhola comes'

It can be observed that while Fon uses the same morpheme in the two cases, Ewe uses the potential in the first instance and the subjunctive in the second. This is evidence that term irrealis can be used to capture the single morpheme which expresses such notions in Fon. By contrast, different terms are needed to capture the two different ways of expressing irrealis in Ewe, hence the term potential which captures the invariant meaning of the *â*-morpheme, and the subjunctive for the (*n*)*a*-segment which expresses wishes and commands.

To conclude, the *â*-morpheme in Ewe is not a grammaticalized tense morpheme. Instead, it is a modal morpheme whose semantics refers to possible worlds. Various adverbs and verbal aktionsarts situate the states of affairs it expresses in the past, present and future precisely because it is not specified for time. Since Ewe does not have any overt marking for present and past time either, it is a tenseless language.

Endnotes

¹ All high tones are marked with ´, rising tones with ˘, and falling tone with ˆ. Low tones are not marked although, where it is important to contrast a low-tone with a high-tone, the former is represented with ˘. I do not mark tones on names.

² A notable exception is the relative tense which expresses temporal relations with respect to a reference point in discourse, rather than with respect to the moment of utterance (Comrie 1976:2). I assume that the evidence I discuss which shows that the *a*-morpheme expresses modal meanings rather than marks tense is sufficient to warrant my discarding a relative-tense analysis as well. I will not devote any further attention to the possibility of a relative-tense analysis of this morpheme.

³ Note that constructions like this cannot be represented with the future tense in a language like French which has a future tense, as the unacceptability of the sentence below illustrates:

*Kofi ira à Accra déjà
Kofi FUT:go to Accra already

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Imperfective Constructions: Progressive and Prospective in Ewe and Dangme

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This paper investigates an important feature common to Ewe and Dangme, but not shared with such Kwa languages as Akan or Ga, namely a periphrastic construction commonly having “progressive” and/or “prospective” meaning, in which the finite verb is selected from a very small set and takes a complement consisting of the event-naming verb that is preceded by its Object and followed either by a construction-specific suffix (Dangme) or one of two characteristic morphemes (Ewe). The finite verb, the post-event-verb morpheme, or both, generally have spatial features. The paper begins with a basic comparative description of the simple verb in the two languages, before proceeding to a detailed description of the progressive and prospective constructions in Ewe, followed by a comparably detailed description of the imperfective construction in Dangme. It is concluded that in both languages we have to do with an elaboration of the construction type V + nominalized NP Complement, which exists throughout the lower Volta Basin in many forms, if not always this one. Despite surface similarities the two languages exhibit important differences in both the semantic range of the construction and its syntax, such that it is likely that in this respect each language has developed independently of the other.

1 Introduction

Dangme and southern Ewe are geographical neighbours along the Volta estuary, with a history of interaction that includes, besides wars and traditions of co-residence during migrations, ethnic assimilation and language shift of small communities, both Dangme to Ewe and Ewe to Dangme. Thus, both the Krobo and the Ada divisions of the Dangme are known to have assimilated groups of Ewe speakers (Huber 1963; Amate 1999). There are several small communities east of the Volta that trace their origins to Dangmeland; most of these have shifted to Ewe as the language of daily life, but others have not (Dakubu 1966; Sprigge 1969). Possibly (but not necessarily) in consequence of this, Ewe and Dangme maintain common features that are not shared with other languages of the lower Volta basin: specifically with Ga, Dangme's closest relative, or Akan and the other languages classified as Comoé e.g. Guang languages.

In this paper we investigate a major common feature, namely a periphrastic construction, commonly having “progressive” and/or “prospective” meaning, in which the finite verb is selected from a very small set and takes a complement consisting of the event-naming verb that is preceded by its Object and followed by a construction-specific suffix (Dangme) or one of two characteristic morphemes (Ewe). The finite verb, the post-event-verb morpheme, or both, generally have locative features. This construction is of course by no means peculiar to Dangme and Ewe. Apart from its Africa-wide distribution described by Heine and Claudi 2001 (see below), it occurs with minor variations in most of the Gbe varieties. Among the Comoé languages it occurs in only Nkonya, presumably as a result of the proximity of that Guang language to northern Ewe (Reinecke 1972; Dolphyne and Dakubu 1988).

In this paper we describe this construction in each language, and then characterize it typologically. The discussion in the typology and grammaticalization literature includes rather little detailed description of how the construction is manifested in different languages. It therefore seems worthwhile to define the extent to which the construction is “the same” in these two, which despite their proximity, the interconnected histories of their speakers, and their current classification as “Kwa” are not particularly closely related genetically. Our discussion is prefaced with an outline of the verb paradigm as it occurs in each language (section 2). Section 3 discusses the construction in Ewe by engaging with Heine’s typological characterization, which makes specific reference to Ewe. This is followed in section 4 by a description of the Dangme construction. The concluding section (5) compares them and tentatively relates the Dangme and Ewe constructions to comparable constructions in other languages of the region.

2 The Verb in Dangme and Ewe

The basic paradigms marking aspect and mood in these languages are very similar. Neither language marks the verb with an elaborate system of grammatical morphemes, and the grammatical affixes used are semantically quite similar between the two.

	Ewe	Dangme
a. Perfective/Aorist	Simple V	Simple V
b. Habitual	-(n)a	-a/-ɔ
c. Subjunctive ¹	(n)á-	á-

d. Negation: The negation strategies of these languages are very different. In Ewe clausal negation is expressed by a bipartite morpheme: *mé ...o*; *mé* is cliticised onto the first element in the verb cluster while *o* occurs at the end of the clause but before any utterance final particles. Dangme negation in the declara-

tive employs two different strategies, the choice being phonologically determined. One of them involves a post-verb particle *we* which in the Ada dialect (but not others) occurs clause finally, and therefore seems to resemble the Ewe clause-final negator particle *o*. However, Negation in Dangme always involves High tone on the verb stem, which is not true in Ewe.

e. Pre-Verbs: In both languages there are a number of pre-verbs, or pre-verb particles exhibiting varying degrees of verbness. They include negation elements, deictics ('come', 'go'), an item meaning "in vain", and a variety of others. For details see Ameka (elsewhere in this volume) and Dakubu (1987). The pre-verbs combine with the paradigmatic affixes in a variety of ways.

It is also the case in both languages, as in most others of the region, that a VP is nominalized by pre-posing the Object to its verb, and giving the verb an affix. In both Ewe and Dangme, and also in Ga but not in the Comoé (or Tano) languages nor the other prefixing languages of the Central Togo area, this affix is a suffix. These suffixes are of various kinds, including agentive, with the suffix *-lá* in Ewe, *-lɔ* in Dangme, and gerundive, with the suffix *-mi* in Dangme. Crucially, there is more than one kind of syntactic relationship between a nominalized verb and its preceding Object. In some constructions the relationship is associative, so that the Object NP is the possessor of the deverbal N, which may usually be pluralized like any ordinary noun. In others however this relationship does not obtain. "Nominalization" therefore does not necessarily entail "conversion to an NP", and the "nominalized" verb is not always morphologically a noun.

3 The Progressive and Prospective Aspect Constructions in Ewe

The focus of this part is on the progressive and prospective aspect constructions in Ewe. In Heine's (1976) word order typology of African languages, Ewe, along with several other languages, is categorized as a Type B language. Type B languages are claimed to have a split word order or two clause level orders of SVO and S Aux OV. The factors that determine the distribution of the two orders vary from language to language. For some, for instance the Kru languages, it may be polarity and aspect (see e.g. Marchese 1985), for others it may be selected lexical verbs, as in the Khoisan language !Xun (see Heine and Claudi 2001). It appears that the more widespread correlate of the so-called word order split is an aspectual distinction between what might *grosso modo* be characterized as "perfective" versus "imperfective" aspect. For Ewe, it is claimed that "the constituent order is VO in the aorist", as in (1a), "but OV in the progressive aspect" (Heine and Claudi 2001: 48), as in (1b) and also in the prospective aspect as in (1c).

- (1) a. *Áma dzrá te-a*
 NAME sell yam-DEF
 'Ama sold the yam.'
- b. *Áma le te-a dzrá-m*
 NAME be.at:PRES yam-DEF sell-PROG
 'Ama is selling the yam.'
- c. *Áma le te-a dzrá gé²*
 NAME be.at:PRES yam-DEF sell PROSP
 'Ama is going to/about to sell the yam.'

The presence of these putative two orders in several Niger Congo languages has been at the heart of debates about word order in Proto-Niger Congo. Gensler (1994: 8) sums up the trend in the debate as follows:

Earlier work has tended to view syntagms that do not conform to straight-forward VO or OV patterns as a deviation from an ideal, both synchronically and diachronically, and thus to view the 'quirky' syntagm S-Aux-O-V-Other as a problem in need of explanation; the explanation would involve an appeal to some more canonical word order (SVO or SOV), recasting S-Aux-O-V-Other as actually being an instance of one or the other 'basic' configuration, or else deriving it historically from such a source.

He suggests that instead of trying to relate the S-Aux-O-V-Other order to SVO or SOV, the syntagm should be reconstructed to Proto Niger-Congo. We are not concerned with the historical syntax issue directly in this discussion but we are sympathetic to Gensler's suggestion (see e.g. Givón 1979, Heine 1980, Williamson 1989, Claudi 1993, Gensler 1994, 1997 for different positions on the matter). Rather we will question some of the assumptions that have been made concerning the structure of the "quirky" syntagm, especially concerning Ewe in the course of some of this debate. In other words, we present in this part, the descriptive and empirical facts relating to the progressive and prospective in Ewe and address the analytic issues that they raise. We share the view that the purpose of language description is "to write a grammar that not only describes but also explains why language is structured the way it is" (Heine and Claudi 2001: 69), see Dryer (2006) for some views. We do not believe, however, that there is a split word order in Ewe or Dangme. Nor do we share an evolutionary explanation where the order of elements in one structure arises out of the other in the course of the history of the language, as Heine and his associates argue from a grammaticalization perspective. This is not to deny the explanatory value of grammaticalization. However, we will argue that the constituent order of progressive and prospective aspect constructions in Ewe and similar structures in Dangme did not arise from an original order.

This part is structured as follows: first, some issues in the analysis of the constructions are introduced. Then an overview of the two construction types is presented with their various uses (section 3.2). This is followed by an analysis and explanation of the structures. We first consider whether the predicator in the constructions is an auxiliary or not (section 3.3). We then examine the nature and structure of the aspectual phrase constituent. We present different pieces of evidence for the nominalization of the eventive VP (section 3.4). We draw attention to the dialectal variation in the instantiation of the constructions, especially in the possibility of including the Other element in the nominalized event structure (section 3.5). The Ewe facts are placed within a wider context by comparing them to the constructions in other Gbe dialects (section 3.6).

3.1 *Issues in the description of Ewe progressive and prospective*

A particularly clear presentation of the Ewe constructions which reveals the inadequacies in the description and at the same time makes the analytic problems evident is given in Heine (1994). Some passages are cited from this and other works to background the discussion. According to Heine (1994: 260-261) (see also Heine and Claudi 1986, 2001; Heine and Reh 1984 among others):

Ewe has a peculiar way of forming a progressive aspect ... Firstly, there are two markers to express the progressive aspect: *le* and *mí*. Secondly, intransitive verbs are reduplicated in the progressive aspect ... Thirdly, whereas the object noun phrase follows the verb in the aorist, it precedes the verb in the progressive aspect ...

There are several problems with such a description of the progressive: first, the construction is not as ‘peculiar’ as it may seem. More importantly, however, is the fact that in Ewe the progressive is expressed by a whole construction distinguished by the progressive marker *mí* (in the standard and southern dialects). To characterize the individual components of the construction as progressive is counter intuitive and misses important generalizations. Thus the verb *le* ‘be.at:PRES’ is not a progressive marker per se, although it participates in the construction. In addition, generalizations are missed if the nature of the constituent that is selected by the aspectual marker is presented as being dependent on transitivity. We argue below that this constituent is a nominalized VP or event. Thus it is not intransitive verbs as such that are reduplicated. Rather, any verb that does not have a complement in the progressive construction gets reduplicated for nominalization. As such the transitive verb *dzrú* ‘sell’ used in example (1) will occur reduplicated if its complement does not occur adjacent to it, as happens when it is focused, for example, as illustrated in (2a).

- (2) a. *te yé Áma le dzadzrá-m /gé*
 yam aFOC NAME be.at:PRESRED-sell-PROG /PROSP
 ‘YAMS Ama is selling/ is going to sell.’
- b. *te dzrá-m /gé yé Áma le*
 yam sell-PROG /PROSP aFOC NAME be.at:PRES
 ‘YAM SELLING Ama is / is about to.’

Notice that the whole aspectual phrase headed by the aspect markers can be focused as shown in (2b). In example (2b), the verb is not reduplicated because the nominalized VP involves a complement. Example (2b) also illustrates that the aspectual phrase as a whole is treated as a constituent and that the internal structure of this constituent is not relevant at the clause level. It is misleading to talk of an OV structure at the clause level. This point is further addressed in section 3.4.

Similarly, it is argued below that *le* ‘be.at:PRES’ and the other predicators that occur in these aspectual constructions are verbs and not auxiliaries as has been claimed in the literature. Within the grammaticalization framework, some sources have been attributed to the aspectual markers which are questionable. To quote Heine again:

... the progressive marker *le* is both diachronically and synchronically a locative auxiliary verb (‘be at’) and the progressive suffix *m* is historically derived from the relational noun **me* ‘inside, interior, in’, which also has the function of a postposition and still exists in both capacities in modern Ewe. (Heine 1994: 265)

Concerning the prospective, which he calls ingressive following the terminology of Westermann (1907, 1930) and others, he says the following:

Exactly the same kind of development can be reconstructed for the ingressive aspect in Ewe: the ingressive suffix *-gé* is historically derived from the relational nominal **gbé* ‘area, direction’ (Heine 1994: 283 footnote 18).

Even though the claim about the historical origins of these aspectual morphemes has been repeated over and over again in the literature (see e.g. Westermann 1907; Heine 1980: 106; Heine and Claudi 1986, 2001; Claudi 1993), the connection being drawn between *mí* and *me* is rather hard to substantiate given the difference in tone. Heine (1994) and Heine and Claudi (2001) suggest that the high tone comes from a floating high tone suffix that occurs on nominalized verbs. Heine and Claudi (2001: 49) assert that: “The nominalization of verbs requires the verb to be reduplicated and to take a floating high tone suffix”. While this may be the case, the behaviour of the floating HTS in contexts suggests that it may not be the source of the high tone on the progres-

sive marker. For one thing, the high tone suffix on such forms tends to spread to the left rather than to the right. Thus the example that Heine gives of *xɔ tu tu* 'house RED-build HTS' is realized in the southern dialects as LMM. And when such a nominal occurs as the dependent in a postpositional phrase, it is still realized as LMM and a low tone postposition is not affected by the HTS. Consider the following utterance. Note that the verb *tu* 'build' has a lexical low tone and it is the HTS that makes it have a mid tone in the nominalized structure.

- (3) H L L M M L L
 Wó-dze *xɔ-tu-tu* *gɔme*
 3PL-contact house-RED-build under
 'They started building.'

Thus it is hard to see how the high tone that occurs at the end of gerunds gets transported on to the postposition as suggested by Heine (1994: 268) during Stage II of the evolution.³ One could also ask about why the same high tone does not occur in the parallel structure in the prospective construction. We maintain that although the scenario proposed fits the received assumptions in grammaticalization theory and could work for some languages, there is the need for more convincing arguments for the claim to be sustained for Ewe.

Similarly, the claim that the prospective marker in the standard and southern dialects, *gé*, evolved out of the noun *gbé* 'area', even though plausible, still needs to be justified. There is a competing path of development, namely, from the noun *gé* 'place', which is used in Tɔŋu dialects in contexts where Anlo, for example uses *afĩ* 'place'. One argument in favour of this is the use in the inland dialects of a place formative *fě* in a sub-construction of the prospective interchangeably with the dialectal *gbé* form. Compare the following examples:

- (4) a. *me-yi tsi le gbé*
 1SG-go water bathe PROSP
 'I am going to bathe.'
 b. *me-yi tsi-le-fě*
 1SG-go water-bathe-PLACE
 'I am going to bathing place.'/'I am going to bathe.'

Such structures would provide a good bridging context for the development of the use of a noun meaning 'place' as a formative or marker for aspect.

It is evident from the foregoing that the claims about the grammaticalization of the progressive and prospective aspect markers are inconclusive and there is the need for more argumentation. Plausibility is not enough. All other competing paths must also be examined. In the next section we give a description of the progressive and the prospective constructions paying particular attention to

their structure, function and meaning. In the subsequent sections, the analytic issues of the constructions are taken up again. In particular, the category status of the individual constituents in the constructions is explored: is the predicator element in the construction a verb or an auxiliary? Is it the case that in Ewe the eventive V is “transparently a nominalized verb form” (Gensler 1994: 11)? What is the status of the complement constituent of the predicator element?

3.2 *Ewe progressive and prospective constructions*

The position defended in this part is that the progressive and prospective constructions in Ewe have the following constituent order:

Subject Verb Aspectual Phrase Other

The Verb slot is filled by a set of seven elements that model the deictic frame (temporal or directional) of the situation that is characterized in the clause (see Table 1).

One could expand on the structure by indicating that negative bipartite marking can occur in the structure where the first part, *mé*, occurs between the subject and the verb complex. The second part of the negative *o* occurs as the last element in the clause (if there is no utterance final particle). Furthermore the Verb itself could be the nucleus of the verb complex where it may be preceded by preverbal markers like the repetitive, directional and/or modal markers as illustrated in example (5) (see Ameka this volume).

- (5) *Avu-a* *mé-ga-vá* *nɔ-a* *tsi-a*
 dog-DEF NEG-REP-VENT be.at:NPRES-HAB water-DEF
 no-mí *o*
 drink-PROG NEG
 ‘The dog was no longer coming to drink the water.’

Table 1: Ewe verbs in the progressive and prospective constructions

Verb form and Gloss	Construction Type	Interpretation of the construction
<i>le</i> ~ <i>nɔ</i> 'be.at:PRES' ~ 'be.at:NPRES'	progressive	State of affairs is on-going at reference time
	prospective	State of affairs will happen not long after reference time
<i>dze</i> 'contact'	progressive	Inception of durative state of affairs that happens habitually after reference time
<i>vá</i> 'come'	prospective: motion cum purpose	Motion towards the deictic centre because one wants to carry out an event
<i>tsó</i> 'come.from'		Motion from a place where the state of affairs was carried out
<i>yi</i> 'go'		Motion directed to a place to carry out an event there
<i>yi-na</i> go-HAB, i.e 'going'	prospective: inchoative	A state of affairs is taking place leading to another state of affairs
<i>gbɔ-na</i> come.back-HAB, i.e., 'coming.back'		
<i>de</i> 'reach, been.to'	prospective: attemptive	Situation represented in the clause was nearly attained

As is evident from Table 1, the one verb that occurs in both the progressive and prospective constructions is the suppletive locative verb *le~nɔ* 'be.at'. Like in its other uses, the two variants are used for present vs. non-present situations respectively (see e.g. Ameka 1995, 1999a and Ameka and Essegbey 2006). Perhaps because it is the one verb common to the two constructions it has received more attention in the literature and the other verbs are either ignored or

mentioned in passing as replacing the locative verb, say in the prospective construction.⁴ These verbs take as their complement an aspectual phrase headed by the PROgressive or PROSpective aspect markers (cf. Fabb 1992). The aspectual markers select a nominalized VP or event whose evolution or distribution in time is being characterised by the clause (cf. Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002 on Fongbe). Rongier et al. (1988: 29) make a similar suggestion when they observe that

Le présent progressif se forme comme suit:

lè + Nominalisation+ní

... Le verbe est alors nominalisé. ... Lorsque le complément d'objet suit le verbe, c'est l'ensemble verbe-complément qui est nominalisé ...

What many analysts fail to recognise is that when they talk about the order of elements in the progressive or prospective as an OV structure, they are talking from the point of view of the input to the nominalized structure that is selected by the aspectual marker, together with which it forms an aspectual phrase. It must be stressed, as Rongier et al. put it, that where there is a complement to the verb that expresses the situation that is being characterised, it is the verb together with its complement that is nominalized. However the output need not be an independent word or phrase. In fact when it is a verb and its complement that is nominalized the output is a nominalized stem that requires the aspectual to form a constituent (see section 3.4 for further discussion). The characteristics of the progressive and prospective constructions are taken up in turn in the subsequent sections.

3.2.1 *The progressive construction*

The structure of the progressive construction can be represented as follows:

Subject(NEG) (Pre verb) Verb [Nominalized VP + PROG]_{Asp} Other
(NEG)

The prototypical function of the progressive construction is to signal that the state of affairs represented in the clause is on-going at the relevant reference time indicated by the verb. As can be deduced from Table 1, there are two verbs that can fill the Verb slot in this construction: the suppletive locative verb set *le~no* 'be.at' and a contact verb *dze* 'contact'. The latter verb has not been mentioned in relation to the progressive in the literature, except in Ameka (1991). One reason may be because it does not seem to be used in the southern dialects on which the standard is based. Hence it is discounted. However, utter-

ances like those in (6a) with its colloquial standard variety (6b) are regularly heard in everyday discourse in the inland dialect areas.

- (6) a. *dɛvi-á dze zɔ zɔ*
 child-DEF contact RED-move:PROG
 ‘The child has started walking.’
 b. *dɛvi-á dze zɔ zɔ-m*
 child-DEF contact RED-move-PROG
 ‘The child has started walking.’

When *dze* ‘contact’ is used as the Verb in the progressive construction, the construction is used to express the start or inception of a state of affairs that one expects to recur over a period of time. This could be seen as the use of the progressive construction to indicate the inception of durative or habitual occurrences. Thus the form in (7a) is interpreted as the start of the rainy season while the one in (7b) is interpreted as it is raining now.

- (7) a. *tsi dze dza-dzã*
 water contact RED-ooze:PROG
 ‘It has started raining (in the season).’
 b. *tsi le dza-dzã*
 water be.at:PRES RED-ooze:PROG
 ‘It is raining.’

The main contrast between the suppletive alternants *le* ‘be.at:PRES’ and *nɔ* ‘be.at:NPRES’ is that *le* is used with respect to situations that are on-going at the moment of speech while *nɔ* is used with respect to time periods removed from the moment of speech. Some of the contrasts are illustrated in (8).

- (8) a. *Áma le te dzrá-m le asi*
 NAME be.at:PRES yam sell-PROG LOC market
me
 containing.region
 ‘Ama is selling yams in the market.’
 b. *Áma nɔ te dzrá-m le asi*
 NAME be.at:NPRES yam sell-PROG LOC market
me
 containing.region
 ‘Ama was selling yams in the market.’

- c. *Áma a-nɔ te dzrá-m le asi*
 NAME POT-be.at:NPRES yam sell-PROG LOC market
me
 containing.region
 ‘Ama would be selling yams in the market.’

Sentence (8a) relates to the present time since *le* is used. Sentences (8b) and (8c), by contrast, relate to the past and potential respectively, hence the form *nɔ* is used. Similarly, the situation in example (5) above concerns a habitual situation hence *nɔ* is used and appropriately marked for the habitual.

The lexical semantics of the verb that occurs as the nucleus of the clause in the progressive construction thus bears on the overall interpretation of the progressive: the locative verb contributes on-going activity coterminous with the reference time and the contact verb, the start of a situation. The semantics of other elements in the construction also contribute to the overall interpretation of the structure. Thus the *Aktionsart* of the verb that is the input to the nominalized VP interacts with the semantics of the progressive construction to yield other interpretations. Because of this, some utterances can be vague. Telic verbs or verb phrases when nominalized and occurring in the progressive have an inchoative reading, that is, the process leading to the realisation of the terminal endpoint is in progress at the reference time. Thus in example (9) the garment is in the process of getting dry. The endpoint of the drying has not been reached yet.

- (9) *awu-a le fu-fũ-m*
 garment-DEF be.at:PRES RED-dry-PROG
 ‘The garment is getting dry.’

Similarly, when the progressive aspectual phrase contains a semelfactive verb, the state of affairs can be interpreted as iterative as in (10).

- (10) *táya-a le wo-wó-m*
 tyre-DEF be.at:PRES RED-explode-PROG
 ‘The tyre is exploding repeatedly.’

In context, an utterance of the progressive construction can be used to express the imminence or immediate or intended future occurrence of a state of affairs. In this usage it overlaps with a sub-construction of the prospective as we shall see presently. Consider a context in which a parent goes to wake their children up and announces what they would be doing in the day with the utterances in (11).

- (11) *ɲu ke, mi-fɔ̃ Mie-le agbleyi-m̃*
 eye open 2PL-rise 1PL-be.at:PRES farm go-PROG
 'It is day break. Get up! We are going to the farm (today).'

Here the parent is not representing the fact that they are on their way to the farm. Rather, the progressive is used here to convey the fact that in the immediate future the parent and the children will go to the farm. The parent has an intention that they should go to the farm. In another context where the answer to the question 'what are you going to do?' is answered with a clause in the progressive such as (12), the reading of the utterance is that of imminence, 'about to'.

- (12) *me-le asi me yi-m̃*
 1SG-be.at:PRES market containing.region go-PROG
 'I am going to the market.'

Here too, the speaker is not on the way to the market but this activity is planned and about to be executed. In both contexts, the prospective can be felicitously used instead of the progressive. We suggest that the progressive is used in order to stress the immediacy of the situation. In this sense it is comparable to the use of the historic present in English discourse.

In sum, the progressive construction expresses the on-going activity with respect to the time specified by the Verb. Depending on the fillers of the various slots in the construction, it can be interpreted as involving change in progress or repeated action within the specified time. The progressive construction can also be used in context to signal the imminence of a state of affairs. It overlaps in this function with the prospective construction to which we now turn.

3.2.2 *The prospective construction*

The structure of the prospective construction is the same as that of the progressive except that the aspect marker that heads the aspectual phrase is the prospective marker *gé* 'PROSP' or its dialect variant *gbé* 'PROSP'. The general meaning of the prospective construction is that the state of affairs characterised in the rest of the clause will happen after the reference time specified in the verb.

Apart from *dze* 'contact', all the other verbs listed in Table 1 can fill the verb slot in the construction. On the basis of the verb that occurs in the construction, one can identify a number of sub-constructions and functions of the prospective. If the Verb slot is filled by the locative suppletive verb *le ~ nɔ* 'be.at' then the prospective construction expresses the imminence of the occurrence of a state of affairs, as in (13 a, b).

