EWE

Felix K. Ameka

Language Name: Ewe or Ewegbe, written in the indigenous orthography as Eʋe or Eʋegbe. It is pronounced depending on one's dialect as əβə or εβε or eβe.

Location: The Ewe homeland occupies the area between River Volta in Ghana as far as and just across the Togo-Benin border and from the Atlantic coast to about 7°N. There are Ewe communities outside this area in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa as well as in Europe and America.

Family: Kwa branch of the Niger Congo family.

Related Languages: Ewe is, in fact, a major dialect cluster of the language cluster that has come to be known as Gbe or Tadoid (Capo 1991). The other major members of the Gbe cluster that are the closest relatives of Ewe are Gen (spoken in Togo and Benin), Aja (spoken in Togo and Benin) and Fon (spoken in Benin and southwestern Nigeria). The ethnonym "Ewe" used to be applied to both Ewe proper and to the Gbe language cluster. (The name Gbe for the cluster is derived from the word for "language" in each of these dialect clusters. It can be adjoined to each of the terms as in Fongbe, Ajagbe, Gengbe or Ewegbe). Other non-Gbe relatives of Ewe are Ga-Dangme, AKAN, (both Kwa languges and spoken in Ghana) and YORUBA (a Benue-Congo language spoken in Togo, Benin and Nigeria). Ewe is also related to the Ghana-Togo Mountains or Togo Restsprachen, which are classified as Kwa. Some of these languages, e.g., Akpafu, Lolobi, Likpe, and Avatime, border on the Ewe-speaking area. Ewe is also used as a second language in some of the Ghana-Togo Mountains languages communities.

Dialects: The distinguishing feature for all Ewe dialects as opposed to other Gbe dialects is the bilabial fricatives *f* [ɸ] and *v* [β]. However, as is the case with many languages the speech in every group of villages differs from the speech of the neighboring villages. For instance there are distinct differences between the dialect spoken in Anfoega—120 km north of Accra and Kpando, which is only 10 km away from Anfoega. Similarly the speech of Sovie, which lies between them and is 7 km from Anfoega and 3 km from Kpando, is distinct from the speech of these two places. Thus the Kpando Ewes say *mbéxĩ* 'I say' while the Anfoega say *mebaaxe* 'I say'. In the Peki dialect, which is some 30 km from Anfoega one hears *mbalólo* 'I say'. Thus individual groups of villages that constitute local government traditional areas can each be thought of as having their own dialects, which can, in turn, be made up of subdialects. Some of the dialects that correspond to groups of villages are: Aŋlɔ, Avenɔ, Tɔŋú, Waci [Watʃí], Kpele, Dzodze, Kpedze, Dodóme, Ho, Awudome, Pekí, Aŋfɔe, Sovie, Botoku, Kpándo, Gbi and Fódome. Dialect variation in Ewe is quite great. But these dialects may be grouped geographically into coastal or southern dialects (Avenɔ, Tɔŋú etc.) central (Ho, Kpedze, Dodóme) and northern dialects (Gbi, Kpando, Fódome, etc.) The central and northern dialects are collectively characterized indigenously as *Ewedomegbe* and may be referred to as the inland dialects as opposed to the coastal dialects. Nevertheless speakers from different localities understand each other and are aware of the peculiarities of the different areas.

In addition to phonological differences, there are slight differences in patterns of greeting as well. In the coastal dialects the one who initiates greetings continues to ask questions until all the topics are exhausted and then the interlocutor also assumes the role of the questioner. In the inland dialects the initiator and responder alternate the roles of questioner and responder throughout the greeting.

Apart from these spoken varieties, a written standard variety was developed in the middle of the 19th century by Norddeutsche Missions-Gesellschaft (Bremen) missionaries (Ansre 1971; Adzomada 1979). It is a hybrid of the variants spoken at the missionary centers and contains a high proportion of the coastal Aŋlɔ dialect. With it has also emerged a standard colloquial variety (spoken usually with a local accent), that is very widely used in cross-dialectal contact situations such as in schools, markets, churches, etc. The principles of the orthography especially with respect to word division continue to be debated and revised (see Bureau of Ghana Languages 1997 for the most recent rules).

Number of Speakers: 3–5 million in the west African region.

