



# Ghana Journal of Linguistics

Vol.6 No. 2

2017

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**Qbádélé Kambon, Josephine Dzahene-Quarshie**  
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A PUBLICATION OF THE LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA  
P. O. Box LG 61, Accra, Ghana  
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*The Ghana Journal of Linguistics* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal appearing twice a year, published by the Linguistics Association of Ghana. Beginning with Volume 2 (2013) it is published in electronic format only, open access, at [gjl.laghana.org](http://gjl.laghana.org) and [www.ajol.info](http://www.ajol.info). However, print-on-demand copies can be made available on application to Digibooks Ghana Ltd.: [fred.labi@digibookspublishing.com](mailto:fred.labi@digibookspublishing.com).

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The Ghana Journal of Linguistics is published by the Linguistics Association of Ghana, P.O. Box LG 61, Legon, Accra, Ghana.

Email: [info@laghana.org](mailto:info@laghana.org) | Website: [www.laghana.org](http://www.laghana.org)

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ISSN 2026-6596

# GHANA JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS

Volume 6 Number 2

2017

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ISSN 2026-6596

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Nerius Kuubezelle, George Akanlig-Pare</b> <i>Dagara Tongue-Root Vowel Harmony</i>	1
<b>Philip Manda Imoh, David Abraham Areo, Philip Daniel Moles, Isa Gambo</b> <i>Verbal Extensions: Valency Decreasing Extensions in The Basà Language</i>	15
<b>MT Lamidi</b> <i>The Syntax of Multi-Word Expressions in Yorulish Code-Mixing</i>	30
<b>Felix Kpogo, Kofi Busia Abrefa</b> <i>The Structure of Face-To-Face Casual Conversation Among the Akans</i>	56
<b>Ọbádélé Kambon, Reginald Akuoko Duah</b> <i>Non-African Linguists Be Like, “This Is a New Way to Quote!”</i>	85
<b>Ọbádélé Kambon, Josephine Dzahene-Quarshie</b> <i>TwiSwahili Or KiswaTwili: A Study of Parallel Proverbs in Akan (Twi) And Kiswahili</i>	116
<b>Mawuloe Koffi Kodah</b> <i>Discourse of Denunciation: A Critical Reading of Chinua Achebe’s Man of The People</i>	154
<b>Contributors to this Issue</b>	169
<b>Preferred Formats for References</b>	175

## INTRODUCTION

This special issue of *GJL* contains seven papers coming out of the eighth annual conference of the Linguistics Association of Ghana, hosted by the Departments of Modern Languages and English Language at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology on 27<sup>th</sup>–29<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The conference theme was ‘Language in the Midst: Theories and Practice’, and under this umbrella a wide range of papers were presented, ranging from topics in theoretical and descriptive linguistics to discourse analysis, language and gender, language and social issues, language and religion, language and politics, language in education, language and literature and corpus linguistics. Some 25 languages were discussed, including Arabic, French and local varieties of English. Paul Kerswill (University of York) gave a keynote dealing with demographic change and dialect change in the UK, drawing parallels with language change in Africa.

The papers we present here reflect the diversity of the conference, dealing not only with the indigenous languages of Ghana, but also those spoken elsewhere in Africa, including Nigeria and Kenya, as well as English in Africa and internationally. Topics, too, are diverse, covering phonology (Kuubezelle & Akanlig-Pare), morphology/syntax (Imoh, Areo, Moles & Gambo, and Lamidi), discourse (Kpogo & Abrefa, Kambon & Duah, Kambon & Dzahene Quarshie) and language and literature (Kodah).

Kuubezelle & Akanlig-Pare describe the Dagara (Gur, Niger-Congo) tongue-root vowel harmony using Autosegmental theory. They suggest that Dagara has bi-directional [ATR] harmony which is triggered by [+ATR] vowels. They conclude that there is a strict co-occurrence restriction on vowels of words in Dagara.