- (13) a. *fífiá, me-le ku-kú gé kpuie*
 now 1SG-be:PRES RED-die PROSP shortly
 'Now, I am about to die shortly.' (Akpatsi 1980: 69)
- b. *é-nɔ nú ɖu gé háfi dzre-a*
 3SG-be.at:NPRES thing eat PROSP before quarrel-DEF
dzɔ
 happen
 'He was about to eat when the quarrel broke out.'

This sub-construction is used to indicate planned, intentional, imminent future actions. The state of affairs is expected to take place after the moment of speech if *le* 'be.at:PRES' is used, and after the reference time if the non-present counterpart is used as in (13b).⁵ Note that in this example, the temporal clause fixes the time with respect to which the state of affairs occurred. In this usage also adverbials that express ideas of 'a short time' tend to be used as modifiers as in (13a) above.

When the verb slot is filled by the habitual verb forms of *yi* 'go' and *gbɔ* 'come back', the prospective construction signifies that an inchoative state of affairs is taking place as in (14a, b).

- (14) a. *zã yi-na do-dó gé*
 night go-HAB RED-fall PROSP
 'It is getting dark.' (Gadzekpo 1982: 26)
- b. *me-gbɔ-na é-gbé gé*
 1SG-come.back-HAB 3SG-refuse PROSP
 'I will be getting divorced from him.' (Akpatsi 1980:53)

The habitual of the two motion verbs expresses the meaning of 'to be in the process of moving'. It is this that gives the inchoative idea. The structures can be interpreted as the situation is moving towards a certain goal, namely another state of affairs. The goal may be attained in the future. This is the interpretation of (14b). Its context is that a woman was discussing the behaviour of her husband with a friend and warns that if he did not change his ways, she will divorce him sooner or later. It can be inferred from the context that the speaker is indicating that a state of affairs is going to be changed. It has not changed yet, but it is intended to happen at some later stage.

The main point of this sub-construction then is that the verbs take the habitual form and the construction conveys the idea that something is happening at the reference time thought of as leading to a change in the state of affairs; it could be either some movement or some thought. The culmination of this current situation as expected is the state of affairs represented in the nominalized VP.

Similar to the inchoative sub-construction, the Verb slot in the motion-cum-purpose prospective construction is filled by a verb form that codes physical motion. The construction signals that the subject moved somewhere for the purpose of carrying out the state of affairs represented in the nominalized VP, as in (15 a, b).

- (15) a. *wó-ga-yi abólo fle gé ydí áǵé*
 3PL-REP-go bread buy PROSP morning INDEF
 ‘They went again to buy bread one morning.’ (Gadzekpo 1982: 23)
- b. *Kofi tsó lã ǵé gé*
 NAME come.from fish take PROSP
 ‘Kofi has come back from fishing.’

One piece of evidence in support of the purposive sense of the prospective construction with verbs of motion is that there is a formal identity between a purposive nominalizing suffix *-gbé* ‘PURP’ and the inland dialect variant of the prospective marker *gbé*. The nominalizing suffix *-gbé* ‘PURP’ is used to form nominals from nouns. The derived nominals may be paraphrased as ‘for the purpose of N’ (Ofori 2002). For example, the form *-gbé* ‘PURP’ can be suffixed to nouns such as *náke* ‘firewood’, *ade* ‘game’ or *ahiã* ‘lover’ to yield the following nouns respectively: *náke-gbé* ‘for firewood’, i.e. look for firewood’, *ade-gbé* ‘for game i.e. hunting’ and *ahiã-gbé* ‘for lover, i.e. look for a lover’. These nominals occur typically as complements of verbs of motion, and in such a context the sentences mean something like ‘move somewhere to look for N’. For example:

- (16) a. *Áma yi náke-gbé*
 NAME go firewood-PURP
 ‘Ama has gone to look for firewood.’
- b. *Kofi tsó ade-gbé*
 NAME come.from game-PURP
 ‘Kofi has come from looking for game, i.e. hunting.’

These sentences can be paraphrased using a prospective construction in the manner shown in (17a, b). In these paraphrases the motion verb retains its function while the purposive nominal serves as the complement of a verb together with which it is nominalized. The nominalized VP is selected by the prospective aspect marker.

- (17) a. *Áma yi náke fɔ gbé /gé*
 NAME go firewood pick.up PROSP
 ‘Ama has gone to collect firewood.’

- b. *Kofi tsó ade da gbé / gé*
 NAME come.from game throw PROSP
 'Kofi has come from hunting for animals.'

The fact that these paraphrases are by and large synonymous supports the view that the prospective construction may be used to express purpose.⁶

Another piece of evidence for the purposive sense of the prospective sub-construction comes from the vagueness in interpretation of structures involving motion verbs with nominal complements derived using the nominalizing suffix *-fě* 'place' (see section 3.1 above). This suffix is attached to a nominalized verb or verb phrase stems to form nominals with the meaning 'place to do X' (Ofori 2002). Thus from the VP *q̣u ní* 'eat' one can form by permutation and suffixation the nominal *núq̣ufě* 'dining place'. Similarly from the verb *dɔ́* 'pass the night, i.e. sleep' one can form the nominal *dɔ́fě* 'sleeping place'. Ambiguity may arise when these derived place nominals are used as complements of verbs of motion. This is especially so in the inland dialects where the *-fě* suffix can have a prospective interpretation. For example,

- (18) *é-yi ga-dí-fě*
 3SG-go money-want-place
 a. 'S/he has gone to a money-seeking place.'
 b. 'S/he has gone to look for money.'

Interpretation (a) emphasises the place the person has gone to. The form *gadífě* in this case behaves in all respects as a nominal complement of the verb *yi* 'go'. It can be modified by a determiner. Interpretation (b) however presumes the *fě* marker to be signaling the prospective and in that interpretation the form *gadífě* cannot be determined. It is only in interpretation (b) that the form can be paraphrased using an undisputed prospective marker *gbé* or *gé*. Utterances of the following kind which are commonplace in the inland dialects make explicit the motion-cum-purpose association with the *-fě* form where it occurs as a complement of a motion verb. Note that the motion verb is marked for the potential.

- (19) *mia-yi núq̣uq̣u dí-fě etsɔ*
 1PL:POT-go food want-place one.day.removed
 'We shall go to look for food tomorrow.'

The links between imminent action, inchoative situations and purposive are semantically transparent. Essentially, a purposive action is something that one has in mind to execute in future, i.e. something one wants to do. Similarly, an imminent action is something that is performed at a time after the moment of speech. An inchoative implies that the change of state will occur in the future.

The same thread runs through the attemptive use of the prospective to which we now turn.

Finally, prospective constructions in which the Verb is the telic or bidirectional verb *de* 'reach, been.to' signal situations that were nearly attained, as in (20 a, b).

- (20) a. *éye wò-de vo-vo gé dó kpo-e*
 and 3SG-reach RED-free PROSP put log-PRED
 'And she tried to be free but couldn't.' (Gadzekpo 1982: 14)
- b. *é-fě ɣúti-gbalē de ba-biã gé klóé*
 3SG-POSS skin-cover reach RED-orange PROSP almost
 'Her skin was almost copper-coloured.' (Dogoe 1964: 11).

As the translations suggest there are two possible interpretations of such a construction: an approximative as in (20b) and an attempted situation which failed as in (20a). As the examples above show, one can use adverbials to give prominence to or reinforce one interpretation over the other. Thus when the expression *dó kpo-e* 'PUT log-i' i.e. failed is used then the attempted reading is highlighted. When an adverbial like *klóé* 'almost' is used, the approximative or the nearly reading is highlighted. The interaction between the semantics of the verb of 'reach' and that of the prospective together with pragmatic inferences generate the nearly attained situation, or non-consummated action reading. For the sentences below, it is true to say that the person did not leave in (21a), nor did the undergoer die after the beating in (21b).

- (21) a. *me-de dzo-dzó gé le é-gbɔ́ dó kpo-e*
 1SG-been-to RED-leave PROSP LOC 3SG-place put log-PRED
 'I tried to leave him, but I failed.' (Setsoafia 1982: 64)
- b. *wó-fò-e wò-de ku-kú gé klóé*
 3PL-beat-3SG 3SG-reach RED-die PROSP almost
 'He was beaten, he nearly died.' (Dogoe 1964: 9)

The implication of the use of the verb *de* 'reach' is that the situation would have occurred, or that someone wanted the situation to occur, but that something else prevented the whole of the situation from happening; consequently one could not say that the situation had occurred. For both senses, it appears if a little more of it happened then one could say the situation occurred.

In sum, the prospective in Ewe has four sub-constructions defined by the nature of the verb in the construction. The common thread that runs through all the constructions is that of imminence or future orientation. Thus for the imminent prospective, someone plans that something will happen after the moment of speech. For the inchoative prospective the idea conveyed is that something is happening at the time of reference whose result or outcome will occur at a time

after the reference point. For the motion-cum-purpose sub-construction, a movement takes place with the intention to carry out an action. For the attemptive prospective, the essential thing is that the culmination of something was imminent at a time but something else intervened to stop it from happening. It seems that the unifying feature of the prospective marker is the imminent or future orientation of the situation characterised in the clause. It must be stressed that for each of the sub-constructions the lexical semantics of the verb plays a crucial role. And even within constructions, subtle distinctions are evident based on the particular verb that instantiates the construction. For instance, in the motion cum purpose sub-construction, the use of *tsó* 'come.from' entails that the participant that is coded as the subject has physically moved from a place where s/he has carried out the state of affairs expressed in the nominalized VP. For this reason, Clements (1972), for instance, describes the motion-cum-purpose prospective construction involving this verb as an 'immediate past' expression. This should be borne in mind when we discuss in the next section the grammatical status of the verbal elements that occur in clause second position, so to speak, in the progressive and prospective constructions, i.e. the verb forms listed in Table 1.

3.3 *A Verb or an Aux?*

One of the controversies in the analysis of the progressive and prospective constructions in Ewe concerns the status of the elements in Table 1, when they occur in these constructions. We claim that they are verbs (see Fabb 1992) while most other analysts claim that they are auxiliaries (see the quotes from Heine 1994 above, see also Clements 1975, Duthie 1996, Manfredi 1997, Ansre 2000 among others). In this section some considerations leading to our conclusion are discussed while at the same time questioning the premises of the alternative analysis.

If one were to adopt Talmy's (2000: 25) characterisation of a basic motion event which subsumes static location and directional motion, we could argue that the verbs that are listed in Table 1 constitute a form class of Motion verbs. They thus satisfy one of the putative characteristics of auxiliaries, namely they form a closed class of linguistic units (Heine 1993: 22). But in fact this form class is a subclass of verbs. This is one of the properties also listed by Heine (1993: 25), but surely this is not a universal property. Ewe language internal facts indicate that these are not auxiliaries. The attribution of an auxiliary status to these verbs in second position in the progressive and prospective seems to be based on the intuitive idea that the central message of such clauses is expressed by the nominalized VP. Hence the verbal element in the nominalized structure is referred to as the main verb and the element that carries other information is the auxiliary. The claim is dependent on the idea that when a verb takes a com-

plement that is non-finite in form such as a participle, a gerund, an infinitive etc. the verbs tend to assume grammatical function and start on the road to auxiliary status (see Heine 1993: 15 and references therein, see also Schultze-Berndt 2006). This is however not applicable to the verbs that occur in the progressive and prospective constructions.

As we have demonstrated, all the verbs that occur in these constructions have their lexical semantics which contribute significantly to the overall semantics of the constructions. To the extent that the verbs in Table 1 are criterial for defining the grammatical constructions of the progressive and the prospective, they may be said to express a grammatical function, however they have full verbal morphosyntax. They do not have a 'defective paradigm'. In fact all the verbs—including the locative suppletive set—occur in the verb slot in the clause, can be modified by bona fide preverbal auxiliaries, and more importantly, can be suffixed with the habitual marker—the single morphological defining property of verbs in Ewe (see e.g. Aboh et al. in press). Some would say none of these features disqualify them from being labeled auxiliaries, because as Payne (1997: 84), for example, suggests, the difference between verbs and auxiliaries lies not so much in the form but in the function:

Auxiliaries are verbs in that they satisfy the morphosyntactic definition of verbs, ... they occur in the position of the verb and they take some of the marking of verbs... However, they are auxiliary in that they do not embody the major conceptual relation, state, or activity expressed by the clause.

From a constructional point of view and from the point of view of the lexical semantics of the verbs involved, it is hard to see how one can claim that the verbs in Table 1 "do not embody the major conceptual relation, state, or activity" as a component of the meaning of the construction. From an Ewe language internal point of view, it does not make sense to say that these forms are auxiliaries.

Arguing that the elements in Table 1 are auxiliaries and their counterpart forms are verbs goes against the parsimony principle, Ockham's razor. A counter argument could be advanced to say that it is common crosslinguistically for forms that are identical to belong to the two classes of verb and auxiliary. The crucial point here is that in the cases where one can make such a postulation, e.g. English *have*, there is a difference in behaviour. For instance, the auxiliary form of *have* can be contracted: *I've eaten*. However it is odd to contract the verb form: ?? *I've a car*. There is no such difference that one can point to for the Ewe situation.

Curiously enough, the same people who advocate an auxiliary analysis for these verbs in the progressive and prospective constructions do not extend the same analysis to the forms when they occur in the phasal aspect constructions.

In these constructions too the verbs carry their lexical meaning and take a postpositional phrase as their complement. The semantics of the postposition and of the verb contribute to signaling the phase of the activity or event that is expressed in the event nominal or the gerund that is the dependent of the postposition. The schematic structure of these constructions is Subject –Verb - Postpositional Phrase. The specific constructions are differentiated by the Verb and the postposition. Those in which the verbs are the same as those in Table 1 are of three kinds, namely *dze* ‘contact’ for inceptive; *le ~ no* ‘be.at’ for durative and *yi* ‘go’ for continuative (see Ameka this volume):

- (22) a. Inceptive: Subject *dze* ‘contact’ [*NP gɔme* ‘under’] _{POSTP}
É-dze avi-fa-fa gɔme
 3SG-contact cry-RED-emit under
 ‘S/he started crying’
- b. Durative: Subject *le ~ no* ‘be.at’ [*NP dzi* ‘surface’] _{POSTP}
 [Many drank a lot and were intoxicated but]
wó-ga-le é-no-no dzi kokoko
 3PL-REP-be.at:PRES 3SG-RED-drink surface TRIP-only
 ‘they remained drinking persistently’ [Agbezuge 232]
- c. Continuative: Subject *yi* go [*NP dzi* ‘surface’] _{POSTP}
álé Papá Ge yi xó-tu-tu dzi
 thus TITLE NAME go tradition-RED-build surface
 ‘so Papa Ge continued to recount the traditions’ (Agbezuge 1910)

The point is that nobody ever analyses these verbs in these phasal aspect constructions as auxiliaries. It is not clear to us why the same logic is not applied: the NP encodes the conceptual event that is being talked about and the verbs depending on their lexical semantics model the deictic and temporal frame of the situation characterised in the construction. It is inconsistent, in our view, to label the same verbs when they occur in similar aspectual constructions auxiliaries while in these phasal constructions they are verbs.

This is not to challenge the validity of the notion of “auxiliary” in general and in Ewe grammar. We are arguing that the forms that have been called auxiliaries in the progressive and prospective construction are not auxiliaries. They are verbs. There is a distinct class of Auxiliary elements in Ewe, called “augments” by Ansre (1966) and modals by Duthie (1996). The forms in Table 1 behave differently from this set of forms: The Auxs always take a VP complement, the elements in Table 1 never take a VP complement directly (see Ameka this volume and Essegbey 2004 for further details). The VP in a progressive and prospective construction headed by the forms in Table 1 can, in fact, be the complement of these auxiliaries as illustrated in (23).

- (23) *Kofi nyá le dzo-dzó gé*
 NAME MOD_{be.at:PRES}RED-leave PROSP
 'Kofi is certainly going to leave.'

It has been claimed that auxiliaries may not themselves be governed by other auxiliaries (see Heine 1993: 23). If this is accepted then it follows that the Verb in the progressive and prospective construction like *le* 'be.at:PRES' cannot be an auxiliary since it can be governed by other auxiliaries.

The forms in Table 1 which form the nucleus of the prospective and progressive constructions are verbs and not auxiliaries. In this context they have not lost any semantic content, nor are they more abstract than when they are used in other contexts. They behave in all respects like bona fide verbs. They do not share any properties with the class of elements in Ewe that satisfy most of the properties identified by Heine (1993: 24-25) as the defining, even if contradictory, features of auxiliaries cross-linguistically. It is uneconomical to assign them to a class of auxiliaries. In the next section, we address the status of the complement of these verbs. We argue that they are aspectual phrases headed by aspect markers. The aspect markers select a nominalized VP.

3.4 *The nature of the complement*

Closely related to the problem of the status of the predicator element discussed in the previous section is the question of the structure and nature of the complement. As indicated earlier, it has generally been assumed that the progressive and prospective constructions have an S-Aux-O-V-Other constituent order. We have argued that it is better to consider the Aux a verb both on semantic and formal grounds. In this section, we defend the view that it is erroneous to talk at the clause level of an SOV order. It is the mixing of levels. We suggest that the complement of the verb in the progressive and prospective constructions is an Aspect Phrase (AspP) headed by the aspectual markers which select a nominalized VP. The complex nature of this constituent has resisted a straightforward analysis. Clements (1975), for example, argues that it is an Affix Verb Phrase (AVP). As he put it:

We may claim that the AVPs are generated as VPs by the base rules, and then at some subsequent point—perhaps at the beginning of the application of the transformational rules—they are reanalysed as NPs (Clements 1975: 38)

This view framed within an Aspects model of generative grammar is instructive and agrees in part with the position advanced here. In particular, it is consistent with the suggestion that the aspectual markers select a nominalized VP. It is important to stress that the AspP is not an NP and that the nominalized

VP is not a free constituent—it is a stem that requires a marker to be able to function as a constituent.

Clements (1975) has amply demonstrated that the AVP, the constituent we are calling an Aspect Phrase, is not a nominal because it cannot be modified by an adjective as illustrated in (24c), unlike other nominals including gerunds (e.g. 24b).

- (24) a. *dɔ sɛsɛ̃ me-wɔ*
work hard 1SG-do
'A hard work I did.'
- b. *dɔ-wɔ-wɔ sɛsɛ̃ dzi me-le*
work-RED-do hard surface 1SG-be.at PRES
'Hard working I am doing.'
- c. **dɔ-wɔ-m sɛsɛ̃ me-le*
work-do-PROG hard 1SG-do
'Hard working I am.'

This data set shows that the progressive aspectual phrase is not nominal. The gerund, by contrast, in (24b) is nominal hence it can be modified by an adjective. Furthermore, the aspectual phrase cannot be relativised, nor pseudo-clefted nor coordinated like other NPs and gerunds with the linker *kplé* 'and':

- (25) a. **Kofi nɔ dɔ wɔ-m kplé ha dzi-m*
NAME be.at:NPRES work do-PROG and song bear-PROG
'Kofi was working and singing.'

Compare (26) in which gerunds formed from the VPs in (25a) are coordinated:

- b. *dɔ-wɔ-wɔ kplé ha-dzi-dzi yé zɔ-na*
work-RED-do and song-RED-bear aFOC walk-HAB
'Working and singing go together.'

Clements uses these arguments to show that the aspectual phrases are not NPs and that they are different from gerunds. Fabb (1992: 33-37), on the other hand, claims that there is no category status difference between the aspectual phrases or Clements' AVPs and the gerunds. He asserts that "I remain with the traditional account that they are both NPs" (Fabb 1992: 37). Fabb even goes further to suggest that the progressive marker nominalizes the verb (Fabb 1992: 37). We do not think this is the case and we agree with Clements that the aspectual phrase is not an NP. One piece of evidence for this is that it cannot be pronominalized. Were it an NP, one would expect this. In fact, gerunds which are NPs can be pronominalized. In the rest of this section we present some of the arguments for the claim that the element the aspectual marker selects is a nominalized VP.

3.4.1 Evidence for nominalization of VP

We have argued in the preceding section that the Aspectual Phrase—the constituent headed by the progressive and prospective aspect markers—is not a nominal phrase. Consequently, the progressive and prospective markers cannot be said to nominalize the phrase, contra Fabb's (1992) suggestion. We maintain, however, that the aspect markers select a nominalized VP. This nominalized VP is a stem that hosts a marker. It is not a free constituent. We first show that this component of the aspectual phrase is a nominalized VP and thereafter show that it is a bound constituent.

The first piece of evidence comes from the fact that where there is no complement adjacent to the verb, the verb is reduplicated. The pattern of reduplication is the same as that for the formation of action nominals from a verb, namely, the reduplicative copy bears a low tone irrespective of the tone of the verb stem (cf. Ameka 1999b, Ofori 2002). This pattern of reduplication is distinct from the reduplication of verbs for the formation of adjectives where the reduplicative copy is a complete copy of the segments and the tone of the verb stem. Compare the forms in example (26):

(26)	Verb		Nominal		Adjectival
a.	sě́	'become.strong'	sè-sě́	'strength'	sé-sě́ 'strong'
b.	lǎ	'to love'	lǎ-lǎ	'love'	lǎ-lǎ 'beloved'

The point is that the form of the nominalized VP selected in the progressive and prospective constructions is the same as the nominal form, as is evident from comparing example (27) below with the corresponding form in (26a) above).

(27)	é-fě	lǎ.me	le	sè-sě́	gé
	3SG-poss	body	be.at:	PRES RED-become.strong	PROSP
	'His body is going to get strong.'				
	i.e. 'His health is going to improve.'				

The second piece of evidence comes from the fact that if the complement is adjacent to the verb, the surface order is permuted. This is the same process that is used for the formation of nominal stems that host other formatives. Hence this can be called a nominal stem formation strategy. The output of the process is not a nominal word, rather it forms a stem that serves as input to further morphological processes such as affixation. For instance, the formation of agent nouns, place nouns, instrumental nouns from VPs etc. is fed by this process if the VP is made up of a verb and complement (see Duthie 1996, Ofori 2002). For example:

- (28)
- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| VP | Agent nominal | Place nominal | Instrument nominal |
| <i>fiá nú</i> | <i>nú-fiá-lá</i> | <i>nú-fiá-fě</i> | <i>nú-fiá-nú</i> |
| teach thing | thing-teach-er | thing-teach-place | thing-teach-thing |
| 'teach' | 'teacher' | 'teaching place' | 'teaching aid' |

The claim is that it is the same process of forming a nominal stem that is deployed in the creation of the component of the aspectual phrase that is selected by the aspect marker if the VP is made up of a verb and a complement and they are adjacent. Compare the nominalized VP form in the progressive construction in (29) below with the forms in (28) above:

- (29)
- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| <i>é-le</i> | <i>nú fiá-m</i> |
| 3SG:be.at:PRES | thing teach-PROG |
| 'S/He is teaching.' | |

This nominal stem formation process described above is distinct from the formation of adjectival stems from a VP made up of a verb and its complement. For the adjective formation the verb and the complement are just compounded without permutation (plus an adjectivalising high tone suffix) (see Ameka 1991 and 2002b). Compare the forms in (30).

- (30)
- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| VP | Agent nominal | Adjectival |
| <i>nyá nú</i> | <i>nú-nyá-lá</i> | <i>nyá-nú'</i> |
| know thing | thing-know-er | know-thing:HTS |
| 'know' | 'savant' | 'knowledgeable' |

A third piece of evidence for the nominalized nature of the component of the Aspectual phrase selected by the aspect markers is one which has been advanced in the traditional literature and exploited in the grammaticalization literature. It is based on a cross-linguistic feature of the nominalization of verbs plus complements. In such nominalizations, there is an associative relation between the verb and the complement (Noonan 1985). This relation is manifested in Ewe in the choice of the form of pronominals to represent the complement in such nominalizations. Thus the independent forms of pronouns are used in these nominalized VP structures. This is one piece of evidence also that at the clause level there is no OV structure. Indeed if the complement in the nominalized VP were thought of as an object it would not have such a pronominal form (cf. Heine 1994).

A second manifestation of the associative relation comes from the order of first and second person singular pronouns in the nominalized VP structure. These pronoun forms occur after the verb just as they occur after the possessed item in the inalienable construction. These pronouns can also occur before the verb. However unlike in possessive structures where the tone of the pronoun becomes rising signaling an alienable structure, the floating high tone posses-

sive marker does not occur on these pronouns in this context. Compare the tone on the first person singular pronoun *nye* in the following:

- (31) a. Aspectual Construction with 1SG before
ta le nyè vé-mí
 head be.at:PRES 1SG pain-PROG
 'Head is aching me.'
- b. Aspectual Construction with 1SG after
ta le vé-(n)yè-mí
 head be.at:PRES pain-1SG-PROG
 'Head is aching me.'
- c. 1SG in inalienable possessive structure
ta-nyè gba
 head-1SG break
 Lit: 'My head is broken' i.e. My head is blocked, I have a cold.
- d. 1SG in alienable possessive structure
nyě ta gba
 1SG:POSS head break
 Lit: 'My head is broken' i.e. My head is blocked, I have a cold.

The behaviour of the 1SG and 2SG pronouns in the aspectual constructions, especially when they occur before the non-finite verb in the aspectual phrase as in (31a), suggests that in Ewe the verb by itself in the aspectual phrase is not nominalized (cf. e.g. Gensler 1994). If it were, one would have expected that in this context a floating high tone should be present to indicate the association between the pronoun and the following element. Note that where a verb is truly nominalized the difference in tone with respect to the different structures is evident, as illustrated in (32).

- (32) a. *lɔ̃lɔ̃-nye* (inalienable structure)
 love-1SG
 'my love'
- b. *nyě lɔ̃lɔ̃* (alienable structure)
 1SG:POSS love
 'my love'

We conclude from all these pieces of evidence that it is the VP as a whole representing the state of affairs that is nominalized.

Thus there is enough evidence to argue that the specifier of the Aspectual phrase is a nominalized VP. In fact it is a mixed category as Clements (1975) already pointed out: the affix VP is base generated as a VP and then at some stage of derivation becomes an NP, in his parlance.

One of the enigmas of the progressive and prospective aspect constructions lies in the fact that the nominalized VP is not a free constituent and it is hard to assign it a category label. This is why it is considered to be a mixed category constituent. A further puzzle is that the NP part of this nominalized VP can be questioned and fronted for focus. However, the nominalized VP as such cannot, as shown in (33).