Origin and History

It has been suggested in some quarters that the Ewes migrated from Egypt and Mesopotamia. There does not seem to be much basis for this and such claims are difficult to support. The Ewe oral traditions, however, support the claim that before the Ewes migrated to their present homeland they lived in Ketu, a town in present-day People's Republic of Benin. They stopped in other places before coming to their present home. Ketu is today a Yoruba settlement. This suggests that the Ewes or rather the Gbe-speaking people were not the only settlers in Ketu. In fact, the Gbe-speaking peoples moved from Ketu because of Yoruba expansion.
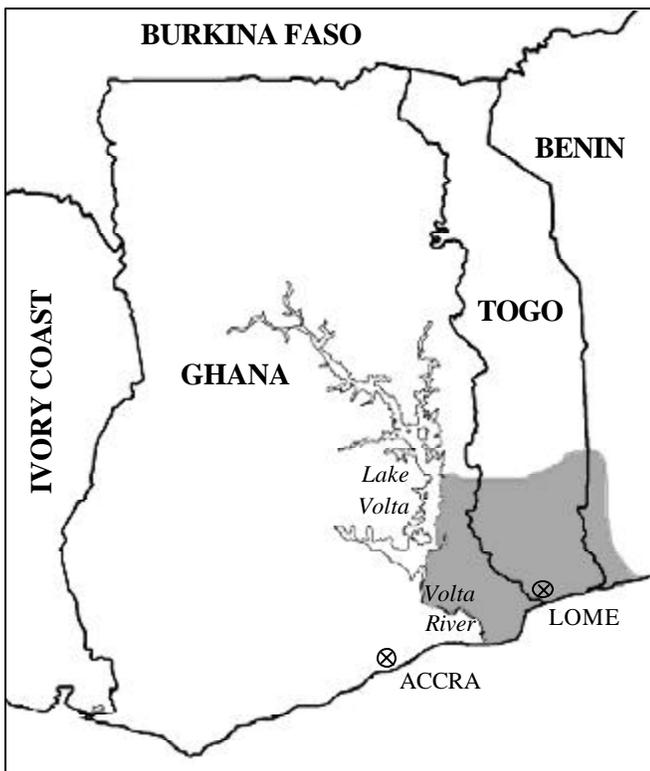
As they left Ketu, the Gbe-speaking peoples divided into

Table 1: Consonants

	Voi	Labial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar
Stops	-	p		t					k	kp
	+	b		d		ɖ			g	gb
Fricatives	-	*f*	f		s				x	
	+	*v*	v		z				h	
Affricates	-				ts		tsy			
	+				dz		dzy			
Nasals		m			n			ny	ŋ	
Approximants								y	ɣ	w
Trill					r					
Lateral					l					

groups: two subdivisions of one group went due south, one to Tado near River Mɔnɔ, the other founded a settlement in ŋɔtsie. The second group, which includes the present-day Aŋlɔs first went to settle in Adele in Togo before joining the rest in ŋɔtsie later. Of the people that settled in Tado a group moved later to form the Alada Kingdom whose political nucleus was Agbome and Xɔgbonu. Historically then, there were three kingdoms associated with the Gbe-speaking peoples around each of which evolved a name for the major dialect clusters of Gbe: Tado is associated with Aja, Alada with its centers of Agbome and Xɔgbonu associated with Fon, and ŋɔtsie associated with Ewe.

Ewe is spoken in the area between the River Volta in Ghana to just across the Togo-Benin border (shaded area).

It is believed that ŋɔtsie, the last ancestral home of the Ewes, was founded in the 16th century. The Ewes seemed to have lived there in peace until the cruelty of one king, Agorkorli, forced them to migrate to their present settlements in Ghana and Togo. From ŋɔtsie the Ewes dispersed in three groups. One group moved and settled in the northern parts of present day Ewe homeland. This group includes settlements such as Peki, Hohoe, and Alavanyo. A second group settled in the central parts of Eweland and include places such as Ho, Sokode, Abutia, and Adaklu. The third group moved southwards and includes Aŋlɔ and Bɛ (in present-day Togo). It is estimated that the Ewes settled in their present homeland in the period between the late 16th century and early 17th century. Many Ewe communities have traditions and festivals to commemorate their migration and settlement. The Anlos, for instance, refer to the ancestral homes of Ketu and ŋɔtsie as Hogbe and have an annual festival to celebrate the movement from Hogbe called *Hogbetsotso*.

Orthography and Basic Phonology

Ewe is written with the African alphabet devised in the 1920s based on the LATIN alphabet. The consonants are presented in their orthographic representation in Table 1 above.

Some of these sounds are in complementary distribution with one another. In general, nasals only occur before nasalized vowels. Thus [b] and [m] and [ɖ] and [n] are in complementary distribution. Similarly *ny* and *y* are allophones of the nasal phoneme. In the northern dialects the palatal approximant '*y*' may be nasalized and in this case it alternates in free variation with the palatal nasal. Thus the word for 'be/become black' may be either [jɔ̃] or [nyɔ̃].