Imoh, Areo, Moles & Gambo investigate verbal extensions which affect the valency of verbs in Basà (Western Kainji). Of interest to them are the morphosyntactic effects of reciprocal and reflexive affixes in Basà. They note that affixes attached to the verb root result in deriving intransitive verbs from transitive ones, and transitive verbs from bi- or ditransitive ones. Lamidi examines the syntactic behaviour of multi-word expressions in Yoruba–English code-switched utterances. Using a combined Myers-Scotton Matrix Language Frame theory and Chomsky’s Transformational Generative Grammar, he suggests that switching is allowed when components of multi-word constructions are relatively free as in English prepositional verbs, but barred when they are fixed as exemplified by some Yoruba splitting verbs and idioms. His conclusion is that Yoruba serves as the base language in these expressions.

Kpodo & Abrefa examine the structure of face-to-face casual conversation openings and closings in Akan (Kwa, Niger-Congo). The openings consistently had greetings and

how-are-you sequences. On the other hand, the closing section of conversations are categorized into three types: introductory closings, future arrangements and transmitted greetings, and final closings. Kambon & Duah show that quotative ‘like’, may have originated from varieties of African speech of the continent (represented by Akan (Asante Twi)) and the diaspora (represented by Anti-American African (AAA)). They show similarities between the bases for grammaticalization for Akan (Asante Twi) *sɛ* and AAA ‘like’ which have gone from showing resemblance/approximation to serving as quotatives. They conclude that there is enough evidence to postulate a common African source for this particular linguistic phenomenon. Kambon & Dzahene-Quarshie demonstrate that as a result of a shared African worldview, there exist a number of (near) parallel proverbs in Kiswahili (Bantu, Niger-Congo) and Akan (Kwa, Niger-Congo). These similarities may be due to shared cultural and/or historical experiences on one hand, or the genetic relationship as languages belonging to the same language family – Niger-Congo.

Finally, Kodah examines the linguistic devices employed by Chinua Achebe in “A Man of the People.” Using a critical discourse approach, he combines elements of literature and language to define the book’s satirical outlook, which effectively communicate messages of socio-cultural relevance aimed at igniting attitudinal transformation to enhance socio-economic and political development.

The diversities of sub-disciplines reflected in this volume provide an indication of the breadth and wealth of research that is found on the African continent. The spread of theoretical approaches provides an avenue for the thorough exploration of varying data. The single paper, which circumnavigates aspects of language and literature, is intended to ignite interdisciplinary scholarship, propelling scholars towards an exploration of language phenomena from interrelated disciplines, with the aim of deepening our understanding of specific linguistic occurrences.

We hope you find this collection stimulating and informative.

**Nana Aba Appiah Amfo**  
**Jemima Asabea Anderson**  
**Paul Kerswill**

*Accra & York*

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v6i2.1>

## **DAGARA TONGUE-ROOT VOWEL HARMONY**

*Nerius Kuubezelle, George Akanlig-Pare*

### **Abstract**

Though tongue-root vowel harmony in many Ghanaian languages has been described, there still remain many others which have received little or no description at all. Dagara, a dialect of Dagaare a Mabia language, is one of such dialects. This paper presents a description of Dagara tongue-root vowel harmony using Autosegmental Theory. The paper reveals that Dagara has bi-directional [ATR] harmony with [+ATR] vowels being the triggers of the harmonic process. In the progressive harmony processes, the [+ATR] feature of stem vowels causes [-ATR] vowels of suffixes to change to harmonize with them; in a regressive harmony process, [+ATR] vowels of the suffixes have dominance over those of stems and cause them to change to harmonize. The paper also shows that [f] is an opaque consonant, and blocks [+ATR] harmony spread from stems to suffix vowels. The opacity effect is however unidirectional as there is no evidence of such restriction in left-to-right harmony. The paper concludes that, there is a strict co-occurrence restriction on vowels of words in Dagara.

**Keywords:** Mabia language, Tongue-root vowel, Autosegmental Theory, Progressive harmony, Regressive harmony

## 1.0. Introduction

This paper discusses tongue-root vowel harmony phenomenon in Dagara, with the view of contributing to a holistic development of the Dagaare language in Ghana. Dagaare belongs to the northern branch of the Western Oti-Volta group of the Gur branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Bendor-Samuel 1971). Dagaare has four major dialects which exhibit obvious linguistic variations at phonological, lexical and grammatical levels (Dakubu 2005). The Dagaare language shares very close affinity with languages like Dagbanli, Moore, Gurenɛ, Mampruli, Kusaal and Buli. Bodomo (1997) refers to these West Oti-Volta languages as Mabilia, not only because they all belong to the Gur branch of the Niger-Congo language family, but more obviously because they all share some common lexical items such as **ma** ‘mother’ and **bie~bia** ‘child’.