- (33) a. *Áma le mɔlu ɖa-mí*
 NAME be.at:PRES rice cook-PROG
 ‘Ama is cooking rice.’
- b. Aspectual Phrase in Focus
mɔlu ɖa-mí yé Áma le
 rice cook-PROG aFOC NAME be.at:PRES
 ‘RICE COOKING Ama is.’
- c. Internal argument of eventive verb in Focus
mɔlu yé Áma le ɖa-ɖa-mí
 rice aFOC NAME be.at:PRES RED-cook-PROG
 ‘RICE Ama is cooking.’
- d. Nominalized VP of the AspP cannot be focused
 **mɔlu ɖa yé Áma le*
 rice cook aFOC NAME be.at:PRES

The focusing facts indicate clearly that the internal argument of the eventive verb is not a clause level object. This is because if it were an object, its focusing as in (33c) should not have any effect in the rest of the clause. However when it is focussed the eventive verb has to be reduplicated, a kind of sign that its internal argument has been fronted for focus. It also shows that a verb as such cannot occur in that slot, rather, it has to be a nominalized constituent. Thus the focusing of the internal argument of the eventive verb also gives evidence for the claim that the specifier, as it were, of the Aspect Phrase is a nominalized VP.

These empirical facts notwithstanding, the OV analysis is predominant in the literature. Manfredi (1997: 88), for example, proposes that

in a durative (non-terminative) sentence, object preposing is motivated by a principle—call it SCOPHOBIA—that forces an object out of the verb’s c-command domain. The specific trigger of object shift varies: in [Ewe]Gbe, it is a progressive Aux ...

Leaving aside the question of whether the so-called OV structure is universally aspectually conditioned in the “Benue-Kwa” languages as Manfredi suggests, it should be evident from the discussion so far that for Ewe there is no so-called progressive Aux that is responsible for this. Furthermore, the struc-

ture is not restricted to the progressive. The prospective displays the same structure and there is no real sense in which one can talk about the prospective as a durative situation. It appears therefore that the account is inadequate for Ewe. As we shall see in section 3.6, in other varieties of Gbe such as Gengbe where one can talk of an auxiliary marker of the progressive, there is no “object shift”, to use Manfredi’s term. Before that we turn to issues of variation within Ewe and relate it to the claims about the grammaticalization of the aspectual constructions.

3.5 *Ewe dialect variation and grammaticalization*

There is some variation within Ewe with respect to the instantiation of the progressive and prospective constructions. Some of these have been hinted at in the course of the discussion. In this section we document this variation systematically and discuss its implications for the grammaticalization of the construction. We first look at the variation with respect to the progressive and then the prospective.

As indicated earlier, the progressive marker in the inland dialects is a high tone that gets anchored to the last syllable of the nominalized VP in the construction. Thus if the tone of the last syllable of the nominalized VP is low, it becomes rising as in examples (6a) and (7b) above. If the last syllable has a high tone, the effect of the progressive tone is to lengthen the final vowel of the nominalized VP, as shown in (34).

- (34) a. *me-le* *dzò-dzóó*
 1SG-be.at:PRES RED-leave:PROG
 ‘I am leaving.’
 b. *me-le* *tsi lèé*
 1SG-be.at:PRES water bathe:PROG
 ‘I am having a bath.’

In the southern, especially Anlo, dialects however, the progressive is realised as a high tone syllabic *m̩*. This is the form we get in the standard dialects too. Another distinctive feature of the Anlo dialects which has not been adopted in the standard literary form is that the present form of the locative verb *le* ‘be.at:PRES’ is elided in the progressive and prospective constructions. Thus utterances of the following kind are used in Anlo (see Clements 1972, 1975):

- (35) a. *é-dzo-dzó-m̩*
 3SG-RED-leave-PROG
 ‘S/he is leaving.’

- b. *é tsi le-m̃*
 3SG water bathe-PROG
 'S/he is having a bath.'

The non-present counterpart of the locative verb *nɔ* 'be.at:NPRES' cannot be omitted in similar fashion. Heine uses this kind of data to argue for the auxiliary status of *le* 'be.at'. Note however that if the aspectual phrase were to be fronted for focus the *le* 'be.at' form can no longer be elided as the focused counterparts of (35a, b) in (36) below show.⁷

- (36) a. *dzo-dzó-m̃ wò-le*
 RED-leave-PROG 3SG-be.at:PRES
 'LEAVING s/he is.'
 b. *tsi le-m̃ wò-le*
 water bathe-PROG 3SG-be.at:PRES
 'BATHING s/he is.'

Another distinctive feature of the Anlo varieties with respect to these constructions is that the reduplicated form of the nominalized VP in the aspectual phrase may also be reduced to just the verb stem. Such reduction seems to occur only in the present progressive form. In such structures there is a reduction in the locative verb form as well but not a complete elision as in the cases illustrated above. Thus a variant of example (36a) above is (37) below.

- (37) *é-e dzó-m̃*
 3SG-be.at:PRES leave-PROG
 'S/he is leaving.'

We suggest that in such structures the locative verb is reduced to a vowel with its low tone which is perceptible if one listens to Anlo speakers. Heine and grammaticalization theorists claim that the *le* 'be.at' form is completely elided indicating that the progressive construction has undergone erosion, which is the evidence par excellence not only for the evolution of the construction from an SVO structure through various stages but also for the auxiliary status of *le* 'be.at'. We hope we have demonstrated that the empirical facts are more complex. It is tempting to suggest that the variation between the locative verbless structure with the reduplicated structure and the reduced reduplicated structure seem to be following a prosodic structure of the Anlo dialect (see Stemberger and Lewis 1986).

When one pays attention to the presence or absence of phonological material, one might be tempted to think that the inland dialects have an eroded progressive, since it is only marked by a floating high tone while the form in Anlo has both segmental and supra-segmental material, namely, *m̃*. There is no evidence that the inland form developed as a result of the erosion of the Anlo

form. It is interesting to observe that in order for the formal contrasts to be maintained, the inland dialects do not have a reduction in any other part of the construction.

As far as the prospective is concerned, we have pointed out the difference between the Anlo dialects and the inland dialects in the following areas: First, as just discussed, the present locative verb form can be omitted in the Anlo dialects but not in the inland dialects. Second, the marker of the prospective in Anlo is *gé* while in the inland dialects it is *gbé*. Given the phonological shape of these markers, it has been suggested that the Anlo form could be a grammaticalized form of the inland forms. Plausible as this may sound, it is not easy to substantiate. Given that the inland form variant is in a heterosemic relation with a place and purposive formative *gbé*, one would have expected to see traces of similar erosion with respect to such nominal forms. But these have not been attested. It seems that the two dialects followed different routes for the development of the prospective. It is possible that the Anlo form is a direct extension of the noun *gé* that is used in some of the southern dialects for 'place' as a generic term, distinct from the one used for the 'place, area' term that is used in the inland dialects.

Another difference between the Anlo dialect and the inland dialects is in terms of the placement of the Other, i.e. adjuncts as well as second objects with respect to the prospective marker. The Anlo and southern dialects follow the order that we have described so far, namely the Other constituent occurs after the prospective marker which marks the end of the aspectual phrase. In some of the inland dialects, however, when the Other is a second object of the verb in the aspectual phrase, it can occur within the scope of the prospective marker. Compare the variants in (38):

- (38) a. *É-le akɔ̃nta fiá ɖevi-á-wó gbé* (Inland)
 3SG-be.at:PRES maths teach child-DEF-PL PROSP
 'S/he is going to teach the children mathematics.'
 b. *É akɔ̃nta fiá gé ɖevi-á-wó* (Anlo)
 3SG maths teach PROSP child-DEF-PL
 'S/he is going to teach the children mathematics.'

Similarly, if the Other is a prepositional phrase, it can also occur within the scope of the prospective marker in the inland dialects but outside it in Anlo. For instance,

- (39) a. *É-le dɔ dí ná-m gbé* (Inland)
 3SG-be.at:PRES work want DAT-1SG PROSP
 'S/he is going to look for a job for me.'

- b. *É dɔ dí gé ná-m* (Anlo)
 3SG work want PROSP DAT-1SG
 ‘S/he is going to look for a job for me.’

The inland dialect’s pattern here follows the nominal stem formation pattern for such structures. For example, one can form an agent nominal from a comparable structure to the input in (39) immediately above as follows:

- (40) *dí dɔ ná ame dɔ-dí-ná-ame-lá*
 want work DAT person work-want-DAT-person-er
 ‘look for job for someone’ ‘one who looks for job for person’

The behaviour of some of the fillers of the Other slot in the prospective construction is consistent with the view that the specifier of the aspectual phrase is a nominalized VP.

Another difference between the inland dialects and Anlo shows up with respect to serial verb constructions in which the first sub-event is in the prospective. In Anlo and generally in pan-Ewe dialects, the second sub-event is marked for the potential. In the inland dialects however, it is also possible to form a complex predicate, as it were, from the two subevents and the complex predicate then occurs within the scope of the single prospective marker. Consider the following examples:

- (41) a. *É-le nú ɔ́a gé á-ɔ́u* (Anlo / Standard)
 3SG-be.at:PRES thing cook PROSP POT-eat
 ‘S/he is going to cook and eat.’
 b. *É-le nú ɔ́a ɔ́u gbé* (Inland)
 3SG-be.at:PRES thing cook eat PROSP
 ‘S/he is going to cook and eat.’

The pattern in example (41b) can be seen as an instance of the Other constituent coming within the scope of the prospective and which again follows the pattern of VP nominalization where the Other is appended after the verb. It appears that because the nominal output is a stem rather than a grammatical word, the first verb is not reduplicated. The pattern of nominalizing a sequence of VPs of this kind is to form a gerund of the first VP and adjoin the second VP to it (see e.g. Ofori 2002). Thus from *ɔ́a nú ɔ́u* ‘cook thing eat’ what we would get is *nú-ɔ́a-ɔ́a-ɔ́u* ‘thing-RED-cook-eat’, i.e. cooking to eat.

In sum, the Ewe dialects vary with respect to the instantiation of the progressive and prospective aspect constructions. The details of the variation conform in broad outline with the analysis proposed in this study. In particular, the variation sheds light on the fact that the predicators in second position in these constructions are verbs and that the aspectual phrase contains a nominalized VP (or in some cases sequence of VPs) headed by the aspect markers. The

inland dialects in which some fillers of the Other slot in the construction occur within the scope of the prospective are similar to languages like Dangme and also Gungbe where elements like second complements and adverbials occur within the scope of the aspectual phrase. We turn in the next section to a comparison of similar aspectual constructions in other Gbe varieties.

3.6 *Comparative Gbe grammar of progressive and prospective constructions*

There is some variation among the various Gbe dialects as well with respect to the progressive and prospective constructions (see Kluge 2000 appendix). Unlike the Ewe dialects however, many of the major dialect clusters have alternative constructions for expressing the same aspectual notions. These are briefly outlined for each cluster in an East to West direction starting from Gungbe, Fongbe, Ajagbe to Gengbe.

Aboh (1998) distinguishes three structures for Gungbe: a progressive, a prospective and a *gbé* –purpose structure. He adopts a traditional analysis where the progressive is expressed by a bipartite morpheme “one of which occurs in a preverbal position [i.e. *tò* ‘Imperf’ FKA&MEKD] while the other is realised in a postverbal position [as a floating low tone FKA&MEKD]” (Aboh 1998: 57). Furthermore, according to Aboh, the object immediately precedes the verb giving rise to the surface word order S *tò* OV, as in (42).

- (42) *dàwé ló tò nú qù`*
 man DEF Imperf thing eat:PROG
 ‘The man is eating.’

While the progressive morpheme is realised as a low tone in Gungbe it is realised as a high tone in the inland dialects of Ewe. Like in the inland Ewe dialects some elements that belong to the Other category such as some reduplicated items that translate as adverbs and which could be ideophonic may occur in the preverbal position in the progressive construction. For example:

- (43) *Asíba tò dèdè zòh⁸*
 NAME Imperf slowly walk
 ‘Asiba is walking slowly.’

Like other Gbe dialects, “a Gungbe verb must double when it is not immediately preceded by a preposed internal argument” (Aboh 1998: 186), as illustrated in (44).

- (44) *sin ló tò si-sà`*
 water DEF Imperf RED-pour:PROG
 ‘The water is pouring.’

Interestingly enough, in Gungbe, different from Ewe, a clitic object pronoun always follows the eventive verb in these constructions and in such contexts the eventive verb must be reduplicated and the tonal morpheme gets anchored to the clitic.

- (45) *Asiba tò din-din wè`*
 NAME Imperf RED-search 2SG:PROG
 'Asiba is looking for you.'

Moreover some speakers extend this strategy to cases where an NP object occurs post-verbally, as illustrated in (46).

- (46) *Asiba tò din-din wémà ló*
 NAME Imperf RED-search book DEF:PROG
 'Asiba is looking for the book.'

Whichever way one would like to analyse the structures involving the reduplicated verbs it is clear that they do not conform to an OV structure; rather, they point to the nominalization of the event functioning as a complement of the predicate in second position.

The prospective in Gungbe is parasitic on the progressive structure in the sense that it involves the same markers plus a distinctive preverb marker *na* 'PROSP'. This marker occurs immediately before the eventive verb and blocks verb doubling in the contexts outlined above for the progressive. Thus the prospective counterparts of the sentences in (43, 44) cannot contain reduplicated verbs as shown in (47a-c)

- (47) a. *sín ló tò na (*si-)sà`*
 water DEF imperf PROSP RED-pour:LTS
 'The water is about to pour.'
- b. *Asiba tò na dín wè`*
 NAME imperf PROSP search 2SG:LTS
 'Asiba is about to look for you.'
- c. *Asiba tò na dín wémà ló*
 NAME imperf PROSP search book DEF:LTS
 'Asiba is about to look for the book.'

Significantly, the object can occur preverbally, however it must occur before the prospective marker, as in (48).

- (48) *Asiba tò wémà ló na dín*
 NAME imperf book DEF PROSP search:LTS
 'Asiba is about to look for the book.'

The position of the prospective *na* marker seems to be fixed with respect to the eventive verb and nothing can intervene between them.

Unlike the Ewe prospective, the Gungbe prospective is used to express imminence of a situation only. A motion-cum-purpose function that the Ewe prospective construction has is expressed by a different structure, which Aboh describes as a *gbé* purpose clause. The marker of this structure is cognate with the marker of the prospective in Ewe. Aboh (1998) describes the *gbé* clauses as a kind of serial verb construction, noting that they involve two different verbs “instead of an aspect marker [e.g. *tò* ‘imperf’; *nà* ‘PROSP’ FKA&MEKD] and a verb as seen in the imperfective [i.e. progressive and prospective FKA&MEKD] sentences. In *gbé* clauses, the complex including the second verb, ... behaves on a par with the complement of *tò* in imperfective/prospective sentences, while V1 is similar to the imperfective marker *tò* with which it appears to share the same position” (Aboh 1998: 189). Just like in the Ewe motion-cum-purpose sub-construction of the prospective, the predicates in second clause position in the Gungbe construction are a closed class of deictic motion verbs, namely, *yi* ‘go’, *wá* ‘come’, *já* ‘about to come’ and combinations of these: *wá-yi* ‘to pass’ and *jé-yi* ‘on the point of going’. In the *gbé* clauses also the eventive verb can be reduplicated when the object is a pronominal, as in (49), or when it does not occur preposed to the verb.

- (49) *Asíba yi dín-dín mi gbé*
 NAME go RED-search 1SG purpose
 ‘Asiba went to look for me.’

The prospective *na* can occur in the *gbé* clauses too and nothing can intervene between it and the eventive verb, as illustrated in (50).

- (50) *Asíba wá hwévinà xò gbé*
 NAME come fish PROSP buy purpose
 ‘Asiba came to buy fish.’

One difference between the *gbé* clauses and the imperfective/prospective is that an object cannot occur postverbally in the former after a reduplicated verb, as the ungrammatical sentence in (51) shows.

- (51) **Asíba wá nà xò-xò hwévi gbé*
 NAME come PROSP RED-buy fish purpose

The Gungbe phenomena are consistent with the analysis proposed for Ewe. Even though Aboh does not commit himself to analysing *tò* ‘imperf’, the predicate that occurs in second position in the progressive construction, as a verb, he admits that it fills the same paradigmatic slot as the verbs in the *gbé* purpose clauses. As such one could extend the verb analysis to the ‘imperfective’

marker too, in our opinion. In addition, the reduplication of the eventive verbs in some contexts resonates with the nominalized VP functioning as the complement of a verb. Moreover, the fact that the internal argument of the eventive verb can surface after it, speaks against an SOV order analysis of the progressive and prospective constructions.

The Fongbe facts are very similar to those of Gungbe (see Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002 Chapter 5 for a detailed description). Lefebvre et al. present an analysis which agrees in many respects with the position we have adopted. They argue that the predicate in the second position is a verb and that the aspectual marker selects a nominalized VP. As they put it, ‘the imperfective aspect is expressed by a periphrastic expression involving *dɔ* ‘to be at’ and the form *wɛ*. The lexical item *dɔ* selects a complement headed by *wɛ*, glossed as POST ... , *wɛ* selects a nominalized VP.’ (Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002: 95)

Both Ajagbe and Gengbe have alternative structures for expressing the progressive and prospective meanings. For Ajagbe, Fiedler (1996) observes that a sentence in the progressive may have one of two orders.⁹ She represents one structure as: Subject – *le* (PROG)-Expansion-(Nominalized) Verb-*kɔ* (PROG).

This structure is illustrated in (52).

- (52) *me le sùklú-yi kɔ*
 1SG COP(LOC)school-go near
 PROG PROG
 ‘I am going to school.’

As is discernible from the glosses, Fiedler adopts a traditional analysis similar to Aboh’s where there are two forms that mark the progressive, the *le* form which she incidentally analyses as a locative copula and a form *kɔ* ‘near’, which looks suspiciously like a postposition. Notice that the Ajagbe *le* is cognate with the locative verb *le* ‘be.at’ in Ewe. An important point of convergence is that Fiedler also considers the eventive constituent as a nominalized verb, perhaps more accurately, a nominalized VP. In Ajagbe also this nominalized VP is selected by the progressive marker. Like in other Gbe varieties the whole aspectual phrase can be fronted for focus as in (53).

- (53) *sùklú-yi kɔ me le*
 school-go near 1SG COP(LOC)
 PROG PROG
 ‘SCHOOL GOING I am.’

The second structure for the progressive in Ajagbe has the following constituent order:

Subject-(Nominalized) Verb - *kɔ* (PROG) –Expansion.

In this structure, the final progressive marker seems to function as a post verbal marker on the verb. Fiedler suggests that the verb in this case is nominalized but there does not seem to be any formal indication of this. Even if it is nominalized, the constituent is the predicate in the clause. In that sense it is a regular SVO structure with a marker on the verb. An example of this second structure is (54a).

- (54) a. *me yi kɔ sùklú*
 1SG go PROG school
 'I am going to school.'

It seems that when the predicate in the above structure is focused it reveals that *yi* 'go' is the verb in the sentence. The predicate focus involves the formation of a nominal by the permutation of the verb plus complement and placing this in the focus position. The verb marked for the progressive is retained in the rest of the clause as in (54b).

- b. *sùklu- yi ní yi kɔ*
 school-go 1SG go PROG
 'SCHOOL I am going to.'

The Ajagbe facts can be straightforwardly analysed along the lines presented for Ewe. Moreover, the Ajagbe facts indicate that the progressive can be expressed by alternate structures with basic SVO order.

Gen also has two structures for the progressive. The more common structure has an S Aux V (O) Other constituent order. The Aux is filled by a form derived from the locative *be.at* verb plus a high tone progressive marker. The Aux is followed by the verb plus complement, if any as in (55a, b).

- (55) a. *Mu lèé ɔ́ nù*
 1SG Imperf eat thing
 'I am eating.'
 b. *Mu lèé dzó*
 1SG Imperf leave
 'I am leaving.'

In fact, the auxiliary slot is also filled by a potential marker followed by a verb and its complement, if any. This suggests that there is a clear auxiliary which takes a VP complement in the language, be it for the progressive or the potential:

- (56) a. *mu làá ɔ́ nù*
 1SG POT eat thing
 'Je mangerai.' (Bole-Richard 1983: 313)

The second structure is that of the widespread Subject-Verb-AspP-Other. In this construction, the aspect phrase is headed by the aspectual particle *ɔ*. The features of this are the same as those that we have seen for the Ewe constructions: the eventive verb and its internal argument are nominalized by permutation and is selected by the *ɔ* particle as illustrated in example (56b).

- b. *mu le nú ɔ*
 1SG be.at:PRES thing eat PRT
 'I am eating.'

In sum, evidence from Ewe and other Gbe languages shows that the progressive and prospective structures employ a structure which is consistent with an S Pre-verb (i.e. Aux) Verb Complement Other structure. This family of constructions does not call for the postulation of an alternative constituent order to the basic SVO order of the languages. Rather, from the perspective of a constructional approach to grammar, the progressive and prospective constructions form part of the arsenal of constructions that is stored in the mind, together with their specific properties including the operator morphemes and their order as well as their semantics. Speakers choose them to talk about situations just as they select simple lexical items to describe situations depending on the perspective they assume.

4 Dangme¹⁰

Our main concern in this section is to describe the imperfective construction in Dangme in a manner revealing of the syntactic and semantic relations between this construction and other verb constructions in the language, and of relations between the construction in Dangme and in other Kwa languages.¹¹ We shall of course compare it to the apparently similar Ewe construction, but it is also desirable that the analysis provide insight into the nature of divergence from related and neighbouring languages that do not have this construction, particularly Dangme's very close relative Ga.

In order to achieve the descriptive goals, however, a number of problems must be faced. We have claimed that the construction consists of a finite verb plus its complement, which in turn consists of the verb that actually denotes the event in a non-finite form. This non-finite verb has a special suffix and is preceded by its object. Object-Verb+Suffix is also the form of nominalization of a VP in this language. As for Ewe, we will need to investigate whether the complement construction in Dangme can be characterized as a nominalized VP, as claimed by Heine and Claudi (2001).

A related question is whether the construction is in any sense, semantic or syntactic, a locative construction. In Dangme, the Aspect marker following the

Complement verb is clearly a suffix, and this suffix occurs in no other context; what semantic feature is to be attributed to it, and what features should be attributed to the finite verb, or even to the construction itself?

Since the grammar and semantics of the construction must be determined in relation to the other finite verb forms of the language, we first give an overview of the verb system, before proceeding to the imperfective construction itself.

4.1 *The Dangme Finite Verb*¹²

Like Ga (see Dakubu elsewhere in this volume), Dangme has more positive verb forms than negative, and modality marking presents analytical problems. Despite numerous important differences between the two languages, it is useful in Dangme, as in Ga, to distinguish the grammatical paradigm that qualifies the verb from a grammaticized serial construction, headed by a free verb, in which elements that lie somewhere on a cline between free verb and particle contribute additional features and may themselves be marked by the grammatical paradigm. We discuss the paradigm first, and then the grammaticized serial construction.

4.1.1 *The Grammatical Paradigm*¹³

The Dangme verb paradigm is relatively simple, although more elaborate than what is found in Ewe. A verb can be marked for one (only) of five features, demonstrated in (58).

- (57)
- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| Perfective | <i>Nà lá</i> | ‘Na sang’ |
| Habitual | <i>Nà lá-á</i> | ‘Na sings’ |
| Negative | <i>Nà lá wē</i> | ‘Na did not / does not sing/ is not singing’ |
| Subjunctive | <i>Nà á lá</i> | ‘Na is to sing, would sing’ |
| Absolute | <i>lá</i> | ‘sing!’ |

We now discuss each form in turn.

a. Perfective: This form out of context is usually translated as a simple past. There is no doubt that it is fundamentally not a tense, but an aspect in which the event is treated as an unexamined whole. A Perfective form is concrete, actual, realis, but implies nothing whatever about the event’s inner structure, except that in the absence of adverbial or grammatical specification it is usually to be interpreted as a singular, completed event. Morphologically it is completely unmarked, so that it seems to be unmarked both grammatically and semantically.

With some verbs the Perfective is stative, with the implication that a process of change of state has been completed, thus:

- (58) *ì pò* ‘I got wet, am wet’, compare *ì bā* ‘I came’.

Even in these cases the form is to be regarded as perfective or completive, since the achievement of the state is treated as a unique occurrence and the temporal process whereby it was achieved is not salient.

b. Habitual: The Habitual suffix is a vowel *-ɔ*, or *-a* if the stem ends in *a* (as in (58)), with High tone. The stem remains unchanged. Habitual forms are semantically and phonologically very similar to another form, which we shall call the Recurrent, and with some verbs the two cannot easily be distinguished. The Recurrent suffix consists of a copy of the stem vowel, also with High tone, and the stem always has Low tone. This means that if the lexical stem ends in *a* or *ɔ* and has Low tone, the two forms are homophonous.¹⁴ Not every stem can occur with the Recurrent suffix, but if a stem can occur with either suffix and there is no phonological ambiguity, it appears that the Habitual denotes a regular habit or a rule, while the Recurrent is affectively more neutral, denoting a frequent event whose recurrence is contingent on some external factor. The sentences of (59) illustrate the difference.

- (59) Habitual: *è nũ-ɔ̃ dā wawɛɛ*
 3SG drink-HAB drinks strongly
 ‘He drinks alcohol seriously, is a drinker.’
 Recurrent: *è nũ-ũ dā da mɔtu*
 3SG drink-REC drinks every morning
 ‘He drinks alcohol every morning.’
 Habitual: *à bu-ɔ̃ akotaa wawɛɛ*
 3PL do-HABmath strongly
 ‘They do math strongly (at a high level, well).’
 Recurrent: *à bu-ũ akotaa ɲɛ suku ɔ*
 3PL do-REC math at school DEF
 ‘They do math at that school.’
 Habitual: *è kpɛ-ɔ̃ ni*
 3SG sew-HAB things
 ‘She sews, with skill.’
 Recurrent: *è kpɛ-ɛ ni*
 3SG sew-REC things
 ‘She sews regularly, is a dressmaker.’

It is the Habitual form, not the Recurrent, that is likely to occur in proverbial language, as in the following Klama saying:¹⁵

- (60) *ba le gbɛ-ɔ̃ ba*
 leaf TOP kill-HAB leaf
 ‘An herb kills an herb.’

In the sentence of (61), taken from a written text, the first three verbs are clearly Habitual, but the last two are ambiguous, and only assumed to be Habitual rather than Recurrent because they continue a series of related sub-events, and there is no change in the narrative viewpoint.

- (61) (a) *bā hé-ɔ̌ ɲɔ̌ wō-ɔ̌ kotoku-hi a-mi kē*
 (3PL)come buy-HAB take put-HAB sack-PL ASSOC-in move
wō-ɔ̌ me le kē kwɔ̌-ɔ̌ wo kē yà-á ma
 put-HAB steamer move climb-HAB sea move go-HAB town
kpa-hi a-nɔ̌.
 several-PL ASSOC-LOC
 ‘They come buy and put (it) in sacks (and) load (it) on a ship (and) take (it) overseas to various countries.’

The verbs in (62) could similarly be either Habitual or Recurrent, depending on whether or not the recurrence of the events is thought of as a regular rule. Given the discourse context, however, the verbs should probably be interpreted as in Habitual aspect.