[ŋ] and [ʋ] occur before front vowels, and [w] occurs before oral nonfront vowels. There is some dialect variation with respect to these sounds. In the southern dialects [w] only occurs before back vowels but in the northern dialects it may occur before the central vowel [a]. Thus the word meaning 'do' is *wɔ* in Aŋlɔ and the standard dialect, but *wa* in the inland dialects. There is also a nasalized allophone of the labial

velar approximant, which alternates in some contexts with the velar nasal in the northern dialects. For instance, the word for 'worm' in the southern dialects is ŋɔ́ while in the northern dialects it may be realized as w̃ã. [l] has a nasalized allophone [l̃]. They complement each other in distribution along the oral nasal dimension: e.g., ló 'leopard' vs. lõ 'remove from fire'. Both laterals are in complementary distribution with the trill. First, the trill does not occur as an initial consonant in a syllable, while the laterals do as in the examples above. Second, when they occur as the second consonant in a cluster, the laterals occur after grave sounds (bilabials, labio-dentals, velars and labial-velars), while the trill occurs after non-grave sounds (dentals, alveolars, palatals). However, the laterals and the trill do not occur after the apical postalveolar plosive ɖ. /p/ occurs only in loanwords and ideophones.

There are seven oral and seven nasalized vowel phonemes in Ewe:

ĩi ũu
eẽ õo
əɤ̃
ɛɛ̃ ɔɔ
aã

In some dialects such as Peki the high midvowels are not nasalized. Thus lõ is lɔ̃ 'remove from fire'. [ə] and [ɤ] are in complementary distribution with [e] and [ẽ] respectively. The latter pair of sounds occur after [+high] sounds. In the orthography, 'e' is used to represent these phonemes. Historically speaking, [ə] and [ɤ], are innovations in the Ewe dialects and some of the words with original /ɛ/ have merged with them. In the southern dialects the original /ɛ/ sound has disappeared and is replaced by the /ə/ sounds. In these dialects a word like /pepɛɛpɛ/ is pronounced [pepeepe] 'exactly'. In other dialects the /ə/ and /ɛ/ have merged into /ɛ/.

Tones. Ewe is a tone language. From a pan-Ewe dialectal point of view, one can say that there are five level tones: Low, Mid, High, Extra High and Extra Low. These five tones do not occur in all dialects. The Extra High occurs in Anlo in predictable environments (Clements 1977a and b). The Extra Low tone occurs in the Adangbe dialect and is specifically linked to the utterance, final interrogative particle/clitic a, which has a low tone in other dialects (Sprigge 1967). This leaves three level tones that are used in all dialects. Combinations of these lead to six surface contour tones: High-Low Falling, High-Mid Falling, Mid-Low Falling Low-High Rising, Mid-High Rising, and Low-Mid Rising. However all these surface tones reduce to two basic tonemes: a High and a non-High. The non-High may be realized as Low or Mid, while the High may be realized as High or Mid or Rising. Typically Mid tones at sentence final position become Low. A Mid tone also becomes Low after another Low tone.

The tones of nominals are affected to some extent by the consonant of the stem. Thus nominals with a non-high toneme may be realized as Mid if the nominal root has a sonorant or a voiceless obstruent. For example: āmē 'person'; āmī 'oil, pomade'; á-fĩ 'mouse'. It is low if the consonant of the nominal root is a voiced obstruent, for instance, è-dà 'snake'. For high tone nominals, the tone of the nominal root is high if the con-

sonant is a voiceless obstruent or a sonorant as in ā-tí 'tree' and ā-yí 'skin'. If the stem consonant is a voiced obstruent the tone is a low-high rising tone as in a-vɔ̌ 'cloth'. In context, this rising tone may change to low tone. This may happen when the word occurs before another syllable that is high. For example, note that the tone of the noun in the following is low as opposed to rising: avɔ̀ lá 'the cloth'.

Typically when morphemes come together, the tones of the two morphemes may be fused in much the same way that the vowels may fuse. To express first or second person singular possession, in the order of possessor followed by possessum, the link is expressed by a high tone which is a relic of the possessive marker fé. This high-tone possessive morpheme fuses with the low tone of the independent forms of the pronouns to yield a rising tone, for example, nyĕ agbalẽ 'my book' wŏ srɔ̃ɖeɖe 'your marriage', etc.

Tone is not customarily marked in the traditional orthography except on a few items with identical segmental forms. Thus the second person singular pronoun is written as è to distinguish it from the third person singular pronoun e, which has a high tone. Similarly the word for 'catch' or 'hold' is written as lé to distinguish it from the locative 'be' verb le, which has a low tone. A practice to mark all High tones in addition to the customarily marked low tones in the orthography introduced by Duthie (e.g., 1996) is gaining currency in academic linguistic writings. Whether this practice will catch on in non-academic circles is questionable.

Basic syllable structure in Ewe is: (C1) (C2) VT (C3). Each syllable has a tone that may be analyzed as being carried by the V element. C1 may be filled by any consonant in the language except r. C2 may be filled by a liquid as in vlẽ [βlẽ] 'struggle', trɔ́ 'turn', or a palatal or a labial velar approximant as in sjá 'to expose something to the sun to dry it' and sue [swə] 'small'. V may be filled by any of the vowels or the bilabial or velar nasal, in which case they carry tone, for example, ŋ̀dí 'morning', yɔ́-m̀ 'call me'. The nucleus may also be filled by two vowels that are the same, yielding a long vowel, or different, yielding a diphthong, for example: dzáà 'welcome', kpáò 'no', yoo 'OK'. C3 is only filled by a nasal as in the following words in which the syllable boundary is indicated by '=' where relevant: sɔ́ŋ 'several', kam=pé 'scissors', kran=té 'cutlass, machete'. The last two types, the double nucleus and the closed-syllable types, occur in borrowed words, ideophones or interjections.