- (62) *e sisi jí wà nà-á wɔ-ɔ-mɛ sī kɛ a*
 3SG meaning is 1PL thank-HAB god-DEF-PL LOC PREP 3PL
mɔde ne à bɔ-ɔ̌
 effort COMP 3PL do-HAB
 ‘It means that we thank the gods for their efforts.’

Despite their phonological similarity and semantic proximity, these two suffixes do not have the same categorial status. They differ in the following ways:

It appears that with very few exceptions every verb has a Habitual form, but not every verb can occur in the Recurrent form, for example:

- (63) *dù* ‘bathe’ Habitual: *è dù-ɔ̌ e-he* ‘s/he bathes him/herself’ but:
 Recurrent: **è dù-ú e-he*

A verb can be Habitual or Subjunctive or Negative, but it cannot combine any two of these features. However a Recurrent verb can be marked as Subjunctive, indicated by the high tone on the pronoun in (64).

- (64) *e sa ne é gbè-é fufu*
 3SG suit COMP 3SG.SUB pound-REC fufu
 ‘He ought to pound fufu.’
 but **e sa ne é gbè-ɔ̌ fufu*
 3SG suit COMP 3SG.SUB pound-HAB fufu

Further, many Recurrent forms (not all) can be negated.

- (65)
- | | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| Simple | <i>hě́</i> | ‘support’ | Negative: | <i>hě́ wē</i> | ‘not support’ |
| Recurrent | <i>hě́-ě́</i> | ‘hold, carry’ | | <i>hě́-ě́ wē</i> | ‘not hold’ |

As can be inferred from (65), Recurrent forms may be lexicalized to varying degrees, and their meanings may be more or less distant from the meaning of the root. (66) gives further examples of partly lexicalized Recurrent stems:

- (66)
- | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>sà</i> | ‘suit, be suitable’ | Recurrent: | <i>sà-á</i> | ‘prepare’ |
| <i>kpè</i> | ‘meet’ | | <i>kpè-é</i> | ‘help; marry a woman’ |
| <i>tsǎ́</i> | ‘set out, set down’ | | <i>tsǎ́-ǎ́</i> | ‘teach’ |

If a verb is nominalized, it does not preserve any of the features of the finite verb, including the Habitual, but most Recurrent forms can be nominalized, as in (67).

- (67)
- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Simple Stem | Nominal | Recurrent Stem | Nominal |
| <i>hě́</i> | <i>hě́-mĩ</i> | <i>hě́-ě́</i> | <i>hě́-ě́-mĩ</i> |
| ‘support’ | ‘supporting’ | ‘carry’ | ‘carrying’ |
| <i>gbè</i> | <i>gbè-mĩ</i> | <i>gbè-é</i> | <i>gbè-é-mĩ</i> |
| ‘hit’ | ‘hitting’ | ‘pound’ | ‘pounding’ |

We therefore conclude that the Recurrent morpheme is not a member of the grammatical paradigm, but a lexical extension suffix, part of the lexical stem.

Formally, therefore, despite its semantics, a verb whose stem carries only the Recurrent suffix is Perfective. The two underlined (serial) verbs in (68) agree in having formally Perfective aspect, although the second verb is Recurrent and the first is not. The apparently progressive semantics of the expression comes from the Recurrent form of the second verb.

- (68)
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>a</i> | <i>bā</i> | <u><i>wó</i></u> | <i>jukwě</i> | <i>ɔ</i> | <i>kē</i> | <u><i>yà-á</i></u> | <i>ɲa</i> | <i>nɔ</i> |
| 3PL | come | take | child | DEF | move | go-REC | bush | LOC |
| ‘They were taking the child to the bush.’ | | | | | | | | |

This expression was followed in the spoken text by a purpose clause in Subjunctive form (to be discussed below), *kó né á yá gbè è* ‘to kill her’. The next sentence began in a topicalized clause with the same Recurrent verb as the previous sentence. It is given in (69):

- (69)
- | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>nē</i> | <i>a</i> | <u><i>yà-á</i></u> | <i>hluu</i> | <i>kekē</i> | <i>le...</i> |
| LINK | 3PL | go-REC | long | then | TOP... |
| ‘as they were going along for a time, ...’ | | | | | |

The main event of the sentence was expressed following this clause with Perfective (non-Recurrent) verbs. It thus appears that a verb with the Recurrent

(not the Habitual) suffix may, as in these expressions, correspond in usage to an English progressive, despite its formal character as Perfect.

c. Negative: Dangme employs several syntactic strategies for negation, depending on the modal structure of the verb. A single paradigmatic form negates the declarative Perfective and Habitual forms. That is to say, the contrast between these realis forms is not maintained in the negative. The irrealis forms, that is, all the forms marked as Subjunctive or Absolute, are negated using different strategies, which are discussed in the next section.

The phonological form of the realis negative depends on the tone class of the verb: if it has a final Low, the stem vowel is raised, there is a suffix consisting of a high vowel, and the whole has High tone. If the stem has final High tone, the tone does not change and a particle *we* either follows the verb, in the Krobo dialect, where it could be regarded as a suffix, or is placed at the end of the clause as a sentential adverbial, in the Ada dialect. Final mid tone verbs follow the pattern of High tone verbs (Krobo dialect), or of Low tone verbs (Ada dialect).

(70)		Negative
	High <i>lá</i> 'sing'	<i>lá wē</i>
	Low <i>dò</i> 'dance'	<i>dú-í</i>
	Mid <i>dū</i> 'bathe'	<i>dú wē</i> (Krobo) <i>dú-í</i> (Ada)

Other dialects follow either Ada or Krobo, with some individual variants (see Dakubu 1987: 68-71 for details). It seems quite likely that these complementary negation strategies are of different origins.

d. Subjunctive: The Subjunctive marker, signifying non-actual, irrealis modality, is expressed by a prefixed High tone. The details of its phonological realization depend on the syntactic status of what precedes it, and secondarily on the tonal environment. That is, the syntactic juncture between the verb expression and a phrase that is not part of the verb is phonologically marked. If the subject is one of the pronouns that behave as a component of the verb expression, i.e. a pronoun realized as a vowel, the prefix is realized as High tone of that vowel. The first person singular with the Subjunctive prefix is uniquely realized as *má*.

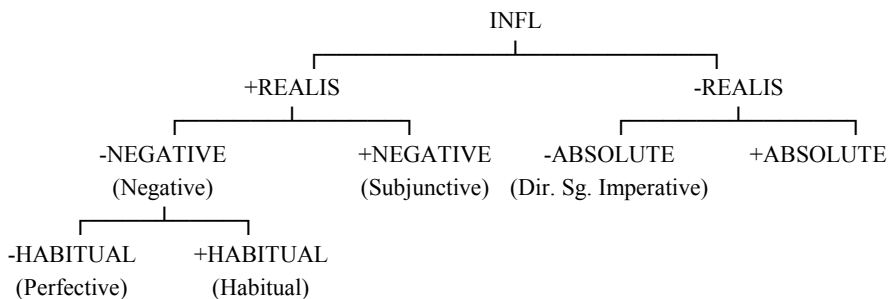
(71)	<i>ó bā</i> 'you (sing.) should come'	<i>é bā</i>	's/he should come'
	<i>á bā</i> 'they should come'	<i>má bā</i>	'I should come'.

However, if the subject is an NP, or one of the nominal pronouns (a pronoun of shape CV) precedes the Subjunctive marker, the Subjunctive is expressed as High tone on a copy of the final vowel of the subject (or of anything not part of the VP, see (76b)). If either the final syllable of the subject or the

4.1.2 The Grammaticized Serial Construction

In addition to and in combination with the features listed above, a number of features are expressed by pre-verb items, most of which can be said to be grammaticized verbs on both grammatical and etymological grounds. That is, the pre-verbs are “dependent verbs” because they are part of a construction that is headed by another, “free”, verb, and grammaticized in the senses that their semantic content is limited to a very few features, perhaps only one, and that while the stems can be regarded as heads of morphological words, their grammatical paradigms are drastically reduced from that displayed in the previous

Diagram 1: The Simple Finite Verb in Dangme



section. Fundamentally, only the contrast realis/irrealis is expressed on non-head verbs. This grammaticized serial construction resembles the comparable structure in Ga (see Dakubu elsewhere in this volume), except that it is more elaborate.

Two degrees of grammaticized serial construction may be recognized. In a series headed by a free verb preceded by one or more dependent verbs, only the head can be marked for the paradigmatic features Habitual or Negative. If it is Subjunctive, the Subjunctive prefix of High tone is carried by the preceding item, and dependent verbs are also marked. However some series include a secondary head, *ma* or sometimes *ya*, *ko*, or *kε*, which heads its own series, although the free verb remains the overall head. We shall return to this after discussing the pre-verb items in the simpler series, in order of decreasing proximity to the head.

a. Deictic Verbs: The head of the verb construction can be immediately preceded by a verb of deixis, either *bā* ‘ventive’ or *yā* ‘itive’. They are evidently

Subjunctive: *é* *kó* *bá* *lá*
 3SG.SUBJV CTR.SUBJV VENT.SUBJV sing
 'May s/he not come sing!'
Kofí *kó* *tró* *kětē*
 Kofi (SUBJV)CTR.SUBJV carry basket
 'Kofi is not to carry the basket!'

If no subject is expressed, an expression including *ko* is interpreted as a singular negative direct imperative. If the subject is the second person plural pronoun, it may be interpreted as either a direct or an indirect plural negative imperative.

- (78) a. *tsá* *kó* *bā*
 EMPH (SUBJV) CTR.SUBJV come
 'Please do not come!'
 b. *nye é* *kó* *nù*
 2PL SUBJV CTR.SUBJV drink
 'Don't drink!; you (pl.) must not drink.'

d. Adverbial Pre-Verbs: Three other pre-verbs are less central to the grammar and have the force of adverbials.¹⁸ These are *pá* 'again', which seems to be related to the free verb *kpàlé* 'return, do again', *pí* 'for nothing, in vain', which appears to be derived from the negative form of *pe* 'surpass, exceed' and reflects negatively on the value of the event, and *tsá*, which lends emphasis to requests or commands and is not obviously related to any verb. (*Pi* also functions as a negating particle, and may be preceded by *tsa*, this time with low tone (Dakubu 1987: 41)) Whether *pí*, which connotes negative affect, or *pá* comes first in the series seems to be indeterminate, but *tsá* always comes first if it is used. All three contribute single features, which we shall refer to as Pejorative, Repetition, and Emphasis. They may be marked as Subjunctive (that is, a preceding constituent of the phrase may receive non-lexical high tone if the head verb is Subjunctive). In (79), the head and the entire expression is Perfective.

- (79) *à pí pá kē bā hǎ lè*
 3PL PEJ REP move VENT give 3SG
 'They brought it to him again for nothing.'

In (79) the pre-verbs appear in the unmarked order, but this order may be changed, according to what appears to be a pragmatic strategy of fronting an item for focus or topicalization:

1. The Counter-Factual verb *ko* is fronted to precede *pá* in the presence of Subjunctive marking, or if there is no expressed subject, i.e., in singular direct imperatives. This gives *ko* scope over the entire following expression.

- (80) *è tsá kó pá ké bá*
 3SG EMPH (SUBJV) CTR.SUBJV REP move SUBJV:VENT
há le
 give 3SG
 ‘She should certainly not give (it) to him again!’

2. The Transitive verb *kē* may be fronted when its object is expressed. This can be overridden by fronting of *kó*, compare (80) above with the sentences in (81). The high tone of *ó* in (81a) marks *kē* as Subjunctive.

- (81) a. *ó kē wɔ kó yà nane kpatami mi*
 2SG.SUBJV move 1PL CTR.SUBJV go foot settling in
 ‘Do not let us go astray’ (‘Lead us not into temptation’)
 b. *è sé ne yi ɔmē kē nyu ɔ kò*
 3SG suit.NEG COMP women DEF-PL move water DEF CTR
bā há le
 VENT give 3SG
 ‘The women ought not have brought him the water.’

The result of this operation seems to be that the object of *kē* is topicalized.

e: The Secondary Grammaticized Serial String. Three pre-verbs head sub-strings of their own:¹⁹ *mà*, etymologically related to the free verb *mà* ‘be in motion’, *yà* which like the deictic is related to the free verb *yà* ‘go’, and the Counter-Factual verb *kò* in one of its uses. Semantically, the first two express the feature [inchoative], and in combination with Subjunctive marking on the free verb they label an event as future. The difference between the two seems to be that *ya* implies that the event or the process leading into it has already been initiated, so that it might be considered to mark “proximate inchoation”, while with *ma* this is not so. The Inchoative verb itself is usually Perfective.

The construction is recognized as distinct from other grammaticalized serializations because of the tonal juncture that follows the sub-head. This position apparently represents a barrier to tonal assimilation. The tones of these verbs are not replaced by the Subjunctive high tone prefix, which instead is realized in the manner normal at a left boundary of a VP, i.e., between an NP subject and the verb, rather than between constituents of the verb construction. That is, the Subjunctive High tone prefix to the free verb or an intervening dependent verb is not marked as High tone of *ma* or *ya*, but as a copy of its vowel with High tone (unless the following tone is also High, in which case it is often not marked at all). Thus there is a contrast (besides the tone difference) between *yā* the Itive Deictic and *yà* the Inchoative, demonstrated in (82).

- (82) a. *wà yá yē jeha a*
 1PL (SUBJV) ITIVE.SUBJV eat year DEF
 'We are going to celebrate that year.'
- b. *nɛnɛ wa yà á pèé nɔ ɔ...*
 REL 1PL INCHO SUBJV do LOC TOP
 'What we are about to do ...'

The same phenomenon distinguishes *ko* as an ordinary dependent or pre-verb (83a) from its occurrence as a secondary head, which is possible only in the absence of an expressed subject, and is interpreted as a direct singular negative imperative (83b).

- (83) a. *é kó nũ*
 3SG.SUBJV CTR.SUBJV drink
 'S/he ought not to drink.'
- b. *kò ó nũ*
 CTR SUBJV drink
 'Don't drink!'

In (84a), the free verb is marked Subjunctive by the high tone on the Transitive verb *kɛ*, but since the Repetition verb has lexical high tone, neither it nor the Transitive verb is overtly marked Subjunctive. This is also true of (84b), where the Subjunctive marker before the head verb *ba* raises the normal Mid tone of the Definite marker, part of the object of *kɛ*, to a lowered High tone.²⁰

- (84) a. *kò pá kɛ bā*
 CTR (SUBJV) REP(.SUBJV) move.SUBJV come
 'Don't bring (it) again!'
- b. *kò pá kè kùsɛ́ !ɔ bā*
 CTR (SUBJV) REP move basket DEF.SUBJV come
 'Don't bring the basket again!'

The scope of the Counter-Factual in this kind of construction includes some kinds of (non-grammaticalized) serial construction. In (85), *ko* heads a pre-verb string to the free verb *wo*, and apparently has scope over the serialized VP *kɛ ba* as well.

- (85) *kò pá wó kusii ɔ kɛ bā*
 CTR (SUBJV) REP lift basket DEF move.SUBJV come
 'Don't bring the basket again!'

Other pre-verbs never precede the Counter-Factual. An Inchoative can head a string that includes one or more of *pí*, *pá*, *kɛ́*, or a deictic, but a pre-verb that occurs before the Inchoative cannot also occur after it, directly under the head,

i.e. any given pre-verb can occur only once in the whole. The sentences in (86) illustrate the inchoative construction with dependent verbs preceding the Inchoative verb.

- (86) a. *Na pi pá mà á yē nɔ*
 Na PEJ REP INCHO SUBJV eat thing
 'Na will eat again in vain.'
- b. *Na ké pa mà á yà*
 Na move.SUBJV REP INCHO SUBJV go
 'Na will take it again.'
- c. *mēni wǎ á kē ŋo ɔ yà á pèé*
 WH 1PL SUBJV move salt DEF INCHO SUBJV do
 'What are we going to do with the salt?'

In (87), the dependent verbs are shared between the Inchoative and the head verb.

- (87) a. *è pí mà yá há mi sika*
 3SG PEJ INCHO(SUBJV) ITIVE.SUBJV give 1SG money
 'S/He will go give me money in vain.'
- b. *Na pá yà á ké há mi*
 Na REP INCHO SUBJV move.SUBJV give 1SG
 'Na is going to give it to me again.'

Under most circumstances it makes little semantic difference whether a dependent verb is under the Inchoative or directly under the head verb. The two sentences in (88) mean the same thing, although they are presumably distinguishable on pragmatic grounds. Note that the Inchoative verb is marked Subjunctive in (88b), where the transitive verb immediately precedes it.

- (88) a. *à mà ké jè*
 3PL INCHO (SUBJV) move.SUBJV leave
- b. *a ké mà á jè*
 3PL move.SUBJV INCHO SUBJV leave
 'They will take it.'

Like other non-imperative constructions involving the Subjunctive, expressions with Inchoative verbs are not negated by either of the strategies described so far.

This concludes our description of the Dangme verb. The analysis presented is based on the principle that tonal variation in the components of the verb is to be treated as variation in the expression of paradigmatic features, and it must be admitted that not all details can yet be accounted for. For example, the sources of tone variation in the Repetition verb, and of some occurrences of High tone

before the Transitive verb, have yet to be determined. However we are satisfied that these problems have no bearing on the imperfective V - OBJ - V+SUFF construction, to which we now turn.

4.2 *The Periphrastic Imperfective Construction*

We are now in a position to discuss the periphrastic imperfective construction, in which a head verb takes a phrasal complement that expresses aspect, in the light of the inflected verb structure and the features it expresses. A typical example of this construction in Dangme is (89a), which may be compared to (89b). The latter is in the simple (non-periphrastic) Perfective form.

- (89) a. *è ηē tso ɔ he bōlē-ē*
 3SG be.at tree DEF LOC surround-SUFF
 ‘He is going around the tree.’
 b. *è bōlē tso ɔ he*
 3SG surround tree DEF LOC
 ‘He went around the tree.’

The following characteristics of sentences like (89a) are to be noted:

- (i) The position of the verb glossed ‘be.at’ in (89a), labelled AUX by Heine among others (as discussed in section 3) is filled by a member of a system of four finite verbs.²¹ This verb is the head of the construction.
- (ii) The position of *bōle* in (89a) can be filled by any verb that can occur in its position in (89b).
- (iii) The verb in the position of *bōle* in (89a), which we refer to as the “event verb”, is non-finite, and takes a suffix that is expressed according to dialect by vowel copy or *-e* or *-ye*, with mid tone.

4.2.1 *The Imperfective Head Verbs*

The four verbs that occur in the finite verb position are *ηē*, *hī*, *hī́*, and *bé* or *bí*. These verbs all occur as free verbs, but two of them, *ηē* and *bé*, are paradigmatically defective, and *bé* does not occur with pre-verbs. All normally take locative objects.

ηē means ‘be at a place’ or ‘have’, depending on the role of its object. It occurs only in the Perfective form, that is, it is never Habitual, Negative, Subjunctive or Absolute, but it can occur with pre-verbs. In its locative sense it can be used intransitively, as (90c) shows.

- (90) a. *à ηē bo*
 3PL have cloth
 ‘They have cloth.’

- b. à *ɲē* *tsu* ɔ *mi*
 3PL be.at room DEF LOC
 'They are in the room.'
- c. à *bā* *ɲē* *da*
 3PL VENT be.at continually
 'They were (somewhere) continually.'

In the meaning 'have', *ɲē* normally implies that the situation is in existence at the time of speaking, and is replaced by *hĩē* 'hold, have in the hand' if the expression is to be understood as referring to a past situation not continuing in the speaker's present. In its locative sense it is used with both present and past time reference, as the examples in (91) demonstrate.

- (91) a. è *ɲē* *hiɔ*
 3SG be.at here
 'She is here.'
- b. í *ɲē* *hiɔ* *be* *nɛ* ē *bā*
 1SG be.at here time COMP 3SG come
 'I was here when he came.'
- c. è *ɲē* *hiɔ* *hĩē*
 3SG be.at here yesterday
 'He was here yesterday (and probably is no longer).'
- d. *Kofi* *ɲē* *Somanya* *kē* *sá*
 NAME be.at NAME PREP past.time
 'Kofi still lives in Somanya.'
- e. *e* *ɲē* *Somanya* *kē* *jè* *jehā* *nɛ* *be* ɔ
 3SG be.at NAME move leave year DEM time DEF
 'He has lived in Somanya since last year.'

It seems that in either sense, the meaning of *ɲē* is durative, implying a locative situation that began in the past, and that will be interpreted as continuing into the present unless a temporal adverbial specifies otherwise. The tone of the first person singular pronoun, see (91b), is significant. All pronouns normally have low tone in the Perfective, but the first singular uniquely has high tone in the Habitual and Negative. The fact that it has high tone with the formally Perfective *ɲɛ* suggests that the feature Habitual is part of the lexical semantics of *ɲɛ*, in both its senses.

A periphrastic expression with *ɲē* as head verb means that an event has been initiated and is already or is about to be in progress. It does *not* mean that the event is in full swing: the simple Perfective is used for that, as the interpretations of the sentences in (92) show.

(92) Periphrastic:

be ne i bā, Kofi ηē kete tró-ē
 time DEM 1SG come Kofi. be.at basket carry-SUFF
 ‘When I came, Kofi was carrying the basket’, i.e. he was in the
 process of raising it to his head.

Simple:

be ne i bā, Kofi tró kusii ɔ
 time DEM 1SG come Kofi carry basket DEF
 ‘When I came, Kofi was carrying the basket’, i.e. he actually had it
 on his head.

When the goal of the event is added, its verb usually takes the Recurrent suffix, see *yà-á* in (93a), and the whole construction has future implications. Compare this to (93b), where the same sentence is in Perfective aspect and has present progressive meaning.

- (93) a. *Kofi ηē kete tró-ē*
 Kofi AUX basket carry-SUFF
ke yà-á ηmɔ ɔ nɔ
 TRANS go-REC farm DEF LOC
 ‘Kofi is going to (is about to) carry the basket to the farm.’
 b. *Kofi tró kete kē yà-á ηmɔ ɔ nɔ*
 Kofi carry basket TRANS go-REC farm DEF LOC
 ‘Kofi is (at this moment) carrying the basket to the farm.’

In contrast to both a simple Perfective and a simple Habitual, therefore, a periphrastic imperfective expression with *ηe* can be identified as Inceptive.

In serial constructions, both Habitual stem semantics and Perfective grammar seem to be reflected in the agreement possibilities. A serial construction with two *ηe* periphrastic expressions (both grammatically Perfective) is possible, as in (94a), but it is also possible for an ordinary simple Perfective verb to be followed by a *ηe* expression, as in (94b), which is not surprising if the latter is also grammatically Perfective. Note the occurrence of the Transitive pre-verb in the second VP of (94a, b). Alternatively, however, a series beginning with this construction can continue with a verb in the Habitual. In this construction, demonstrated in (94c), the Inceptive feature is particularly clear, since the first verb *be* ‘pass over, overflow’ initiates the event of fat pouring down.

- (94) a. *à ηē tohi gbè-ē kē ηē se ɔ-me hã-ã*
 3PL be.at goats kill-SUFF move.be.at stool DEF-PL give-SUFF
 ‘They are killing goats and giving them to the stools.’

- b. *alɔŋɔ wó kpã kē ŋē e kue wō-ō*
 hare take rope move be.at 3SG neck put-SUFF
 'Hare took a rope and was putting it on his neck.'
- c. *è ŋē bē-ē pú-ó sī*
 3SG be.at pass-SUFF pour-HAB down
 'It is/was pouring out.'

On the basis of such examples and their occurrences in text, two uses of the construction can be distinguished. When related to a Perfective event, whether or not it is in a serial construction with it, a periphrastic imperfective with *ŋē* denotes immediacy, an action or situation initiated at the very time of the specified event. Thus in (94b), the implication is that hare had no sooner taken the rope than he was putting it on the other animal's neck. Depending on the pragmatic strategy adopted, however, it may mean that no sooner was the event denoted by the periphrasis begun, than something else (had) happened. This is the case in (94c) and in (95), where a periphrastic expression (underlined) referring to an event that is viewed as having duration contextualizes a formally Perfective serial event.

- (95) *wēē ne à bā ŋē fīà-ā, pum, wēē*
 behold LINK 3PL VENT be.at strike-SUFF EXCL behold
ne à bā kē wetse nani kē fō sī
 LINK 3PL VENT take master spider move hit down
 'No sooner had they started wrestling than bam, they felled Mr. Spider'

It seems therefore that the periphrastic imperfective construction when used with this particular head verb combines a notion of duration with focus on the inception of the event. In some contexts, but by no means all, this may have a future implication.

bé: This verb (in some dialects *bí*) is the replative negative of *ŋē* in both possessive and locative senses, and can be glossed as 'be absent'. Like *ŋē*, *bé* takes no paradigmatic markers, except that its high tone could be considered to represent the negation marker. It normally takes a locative object, although intransitive use is possible.

- (96) a. *noko bé mĩ*
 something absent inside
 'It is empty', 'nothing is in it.'
- b. *sika bé e dē*
 money absent 3SG hand.LOC
 'S/He has no money, does not have money.'

Contrary to what one might expect, a periphrastic construction with *be* does not negate the same construction with *ɲɛ*. The latter is negated by the NEGATIVE member of the paradigm, identically with the simple Perfective and the Habitual. The function of the periphrastic construction headed by *be* is to negate all Subjunctive verbs other than imperatives, which are negated with *ko* (see the preceding section). That is, it negates inchoatives (with *ma* or *ya*) and non-Counter-Factual conditions.

- (97) a. *è bí e lo eko nã-ã*
 3SG absent 3SG meat any get-SUFF
 'S/He would not get any of his meat.'
 b. *è bé sika a há-ã*
 3SG absent money DEF give-SUFF
 'S/He will not give the money.'

In serial constructions, a periphrastic construction with *be* is followed by a Subjunctive and therefore non-Negative verb, as in (98). Note that in this construction, *be* can occur with a pre-verb (and its object), depending on the argument structure of the complement verb.

- (98) a. *ò kē kpade ko bé kpē-ē kē*
 2SG move ghost DET absent meet-SUFF move.SUBJV
yá sù o si tomi he
 ITIVE.SUBJV reach 2SG downloading place
 'You won't meet any ghost before you reach your destination, you will reach your destination without meeting any ghost.'
 b. *(e na kãã) è bé nyé-ē mà á gbè*
 (3SG see LINK) 3SG absent able-SUFF INCHO SUBJV kill
le
 3SG
 '(S/He saw that) s/he would not be able to kill her.'

The lexically expressed NEGATIVE feature of the first, imperfective VP with *bé* therefore has scope over the entire series. It seems that this verb must also be considered inherently or lexically both Negative and Subjunctive, since even though the High tone prefix does not precede it, it requires Subjunctive agreement in the following VP. Thus both *ɲɛ* and *be* lexically express features that on other verbs require paradigmatic marking.

hĩ, hĩĩ *hĩĩ* is the Recurrent form of *hĩ*, 'stay, remain, continue in a place'. They both take the normal range of paradigm features and dependent verbs. If one compares expressions that differ only in substituting *hĩ* for *ɲɛ* as the only verb, it appears that both signify duration, but that while the latter implies reference to a specified event time, *hĩ* is non-specific.

- (99) *ì hĩ Somanya* 'I live, stay, in Somanya'
è hĩ Somanya jeha ne be ɔ 'S/He lived in Somanya last year'
ì ηē hio 'I am/was here (at a specified moment)'

Although it evidently has durative meaning, at least as salient is the fact that *hĩ* has inchoative meaning. The sentence *è hĩ sĩ*, which includes the Locative object *ĩ* 'down', can mean either 's/he stayed, lived', or 's/he sat down'. It would seem that basically, the verb means to have arrived at and therefore be at a location, and that the idea of getting into a particular posture at the location arises by default, that is, 'sitting' is assumed because none of lying, standing, squatting etc. is specified.

The Recurrent form also has inchoative as well as durative meaning. Compared to the Habitual form of the same verb (101c), it implies a contingently recurring situation, as opposed to an unqualified customary event or situation.

- (100) a. *è hĩ-ĩ hio*
 3SG stay-REC here
 'S/Hhe lives here.'
 b. *è bā hĩ-ĩ huu*
 3SG VENT stay-REC long
 'S/He sat for a long time.'
 c. *è hĩ-ɔ hio*
 3SG stay-HAB here
 'S/He customarily sits here, is here.'

As heads of imperfective constructions these two stems behave rather differently. *Hĩ* is usually Subjunctive, and is often preceded by the inchoative pre-verb *ma*. The combination of its inherent Habitual and Inchoative properties with the Subjunctive feature indicates that the event is proposed as having an extended time span that coincides with that of a proposed situation or another proposed event. The presence of *ma*, as in the first sentence in (101a), affirms that it will actually happen. In (101b), the first clause is future, with *ma* and the verb *hĩ* with Subjunctive marking, followed by a clause with the same verb, also with Subjunctive marking but without *ma*, heading an imperfective construction. This stem has been found occurring in the Perfective, but only in the presence of the Counter-Factual pre-verb, and therefore in a conditional expression, as in (101c).

- (101) a. *à mā yá hĩ duɔmi bēē-ē*
 3PL INCHO (SUBJV) ITIVE.SUBJV stay rubbish sweep-SUFF
 'They will be sweeping away rubbish.'

- b. è mà á hĩ sĩ kone é hĩ ní
 3SG INCHO SUBJV stay LOC LINK3SG.SUB stay things
 hòó-ō há mē
 cook-SUFF give 3PL
 ‘S/He will/should stay to be cooking for them.’
- c. è kò hĩ kētē ɔ tró-ē
 3SG CTR stay basket DEF carry-SUFF
 ‘(If ... then) s/he would have continued to carry the basket, would have been carrying the basket’

If an imperfective expression with *hĩ* occurs in a serial construction, the other VP need not be periphrastic, but it must agree with it in paradigmatic form, as in (102), where both verbs are Subjunctive.

- (102) a mà wó nine ké hĩ munyu
 3PL INCHO (SUBJV) raise arm move.SUBJV stay language
 tũ-ē
 express-SUFF
 ‘They will talk with their hands’; ‘raise their hands and be talking with them’

It seems that in the imperfective VP, focus on the moment of *inception* is contrasted with its temporally generalized *inchoation*, according to whether *ye* or *hĩ* is used at head position.

Use of *hĩĩ*, as might be expected, confirms recurrence of an event over a period of time. This period of time may be entirely in the past or extending into the future. In the imperfective construction this verb is invariably in the Perfective form.

- (103) a. à hĩ-ĩ blɔ hĩá-ā
 3PL stay-REC way remove-SUFF
 ‘(In those days) they traveled, used to travel.’
- b. he né è hĩ-ĩ yà-ē ɔ hí
 place REL 3SG stay-REC go-SUFF DEF good.NEG
 ‘Where he has been going isn't good.’

The contrast between the Perfective Recurrent verb in the imperfective construction and the Habitual aspect permits a subtle distinction in meaning between two versions of a sentence as in (104). Both versions have future implications, but the difference is not readily translatable into English. The Habitual version, (104a) specifies that the recurrent inception of the event is not contingent on the satisfaction of any external conditions on Kofi's carrying of the basket, that is, the first clause is a context, not a condition, whereas in (104b), our going to market is viewed as a condition on the recurrence of the event.

(104) a. Habitual:

ke wà yà-á jua nɔ, Kofi tró-ɔ kete
 if 1PL go-REC market LOC, Kofi carry-HAB basket
 'If we go to market, Kofi (by custom) carries the basket.'

b. Paratactic Recurrent:

ke wà yà-á jua nɔ, Kofi hĩ-ĩ kete tró-ē
 if 1PL go-REC market LOC, Kofi stay-REC basket carry-SUFF
 'Any time we go to market, Kofi carries the basket.'

Any future implications of *hĩĩ* are thus accounted for by its Recurrent feature, and balanced by its past implications. Like *hĩ* it can be said to focus on the inchoative phase of an event, but since it specifically confirms recurrences of that phase, at least some of its recurrences are presumed to be in the past.

These two verbs are negated according to their paradigmatic modality. Therefore, imperfective constructions with *hĩĩ* like those with *ɲe* are negated by the paradigmatic Negative, identically with other declaratives, the Perfectives and Habituals. A construction with *hĩ* in irrealis Subjunctive modality, on the other hand, is negated with a periphrastic construction employing *be*, if an Inchoative verb is present, or otherwise *ko* plus the Subjunctive. The array of Positive-Negative equivalencies is tabulated in (105).

(105) Type:	Aspect/Mood	Positive	Negative
Realis:	Perfective	<i>è tró kete</i>	<i>è tró wē kete</i>
	Peri. Perfective	<i>è ɲē kete tró-e</i>	<i>è tró wē kete</i>
	(Recurrent)	<i>è hĩ-ĩ kete tró-e</i>	<i>è tró wē kete</i>
	Habitual	<i>è tró-ɔ kete</i>	<i>è tró wē kete</i>
Irrealis: ²²	Future	<i>è mǎ ǎ tró kete</i>	<i>è bé kete tró-ē</i>
	(Peri.)	<i>è mǎ ǎ hĩ kete tró-ē</i>	<i>è bé kete tró-ē</i>
	Indir. Imperative	<i>é tró kete</i>	<i>é kó tró kete</i>
	(Peri.)	<i>é hĩ kete tró-ē</i>	<i>é kó tró kete</i>
	Dir. Imperative	<i>tró</i>	<i>kò ó tró</i>

Broadly, whether Inceptive, Inchoative or Negative Subjunctive, all four types of the periphrastic imperfective VP construction focus on the prospective occurrence of a durative event. This prospectivity can appear from a past or present point of view. Since Habitual aspect is part of the semantics of all four head verb stems, and Inceptive, Inchoative, Negative and Subjunctive are introduced by the choice of stem, and in the case of Subjunctive also by the grammatical marker, the feature [Prospective] can be attributed to the suffix that marks the non-finite verb. In this paper it will henceforth be glossed 'PROSP'.

Whether the same suffix can usefully be said to have locative implications seems doubtful, but it may be noted that local scholars have occasionally (not

in the current standardized orthography) spelled it *he*, as in, for example, *e ɲe nɔ yehe* ‘s/he is eating’. This is etymologically suggestive, since *hé* ‘place’ and *hè* ‘body, self’ are both used as Locative heads (Postpositions), but nobody seems to pronounce it that way.

4.2.2 *The Objects of the Prospective VP*

It has been remarked already that in a periphrastic construction, an object of the (non-finite) event verb precedes it. There seem to be no restrictions on the role of the object: it can be a Theme, like *ketɛ* ‘basket’ in (93), a Patient, like *tohi* ‘goats’ in (94a), or a locative Goal, like *e kue* ‘his neck’ (94b). If the complement verb is ditransitive, both objects precede it, in the same order as they follow it in non-periphrastic constructions, namely Goal (or Recipient) -Theme. This is quite different from the Ewe construction, where the second object may precede the aspect marker (in Inland dialects, see 38, 39 above), thus falling within its scope, but never precedes the verb itself.

- (106) a. *è tsɔ̌-ɔ̌ jukue ɔ-mɛ la*
 3SG set-REC child DEF-PL song
 ‘S/He taught the children a song.’
 Prospective:
è ɲɛ jukue ɔ-mɛ la tsɔ̌-ɛ
 3SG be.at child DEF-PL song teach-PROSP
 ‘S/He is teaching the children a song.’
- b. *è mà á há mi sika*
 3SG INCHO SUBJV give 1SG money
 ‘S/He will give me money.’
 Prospective:
è bé mi sika há-ã
 3SG absent 1SG money give-PROSP
 ‘S/He will not give me money.’

With some verbs, a Comitative object can appear, as object of the Transitive pre-verb. The same possibility exists in an imperfective expression. The pairs of sentences in (107) show a parallel semantic difference.

- (107) a. Goal:
è tũ mi munyu
 3SG spoke 1SG language
 ‘S/He spoke to me, advised me.’

Prospective:

è *ŋē* *mi* *munyu* *tũ-ē*
 3SG be.at 1SG language speak-PROSP
 'S/He was advising me.'

b. Comitative:

è *kē* *mi* *tũ* *munyu*
 3SG move 1SG spoke language
 'S/He spoke with me.'

Prospective:

è *kē* *mi* *ŋē* *munyu* *tũ-ē*
 3SG move 1SG be.at language speak-PROSP
 'S/He was talking to me.'

If there is an Instrumental object, it appears as object of the Transitive pre-verb, and the complement verb can be preceded by both a Goal and a Theme.

(108) Simple:

è *kē* *klama* *a* *tũ* *jiji* *ɔ* *munyu*
 3SG move machine DEF speak crowd DEF language
 'He addressed the crowd with the loud-speaker.'

Prospective:

è *kē* *klama* *a* *ŋē* *jiji* *ɔ* *munyu*
 3SG move machine DEF be.at crowd DEF language
tũ-ē
 speak-PROSP

'He was addressing the crowd with the loud-speaker.'

Some verbs must take a Locative object that is not a semantic Recipient but an abstract Goal. This kind of object also precedes its verb in the imperfective construction, as demonstrated by (109a, b). If there is both a Patient or Theme and a Locative of this type, the order in both simple and imperfective expressions is Patient/Theme - Locative. All adverbial expressions, however, remain outside the Complement (109c). Dangme therefore seems to be an exception to the claim that in this type of construction, only one Object, the direct Object, precedes its verb.

(109) a. Simple:

e *púe* *sĩ*
 3SG fall LOC
 'It fell (down).'

Prospective:

è ηē sī púe-ē
 3SG be.at LOC fall-SUFF
 'It was falling.'

b. Simple:

è bā lε sī
 3SG come 3SG LOC
 'S/He lowered it.'

Prospective:

è ηē lε sī bā-ē
 3SG be.at 3SG LOC come-SUFF
 'S/He is lowering it.'

c. Prospective with Adverbial Phrase:

à mà yá hĩ duɔmi bēé-ē
 3PL INCHO(SUBJV) IT.SUBJV stay rubbish sweep-PROSP
 ηé e hla mĩ
 PREP 3SG front LOC
 'They will be sweeping away rubbish in front of him.'

4.2.3 *The Categorical Status of the Complement VP*

In non-periphrastic verb expressions, Dangme is clearly an SVO language. The OV arrangement observed in the imperfective construction is typical in this language, as in many others, of constructions generally regarded as nominalizations. The question therefore arises, whether the construction is fundamentally a Locative VO structure. Note that in example (81a) we have a construction in which the head verb (*yá* 'go') is followed by a formally nominalized verb preceded by its Object and followed by a Locative particle, apparently conforming to Heine's outline of the classic periphrastic imperfective structure, yet (81a) is not an instance of the Dangme imperfective construction.

We examine the problem of the syntactic status of the complement in the imperfective construction from two points of view: by comparing it with another, very similar structure, that has a demonstrably nominal character, and by considering whether and how it can be preposed to the clause for focus

Deverbal Nominals and Gerundives. The Dangme VP is commonly nominalized by preposing any objects, and adding the suffix *-mĩ*.²³ Objects precede the nominalized verb in the same order as they follow it.²⁴

(110) Finite:

ì kǎné womi ɔ
 1SG read book DEF
 'I read the book.'

Nominalization:

womi ɔ *kǎné-mĩ*
book DEF read-NOM
'reading the book'

Finite:

ì *hǎ* *le* *womi* ɔ
1SG give 3SG book DEF
'I gave him the book.'

Nominalization:

le *womi* ɔ *hǎ-mĩ*
3SG book DEF give-NOM
'giving him the book'

Apart from functioning as head of an NP, the Dangme noun has two fundamental grammatical characteristics: it can be pluralized, usually by suffixation of the plural morpheme *-hĩ*, and it must be preceded by the plural association morpheme *ā* if the NP it heads includes a plural possessor, as in (112).

(111)		Possessive			
Singular	<i>gbé</i>	'dog'	<i>gbé tsú</i>		'dog's house'
	<i>tsú</i>	'house'	<i>gbé tsú-hĩ</i>		'dog's houses'
Plural	<i>gbé-hĩ</i>	'dogs'	<i>gbé-hĩ ā tsú</i>		'dogs' house'
	<i>tsú-hĩ</i>	'houses'	<i>gbé-hĩ ā tsú-hĩ</i>		'dogs' houses'

On this basis, several constructions employing the *-mĩ* form can be distinguished, but not all turn out to be true nominalizations. In some contexts, particularly in subject position, the deverbal shows plural association with its plural object. Some such deverbals cannot be pluralized, but others can. In some cases, pluralization is more readily accepted if the NP is Definite, in which case the NP is pluralized by suffixing *-mē* to the Definite marker. On the other hand, some, like *nra-mi* 'dream', behave like ordinary abstract nouns, presumably in consequence of a diachronic process of lexicalization. Some of the possibilities are demonstrated in (112). They are quite different from what obtains in the complement of an imperfective prospective construction, where neither pluralization nor plural association marking is possible. It may also be noted that the non-finite prospective verb with its object cannot occur in subject position (compare (112a, g)).

(112) a. Plural Agreement:

womi-hĩ *a* *kǎné-mĩ* *hĩ*
book-PL ASSOC read-NOM good
'Reading books is good.'

- b. *e ji wɔ-hĩ a tsé-mĩ klama*
 3SG is god-PL ASSOC call-NOM Klama
 'It is Klama for calling the gods.'
- c. Plural Head:
womi kãné-mĩ ɔ-me
 book read-NOM DEF-PL
 'the readings of a book'
- d. *womi kãné-mĩ-hĩ*
 book read-NOM-PL
 'readings of a book'
- e. *ni tsɔ̃ɔ̃-mĩ ɔ-me*
 things teach-NOM DEF-PL
 'the teachings'
- f. *ni-tsɔ̃ɔ̃-mĩ-hĩ munomuno ɔ-me*
 things-teach-NOM-PL different DEF-PL
 'the different lessons'
- g. *i nrā-mĩ-hĩ hĩ*
 1SG dream-NOM-PL good.NEG
 'my dreams are not good'
- h. *i dé ɛ i nrā-mĩ-hĩ fuu*
 1SG say 3SG 1SG dream-NOM-PL plenty
 'I told him many of my dreams.'

A number of verbs, including among others *pɔ̃* 'do frequently', *hĩ* 'be good, easy', *bɔ̃nĩ* 'begin', *sũɔ̃* 'like', *sũymé* 'dislike', regularly take a complement consisting of a *-mi* form preceded by its objects. This construction resembles the periphrastic imperfective construction much more closely than those demonstrated in (112): the complement head cannot be pluralized, and Plural Association with its object is not marked. Expressions in (113) may be compared with those in (112). In (113i), Plural Association is marked, but between the Postposition *he* 'self', which is the head of the complement of *fɔ̃mi*, not *fɔ̃mi* itself, and its possessor.

- (113) a. *è hĩ pò-mĩ*
 3SG good.NEG cut-NOM
 'It was difficult to cross.'
- b. *è bɔ̃nĩ ɛ sĩ bā-mĩ*
 3SG begin 3SG LOC come-NOM
 'He began to lower it.'
- c. *è pɔ̃-ɔ wɔ-hĩ tsé-mĩ*
 3SG often-REC god-PL call-NOM
 'He often calls upon the gods.'

- d. *è pɔ̀-ɔ́ wɔ́-hĩ a tsé-mĩ
3SG often-REC god-PL ASSOC call-NOM
- e. è sũɔ́ womi-hĩ kǎné-mĩ
3SG like book-PL read-NOM
'S/He likes to read books.'
- f. *ē sũɔ́ womi-hi a kǎné-mĩ-hĩ
- g. à bɔ́nĩ yi ɔ́-mε gbè-mĩ
3PL begin women DEF-PL kill-NOM
'They began killing the women.'
- h. *à bɔ́nĩ yi ɔ́-mε ā gbè-mĩ-hĩ
- i. è sũɔ́ ni-hĩ a he fɔ́-mĩ
3SG like things-PL ASSOC LOC wash-NOM
'S/He likes to wash things.'

On the other hand, a form of this type in this construction can be headed by a Postposition, a property associated with NPs, and not possible in the prospective constructions. In (114a) the head of the complement of *bɔ́ni* is the Postposition. In (114b), repeated here from (81a), the head of the complement of *ya* is the Postposition *mĩ*.

- (114) a. ì bɔ́nĩ nrā-mĩ n̄
1SG begin dream-NOM POST
'I began to dream.'
- b. ó kē wɔ́ kó yà nǎne kpátà-mĩ
2SG.SUBJV move 1PL CTR.SUBJV go foot settle-NOM
mĩ
POST
'Do not let us go astray.'

It is clear that there is more than one construction in which an event verb takes the suffix *-mi* and is preceded by its objects. Overall, however, such constructions are rather more NP-like than the complement of a periphrastic prospective. If the *-mi* form is a gerundive, the form we have semantically labelled "prospective" may be grammatically labelled a participle.

Focus. In Dangme, an object can be put in focus by exporting it to a position preceding the subject. The focus marker *nē* (Krobo; *lē* in Ada) is optional. As the examples in (115) show, either object of a ditransitive verb may be preposed for this purpose, including Locative objects.

(115) Unmarked:

- a. è ŋɔ́ nyũ ɔ́ mā páipò ɔ́ nyā
3SG take water DEF put pipe DEF LOC
'S/He set the water by the pipe.'

Focus:

- b. *nyũ ɔ̃ nẽ̃ è ɣ̃ɔ̃ mã páipò ɔ̃ nyã̃*
 waterDEF FOC 3SG take put pipe DEF LOC
 ‘It was the water (not the oil) that s/he put by the pipe.’

- c. *páipò ɔ̃ nyã̃ nẽ̃ è ɣ̃ɔ̃ nyũ ɔ̃ mã̃*
 pipe DEF POST FOC 3SG take waterDEF put
 ‘It was by the pipe (not the house) that he put the water.’

Of the two constructions consisting of finite verb plus O-V complement that we have examined, the gerundive allows its object to be exported to focus position before the subject, or alternatively the entire complement can be exported.

(116) Unmarked:

- a. *è sũ̃̃ womihi kãné-mĩ̃*
 3SG like books read-NOM
 ‘He likes to read books.’

Focus: Object of Gerundive:

- b. *womihi nẽ̃ è sũ̃̃ kãné-mĩ̃*
 books FOC 3SG like read-NOM
 ‘It is books that he likes reading.’

Focus: Gerundive:

- c. *womihi kãné-mĩ̃ lẽ̃ è sũ̃̃*
 books read-NOM FOC 3SG like
 ‘It’s reading books that he likes.’

With the participial or prospective construction, however, only the first alternative is available. Whether the entire prospective phrase is to be interpreted as in focus or only its object can only be determined from the discourse context.

(117) Unmarked:

- a. *è ɣ̃ɛ̃ womihi kãné-ẽ̃*
 3SG be.at books read-SUFF
 ‘S/he is reading books.’

Focus:

- b. *womihi lē è ηē kâné-ē*
 books FOC 3SG be.at read-SUFF
 ‘It is books that he is reading; reading books is what he is doing.’
- c. **womihi kâné-ē lē e ηē*
 books read-SUFFFOC 3SG be.at

In this respect, therefore, the prospective together with its object does not behave like a nominalized VP constituent of a VP. We may note that this is not to be attributed to lexically based restrictions on focus of the complement of the finite verb, since the object of the same verb in its other functions can be focussed.

(118) Unmarked:

- a. *Kofi ηē sika*
 ‘Kofi has money’
- b. *Kofi ηē Somanya*
 ‘Kofi is at Somanya.’

Focus:

- c. *sika lē Kofi ηē*
 money FOC Kofi have
 It is money (not sense) that Kofi has.’
- d. *Somanya lē Kofi ηē*
 Somanya FOC Kofi be.at
 ‘Kofi is at Somanya (not Ada).’

We conclude that in view of the order difference and the non-finite nature of V, the OV complement of the VP in the Dangme prospective construction can be considered a nominalization of a kind, but it is not a noun phrase. The event verb is constrained to follow the head verb, a situation as suggestive of serial constructions as of V+Complement. We suggest that Object+Verb-SUFF is a syntactic type in this language with a categorial range that includes participials, gerundives, and true nominalizations.

All the head verbs characteristically take locative complements when they occur in other constructions, and the suffix to the complement or event verb characterizes the construction semantically as Prospective, thus directed at some temporal goal. In these highly metaphorical senses, then, the construction can be characterized as Locative. We also conclude that, while all the finite

verbs imply duration, neither “progressive” nor “stative” (Dakubu 1987) is a suitable label for the construction, since these labels miss the essential features of Inception and Inchoation. The conventional English translations tend to obscure the basic semantics, which combines putative duration with the feature [prospective].

5 Conclusions

In both Dangme and Ewe, we have demonstrated that the imperfective aspect construction is an elaboration of a Verb plus nominalized VP complement type of construction that exists in several guises and could hardly be said to be marginal or unusual in either language or indeed the languages of the area generally. In Ga there are verbs that regularly take a nominalized VP complement, for example:

- (119) *e-bɔi gbekeɛbii ɛ bi-mɔ* (Ga)
 3SG-begin children DEF ask-NOM
 ‘He began asking the children.’

Even in the Comoe languages that do not have this type of construction, nominalizations in which the object precedes the nominalized verb exist. In Akan for example we have the following compound nouns derived from Verb-Object VPs (examples from Christaller 1965 [1864]):

- (120) N-V N-V N-V N-V
 dwon-to *agua-di* *aho-pe* *ade-nim*
 song-utter trade-do self-love thing-know
 ‘singing’ ‘trading’ ‘self-love’ ‘knowledge’.

In Akan, however, Verb+Object is also frequently nominalized without changing order, so that for example *nim ade* ‘know thing’ can alternatively be nominalized as *nimdeɛ* ‘knowledge’. This kind of nominalization is extremely rare in Dangme and Ga, although it is a regular process in Ewe (see example 30; cf. Duthie 1996, Ofori 2002).

Semantically what seems to be specific and constant to the construction is its combination of imperfective and inceptive/ inchoative/ prospective aspectual meanings, and a locative and/or existential head verb. In Dangme “progressive” meaning in the sense of ongoing realized action is not really applicable. In Ewe, however there is a distinct progressive construction. The “progressive” interpretation may thus not be available for the so-called OV structure in all the languages.

Also constant and characteristic is the morpho-syntax, in which a very small set of markers that select a nominalized event or verb phrase co-occurs with a small set of head verbs. In Ewe there are two post verb aspect markers (in most dialects) as opposed to just one in Dangme, and there are at least six head verbs in Ewe as opposed to four in Dangme. Ewe thus has a wider variety of types of the construction, carrying a wider range of semantic features. (Dangme by contrast has a more complex finite V word structure.)

A possibly more important difference between the two languages is that in Dangme but not in Ewe both objects, ie., both a Goal and a Theme, precede a ditransitive event verb. This seems to be fairly unusual, since most authors have claimed that only one object can precede the event verb in this type of construction. In all Ewe dialects only one object can occur together with the event verb within the scope of the Progressive marker. In Prospective constructions, however, two objects occur together with the event verb within the scope of the Prospective aspect marker, but only the Theme precedes the event verb. What is particularly remarkable is that in Ewe, unlike virtually all the Kwa languages for which we have good data, Goal and Theme occur in no fixed order, and in the Prospective either object may precede the event verb. These differences are demonstrated by examples (38) and (106-109), partially reproduced and expanded below for convenient comparison.

- (121) a. *é-le akɔ́nta fiá ɖévi-á-wó gbé* (Inland Ewe)
 3SG-be.at:PRES maths teach child-DEF-PL PROSP
 THEME GOAL
 'S/he is going to teach the children mathematics.'
- b. *é-le ɖévi-á-wó fiá akɔ́nta gbé* (Inland Ewe)
 3SG-be.at:PRES child-DEF-PL teach maths PROSP
 GOAL THEME
 'S/he is going to teach the children mathematics.'
- c. *è ɣē jukue ɔ-me la tsɔ̌-ē* (Dangme)
 3SG be.at child DEF-PL song teach-PROSP
 GOAL THEME
 'S/he is teaching the children a song.'
- d. **è ɣē la jukue ɔ-me tsɔ̌-ē* (Dangme)
 3SG be.at song child DEF-PL teach-PROSP
 THEME GOAL

In Ewe certain kinds of Prepositional Phrase expressing a Goal or a location can occur within the scope of the Prospective marker, although following the event verb. In Dangme, where nothing can intervene between the event verb and the Aspect marker, a Prepositional Phrase occurs outside the VP. The examples in (122) contain locative prepositional phrases. (122b) repeats (109c).

- (122) a. *amatsi-a le dɔ wa le é-ŋú gbé* (Inland)
 medicine-DEFbe.at:PRES work do LOC 3SG-side PROSP
 THEME LOCP
 'The medicine is going to work on him/her.'
- b. *à mà yá hĩ duɔmi bèé-ē* (Dangme)
 3PL INCHO(SUBJV) IT.SUBJV stay rubbish sweep-PROSP
ŋé e hla mĩ
 PREP 3SG front LOC
 'They will be sweeping away rubbish in front of him.'

A third difference concerns extractability of constituents for focus and its implications for categoriality. In both languages an object can be focussed by extraction to initial position. However the entire nominalized complement with its aspect marker can be extracted in Ewe only, not in Dangme. This is demonstrated in (33b, c) and (118), repeated below as (123).