Vowels may be elided or assimilated to other vowels in context. Vowel elision typically occurs in the formation of words involving nouns, where the vocalic prefix of a noun is dropped. For example, when the three forms ame 'person', fo 'beat', atí 'stick, tree' are compounded to form one noun meaning 'whip, cane', the vocalic prefix on atí is elided, as is evident in the word: amefotí. The vowel of a root can also be elided. The vowel of the word gbe 'day' is elided when it is in construction with áɖé INDEF and the word gbe is iterated after it as in the form gbaɖégbe 'some day'.

The third person singular object pronoun has the underlying form -i (Capo 1985). This vowel is either assimilated to the vowel of the predicate, or the vowel of the predicate is assimilated to it. Roughly speaking, when the assimilating vowel is a high vowel, the object pronoun vowel stays high, for example,

ɖu-i 'eat it', *dí-i* 'look for it'. When the assimilating vowel is half close, the object pronoun is realized as the front half close vowel [e], for instance, *ɖó-e* 'planned it', *se-e* 'heard it'. In the southern dialects, the object pronoun vowel assimilates the half close stem vowel to itself making it high. Thus these words would be *ɖú-i* 'planned it' and *si-i* 'heard it' in *Aŋlɔ*, for example. When the vowel of the stem is low the object pronoun is realized as [ɛ], for example, *dɔ́-ɛ* 'send him/her/it'.

In the southern dialects, palatalization of alveolars in the environment of a high front vowel occurs as shown in the correspondences in the chart below.

Northern	Southern	
tsi	tʃi 'tsyi'	'water'
azi	aʒi	'peanut'
atí	atʃí 'atsi'	'tree'

Basic Morphology

Ewe is an isolating language with agglutinative features. As such most morpho-semantic features are expressed by lexical items or markers and by syntactic periphrasis.

Noun Morphology. Nouns as opposed to nominals have a vocalic prefix *à-* or *è-*, which are relics of Proto Niger Congo noun class markers. The *è-* prefix tends to be elided when the noun is said in isolation, e.g., *a-me* 'person', *a-tí* 'stick', *(e-)te* 'yam', *(e-)tsi* 'water'.

The nominal prefix bears a non-high tone with the following exceptions: (1) two temporal nouns in which the prefix bears a High tone and they are never elided, *égbe* 'today', and *ázɔ̃* 'now'; (2) the prefixes in some borrowed words retain their high tone, e.g., *áko* 'parrot', *Áma* 'name of a female born on a Saturday'.

Most categories pertaining to the noun are expressed by elements within the noun phrase. The order of elements in a simple noun phrase is: Noun/Pronoun - Adj - Quantifier - DET1 - DET2/DEM - Plural – Intensifier. Nominal plurality, for instance, is expressed by the morpheme *wó*, which is cliticized onto the immediately preceding element:

ame   (kɔ́kɔ́) (má)-wó   ko
person   tall   that-PL   only
'only those people; only those tall people etc.'

There is a co-occurrence dependency between the Numeral, the Determiners and the Plural morpheme. A noun phrase containing a quantified noun that does not take a determiner is not marked with the plural morpheme *wó*. If a noun is quantified by a numeral and is modified by a determiner, then the plural marker is obligatory. Compare [NB (*x) = ungrammatical if x included; *(x) = ungrammatical if x omitted]: *atí etɔ̃ (*wó)* (tree three PL) 'three trees', *atí etɔ̃ má *(wó)* 'those three trees'.

Numeration may be indicated within the noun phrase using a UNIT COUNTER *ame* which is related to the noun *ame* 'person' although as a unit counter *ame* is used to individuate not only humans but any countable entity. For example,

atí   wó   ame   etɔ̃   (*wó)
tree   3PL   COUNTER   three   PL
lit: tree, they three units/individual, i.e. 'three (units of) trees'

The Determiner1 slot can be filled by the definite article (*lá ~ a* 'the') or the particularized indefiniteness marker *áɖé* 'a certain'. The Determiner 2 slot is filled by demonstratives that vary in form from one group of dialects to the other. However, all Ewe dialects have two basic Demonstratives, as shown in the table below. The elements in italics are truncated forms of the corresponding forms, which have specific uses. A third demonstrative term for YONDER is derived from the THAT terms by either the suffixation of *-i* 'deictic' to *kema* to get *kemɛ* or by the addition of a particle *ɖá* 'in the distance', e.g. *kemi ɖáa* 'that further away in the distance'. In the Inland dialects the definiteness marker and the demonstratives can co-occur. In the Southern and Standard dialects, however, they are mutually exclusive.