- (123) a. Internal argument of eventive verb in Focus
 Ewe: *mɔlu yé Áma le ɔa-ɔa-m*
 rice aFOC name be.at:PRES RED-cook-PROG
 'RICE Ama is cooking.'
- Dangme: *womihi lē è ŋē kǎné-ē*
 books FOC 3SG be.at read-PROSP
 'It is books that he is reading;
reading books is what he is doing.'
- b. Aspectual Phrase in Focus
 Ewe: *mɔlu ɔa-m yé Áma le*
 rice cook-PROG aFOC NAME be.at:PRES
 'RICE COOKING Ama is'
- Dangme: **womihi kǎné-ē lē è ŋē*
 books read-PROSP FOC 3SG be.at

The situation suggests that while in Ewe the nominalized event aspect phrase is clearly a constituent of the VP, subcategorized for by the verb, the situation in Dangme is somewhat ambiguous. As indicated in the previous section, Dangme gerundive phrases can be focused as wholes, like associative NPs but unlike Prospective phrases, or the object can be extracted alone (116), while "normal" associative NPs must be extracted as wholes. The situation is reminiscent of what obtains with verbid expressions (Dakubu 2004), where the extractability of the object alone or with its verbid head depends on the particular verbid, resulting in ambiguity of categorization for the construction type in general.

Perhaps a major distinction needs to be made between languages like Dangme and Ewe which show no functional trace of a nominal class and concord system and those in which such systems are active. In such languages it becomes especially clear whether or not the complement of the first verb is a nominalization. In the instances known to us it takes a class concord affix. Tuwuli according to Stewart (1989) is more closely related to Ewe than to the Comoe (Tano) languages, but it has an active system of nominal prefixes. Harley (elsewhere in this volume) shows that that language has a comparable progressive construction, in which however a locative element follows the head verb, not the event verb. The following sentence is an adaptation of his example (86)

- (124) Tuwuli: *bɛ-la-mla* *awɛ* *ka-bɔa*
 3PL-be-LOC hands NOM-hit
 ‘They are clapping with their hands.’

Likpe, on the other hand, is classed in Stewart (1989) as relatively closely related to the Comoe (Tano) languages like Akan or Guang. It has a very similar construction, but apparently without a Locative marker of any sort. The following example is from Ameka (2002a:97):

- (125) Likpe: *ɔ-lɛ'* *ka-mɔ'* *bo-tɛ*
 3SG-hold Pfx-rice NOM-sell
 ‘S/he is selling rice.’

In both Tuwuli and Likpe, the prefix that nominalizes the event verb is a nominal class prefix.

Very strikingly, however, the language with a construction that seems to fit Heine et al.’s schema best is Kaansa (Gan), a Gur (Grusi) language, described by Mieke (1998). Kaansa has an active class system, marked by suffixes. In this language the last morpheme in the nominalized verb itself is a Locative affix, and the complement of the head verb is not just a nominalization but an NP, as shown by the fact that in (126) below, the object and the nominalized verb are in associative (‘genetive’) relationship. The examples are from Mieke (1998), with glosses and translations translated and adapted by the authors. The item glossed NOM is a nominal class suffix.

- (126) Kaansa: *a* *mi* *ma* *ú-bosoʔ-m-o*
 1SG be 3SG-care.for-NOM-LOC
 ‘I look after him.’
 yirera *ma* *ú-khɪ-gɪ* *wá* *dǎŋ-m-o*
 smith be 3SG-iron-SG GEN forge-NOM-LOC
 ‘The smith is engaged in forging his iron.’

On a broad typological scale, therefore, the complement of the head verb is a nominalization of a VP, but whether or not this nominalization is an NP is highly variable.

Perhaps the solution to the Locativity question is that typologically it is usually present, but its expression cannot be located on any particular constituent. In Dangme, Ewe and Likpe it is a semantic feature of the head verb. In Tuwuli it surfaces as a clitic to the head verb. In Kaansa, on the other hand, it is represented by a suffix or particle that follows the event verb.

Finally, we observe that while it is possible that Likpe may have developed the construction under influence from Ewe, the dominant lingua franca in the area (Ameka 2002a) we have found no reason to think that Ewe or Dangme has developed the construction under the influence of the other. The differences between the two languages are such that we must assume that diachronically speaking they are the result of internal developments within each language.

Endnotes

¹ In Dakubu (1987) this form is termed the “Potential”. Although this is not an unsuitable term language-internally, we have changed it here because Ewe distinguishes the Subjunctive from the Potential, and the Dangme form is semantically more similar to the former, although in some respects it combines the two. The Dangme form is also clearly cognate with the Ga Subjunctive.

² The forms in (1) are from the standard colloquial dialect. There is variation across dialects, especially with respect to the expression of the forms in (1b) and (1c) which we shall return to. The variation can be reduced to the coastal or southern vs. inland or *Ewedomegbe* (see Atakpa 1997 and Ansre 2000 on these dialects respectively; see also Kluge 2000). For instance, the realization of the progressive and the prospective morphemes is the same in the southern and the standard. In the inland dialects, however, the progressive morpheme is realized as a high tone without the ‘m’, while the prospective is *gbé*.

³ (Heine 1994: 268) summarizes the evolution of the progressive construction in Ewe thus:

Stage I	*le Verb-	Verb-me	
II	*le Verb-	Verb-mé	
III	le Verb-	Verb-mí	intransitive verbs
	le	Verb-mí	transitive verbs
IV		Verb-mí	optional form for both intransitive and transitive verbs

... in its initial stage (I) the progressive clearly forms a phrase level construction, whereas Stage IV is clearly a word-level phenomenon, since progressive marking has been reduced to a verbal suffix.

⁴ For example, Warburton et al. (1968: 171) note that “In the ingressive (i.e. intentional) [i.e. prospective FKA&MEKD] /le/ may be replaced by a verb of motion such as /va/, /gbɔ/ ‘to come’, /yi/ ‘to go’”. Similarly Rongier et al. (1990:112) say that “L’intentionnel est marqué par

le nom locatif 'gé'. Le verbe locatif est variable. Les plus fréquents sont 'lè', 'nɔ', 'yi' [...], 'dè' (aller) et 'gbɔna' (revenir)".

⁵ One can paraphrase the imminent prospective construction using simple terms in the spirit of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) espoused by Anna Wierzbicka and her colleagues as follows (see e.g. Wierzbicka 1988, Goddard 1998 and see Ameka 1991 for justification):

at time *t* one can think this:

not much more time after now, X happens
because someone wants it

⁶ It has been suggested that the prospective developed out of the nominalizing suffix *gbé* (Heine and Reh 1984). If this suggestion is correct then the purposive sense of the prospective marker should not be too surprising.

⁷ The preposition *le* 'LOC' which is in heterosemic relation to the present locative verb also tends to be elided very often in Anlo, more than in the inland dialects. However when it is stranded, i.e. the complement is focused it must be overtly realised.

E.g. *É-kpɔ-e* (le) *aɸé-á* *me*
3SG-see-3SG LOC house-DEF containing.region
'He saw her in the house.'
Aɸé-á *me-é* *wò-kpɔ-e* *le*
house-DEF containing.region-aFOC 3SG-see-3SG LOC
'IN THE HOUSE he saw her at.'

⁸ In the orthography of non-Ewe Gbe varieties, a nasalised vowel is represented by the vowel followed by "n". In Ewe orthography nasalisation is indicated by a tilde.

⁹ The French glosses of the Ajagbe sentences as well as the schematic representation of constituent order representations given by Fiedler have been translated into English. Her terminology in the glosses has been maintained.

¹⁰ We profoundly thank Gloria Akutu Vondee and Samuel Odonkor for their indispensable contributions to the preparation of this part of the paper on Dangme.

¹¹ This construction was called the "modal construction" in Dakubu (1987). In view of other linguistic uses of "modal", choice of this term was unfortunate, and it is abandoned in this paper.

¹² This section develops (with extensive revisions) an approach first presented in a paper to the Linguistics Association of Ghana by Dakubu in January 1999. Most of the ground is also covered in Dakubu (1987), but in a less systematic manner.

¹³ Dangme has three contrastive tones, High Mid and Low, although the Mid-Low contrast is neutralized in many contexts, especially in the Ada dialect (see Dakubu 1974; 1986). In this paper they are transcribed with the acute accent for High tone *ɔ́*, the grave accent for Low tone *ɔ̀*, and the bar, *ɔ̄*, for Mid tone. Only underlying tones, not surface tones (which are more likely to vary with dialect) are marked, and only verb forms (including subject pronouns) are tone marked, except occasionally when the tones of other forms are relevant to the discussion.

¹⁴ In Dakubu (1987: 63) the distinction was not recognized, so that the description there of the Habitual suffix on Low tone stems is wrong.

¹⁵ Klama is the body of Dangme religious lore and poetry, see Huber 1963.

¹⁶ Strictly speaking, therefore, and in conformity with our treatment of negation in Ga, the High tone of negation is the morpheme of negation proper, distinct from the particle or suffix with vowel change, which perhaps signify Realis modality.

¹⁷ Brackets around the label (SUBJV) indicate that its expression is neutralized by the tonal context (ie., occurrence before a High tone).

¹⁸ Unlike those discussed above, these pre-verb items do not correspond to anything in the Ga grammaticized serial construction. However they are reminiscent of the verb construction in several Central Gur languages, which incorporates various kinds of adverbials, usually at the beginning of the phrase.

¹⁹ Possibly four: it seems that *kɛ* sometimes heads such a string, but this has yet to be properly investigated.

²⁰ This phenomenon has been observed in the Ada dialect.

²¹ This is the item termed “modal verb” in Dakubu (1987), see note 11.

²² The distinction between the two kinds of irrealis expression evidently corresponds to the two values of the feature VOLITIONAL in Ga, although its expression, especially as reflected in negation, is quite different.

²³ This morpheme is at least as likely as the Prospective suffix to be locative in origin, since it is homophonous with the locative noun meaning “inside”. On the other hand, these resemblances may be purely fortuitous.

²⁴ This is not the only form of nominalization in Dangme (see Dakubu 1987: 89), but it is the most productive and the form most relevant to our topic.

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Tense, Aspect and Mood in Tuwuli

Matthew Harley

Tuwuli is one of 14 minority Kwa languages spoken in the southern Ghana-Togo border region. Tuwuli's tense, aspect and mood (TAM) system reveals how the widely-attested perfective/imperfective aspectual distinction operates alongside a more surprising future/non-future tense distinction, and how tonal processes clearly form an integral part of TAM coding. Of particular interest is the present-progressive construction, whose basic SVO word order is clearly verifiable despite its S-Aux-O-V appearance, and whose interpretation partly depends on the inherent semantic properties of the verb involved. Overall, Tuwuli's TAM system makes important contributions to our understanding of TAM categories in general, whilst also supporting several important typological observations concerning the grammaticalization processes involved in the development of TAM categories from certain auxiliary verbs.

Introduction

This paper¹ describes the coding of tense, aspect and mood (TAM) in Tuwuli², a Kwa language spoken by about 11,000³ people in nine towns of the mountainous and linguistically diverse Volta Region of South-Eastern Ghana. Tuwuli is one of at least 14 'Central Togo' (CT) languages, most of which have been little described in previous literature, although some of these languages are the topic of several current research initiatives. Being a highly agglutinative language, Tuwuli expresses TAM categories mostly by means of verbal prefixes, which often exhibit complex tonal behaviour. The TAM categories described in this paper are as follows: future tense, imperfective aspect, present-imperfective aspect, present-progressive aspect, subjunctive mood, and subjunctive-imperfective mood. Certain auxiliary verbs are also used in the expression of tense and aspect, and these are also described in this paper. It should be noted that there are other verbal affixes in Tuwuli, which do not relate to the expression of TAM categories, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to deal with all of these.⁴ Two such affixes which are discussed however, are the purposive prefix *-a-*, and the stative suffix *-ne/-ni*. This latter affix appears to have been used to derive a number of stative verbs, but is no longer very productive.

The data presented in this paper also has a bearing on the long-standing debate about the relationship between aspect and word order in Kwa-type languages, namely that, although SVO is commonly the basic word order, imper-

fective aspects (especially progressive aspects) are typically associated with S-Aux-O-V word order. Analysts disagree as to whether the Aux constituent should be considered an auxiliary verb, essentially fulfilling the role of a tense, aspect or mood marker, or a full verb which takes an event complement (OV), where the V constituent appears in some non-finite form. The present-progressive form in Tuvuli strongly supports the latter view. Ameka (2002) reports similar findings in Likpe, another CT language of the Central Volta Region. Better candidates for auxiliary verbs are those used in purposive constructions, namely the deictic motion verbs *na(a)* - 'come' and *ya* - 'go', and the instrumental verb *kɔa* - 'use/take'.

Another typological issue which this paper touches on is the claim that Kwa languages are tenseless (Manfredi 1991). In many African languages, grammatical distinctions previously analysed in terms of tense are now being reanalysed in terms of either aspect or mood (see Avolonto 1995, Essegbey (this volume), Osam 1994). Although this paper presents Tuvuli as a clearly aspect-dominated language, it claims that there is indeed a basic future/non-future tense distinction, a distinction which has also been reported within Kwa for the Gbe languages (Aboh 1998).

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 1 discusses the genetic classification of Tuvuli and the CT languages, a topic which has been debated at least as much as either of the two typological issues mentioned above. Section 2 presents an overview of the TAM system, giving a general picture of the structure of the verbal word. Section 3 discusses the four basic verb classes, and provides some evidence for their justification in Tuvuli. Sections 4 and 5 form the heart of the paper, with section 4 describing tense and aspect distinctions, and section 5 describing modal distinctions. Section 6 examines the three auxiliary verbs, and their role in the expression of tense and aspect. The purposive marker *-a-* is also discussed in this section, since it always co-occurs with one of the three auxiliary verbs. Section 7 looks at the evidence for the stative suffix *-ne/-ni*, and discusses some of the phonological processes that have been involved in its lexicalisation. Finally, section 8 summarises the main features of Tuvuli's TAM system, and discusses them in the context of ongoing research into Kwa and Niger-Congo languages.

1 Classification review

As far as I am aware, the first reference to Tuvuli is in a brief article by Christaller (1895), but it wasn't until Westermann (1927) that a proposal for its genetic classification appeared. Westermann placed it in a group of 14 languages, which came to be known collectively as the 'Togo-Remnant' languages (Westermann and Bryan (1952), based on the German term

‘Togorestsprachen’ in Struck (1912)). However, they are currently better known as the ‘Central Togo’ (Dakubu and Ford 1988) or ‘Ghana-Togo Mountain’ languages (Ring 1995). Since Westermann’s initial classification, the group has been split into two subgroups, labelled ‘Na-Togo’ and ‘Ka-Togo’, each containing seven languages, following a comparative study of the group as a whole by Heine (1968). Greenberg (1963) was the first to place the CT languages within Kwa, and Heine’s two subgroups have survived more or less intact through most of the major classifications since then (Bennet and Sterk 1977, Stewart 1989, Williamson and Blench 2000, Gordon 2005). The exact placement of the two subgroups within Kwa has varied considerably however, partly due to the fact that the classifications at this level have been based on relatively little empirical data. Work is in progress to re-evaluate the classification at sub-CT level, but the currently accepted classification for Tuwuli is that it belongs to the Ka-Togo subgroup of Kwa, with Akposso and Ahlo (Igo) being its closest relatives within that group (Williamson and Blench 2000). However, in a more recent article, Blench (2001, 2006) casts doubt on Heine’s two subgroups, and suggests that Tuwuli’s closest relatives are possibly Avatime and Nyangbo-Tafi. A cursory glance at the phonology, morphology and lexicon of a number of CT languages seems to confirm Blench’s suspicions that Heine’s subgroups are at least questionable.

It is worth noting here that the CT languages gained early attention from African language scholars due to their Bantu-style noun-class system based on obligatory singular/plural affixes that most count-nouns take. The difficulty in their classification arose because it was also observed that several of the CT languages showed significant vocabulary resemblances to the Kwa languages. These facts are the primary reason why the CT languages were identified as a possible isolated group so early on.

2 Overview of the tense and aspect system

Table 1 illustrates the main TAM distinctions in Tuwuli. A ‘+’ sign beside an affix indicates that an affix from the immediately adjacent column on that side is also required. Hence it is not possible to have the purpose marker *-a-* without one of the auxiliary verbs as well. The horizontal lines in the table are included to illustrate compatibility constraints (i.e. in selecting an affix from each column, you are not allowed to cross these lines, moving from left to right across the page).

Note that the present-imperfective and present-progressive forms are combined tense-aspect markers⁵ and are therefore incompatible with the future tense marker. The present-progressive is different from the other forms in that it is not marked by a single morpheme, but by a periphrastic construction in-

volving the state verb *lā*, the ‘joint participation’ suffix *-mla*, and a nominalized verb complement *ka-V*.

Tone is important in several of the TAM categories, and is marked in the examples whenever it is relevant to the discussion in hand. Tuwuli has two basic, underlying tone levels, denoted as high and low. A word-final falling tone, which can be analysed as a high-low sequence, is also quite common. Two other tone levels (downstepped-high and upstepped-high) are generated by morphophonemic processes operating within the verbal word. In addition, there exists an extra-high tone level, which is strongly linked with the marking of negation. In the case of state verbs, this is frequently the only indication of negation in the clause (see section 7). For a more detailed discussion of tone in Tuwuli, see Harley (2000, 2005).

3 Verb classes

The distribution of tense and aspect markers depends partly on the inherent semantic properties or ‘aktionsart’ of individual verbs. Furthermore, verbs from different aktionsart classes are often interpreted in different ways when they are marked for various tense-aspect categories. I give an example of this in a moment. Firstly though, the four generally accepted verb classes are presented and characterised. Vendler (1957) was the first to identify these four

Table 1: Tuwuli verbal prefixes denoting distinctions in tense, aspect and mood

TENSE/MOOD	ASPECT	AUXILIARY	PURPOSE	ROOT
-aa- (Future)	-ka- (Imperfective)	-na- (Go)	+a- (Purpose)	
-Ø (Non-future)	-Ø (Perfective)	-ya- (Come)		
-a- (Present-imperfective)		-kɔa+ (Use)		
-kaa-/aka- (Subjunctive-imperfective)				
-Ø (low tone)- (Subjunctive-perfective)				
la-mla....ka- (Present-progressive)				

groups, which he labelled as states, activities, accomplishments and achievements. These groups reflect a basic distinction in types of states of affairs, a tradition which can be traced back to Aristotle. Various revisions of Vendler’s *Aktionsart* groups have appeared since his seminal publication (e.g. Kenny 1963, Mourelatos 1981, Smith 1997), but the same terminology has often been

used with different meanings. The four-way distinction can be characterised by means of the three binary features [+/-static], [+/-punctual] and [+/-telic], as set out in Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:93)⁶:

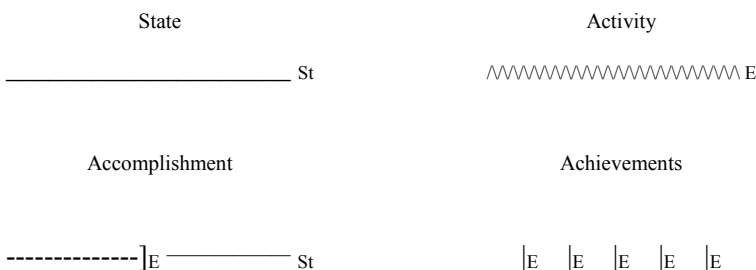
- | | | | |
|-----|----|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) | a. | State | [+static], [- telic], [- punctual] |
| | b. | Activity | [- static], [- telic], [- punctual] |
| | c. | Accomplishment | [- static], [+telic], [- punctual] |
| | d. | Achievement | [- static], [+telic], [+punctual] |

The feature [+/-static] distinguishes ‘happenings’ from ‘non-happenings’ (i.e. those predicates that can be used to answer to the question ‘*what happened?*’ from those which cannot). The feature [+/-telic] refers to whether the event has an inherent end point or not, and the feature [+/-punctual] refers to whether or not an event happens instantaneously (for all practical purposes).

The schematisations in Figure 1 may help to conceptualise each of the four verb classes. In the schematisations, time proceeds linearly from left to right, ‘St’ denotes a state, ‘E’ denotes an event, ‘]’ denotes an end point of an event and ‘|’ denotes a punctual occurrence. The wavy lines for the activity schematisation represent the fact that activities are dynamic events (i.e. they can be modified by adverbs such as *vigorously* and *dynamically*). Accomplishments, on the other hand, involve non-dynamic events that lead into result-states after an end point has been reached.

Van Valin and LaPolla propose several syntactic tests (based on Dowty 1979) which help to determine the class of individual verbs, but their progressive aspect test alone can distinguish between the different verb classes in Tuwuli. States are identified by their inability to occur with present-progressive aspect, or indeed, with any other tense-aspect marker. Verbs from the other classes can be identified by their interpretation in the present-progressive; ac-

Figure 1: Schematisations for the four *Aktionsart* classes.



tivities have an ongoing, unbounded action interpretation; accomplishments suggest an action or process that is working towards completion; and achievements necessarily involve iterativity:

- (2) *ε-la-mla* *ka-kã* (activity)
 3SG-be:MANNER-with NOM-read
 'He is reading',⁷
- (3) *fɔ-la-mla* *ka-le* (accomplishment)
 3SG.REF-be:MANNER-with NOM-become:good
 'It is (gradually) becoming good'
- (4) *osidza a la-mla* *ka-mɔanɛ* (achievement)
 light ID be:MANNER-with NOM-flash
 'The light is flashing'

Further examples of verbs in each of the four classes are given below:

- (5) a. States: *nɛnɛ* - 'be good', *tɛĩ* - 'be on', *nɛɛ* - 'be holding'
 b. Activ's: *sã* - 'sing', *to* - 'dance', *nya* - 'eat'
 c. Accom's: *pɔ* - 'become fat', *ku* - 'die', *tsã* - 'move/travel'
 d. Achiev's: *yɛɛ* - 'shatter', *tui* - 'explode', *tsui* - 'peck'

Activities and accomplishments seem to be more common than states and achievements. Some state verbs (including several verbs of position such as 'sit', 'stand', 'lie', 'lean', 'hang' and 'attach') appear to be derived by means of a stative suffix. With other state verbs, the relation to their non-stative counterparts is more ambiguous and the derivational process involved varies from verb to verb. With a few verbs, there seems to be no formal relation whatsoever with the non-stative counterparts. What is clear though, is that all state verbs are incompatible with any tense-aspect markers. It is arguably preferable to analyse Tuwuli as having a class of lexically stative verbs, rather than positing the existence of an independent stative aspect marker, as has been proposed for Akan for example (Dolphyne 1996:98).

4 Tense and aspect

Tuwuli has a basic tense distinction between future and non-future and a basic aspectual distinction between imperfective and perfective. In each case, the latter is the unmarked form. In addition, there is a combined tense-aspect marker, the present-imperfective, and a periphrastic present-progressive construction. These distinctions are discussed and illustrated in the following subsections.

4.1 Future tense

Future tense is marked by the prefix *aa-*. The tone of the second *a* is always low, but the tone of the first *a* is dissimilar⁷ to the surface tone of the initial syllable of the verb root. However, the surface tone of the verb root is itself the opposite of its underlying tone. Hence, a monosyllabic verb with an underlying high tone would appear with a low tone in the future construction, and the future prefix in that case would be *áà-*. However, a verb with an underlying low tone would appear with a high tone, and the future prefix in that case would be *àà-*. This is illustrated in the examples below:

- (6) *m-áà-kǎ* (kǎ - 'read')
 1SG-FUT-read
 'I will read'
- (7) *m-àà-tá* (tá - 'throw/shoot')
 1SG-FUT-shoot
 'I will shoot'

Hence if the underlying initial tone of the verb root is α , and '- α ' means 'the opposite tone from α ', then the paradigm for simple future tense formation can be expressed as follows:

- (8)
- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|
| α | \rightarrow | α L - α |
| | Future tense | |
| Verb root | | a a Verb root |

In cases where the pronominal clitic carries an independent high tone, the resulting high-low sequence often surfaces as a mid tone:

- (9) *mí-àà-tá* \rightarrow [*m'āàtā*]
 2PL-FUT-shoot
 'You (PL) will shoot'

The tone formation paradigm given in (8) applies when future tense is the only functional category expressed by the verbal word. When future tense combines with imperfective aspect or negative polarity for example, different tone rules apply. The exact tonal behaviour of such combinations of verbal affixes is a matter for future research.

As in many other West African languages, the morpheme expressing future tense can have scope over several verbs in a multi-verb construction, and is marked only on the first verb in the series:

- (10) *y-aa-ya* *kafɔabi* *ε-tɔle* *ε-nɔ* *ε-na* *sika*
 3SG-FUT-buy fish 3SG-fry 3SG-sell 3SG-get money
 'She will buy fish, fry it, sell it and get money'

Again like future morphemes in other West African languages, the future morpheme in Tuwuli shows ‘relative tense’ effects, in which it is interpreted in relation to the time reference of the verb in the main clause:

- (11) *n-kɔna kĩ y-aa-ya*
 1SG-think COMP 3SG-FUT-come
 ‘I thought that he would come’ (but he didn’t)

The primary function of the *aa-* morpheme is to mark future tense, although in some circumstances it can be interpreted as an obligation:

- (12) *bɔ-aa-naa*
 1PL-FUT-go
 (i) ‘We will go’
 (ii) ‘We should go’

The same ambiguity occurs in Dangme (Kwa; Ghana: Kropp-Dakubu 1987:60), and in several other genetically disparate languages around the world (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994). Interestingly, an obligation reading is also available with the present-imperfective aspect (see section 4.2), from which the future morpheme is almost certainly derived. Unlike other Kwa languages in which morphemes indicating future time reference can also be used to indicate possibility, as far as I am aware, Tuwuli shows no such ambiguity:

- (13) *bɔ-aa-naa*
 1PL-FUT-go
 *‘We may go’

In the literature on tense-aspect distinctions in Kwa languages, the question as to whether Kwa languages are tenseless has been much discussed (e.g. Aboh (1998), Manfredi (1991), Osam (1994)). In particular, morphemes originally analysed as being markers of future tense have sometimes later been reanalysed as markers of potentiality or probability (e.g. Essegbey (1999, this volume) for Ewe, Kropp-Dakubu (1987) for Dangme). Although, the future tense marker in Tuwuli does have one occasional non-tense function, I believe its primary function is to mark future tense. If this is the case, then describing the morpheme as a tense morpheme is justified, according to Comrie (1985:46), who states that in order to analyse a morpheme as a tense morpheme, it is necessary to show that its use “cannot be treated as a special use of a grammatical category with *basically non-tense meaning*” (emphasis mine).