Table 2: Ewe Demonstratives

	Standard Dialect	Southern (Aŋlɔ) Dialect	Northern Dialect
THIS	sia, (*ési*)	yia; yi, (*-i*)	ke; kelé; xe; tsyi [ci]
THAT	má, kema	má, kema, *-m, -kem*	mí; kemí

A simple noun phrase may be preceded by a closed class of items labeled 'identifier'. There are three synonymous terms in this class, all of which can be glossed as 'such, the same', namely: *álé*, *neném*, *sigbe*. The identifier has a co-occurrence dependency with the items in the Determiner2 slot.

Verb Morphology. Most categories of the verb are expressed by markers that occur in the following order in a verb phrase:

(IRR)	(REP)	(MODAL)	-VERB-	(ASPECT)
(l)a FUT/POT	ga	kpɔ́! 'not yet'		[n]a HAB
(n)á SUBJV		xa 'in vain' etc.		

The only affixal element that occurs on the verb is the toneless *-(n)a* habitual aspect marker. It assumes the tone on the last syllable of the verb. Compare: *dí-(n)á* 'want-HAB' and *dze-(n)a* 'land-HAB'. The alternation between *na ~ a* tends to be syntactically determined. If the verb is followed by an object the habitual is realized as *-a*, but if it is not, then it is realized as *na*. A verb marked with the habitual signals an event that is customarily performed, a habit, or a disposition of the participant. The Progressive and Ingressive or Prospective aspect 'to be about to do something' are expressed by nominalizing the event whose unfolding in time is being described and then this functions as the complement of a verb that models the deictic and temporal frame of the situation. The aspectual markers are placed after the event complement: *é-le akɔ́nta fiá-m* (3s-be arithmetic teach-PROG) 'She is teaching arithmetic'.

Perfective aspect is signaled by three adverbial markers, which have evolved from verbs: *vɔ* 'finish' for completed or imminent completion situations, *sé* 'stop' for cessative perfective situations, and *kpɔ́* 'see' for experiential perfective (Ameka 1988).

The irrealis markers, the future or the potential and the subjunctive markers, both have allomorphs *a* and *á* respectively. *ga* is the marker of repetitive action or process. It can co-occur with any of the other elements in the verbal phrase.

A closed class of items function in the verbal phrase and express various modal meanings, e.g., *nye-mé kpɔ́ wɔ dɔ lá o* (1s-NEG MOD do work DEF neg) 'I have not had the opportunity to do the work'.

General Rules. Ewe has very little inflectional morphology. It makes use of compounding as well as reduplication and triplication and affixation processes in the formation of new words, especially nouns, adjectives and adverbs. There are no morphological means for forming new verbs. Verbs can be reduplicated to form an adjective or a verbal noun. If the original begins with a consonant cluster, the cluster is simplified and the first consonant is retained in the copy. If the stem vowel is nasalized, it is replaced by its oral counterpart in the reduplicative. However, if the stem consonant is a nasalized approximant and the vowel is also nasalized then the whole form is copied without any change in nasalization. As far as tones are concerned, the copy retains the tone of the original when an adjective is being formed. If a noun is being formed, then a high tone in the original is changed to a low tone in the reduplicative form:

Verb	Nominal	Adjectival
sí 'to escape'	*sì-sí* 'escape, -ing'	*sí-sí* 'escaped'
sẽ 'be strong'	*sè-sẽ* 'strength'	*sé-sẽ* 'strong'
lɔ̃ 'to love'	*lɔ̃-lɔ̃* 'love'	*lɔ̃-lɔ̃* 'beloved'
blá 'to tie'	*bà-blá* 'tying, tied'	*bá-blá* 'tied'
nyrɔ̀ 'to sink'	*nyɔ̀-nyrɔ̀* 'sinking'	*nyɔ̀-nyrɔ̀* 'sinking'
súbɔ́ 'to worship'	*sùbɔ̀-súbɔ́* 'worshipping'	*súbɔ́-súbɔ́* 'worshipping'

However, if the formation of a verbal noun involves the verb and its complement, then the tone and nasality of the stem vowel of the original is maintained in the reduplicative form: *sí du* 'run' > *du-sí-sí* 'running'; *lɔ̃ Máwú* 'love God' > *Máwú-lɔ̃-lɔ̃* 'loving God'.

Ewe has two types of triplication: a plain triplication and a triplication with internal modification. In a triplicative construction involving internal modification, the vowel of the second syllable is lengthened. In some dialects, there is a further emphatic modification of the second syllable in the construction, by the insertion of an */i/* vowel. There are no tonal changes. Sometimes the feature of nasalization in the stem is left out in the first syllable: *ko* 'only' > *kokooko* 'only, only, only'; *gbã* 'first', *gbãgbã̃ãgbã* 'the very first', *gbãgbiã̃ãgbã* 'the very first of the first'.