4.2 Present-imperfective aspect

The present-imperfective morpheme is the prefix *a-*. It has an underlying high tone, but, like the future morpheme, it shows dissimilation with the initial tone of the verb root if the subject is a pronominal proclitic:

- (14) *m-á-tà* (tá - 'throw/shoot')
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-shoot
 (i) 'I shoot (habitually)'
 (ii) 'I am shooting (now)'
- (15) *m-à-kǎ* (ká - 'read')
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-read
 (i) 'I read (habitually)'
 (ii) 'I am reading (now)'

With independent NP subjects its tonal behaviour is more complicated. It retains its underlying high tone, but the dissimilation still surfaces on the following tone such that a following high tone becomes downstepped, but a following low tone remains unchanged:

- (16) *yĩ óbì á-'ká óvólì*
 my child PRES.IMPF-read book
 'My child is reading a book'
- (17) *yĩ obì á-tà bákélà*
 my child PRES.IMPF-shoot type.of.large:antelopes
 'My child is shooting antelopes'

Furthermore, with independent NP subjects which have a final falling tone, the high tone of the present-imperfective morpheme becomes upstepped:

- (18) *yĩ sèmé á-wò yĩ* → [yĩ sèmé 'áwò yĩ]
 my tongue PRES.IMPF-enter me
 'My tongue is painning me'

Floating low tones would normally be expected to cause downstep in West African tone languages. In some environments in Tuwuli (e.g. within the NP), they do, but in others, they have the opposite effect.

As indicated in the glosses of examples (14) and (15) above, the present-imperfective morpheme typically describes current actions (including habitual and generic situations):

- (19) Q. 'what are you doing?'
 A. *m-a-nɔ ɔtsetse*
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-weave basket
 'I am weaving a basket'

- (20) Q. 'How do you get to school'

A. *m-a-tsã*
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-walk
 'I walk'

- (21) *kɔvlabi a-yi fuge*
 birds PRES.IMPF-put:down eggs
 'Birds lay eggs'

With such functions, the *a-* morpheme might well be considered a present tense marker. However, if as Comrie (1985:36-41) suggests, present tense is understood as referring to situations that hold at the present moment, then present states clearly fall within the scope of present tense. If *a-* was simply marker of present tense, it would then be strange that stative verbs in Tuwuli never co-occur with the *a-* morpheme, even though they frequently denote present states. In fact stative verbs in many West African languages are only compatible with perfective aspect. I believe the reason for this is that imperfective aspect (which marks verbs as having specific, context-dependent, internal temporal structures) is crucially only applicable to verbs which can be interpreted with more than one possible internal temporal structure (see section 4.4).

What the *a-* morpheme seems to signal is a combination of present tense and imperfective aspect. This explains why it is incompatible with other morphemes indicating either tense (e.g. future *aa-*) or aspect (e.g. imperfective *ka-*). However, the *a-* morpheme is also beginning to take on some of the functions of a typical subjunctive marker. For example, it is already obligatory in subordinate purpose clauses:

- (22) *ε-naa Hohoe kĩ y-a-na-a-ya kɔfɔabi*
 3SG-go Hohoe COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-go-PURP-buy fish
 'He went to Hohoe to buy fish'

- (23) *bε-bɔa mbɔdi kĩ y-a-kɔ ye*
 3SG-beat attempt COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-kill 3SG
 'They tried to kill him'

Tuwuli already has a distinct subjunctive form, marked by a low tone on the pronominal proclitic, but the present-imperfective morpheme may replace the subjunctive form in complement clauses following the verb *wâ* – 'want/desire', in which the subjunctive form is otherwise obligatory:

- (24) a. *ε-we kĩ ê-ya*
 3SG-want COMP 3SG.SUBJV-come
 'He wants to come'
- b. *ε-we kĩ y-a-ya*
 3SG-want COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-come

‘He wants to come’

Furthermore, in main clauses with first-person subjects, the present-imperfective morpheme, like the future morpheme, can convey a sense of obligation:

- (25) *m-a-naa*
1SG-PRES.IMPF-go
‘I (should) go’

- (26) *bɔ-a-naa*
1PL-PRES.IMPF-go
‘We (should) go’

Second and third-person subjects use the subjunctive form instead. Since the subjunctive form is not compatible with first-person subjects in declarative main clauses, it can be said that in this environment, the present-imperfective and subjunctive forms are in complimentary distribution.

The present-imperfective may also convey a sense of possibility, whilst the subjunctive form cannot:

- (27) *fɔ-a-nya* *kĩ* *ε-bɔε* *foe*
3SG.REF-PRES.IMPF-become COMP 3SG-take it
‘He might have taken it’

Main clause verbs of cognition and desire may optionally use the present-imperfective morpheme with no apparent difference in meaning from the corresponding form without it:

- (28) a. *m-a-bu* *kĩ* *y-aa-ya*
1SG-PRES.IMPF-think COMP 3SG-FUT-come
‘I think that he’ll come’
b. *m-bu* *kĩ* *y-aa-ya*
1SG-think COMP 3SG-FUT-come
‘I think/thought that he’ll come’
- (29) a. *m-a-wε* *kĩ* *y-a-ya*
1SG-PRES.IMPF-want COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-come
‘I want him to come’
b. *n-wε* *kĩ* *y-a-ya*
1SG-want COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-come
‘I want(ed) him to come’
- (30) a. *m-a-tε* *ka-do* *kĩ* *y-aa-ya*
1SG-PRES.IMPF-receive IMPF-put:inside COMP 3SG-FUT-come
‘I believe/hope that he’ll come’

- b. *n-tē* *ka-do* *kĩ* *y-aa-ya*
 1SG-receive 1SG-put:inside COMP 3SG-FUT-come
 'I believe(d)/(*hope) that he'll come'

These are precisely the kinds of verbs that are often associated with subjunctive forms. Note particularly in example (30) that with the complex predicate *tâ...do* 'believe/hope', an optative interpretation (i.e. 'hope') is only available if the present-imperfective is used. Since optative interpretations are prototypical of subjunctive morphemes cross-linguistically, example (30) further illustrates the tendency for the *a-* morpheme to be associated with subjunctive meaning. Overall, it seems that both the subjunctive form and the present-imperfective form represent two overlapping domains within the whole 'semantic space' of subjunctive meaning. However, whilst the domain of the subjunctive form lies entirely within this semantic space, the domain of the present-imperfective form has a functional core which lies outside of it, and more within the general semantic space of tense and aspect.

A possible reason why the present-imperfective is beginning to take on subjunctive meaning is because of the existence of an independent present-progressive construction. Subordinate clauses are typically among the last environments to be affected by developing tense-aspect morphemes, and so older tense-aspect morphemes tend to be retained in such places. Since subordinate clauses often have modal content, the older tense-aspect forms gradually become associated with modal meaning and begin to surface in main clauses with modal functions such as obligation and desire. Bybee et al (1994:231-232) note just such a process in the development of the old present tense form in Classical Armenian into something approaching a subjunctive in Modern Armenian. The facts in Tuwuli seem to be almost identical, although the development here is perhaps at a slightly earlier stage.

The present-imperfective morpheme sometimes has a temporal reference point in the past, rather than at the moment of speech. In such cases, it is equivalent to using the non-future imperfective form:

- (31) *m-a-tō* *ofuo mō ɔdō a bɔa*
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-pound fufu with bell ID beat
 'I was pounding fufu and the bell rang'
- (32) *n-ka-tō* *ofuo mō ɔdō a bɔa*
 1SG-IMPV-pound fufu with bell ID beat
 'I was pounding fufu and the bell rang'

Such examples may be stylistic devices for adding vividness to a narrative, much like the use of the 'historic present' in English. The present-progressive construction (section 4.5) can also be used in this way.

The present-imperfective morpheme may even have future time reference, although only when the irrealis marker *ntā* is also present. Compare (33) below with (31) and (32) above:

- (33) *nte m-a-tɔ ofuo mɔ ɔdɔ̃ a aa-bɔa*
 IRR 1SG-FUT-pound fufu with bell ID FUT-beat
 ‘While I am pounding fufu, the bell will ring’
 (Lit. ‘I am pounding fufu and the bell will ring’)

As with the future morpheme, such ‘relative tense’ effects are quite common with the present-imperfective morpheme, especially in subordinate clauses, where the temporal reference point of the verb is interpreted relative to the time reference of the verb in the main clause (example (34)). The same effect is true of the present-progressive construction as well, as shown in example (35).

- (34) *kĩ y-a-nɛ a, ɛ-balɛ kɔla*
 REAL 3SG-PRES.IMPF-come:out ID, 3SG-close house
 ‘As he was going out, he closed the door’
- (35) *nte ɛ-la-mɔ kɔdzela ka-lɛ a, m-aa-ya*
 IRR 3SG-be-with talking NOM-speak ID 1SG-FUT-come
 ‘While he is talking, I will come’

4.3 Imperfective aspect

In addition to the present-imperfective, there is a general imperfective morpheme *ka-* that is used in non-present situations:

- (36) *n-ka-tɔ ofuo*
 1SG-IMPF-pound fufu
 (i) ‘I was pounding fufu’
 (ii) ‘I used to pound fufu’
- (37) *m-aa-ka-tɔ ofuo*
 1SG-FUT-IMPF-pound fufu
 ‘I will be pounding fufu’ (either on one occasion or habitually)

ka- also occurs as the noun class prefix which is used to form verbal nouns (among other things), but is glossed as ‘NOM’ in such cases, in order to maintain the important distinction between arguments and predicates:

- (38) *m-a-wɛ tuvoli ka-kã*
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-want books NOM-read
 ‘I like reading books’

- (39) *ye ka-dzakũ*
 his NOM-leave
 'his departure'

It is this verbal noun form that also occurs in present-progressive and predicate focus constructions:

- (40) *ε-la-mla (ovoli) ka-kã*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with book NOM-read
 'he is reading (a book)'

- (41) Q. 'what happened to the cat?'
 A. *(ka-ku) e-ku*
 NOM-die 3SG-die
 'It *died*'

The distribution of *ka-* is somewhat similar to that of the English imperfective participle suffix *-ing*. Indeed Vincent (1994 [1999]:357) notes that in a variety of languages, there is often a close link both structurally and etymologically between non-finite verb forms and verbal nouns.

Also typical of numerous languages is the occurrence of imperfective marking in certain kinds of unreality conditionals. When *ka-* occurs with a repeated verb form in the protasis (condition) of a conditional sentence, it expresses the speaker's doubtfulness about the actuality of the condition, and necessarily forms part of an argument or debate:

- (42) *nte ka-ya y-aa-ya kunya malo,*
 IRR IMPF-come 3SG-FUT-come tomorrow EMPH
ε-l-aa-mɔ yĩ
 3SG-NEG.FUT-FUT-see me
 'Even if he were to come tomorrow, he wouldn't meet me'

- (43) *nte ka-vũ b-a-vũ ni*
 IRR IMPF-fight 3PL-PRES.IMPF-fight ANTIC
bɔ-aa-nu be fɔwɔla
 1PL-FUT-hear their shouts
 'If they *were* fighting, we would hear their shouts'

Repeated verb forms in this environment are essentially *pragmatically* determined structures; it is perfectly possible for the speaker to express his doubts about the actuality of an event within an unreality conditional without using verb repetition or imperfective aspect. What these constructions say to the hearer is not only "I have doubts about the truth of this event" but also "what have you got to say in your defence?"

On the subject on this macro-correlation between imperfective aspect and various irrealis contexts, Fleischman (1995:539) suggests that the link can be found in the discourse notion of backgrounding, namely that both irrealis and imperfective contexts involve a reduced degree of assertiveness, one of the characteristic features of background information (Hopper 1981:215). Taking a slightly different viewpoint, but one not incompatible with this idea, James (1982) suggests that both contexts share the semantic feature of non-completion.

Another environment where the *ka-* prefix occurs is on non-initial verbs in certain serial verb constructions (SVCs), including certain serial imperatives:

- (44) *okpete a a-pi bakobi ka-ba*
 dog ID PRES.IMPf-catch chicks IMPf-chew
 'The dog catches chicks and eats them'
- (45) *okpete a la-mɔ bakobi ka-pi ka-ba*
 dog ID be:MANNER-with chicks IMPf-catch IMPf-chew
 'The dog is catching chicks and eating them'
- (46) *naa ka-na-a-te tuvoli a ka-ya*
 go IMPf-go-PURP-receive books ID IMPf-come
 'Go, collect the books and come'

In some SVCs, these non-initial verbs may function much like prepositions in English:

- (47) *b-a-kena tuvoli ka-kpa ka-kā*
 1SG-PRES.IMPf-do books IMPf-give NOM-read
 'They make books for reading'
- (48) *bɔ-a-kena adzuma ka-to ɔnɔnɛ tɔdɔ*
 1PL-PRES.IMPf-do work IMPf-be:from morning bells
ɛlɛ ka-na-a-wo olobe tɔdɔ elo
 eight IMPf-go-PURP-enter evening bells five
 'We work from 8am to 5pm'

4.4 Perfective aspect

In Tuwuli, as in many West African languages, perfective is the unmarked form of the basic imperfective/perfective distinction, analogous to the non-future form of the basic future/non-future tense distinction. The term 'perfective' should not be confused with 'completive', as some authors have understood it. 'Completive' refers explicitly to the completion of an event, but 'perfective' simply denotes "a situation viewed in its entirety, without regard to internal temporal consistency" (Comrie 1976:12). Hence verb forms (such as

all those in examples (49)-(51) below) which lack explicit reference to the completion of an event may be regarded as perfective rather than completive:

- (49) *n-tɔ* *ofuo* (non-future perfective)
 1SG-pound fufu
 'I pounded fufu'
- (50) *m-aa-tɔ* *ofuo* (future perfective)
 1SG-FUT-pound fufu
 'I will pound fufu'
- (51) *y-aa-ya* *kɔfɔabi* *ɛ-tɔlɛ* *ɛ-nɔ* *ɛ-na* *sika*
 3SG-FUT-buy fish 3SG-fry 3SG-sell 3SG-get money
 'She will buy fish, fry it, sell it and get money'

In the non-future perfective, the pronominal clitic typically carries a high tone which spreads onto the following syllable, with one of two possible results. If the following syllable carries a low tone, then the high tone displaces the low, giving a high-high sequence:

- (52) *é-tà* *bàyíkò* → [*é-tá* *bàyíkò*]
 3SG-shoot monkeys
 'he shot monkeys'

If the following syllable carries a high tone, then its high tone is upstepped, giving a high-upstepped-high sequence:

- (53) *é-kǎ́* *óvólì* → [*é-ʔkǎ́* *óvólì*]
 3SG-read book
 'He read a book'

This process is not a feature of perfective aspect, but is a general phonological process which occurs whenever the pronominal proclitic carries a high tone. If the pronominal clitic carries a low tone instead, the verb may still be perfective, though it would then be a subjunctive perfective (see section 5.1).

Example (51) above shows that perfective aspect cannot be equated with past time reference, although past time reference is the default interpretation of perfective aspect with activity verbs in single clauses (example (49)). The default interpretation with state verbs is one of a present state:

- (54) *ɛ-waa*
 3SG-be:lying:down
 'He is lying down'
- (55) *ɛ-nyina* *awã*
 3SG-know place
 'He knows the place'

As is the case in many West African languages, many accomplishment and achievement verbs can have either a present-state or past-event interpretation with perfective aspect:

- This is because accomplishment and achievement verbs (excluding semel-factives) necessarily involve result states, and hence either the event itself or the resulting state may be the more pragmatically prominent feature of the utterance. Many languages, like English, have a perfect aspect category to distinguish these two senses. The fact that so many accomplishment and achieve-

ment verbs can have a present-state interpretation accounts for the relative shortage of true state verbs in Tuwuli. However, the stative senses of a few accomplishment verbs in Tuwuli have developed their own distinct syntactic forms, thus reducing the level of ambiguity (see section 7 for more examples):

- (58) *ε-wa* (accomplishment)
 3SG-lie:down
 (i) 'He lay down'
 (ii) *'He is lying down'
- (59) *ε-waa* (state)
 3SG-be:lying:down
 'He is lying down'
- (60) *ḥ-pɔ* (accomplishment)
 3SG.REF-become:large
 (i) 'It became large'
 (ii) *'It is large'
- (61) *ḥ-pɔnɛ* (state)
 3SG.REF-be:large
 'It is large'

Most accomplishments and achievements involve a change of state, but self-factives are the subclass of achievements that do not involve a result state (e.g. 'flash', 'blink', 'cough'). Hence with perfective aspect, only the past-time interpretation is available for such verbs.

4.5 *Present-progressive aspect*

The present-progressive differs markedly in form from the tense-aspect distinctions discussed so far in that it is not marked by any single morpheme but by a periphrastic construction with apparent S-Aux-O-V word order:

- (62) *ε-la-mla* (ovoli) *ka-kã*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with book NOM-reading
 'He is reading (a book)'

Even if the object is a pronoun, then the same structure holds:

- (63) *ε-la-mla* *fœ* *ka-kã*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with it NOM-reading
 'He is reading it'

A number of other Kwa languages (e.g. Nkonya, Dangme, Likpe, Ewe) also have this structure in the present-progressive. Such languages have attracted much attention in previous literature specifically with regard to the ongoing

debate as to whether Proto-Niger-Congo can be reconstructed with basic SVO or SOV word order. It is far beyond the scope of this chapter to try and answer this question, but several pieces of evidence do suggest that the present-progressive in Tuwuli is better analysed with SVO order, where V is the state verb *lá* – ‘be:MANNER’ and O is a nominalized event complement with structure (O-)V_{NOM}. To begin with, the verb *lá* – ‘be:MANNER’ can function unequivocally as a main verb:

- (64) *fǝ-’lá* *lómò*
 3SG.REF-be:MANNER that:way
 ‘It’s like that’

- (65) *ndé ádzúmà lá?*
 how work be:MANNER
 ‘How is the work?’

As an independent state verb, it is negated in the same way as other state verbs (i.e. by receiving an extra-high tone):

- (66) *fǝ-lǎ́* *lómò*
 3SG.REF-NEG.be:MANNER that:way
 ‘It’s not like that’

- (67) *é-lǎ́-mlà* *(óvóli) kà-kǎ́*
 3SG-NEG.be:MANNER-with book NOM-reading
 ‘He isn’t reading (a book)’

Secondly, the suffix *-mla* ‘with’ is quite productive as a verbal suffix signalling ‘joint participation in an event’, and under most circumstances, it requires a nominal complement:

- (68) *é-bǝa-mla* *otse*
 3SG-hit-with stick
 ‘He bumped into a stick’

- (69) *é-nǝ-mla* *be*
 3SG-fight-with them
 ‘He fought with them’

Thirdly, nominalized event complements with (O-)V_{NOM} structure are formally equivalent to possessor+possessed phrases, and as regular NPs, they may be possessed, modified or topicalised for example:

- (70) *yĩ [litĩ ka-kpa] kɔ̃, b-ǎ-a-lɛ*
 my back NOM-give TOP 3PL-NEG.IMPF-PRES.IMPF-say
fœ kɔlaa
 it at:all
 ‘As for my lateness, they don’t talk about it at all’

Fourthly, and perhaps most significantly, *la* can be replaced by certain other verbs (e.g. *dzẽ* – ‘be standing’) which are clearly main verbs in their own right:

- (71) *ɛ-dzẽ-mla tɔnɔ ka-sã*
 3SG-stand-with songs NOM-sing
 ‘He is standing singing songs’

One might argue in support of the auxiliary status of the verb *lá* on semantic grounds by claiming that it is the nominalized verb, and not *lá*, which embodies the conceptual activity expressed by the clause. Such a stance would view auxiliary verbs as being semantically ‘empty’, being used primarily to add TAM colouring to the main verb. If this is the case, then it should not be possible to omit the main verb, unless it was an instance of zero-anaphora, where the omitted verb is interpreted as referring to an event that was explicitly stated in the preceding discourse (e.g. Q. ‘*Were you working yesterday?*’ – A. ‘*Yes, I was (working)*’). However, in Tuwuli, the V_{NOM} component of an O- V_{NOM} complement can sometimes be omitted from the clause if the action in question is inferable from the direct object noun, whether or not the action was explicitly mentioned in the preceding discourse:

- (72) *ɛ-la-mla adzuma (ka-kena)*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with work doing
 ‘He is working’
- (73) *ɛ-la-mla atɛ (ka-wula)*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with speed pouring
 ‘He is running/hastening’

Hence, although *la-mla* ‘be-with’ normally requires an explicit V_{NOM} complement, there are situations where it doesn’t, and hence its syntactic and pragmatic behaviour differs from that of other tense-aspect markers, which always require adjoining verbs.

It should be noted that the ‘joint participation’ suffix *-mla* ‘with’ is often subject to a phonological process whereby the nasality of the nasal stop spreads onto the following liquid, resulting in the ill-formed syllable structure /*mna*/. An acceptable structure is then regained by inserting a short transitional vowel, similar in quality to a schwa (but often written as ‘*ɛ*’) in between the adjacent nasal consonants:

- (74) $\varepsilon\text{-}la\text{-}mla \quad ka\text{-}k\tilde{a} \rightarrow \varepsilon\text{-}la\text{-}mna \quad ka\text{-}k\tilde{a} \rightarrow [\varepsilon lam^{\text{a}} na \quad kak\tilde{a}]$
 3SG-be-with NOM-read
 ‘He is reading’

The verbal suffix *-mla* can almost always be replaced by the independent preposition *mɔ* – ‘with’, which is primarily used in conjoining noun phrases (e.g. *Kofi mɔ Amba* – ‘Kofi and Amba’). The only environment where *-mɔ* cannot replace *-mla* is when *-mla* occurs sentence-finally, the direct object having been deleted as a case of zero-anaphora. Hence whenever *-mla* is used, *-mɔ* is nearly always an acceptable alternative, but the reverse is not true; *-mla*, being exclusively a verbal suffix, can never substitute for *mɔ* functioning as a preposition. Being a lexical preposition, *mɔ* is usually written as an independent word, but when it replaces *-mla*, it is conventionally written attached to *lá*:

- (75) $\varepsilon\text{-}la\text{-}m\text{ɔ} \quad ka\text{-}k\tilde{a}$
 3SG-be:MANNER-with NOM-reading
 ‘He is reading’

Sometimes in rapid speech, neither suffix is used, and the /a/ vowel of the main verb is lengthened, probably to compensate for the deleted suffix:

- (76) $\varepsilon\text{-}laa \quad ka\text{-}k\tilde{a}$
 3SG-be:with NOM-reading
 ‘He is reading’

As mentioned in section 3, the present-progressive is a useful tool for distinguishing between the four verb classes. With activities, it is interpreted as referring to the middle of an unbounded action or process. Recall from section 4.2 that the default interpretation of the present-imperfective marker *a* – with non-state verbs is also one which involves reference to the middle of an unbounded action or process. Therefore one question which immediately arises is whether the present-progressive form is different in meaning to the ‘current-activity’ sense of the present-imperfective form. Both forms can be used to answer the question “*What are you doing?*”, so what motivates the speaker to choose one form rather than the other? Some clue to the answer lies in the ability of the present-progressive form to take adverbial expressions modifying the duration of an event:

- (77) $\varepsilon\text{-}la\text{-}m\text{ɔ} \quad ka\text{-}k\tilde{a} \quad t\text{ɔ}d\tilde{ɔ} \quad \varepsilon\text{la}le$
 3SG-be:MANNER-with NOM-read bells three
 ‘He has been reading for three hours’

The corresponding forms with the present-imperfective aspect can only have a habitual interpretation with such expressions:

- (78) *y-a-kã* *tɔdɔ̃* *ɛlale*
 3SG-PRES.IMPF-read hours three
 'He (habitually) reads for three hours'

Hence it seems that although both forms refer to a current action or process, the present-progressive involves a sense of durativity which the present-imperfective does not. Furthermore, if a speaker says

- (79) *m-a-kã* *ovoli*
 3SG-PRES.IMPF-read book
 'I am reading a book'

it typically means that what he is doing at that particular moment is reading a book, but if he says

- (80) *n-la-mla* *ovoli ka-kã*
 1SG-be-with book NOM-read
 'I am reading a book'

it may be the case that he is in the process of reading a book over a certain period of time, but that it is not what he is doing at that particular moment.

The present-progressive, like the present-imperfective, can have an 'historic present' function, adding vividness to a narrative. In such cases, there is usually a clear sense of implied duration:

- (81) *bɛ-la-mla* *ka-pili* *flee*
 3PL-be:MANNER-with NOM-struggle all
 'All the while, they were struggling'

Returning to the S-V-O or S-Aux-O-V word order debate, it is worth noting that non-present-progressives are expressed using the general imperfective marker, and hence have unambiguous S-V-O order, as in examples (36) and (37), repeated below:

- (82) *n-ka-tɔ* *ofuo*
 1SG-IMPF-pound fufu
 'I was pounding fufu'
- (83) *m-aa-ka-tɔ* *ofuo*
 1SG-FUT-IMPF-pound fufu
 'I will be pounding fufu'

For most other languages which have apparent S-Aux-O-V word order in the present-progressive (e.g. Dangme, Ewe), the same order holds in non-present-progressives. However Ameka (2002) reports that Likpe (Kwa; Ghana) shows the same pattern as Tuwuli, and speculates that the present-progressive word-order might have resulted out of contact with Ewe-speakers. Indeed, a

cursory geographic investigation reveals that most, if not all the Kwa languages reported to have an S-Aux-O-V word order in the present-progressive are indeed situated relatively close to Ewe-speaking areas, despite being from different subgroups within the Kwa family. It should be noted however, that there are several other languages in close proximity to Ewe-speaking areas, which do not show S-Aux-O-V word order in the progressive.

One final point of interest about the present-progressive is that it reveals a formal difference between so called ‘symmetric’ predicates and cognate object (inherent complement) verbs. Such a difference is also found in Likpe (Ameka 2002). Symmetric predicates are those which involve two semantic arguments in a reciprocal relationship, but have the option of specifying only one argument syntactically (e.g. ‘quarrel’, ‘fight’, ‘argue’). In Tuwuli, in non-present-progressive constructions, if both protagonists are not explicitly specified in the clause, then the verb necessarily takes a semantically-related noun in object position:

- (84) *ε-nɔ kawũ*
 1SG-fight war
 ‘He fought a war’
- (85) *ε-nɔ (kawũ) mɔ ye*
 3SG-fight war with him
 ‘He fought with him’

However, in present-progressive constructions, semantically-related object nouns and second protagonists are optional:

- (86) *ε-la-mla (kawũ) ka-nɔ*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with war NOM-fight
 ‘He is fighting (a war)’
- (87) *ε-la-mla (ye) ka-nɔ*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with him NOM-fight
 ‘He is fighting (with him)’

A cognate object (inherent complement) verb has been defined by Nwachukwu (1987) as a verb whose citation form is followed by a meaning-specifying complement, much like the verb ‘set’ in English. Cognate objects are always obligatory in Tuwuli, but in present-progressive constructions, the nominalized verb components are optional:

- (88) *ε-wula atse*
 3SG-pour speed
 ‘He ran/hastened’

- (89) *ε-la-mɔ* *atɛ* (*ka-wula*)
 3SG-be:MANNER-with speed NOM-pour
 ‘He is running/hastening’

This difference in syntactic behaviour in the present-progressive illustrates the fact in symmetric predicates, it is the verb whose semantics most closely matches that of the V-O combination, whereas in cognate object verbs, it is the cognate object which carries the bulk of the recognisable semantic content.