Word repetition or syntactic iteration that could be open, ended is used for the expressive modification of meaning as well as indicating iterative numerals, e.g., *kábá* 'quickly' > *kábá kábá kábá* 'very very quickly'. Complex nominal duplication involves duplication of the nominal head or repetition of the entire nominal phrase with intervening morphological material between the two instances of the nominal base. It is used for the expression of specific syntactic semantic functions, such as distributive, deprecatory, superlative, etc.

ame síáa ame	ame gbɔ́ mě
person INT person	person near person
'everybody'	'a non-real person'

Nominal compounds abound in Ewe. They are formed by the juxtaposition of two nouns or a verb and a noun as in *ɣetrɔ* 'sun-turn', i.e., 'late afternoon.' A verb and its complement may be permuted and compounded as in *nú-nyá* 'thing know', i.e., 'knowledge.' Permutation, compounding and repetition can all serve as input to affixation. Thus an agent nominal can be formed by suffixing *-lá* to a stem, *nú-fíá* 'thing-teach' formed by permutation and compounding to get *núfíálá* 'teacher'. A tonal prefix may be used to form a noun from a basic adjective as in *gã́* (ADJ) 'big' > *gã̌* (N) 'bigness'. Adjectives may also be derived from verbs by suffixation, e.g., *nyó* (V) 'be good' > *nyúí* (ADJ) 'good'. Morphologically, Ewe is right headed.

Basic Syntax

Ewe is a grammatical word order language with basic SVO syntax (and subject and object are morphologically unmarked). Typically, weather clauses have a full subject NP which denotes a meteorological element. Ewe does not use dummy subjects in such sentences:

tsi	dza;	ŋdɔ	ʋu	sésɛ́e	etsɔ
water	ooze	sun	shine	hard	yesterday
'It rained'		'The sun shone hard yesterday.'			

Ewe also has a number of utterance final particles which signal the illocutionary force or the attitude of the speaker. For instance propositional questions are marked by an utterance final clitic *à:*

Áma	ƒle	avɔ	etsɔ-a?
A.	buy	cloth	yesterday-Q
'Did Ama buy a piece of cloth yesterday?'			

In general, the possessor precedes the possessum. 'Alienable' possession is indicated by a possessive marker *ƒé*, which is interposed between the possessor and possessum. Inalienable possession is expressed by merely juxtaposing the possessor and the possessed. Body parts have 'alienable' syntax. Relative clauses and other modifiers generally follow the noun head.

Ewe is a serializing language. In a serial verb construction, each verb in the series has the same subject and shares the same tense, mood and aspect. The subject is only expressed with the first verb. In some of the serial verb constructions, serializing connectives may be used to link the verbs: *hé* for simultaneous or sequential relations and *ɖa* for purpose relations.

é-fɔ	do	go	le	zã	me	dzáá	ɖa-ku
3sG-arise	go	outside	at	night	in	quietly	PURP-dig

te	ɖa	ɖu.
yam	cook	eat
'He got out quietly at night, dug up yams, cooked them and ate them.'		

In serial verb constructions in which the first verb is one of accompaniment such as *kplɔ* 'lead', or instrument such as 'take' etc., there is an optional element that may be called SERIAL-*i*,

which occurs with the second verb to show that the events are concomitant or simultaneous rather than consecutive or consequential: *é-kplɔ Ama dzó-é* ('3sɢ-lead A leave- SERIAL) 'S/he led Ama away'.

Another verbal concatenative construction is the overlapping clause, in which the subject of the second clause is coreferential with a nonsubject argument of the first clause. Typically it is used to express simultaneous events: *é-da tú-í wò-kú* (3sɢ-throw gun-3sɢ 3sɢ-die) 'S/he shot it dead'.

The language has both prepositions, which evolved from verbs, and postpositions, most of which have evolved from body part nominals, for expressing relational meanings.

There are particles for indicating the status of the information units and for framing discourse. An NP or AP that sets the scene for the rest of the clause may be preposed to it. Typically such a constituent is separated from the rest of the clause by a pause and /or marked by a discourse framing particle *lá* or *ɖé*. If the preposed constituent is coreferential with a core argument of the clause, the relationship between the constituent and the argument is indicated by an anaphoric pronoun in the clause: *Kofí lá papá ná dɔ ɛ* (Kofi TOPIC father give work 3sɢ) 'Kofi, father gave him work.'

An argument of the clause may be front shifted to the precore clausal position for focus, that is, before the subject slot but after the preposed constituent slot. The fronted element is marked by an argument focus marker *-(y)é*. Typically a gap is left in the slot within the clause structure where the fronted element would have occurred. *Ga-é Papá ná Kofí* (money-FOC father give Kofi) 'MONEY father gave to Kofi.'

There are two dialectally varying strategies for verb or predicate focus. The verb may be copied, as happens in the *Aŋlɔ* dialect: *Kofí sí* 'Kofi escaped' vs. *Sí Kofí sí* 'Escape Kofi did'. In the standard and other dialects, the verb is focused by the use of a predicate focus marker *ɖè*: *Kofí ɖè wò-sí* (Kofi FOC 3sɢ-escape) 'Kofi did escape.'

Dependent and embedded clauses may be introduced by various conjunctions and connectives. They fill the first position in the clause preceding all the other elements.

Negation. Standard or clausal negation is marked by a discontinuous negative morpheme *mé...o*. *Mé* occurs just before the VP and tends to be cliticized onto the first element in the VP, while *o* occurs at the end of the clause but before the sentence-final particles. In a serial verbal construction, *mé* occurs before the first VP in the series, while the *o* occurs at the end of the serial clause.

Kofí	*mé-*	*vá*	*afí*	*sia*	*o-a?*
Kofi	NEG-	come	place	this	NEG-Q

'Did Kofi not come here?'

Mé-	ga-wɔ-e	o.
NEG:2sɢ	REP-do-3sɢ	NEG

'Don't do it.'

In this last example, the *mé* part of the negative morpheme has fused with the second person pronoun leading to a low tone on the form.

There are different kinds of nonclausal or constituent negation. One of these is the negative cleft construction. This con-

struction is used to emphatically negate a particular constituent in a clause, an NP or a predicate. The constituent that is thus negated is focus marked, either by the argument focus marker or the predicate focus marker.

Mé-nyé	etsɔ-	é	me-	dzɔ	o
3sɢ:NEG-be	yesterday	AFOC	1sɢ	happen	NEG

'It wasn't yesterday I was born.'

Derivational negation is marked by the affix *ma-* 'un', the privative marker. This affix is used in the derivation of adjectives and adverbials. It is usually prefixed to a verbal element and reduplicated together with it when necessary: *ma-vɔ* (NEG-finish) 'everlasting', *nu-ma-ɖu-ma-ɖu* (thing-NEG-eat-NEG-eat) 'without eating'. These may occur with or without standard negation.

Transitivity. There are two types of transitive clauses in Ewe: a highly transitive one in which the subject is an Effector or an Agent and the Object a Theme, and a less-transitive one in which the Subject is a Theme (or Undergoer) and the Object a Locative including properties. Some verbs can occur in either construction. For instance *fo* 'hit, strike'

Núfíálá	*fo*	ɖeví-á		Effector -Theme
teacher	hit	child-DEF	=	'The teacher beat the child.'

Awu	lá	*fo*	ɖi		Theme -Locative
garment	DEF	hit	dirt	=	'The garment is dirty.'

Inversion. A grammatical process of inversion can apply to the Effector/Theme but not the Theme/Locative construction. The Inversion construction, which is a passive-like construction involves the introduction of a modal *nyá*, which forces the reorganization of the argument structure of the clause. The Effector is demoted to a dative object position or deleted and the Theme is promoted to Subject position. It is used to express the ability or the experience of the Effector in relation to the Theme:

ɖevi-a	nyá	*fo*	ná	nufiala
child-DEF	INV	hit	to	teacher

'The teacher was able to hit/enjoyed hitting the child.'

Reported Speech. The language also has a logophoric pronoun *ye* (plural *yewó*), which is used in reportive contexts to designate the individual(s) (except for the first person) whose speech, thoughts, feelings and so on are reported or reflected in the linguistic context. It occurs in grammatical or discourse dependent contexts ususally in clauses introduced by the dependent clause introducer *bé(ná)* 'that'.

Contact with Other Languages

Contact with various languages has yielded quite a few loanwords: *sini* < ENGLISH 'cinema'; *sukúù* < English 'school'; *bókiti* < Eng. 'bucket'; *súkli* 'sugar' < FRENCH *sucre*; *gáflo* 'fork' < GERMAN *Gabel*; *sabála* 'onion' < PORTUGUESE *cebola*; *atrakpoe* 'stairs' < DUTCH *trappe*; *ɖúku* 'headkerchief' < Dutch? DANISH *doek; abladzó* 'plantain' < Akan (Fante) *abrɔdzo*; *ablegɔ́*

'chair' < Akan Twi *aburoguo*; *káfra* 'I beg your pardon' < Hausa *gafara*; *alafá* 'hundred' < Arabic *'alf* 'thousand'.

Common Words

man:	ŋútsu	small:	ví; sue; túkui
woman:	nyɔ́nu	yes:	ee; ẽ̄ẽ̄
water:	etsi	no:	ao; oo
sun:	ŋdɔ; ɣe	good:	nyó (Verb) nyúí (Adj)
three:	etɔ̃	bird:	xeví
fish:	tɔmelã; akpa	dog:	avǔ
big:	gã́	tree:	atí
long:	didi		

Example Sentences

(1) Máwúli nyé ŋútsu tsralɛ yibɔ-e ádé.
M.   COP man tall.slender black-DIM INDEF
'Mawuli is a slender, tall black man.'