5 Mood

Like most Kwa languages, Tuwuli has a distinct subjunctive form which expresses obligations, hopes and desires. As is often the case in Kwa, there is a clear relationship between subjunctive mood and imperative illocutionary force, with the two categories being in complimentary distribution, as is reported to be the case in Akan (Dolphyne 1996:94), and Krobou (Mensah 1983:461)). Also typical of Kwa subjunctives is the formal similarity between subjunctive and perfective marking, the difference being purely tonal in most instances. What is more unusual, however, is the existence of a morphological imperfective/perfective distinction within subjunctive mood. As in the indicative, the perfective is the unmarked form, being signalled by a lack of imperfective marking.

5.1 Subjunctive mood

Subjunctive mood is marked by a low tone on the pronominal clitic. This contrasts with its high-toned counterpart, which marks perfective-indicative:

- (90) *ε-bɔ́ɛ* *fɔ̀ɛ*
 3SG.SUBJV-take it
 (i) ‘He should take it’
 (ii) ‘Let him take it’
 (iii) ‘May he take it’
- (91) *ε-ʔbɔ́ɛ* *fɔ̀ɛ*
 3SG-take it
 ‘He took it’

As indicated in example (90), the subjunctive occurs in main clauses to indicate obligations/commands, hopes/wishes, or granted permission. In subordinate clauses, it is associated with the same kind of semantic notions, being obligatory in examples such as the following:

- (92) *kε-nε* *kĩ* *ê-ya*
 3SG.EXPL-should:be COMP 3SG.SUBJV-come
 'He should come'
 (Lit. 'It should be that he comes')
- (93) *ε-we* *kĩ* *ê-ya*
 3SG-want COMP 3SG.SUBJV-come
 'He wants (him) to come'
- (94) *m-fĩ* *kĩ* *ê-ya*
 1SG-let COMP 3SG.SUBJV-come
 (i) 'I made him come'
 (ii) 'I let him come'

In main clauses, the subjunctive is more restricted than it is in subordinate clauses. Subjunctive first person subjects (singular and plural) only occur in main clauses with interrogative illocutionary force:

- (95) *ñ-naa?*
 1SG.SUBJV-go
 (i) 'Should I go?'
 (ii) *'I should go'
- (96) *bɔ̃-naa?*
 1PL.SUBJV-go
 (i) 'Should we go?'
 (ii) *'We should go'

The corresponding declarative meanings for first person subjects are expressed using the present-imperfective morpheme, as in examples (25) and (26), repeated below:

- (97) *m-a-naa*
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-go
 'I (should) go'
- (98) *bɔ̃-a-naa*
 1PL-PRES.IMPF-go
 'We (should) go'

Interestingly, these forms can have interrogative illocutionary force too, giving virtually the same meanings as in examples (95) and (96) above. The only difference is that with interrogative first person plural forms, the use of the present-imperfective morpheme suggests an inclusive rather than an exclusive reading:

- (99) *bɔ-a-naa?*
1PL-PRES.IMPF-go
'Should we go?' (addressing one of the group to go)
- (100) *bɔ-naa?*
1PL.SUBJV-go
'Should we go?' (addressing someone not going)

This difference is perhaps understandable from the fact that imperfectivity is associated with internal event structure (see section 4.4).

Subjunctive second person singular subjects occur only on non-initial verbs in main or subordinate clauses:

- (101) *ta-nye nɔ akũ ɔ-tsa be*
NEG-bring:out your body 2SG.SUBJV-show them
'Don't let them see you'
- (102) *ɛ-we kĩ Ø-a-kɛna fœ*
3SG-want COMP 2SG-PRES.IMPF-do it
ɔ-kpa be
2SG.SUBJV-give them
'He wants you to do it for them'

As the above examples illustrate, initial verbs which would normally be expected to have subjunctive second person singular subjects use either the imperative/prohibitive form (example (101)) or the present-imperfective form (example (102)). Furthermore, where present-imperfective forms are used, imperative/prohibitive forms are also acceptable. Compare example (102) with example (103) below:

- (103) *ɛ-we kĩ kɛna fœ ka-kpa be*
3SG-want COMP IMP-do it IMPF-give them
'He wants you to do it for them'

In fact, imperatives/prohibitives only ever occur with second person singular subjects on initial verbs in main and subordinate clauses, and therefore subjunctives and imperatives/prohibitives are in complimentary distribution. Note however, that imperatives and prohibitives have to be distinguished on account of their non-initial verb forms in serial verb constructions:

IMPERATIVE:

- (104) *nye nɔ akũ ka-tsa be*
IMP-bring:out your body IMPF-show them
'Show yourself to them'

PROHIBITIVE:

- (105) *ta-nye* *nɔ* *akũ* *ɔ-tsa* *be*
 NEG-bring:out your body 2SG.SUBJV-show them
 ‘Don’t let them see you’

To achieve an obligative reading (rather than an imperative/prohibitive one) with second singular subjects, one of the following periphrastic expressions is used:

- (106) *lɔkɔa* *ɔ-nya* *fœ*
 then 2SG-eat it
 ‘You should eat it’
- (107) *kɛ-nɛ* *kĩ* *Ø-a-ya*
 3SG.EXPL-should:be COMP 2SG-PRES.IMPF-come
 ‘You should come’

These periphrastic strategies are open to other person/number subjects as well, but are generally not preferred. Table 2 gives the preferred forms for default subjunctive meaning for each person/number subject reference in simple clauses with positive polarity.

5.2 Imperfective-subjunctive mood

The imperfective-subjunctive form is, unsurprisingly, a combination of imperfective marking and subjunctive marking. Hence the low tone on the person number affix combines with the general imperfective marker *ka-*. However, in non-negative clauses, *ka-* appears either as *kaa-* or *aka-*:

Table 2: Preferred forms for subjunctive meaning in simple clauses

MAIN CLAUSE		SUBORDINATE CLAUSE
Preferred form	Default subjunctive meaning	Preferred form
<i>m-a-naa</i>	‘I should go’	<i>n-naa</i>
<i>lɔkɔa ɔ-naa</i>	‘you (SG) should go’	<i>a-naa</i>
<i>ɛ-naa</i>	‘he should go’	<i>ɛ-naa</i>
<i>bɔ-a-naa</i>	‘we should go’	<i>bɔ-naa</i>
<i>mì-naa</i>	‘you (PL) should go’	<i>mì-naa</i>
<i>bè-naa</i>	‘they should go’	<i>bè-naa</i>

- (108) *bè-kaa-kena* *adzuma*
 3pl.SUBJV-SUBJV.IMPF-do work
 ‘They should be working’
- (109) *b-aka-kena* *adzuma*
 3PL-SUBJV.IMPF-do work
 ‘They should be working’

In negative clauses, it appears either as *ka-* or *aka-*:

- (110) *bè-ta-ka-kena* *adzuma*
 3PL.SUBJV-NEG-IMPF-do work
 ‘They should not be working’
- (111) *b-ǎ-aka-kena* *adzuma*
 3PL-NEG.IMPF-SUBJV.IMPF-do work
 ‘They should not be working’

Since *ka-* is a general imperfective marker, imperfective-subjunctives readily co-occur with adverbial phrases such as *finyaĩ-finyaĩ* - ‘right now’ or *luwi bīaa* - ‘every day’.

As with the unmarked subjunctive, there are restrictions on which person/number subjects can co-occur with imperfective-subjunctive marking in declarative main clauses. As before, first person subjects in main clauses necessarily have interrogative illocutionary force with *kaa-*, although they may co-occur with *aka-* in declarative clauses:

- (112) *m-aka-kena* *adzuma*
 1SG-SUBJV.IMPF-do work
 ‘I should be working’
- (113) *n-kaa-kɜna* *adzuma?*
 1SG.SUBJV-SUBJV.IMPF-do work
 (i) ‘Should I be working?’
 (ii) *‘I should be working’

Subjunctive second person singular subjects are not compatible with *kaa-* at all. Either *aka-*, or the imperative-imperfective form, or a periphrastic expression has to be used instead:

- (114) *Ø-aka-kena* *adzuma*
 2SG-SUBJV.IMPF-do work
 ‘You (SG) should be working’
- (115) *(ka)kaa-kena* *adzuma*
 IMP.IMPF-do work
 ‘Be working!’

- (116) *lɔkɔa ɔ-ka(a)-kɛna adzuma*
 then 2SG-IMPF-do work
 ‘You (SG) should be working’

Hence like before, imperfective-subjunctives and imperfective-imperatives are in complimentary distribution. The preferred forms for imperfective-subjunctive meaning in simple clauses (in table 3) look very much like those for unmarked subjunctive meaning (table 2).

6 Auxiliary verbs and purposive action

Auxiliary verbs in Tuwuli are morphemes which can occur within the verbal word to indicate purposive action, and which are identical to or derived from independent lexical verbs. There are only three auxiliary verbs in Tuwuli: *na-* (<= *naa* - ‘go’), *ya* - ‘come’ and *kɔa-* - ‘use’. As they are all potentially (or nec-

Table 3: Preferred forms for imperfective-subjunctive meaning in simple clauses

MAIN CLAUSE		SUBORDINATE CLAUSE
Preferred form	Default meaning	Preferred form
<i>m-aka-nya</i>	‘I should be eating’	<i>n̄-kaa-nya</i>
<i>aka-nya</i>	‘you (SG) should be eating’	<i>aka-nya</i>
<i>ê-kaa-nya</i>	‘he should be eating’	<i>ê-kaa-nya</i>
<i>bɔ-aka-nya</i>	‘we should be eating’	<i>bɔ-kaa-nya</i>
<i>mì-kaa-nya</i>	‘you (PL) should be eating’	<i>mì-kaa-nya</i>
<i>bê-kaa-nya</i>	‘they should be eating’	<i>bê-kaa-nya</i>

essarily) purposive in function, they are all compatible with the purpose marker *-a-* which immediately precedes the main verb root. Furthermore, when cooccurring with *-a-*, they all have functionally equivalent periphrastic forms:

- (117) a. *ɛ-na-a-kɛna adzuma*
 3SG-go-PURP-do work
 b. *ɛ-naa (kĩ) y-a-na-kɛna adzuma*
 3SG-go COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-go-do work
 ‘He has gone to do some work’
- (118) a. *ɛ-ya-a-kɛna adzuma*
 3SG-come-PURP-do work

- b. *ε-ya* (kī) *y-a-ya-kɛna* *adzuma*
 3SG-come COMP 3SG-PRES.IMPF-come-do work
 ‘He has come to do some work’
- (119) a. *fugbanɔ onuvɔe, m-a-kɔa-a-tɔ* *kano*
 maize flour 1SG-PRES.IMPF-use-PURP-cook porridge
- b. *fugbanɔ onuvɔe, m-a-kɔa* *ka-tɔ* *kano*
 maize flour 1SG-PRES.IMPF-use IMPF-cook porridge
 ‘Maize flour, I use it to cook porridge’

The purpose marker *-a-* is only compatible with these three auxiliary verbs, and since in each case there is an expanded form with the equivalent meaning, one could simply view the *-a-* as compensatory lengthening of the auxiliary verb (i.e. a phonological reflex of the multi-verb form), rather than an independent morpheme in its own right. Indeed, given the limited productivity of the purpose marker, and the fact that these three auxiliary verbs are typically among the first verbs to become auxiliaries cross-linguistically, the compensatory lengthening explanation is arguably preferable.

Auxiliary verb constructions can be syntactically distinguished from serial verb constructions by the fact that the second verb in auxiliary constructions carries no person/number or TAM marking. Hence (119a) is an auxiliary verb construction, but (119b) is a serial verb construction.

Both *na-* and *ya-* may occur without the purpose marker *-a-*, in which case they indicate either simple deictic motion or various shades of tense-aspect meaning:

SIMPLE DEICTIC MOTION:

- (120) *ε-na-kɛna* *adzuma*
 3SG-go-do work
 ‘He went and did some work’
- (121) *n-ya-wɔna* *nɔ*
 1SG-come-greet you
 ‘I came and greeted you’

FUTURE TENSE:

- (122) *m-a-na-bɔa* *bɔl*
 1SG-PRES.IMPF-go-beat ball
 ‘I will (go and) play football’
 (an alternative to the usual future form: *m-aa-bɔa bɔl*)

INCHOATIVE/INGRESSIVE ASPECT:

- (123) *fɔ-ya-sĩ*
 3SG.REF-come-need
 ‘It became necessary’

INCEPTIVE ASPECT:

- (124) *bɔ-ya-naa sukuu ne Amanfrom*
 1PL-come-go school LOC Amanfrom
 ‘We started going to school at Amanfrom’

These extra functions are fairly typical of motion verbs cross-linguistically (Bybee et al 1994:253, Heine 1993:47). Even in English, the verb ‘go’ can signal future tense (e.g. ‘*He’s going to do it*’) or even something approaching inchoative aspect. Consider the examples below:

- (125) a. I’ve forgotten it
 b. I’ve gone and forgotten it

The perfect construction (i.e. ‘*have*’ + past participle) is used in both examples to convey the notion of a currently relevant state, but the example in (125b) seems to add particular emphasis to the newly achieved state for some pragmatic purpose. In this case, it gives the impression of frustration or annoyance, or that the achieved state was undesirable. The first sentence simply conveys the notion that the state holds at present, and doesn’t carry any particularly positive or negative impressions about being in that state. The verb ‘come’ has also lent itself to the development of inchoative aspect since historically the word ‘become’ derives from the same root as the word ‘come’ (Old English: *cuman* – ‘come’).

Note in example (124) that *ya-*, functioning as an aspectual marker, happily cooccurs with the semantically incompatible verb *naa* - ‘go’. Such examples support the claim that when auxiliatation processes start, “the erstwhile predicate tends to be desemanticised and to assume a grammatical function such as expressing some temporal, aspectual or modal contours of the verbal complement” (Heine 1993:47).

Aspectual *ya-* has a special discourse function related to its inchoative or change-of-state function. In narratives (e.g. folktales), *ya-* often occurs in the initial sentence of new paragraphs to help signal the beginning of a new episodic chunk, as in example (126) below:

- (126) *luwi a, legã ya-naa osĩ akũ*
 day ID, chief come-go road on
 ‘One day, the chief went on a journey’

Both *na(a)-* and *ya-* are also used with expletive subject pronouns to achieve the equivalent of certain prepositions in English:

- (127) *ε-kahɔ* *nε* *ɔɔkame* *kε-ya-wo* *nviã*
 3SG-remain LOC home inside 3SG.EXPL-come-enter today
kĩĩ
 this
 ‘He has stayed at home until today’
- (128) *lε-bẽ* *nε* *kayite* *ki-to* *nyange*
 3SG.CONC-split LOC middle 3SG.EXPL-be:from top
kε-ya-wo *ka-yɔ*
 3SG.EXPL-come-enter bottom
 ‘It was torn in the middle from top to bottom’
- (129) *bɔ-a-kɛna* *adzuma* *flee* *kε-na-a-wo*
 1PL-PRES.IMPF-do work all 3SG.EXPL-go-PURP-enter
olobe
 evening
 ‘We work until evening’

In some Kwa languages, verbs have become fully grammaticalized as prepositions (Aboh, Ameka and Essegbey 2002), but in the examples above, I do not regard the grammaticalization process as fully complete since the verbs in question retain their capacity to carry the expletive verbal inflection *kV-*.

7 The derivation of some stative verbs

The suffix *-nε/-ni* appears to have been used to derive stative forms of various non-state verbs. Unambiguous minimal contrasts exist in only a few cases however:

- (130) a. *pɔ* ‘become large’ *pɔ-nε* ‘be large/sufficient’
 b. *pɪ* ‘catch’ *pɪ-ni* ‘be holding’
 c. *kε* ‘put up/stand’ *kε-ni* ‘be standing’

More commonly, the derived stative forms have been subject to various degrees of phonological reduction. In some cases, a nasalised vowel is all that remains of the suffix. In other cases, the lexical root has also been subject to reduction and/or nasalisation. Consider the following stative/non-stative pairs:

- (131) a. *te* ‘put on’ *teĩ* ‘be on’
 b. *lε* ‘become good’ *nεnε* ‘be good’
 c. *lε* ‘hold/carry’ *nεε* ‘be holding’
 d. *lɔ* ‘carry’ *nɔnε* ‘be carrying’

e.	<i>ba</i>	‘surpass’	<i>bě</i>	‘be greater than’
f.	<i>dza</i>	‘stand up’	<i>dzě</i>	‘be standing’
g.	<i>nya</i>	‘become’	<i>nyε</i>	‘be [DESCRIPTIVE]’
h.	<i>tsā</i>	‘move/travel’	<i>tsě</i>	‘be moving’
i.	<i>dzǐ</i>	‘sit down’	<i>dzǐ̃</i>	‘be sitting down/live’
j.	<i>mena</i>	‘become attached’	<i>mane</i>	‘be attached’
k.	<i>vēla</i>	‘hang (something)’	<i>vane</i>	‘be hanging’

Note that quite a few of these words are positional verbs - a subset of verbs which, cross-linguistically, often exhibits special morphosyntactic behaviour.

In one instance, the suffix *-na* appears to have a stative function: *nyi* - ‘come to know’ => *nyina* - ‘know’. In two other cases, stative forms seem to be derived by a lengthening of the final root vowel:

- (132) a. *wa* ‘lie down’ *waa* ‘be lying down’
 b. *nya* ‘eat’ *nyaa* ‘be eating’

Such examples could be cases of expressive phonology, where the vowel lengthening is a phonetic correlate of the durative semantics. Alternatively, they could be cases of compensatory lengthening, where the final vowel is lengthened to compensate for a deleted suffix - a process known to exist independently in the language. Compare, for example, examples (75) and (76), repeated below, illustrating compensatory lengthening of the stative verb *lā* in the present progressive construction:

- (133) *é-’lá-mò* *kà-kā̃*
 3SG-be:MANNER-with NOM-reading
 ‘He is reading’
- (134) *é-’lāā* *kà-kā̃*
 3SG-be:with NOM-reading
 ‘He is reading’

All state verbs, whether derived or otherwise, are negated by tonal modification alone, as illustrated by examples (64) and (66), repeated below:

- (135) a. *fǝ-’lá* *lómò*
 3SG.REF-be:MANNER that:way
 ‘It’s like that’
- b. *fǝ-lā̃* *lómò*
 3SG.REF-NEG.be:MANNER that:way
 ‘It’s not like that’
- (136) a. *fǝ-nénè*
 3SG.REF-be:good
 ‘It’s good’

- b. *fɔ̌-nɛ́nè*
 3SG.REF-NEG.be:good
 'It's not good'

Such a tonal contrast has often been considered to be a secondary modification of negation (T.E. Payne 1997:290), though Dahl (1977), quoted in J.R. Payne (1985:229), mentions the Niger-Congo language *Mano* (Mande; Liberia, Guinea), in which similar distinctions occur.

8 Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented the forms and functions of the verbal affixes used in Tuvuli to encode information about tense, aspect and mood. In describing the distribution of these affixes and their interpretation with verbs from different lexical classes, I have tried to provide semantic characterisations of the different TAM categories in Tuvuli, drawing on insights from the study of these categories in other languages. In conclusion, I would like to summarise some of the ways in which Tuvuli's TAM system contributes towards our understanding of morphosyntactic features of Kwa and Niger-Congo languages in general.

Firstly, the role of tone in Tuvuli's TAM system is quite interesting because it reveals a variety of tonal processes operating within the verbal word, and illustrates the important role that tone has in making grammatical distinctions. Downstep, upstep, high-tone spreading and dissimilation are all common processes, with tonal modifications often distinguishing subjunctive mood from indicative mood. Several other Kwa languages (e.g. Ebie, Ega, Krobou and Mbatto) also use tone to make this distinction (see Herault 1983). Furthermore, in the case of state verbs, tonal perturbations are the sole indicator of negation - something which has not been widely reported among Niger-Congo languages.

Secondly, the presence of a morpheme whose primary function appears to be best explained in terms of tense rather than mood is also relevant to the discussion of Kwa languages, since these languages have previously been reported to be tenseless. Morphemes used to express future meaning in a number of Kwa languages also tend to express notions such as obligation, potentiality or probability, and in some cases occur in sentences which refer to past or present situations. This is not the case in Tuvuli however, since although the future morpheme can occasionally have an obligative reading, it always refers to a temporal location to the right of some reference point on the linear time line.

The present-imperfective morpheme is a better candidate for a TAM marker which has begun to take on various modal functions. Unlike the future mor-

pheme, it has several functions which are more typical of subjunctive markers, in both main and subordinate clauses. The reason for this shift in function may be that it has to compete with an independent present-progressive construction. As the present-progressive has begun to take over some of the original functions of the present-imperfective in main clauses, the present-imperfective has become more associated with its function in subordinate clauses, which are typically among the last environments to be affected by developing tense-aspect morphemes, and are also typically the locus of subjunctive meaning.

Thirdly, the relationship between the different verb classes and perfective aspect in Tuwuli gives a new insight into an old problem. State verbs typically have a 'state-exists' interpretation in the perfective, but activity verbs have either a past or future action interpretation, depending on whether the future tense morpheme is also present. Unlike some authors, I see no reason why future tense should not be able to combine with perfective aspect, since as Comrie (1976:18) puts it, perfective aspect simply views an event as a 'blob' on the linear time line, irrespective of whereabouts on the time line that blob actually lies. The crucial idea behind the term 'blob' is that it lacks internal temporal complexity. State verbs in Tuwuli have no scope for distinctions of internal temporal structure, and hence are only compatible with perfective aspect. Activity verbs on the other hand only lack internal temporal structure when they are viewed simply as past or future events. The fact that accomplishment and achievement verbs may be interpreted as either individual events or resulting states is due the fact that both an event and a result-state are inherent to their lexical semantics. Which of these two interpretations holds on any given occasion is pragmatically determined rather than semantically determined. Otherwise they behave just like activity verbs with respect to perfective aspect. Hence an understanding of the different verb classes not only helps to explain the variation in interpretations that different verbs have in the perfective, but also helps to characterise the precise nature of perfectivity in Tuwuli.

Finally, although Tuwuli might seem to have S-Aux-O-V word order in the present-progressive construction, a closer examination of the components involved strongly suggest that this is not the case. Instead, synchronic evidence is strongly in favour of an S-V-O word order, where V is the verb *lá* - 'be:MANNER' and O is a nominalized event complement. Support for such a claim comes from four main observations. Firstly, *lá* can function independently as a main verb, and behaves morphosyntactically like other main verbs. Secondly, other unambiguous main verbs such as *dzẽ* - 'be:standing' can substitute for *lá* to form constructions which are structurally identical to the present-progressive construction. Thirdly, in some S-Aux-O-V constructions, the final V constituent is optional, suggesting that it is not in fact the main predicating element in the construction. Fourthly, the nominalized event comple-

ment distributes just like other noun phrases, and can helpfully be thought of as a type of possessor + possessed combination. Given these facts, and also the existence of unambiguous S-V-O word order in non-present progressives, the S-Aux-O-V hypothesis becomes untenable. The question remains however as to how Tuvuli acquired a such a construction in the first place. One possible solution is given by Ameka (2002) in his discussion of Likpe, another Ghana-Togo Mountain language, in which the present and non-present-progressive constructions are analogous to their corresponding forms in Tuvuli. He suggests that the apparently deviant word order in the present-progressive construction might have resulted out of contact with Ewe-speaking peoples. Indeed, a quick geographic investigation reveals that most, if not all the Kwa languages reported to have present-progressive constructions like Tuvuli (e.g. Nkonya, Dangme, Likpe) are situated relatively close to Ewe-speaking areas, despite being from different subgroups within the Kwa family. It is interesting too that in the case of Nkonya and Dangme, their closest genetic relatives do not have Ewe-style progressives, and are situated further away from Ewe-speaking areas. It should be noted however, that there are several other languages in close proximity to Ewe-speaking areas, which do not show Ewe-style progressives, though this fact alone does not preclude the Ewe-influence theory. As more descriptive data on these languages becomes available, the picture will not doubt become clearer.

Endnotes

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² The autodenominations for the language, people and traditional area are Tuvuli, Bawuli and Luvuli respectively. The general name for the geographical area is Bowiri. Tuvuli has also been referred to in previous literature as Bowiri, Bowili, Bowuri, Boviri and Tuvili.

³ Gordon (2005) reports 11,400 speakers, whilst Blench (2001) estimates 10,000 speakers and Ring (2001) reports 10-12,000 speakers. Similar figures are estimated using population figures from the 1960, 1970 and 1984 ethnic censuses using a growth rate of 2.5%, which, according to the UN common database, was the average growth rate in Ghana between 1960 and 2000.

⁴ Other verbal affixes in Tuvuli convey information about concepts such as causativity, auxiliary focus, person/number information, negation, and argument participation.

⁵ This is an important point, especially when it comes to looking at the scope of combined tense-aspect morphemes in discourse. It has been noted that tense morphemes can have a considerably wider scope in discourse than aspect morphemes (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997).

Combined tense-aspect morphemes typically have a scope similar to that of tense morphemes, and this is attested in Tuwuli with the present-imperfective morpheme.

⁶ An alternative distinction of the four verb classes, using only two binary features ([+/- durative] and [+/- static]) is given in Guéron (1993:6).

⁷ Tonal dissimilation is the process whereby a syllable reverses its tone in order to become dissimilar to the tone of an adjacent syllable. It is distinct from tonal polarisation in that, with polarisation, the syllable has no underlying tone, but simply receives a tone dissimilar to that of an adjacent syllable. In the case of the present-imperfective morpheme *a-*, there is some evidence to suggest that there is indeed an underlying high tone (see section 4.2), and hence exemplifies dissimilation rather than polarisation. In the case of the future morpheme *aa-*, further research is needed to resolve the issue, although initial investigations suggest that this too is a case of dissimilation. If, as is strongly suspected, that the future morpheme is derived from the present-imperfective form of the verb *naa* - 'go', then this conclusion not altogether unsurprising.

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