(2) Du sue ádé nɔ Eve-nyígbá dzí
town small INDEF be.at:NPRES Ewe-land upper.surface

le Ghana ƒé ɣedzeƒé lɔfo kpɔ.
at Ghana POSS east direction PFV
'There was once a small town in the east of Eweland in Ghana.'

(3) Ezuagba lɔ̃ é-xɔ́lɔ̃ Nyuiemedi ŋútɔ gaké
E.   love 3SG-friend N.   much but

ŋubiabiã ɖé ga ŋú trɔ́ é-ƒé lɔlɔ̃.
envy ALL money side change 3SG-POSS love
'Ezuagba loved his friend Nyuiemedi very much, but envy because of money changed his love.'

Efforts to Preserve, Protect, and Promote the Language

Ewe is used in Ghana as a second language in most of the Ghana-Togo Mountains–languages area. It is also one of the three most important languages in southern Ghana, Ga and Akan being the other two. Ewe is taught in primary, secondary and university institutions. It is used for radio and TV broadcasting and in some community newspapers, e.g., *Kpodoga*. It is also used in adult literacy programs. There is a fair amount of published material in the language (see Duthie and Vlaardingerbroek 1981: part 2).

In Togo, Ewe has been declared one of the two indigenous languages being promoted for official use as well as for use in education, mass media, etc. Ewe is thus an important language in that region of West Africa where it is in contact with English and French and other indigenous African languages. There is a commission in Togo that has been working to devise Ewe words for new technological terms. In Ghana there is an Ewe Language Committee that offers advice on the promotion and use of Ewe in Ghana. There is also an Ewe Section of the Bureau of Ghana Languages, which publishes some materials on and in the language.

Select Bibliography

Adzomada, Jacques K.1979. *L'Ewe Standard.* Lome: Institut National de Recherche Scientifiques.

Agbodeka, Francis K., ed. 1998. *A Handbook of Eweland. Vol. 1: The Ewe of Southeastern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli.

Ameka, Felix K. 1988. "The grammatical coding of the terminal viewpoint of situations in Ewe." In *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 2: 185–217.

____. 1998. "Les particules énonciatives en ewe." In *Les langues d'Afrique Subsaharienne*. S. Platiel and R. Kabore, eds. pp. 179–204. Faits de Langues 11–12. Paris: Ophrys.

____. 1999. "The typology and semantics of complex nominal duplication in Ewe." In *Anthropological Linguistics* 41–1: 75–106.

Ansre, Gilbert. 1971. "Language standardisation in Sub-Saharan Africa." In *Current Trends in Linguistics. Vol. 7: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*. T. Sebeok, ed. pp. 680–698. The Hague: Mouton.

Asamoa, Ansa K.1986. *The Ewe of South-East Ghana and Togo on the Eve of Colonialism*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Capo, Hounkpati B.C.1985. "Determining the third person singular object pronoun in Gbe." In *West African Languages in Education*. K. Williaamson, ed. pp. 106–131. Wien: Afro Publishers.

____. 1991. *A Comparative Phonology of Gbe*. Berlin and Garome: de Gruyter (Foris) and LABOGBE.

Clements, George N. 1977a. "Four tones from three: The extra high tone in *Aŋlɔ* Ewe." In *Language and Linguistic Problems in Africa*. P.F. Kotey and H. Der-Houssikian, eds. pp. 168–81. Columbia: Hornbeam Press.

____. 1977b. "Tone and syntax in Ewe." In *Elements of Tone, Stress and Intonation*. J. Napoli, ed. pp. 21–99. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Duthie, Alan S. 1996. *Introducing Ewe Linguistic Patterns.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Duthie, Alan S, and R.K. Vlaardingerbroek.1981. *Bibliography of Gbe (Ewe, Gen Aja, Fon Xwla Gun, etc)*. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien.

Essegbey, James. 1999. *Inherent Complement Verbs Revisited: Towards an Understanding of Argument Structure in Ewe*. Ph.D. Dissertation: Leiden University.

Ring, Andrew J. 1981. *Ewe as a Second Language: A Sociolinguistic Survey of Ghana's Central Volta Region*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

Rongier, Jacques. 1995. *Apprenons l'ewe*, (9 volumes) Paris: L'Harmattan

Sprigge, Robert G.S. 1967. *Tone in the Adangbe dialect of Ewe*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

Stahlke, Herbert F.W. 1971. *Topics in Ewe phonology*. Ann Arbor MI: University Microfilms.

Westermann, Diedrich. 1973a. [1928] *Ewefiala: Ewe -English dictionary*. Nendeln: Kraus Thompson.

____. 1973b. [1930] *Gbesela yeye: English-Ewe dictionary*. Nendeln: Kraus Thompson.

____. 1930. *A Study of the Ewe Language*. London: Oxford University Press.