The phenomenon of vowel harmony has been explained by various linguists. Goldsmith (1990) postulates that a vowel harmony system is one in which the vowels of a language are divided into two subsets with the condition that all vowels in a given word (or domain), generally must come from a single subset. Kenstowicz (1994) also explains that vowel harmony is a phonological state in which the vowels in a given domain share or harmonize for a particular feature. Clements (1976) further states that vowel harmony consists of a co-occurrence restriction upon the vowels that may occur in a word. In other words, all the vowels in a word must be drawn from one or another of two mutually exclusive sets.

Several studies have been carried out regarding this phenomenon in Ghanaian languages. Among them are Akanlig-Pare (1994) in Buli and Hudu (2013) in Dangbanli. Saanchi (1997) also discusses vowel harmony in Dagaare pointing out three types including ATR harmony, Rounding harmony, and Cross Height Vowel Harmony drawing data from the Central dialect of Dagaare. Dundaa (2013) discusses aspects of Birifor phonology including Tongue-Root vowel harmony, Cross-Height vowel harmony among others. Bemile (1985) touches briefly on Dagara tongue root vowel harmony, but this work is in German, which is not accessible and comprehensible to the many readers. This paper contributes to the existing literature by discussing Dagara tongue root vowel harmony system. It will show that the Dagara harmony system is unique, and manifests many features that are not in the other Dagaare dialects.

There are eighteen (18) vowel phonemes in Dagara, sub-categorized into eight (8) Advanced Tongue Root [+ATR] vowels which are: /i, e, u, o, ɪ̃, ɛ̃, ũ, õ/, and eight (8) Retracted/Unadvanced Tongue Root [-ATR] vowels as follows: /ɪ, ɛ, ʊ, ɔ, ɪ̣, ɛ̣, ʊ̣, ɔ̣/. Two

other vowels, /a, ã/, are considered as neutral by virtue of the fact that they co-occur with both [+ATR] and [-ATR] vowel(s) in some words, but they associate more frequently with the [-ATR] set of vowels. In poly-syllabic words in Dagara, there is strict co-occurrence restriction of the two sets of vowels, as described in Clements (1976). The vowels in words are selected from either of the two harmony systems. In the formation of words, when forms with vowels from the two different sets are juxtaposed, a harmony process is triggered to ensure that the vowels harmonize for a particular feature in line with Kenstowicz (1994) explanation. The harmonic processes in Dagara are bidirectional; the harmony spread is either progressive and spreads from stems to suffixes, or it is regressive and spreads mainly from dominant suffixes to stems or from one dominant stem to another stem in the case of compounds. The examples in (1) below illustrate the strict co-occurrence restriction of the two sets of vowels in some words in Dagara.

(1) Tongue root vowel harmony

[+ATR]	Gloss	[-ATR]	Gloss
<b>túór</b>	‘load’	<b>túór</b>	‘mortar’
<b>kúór</b>	‘funeral’	<b>kùòr</b>	‘gourd’
<b>púó</b>	‘farm’	<b>pùò</b>	‘within’
<b>gbébir</b>	‘toe’	<b>tíɛŋkublu</b>	‘beard’
<b>gbògbókyilé</b>	‘jackal’	<b>nàfòdéglikèr</b>	‘sandals’ (slippers)

The data for this study is a blend of primary data, secondary data from published works and native-speaker knowledge. The primary data was elicited from native speakers of the Dagara dialect in villages including Kyebogo, Nandom and Hamile in the Upper West Region of Ghana, using the Summer Institute of Linguistics West African Area Wordlist 1 (Boone Douglas 1989). The analyses of the data are done qualitatively and represented using the Autosegmental Theory (AT) framework propounded by Goldsmith (1976). Autosegmental theory is an offshoot Generative Phonology theory which evolved initially to handle the problematic issues relating to tonal representations in linguistic analyses. Autosegmental phonology places phonological features on separate tiers and link them using Association Lines at a Skeletal Tier. From tonal representation, Autosegmental theory was extended to cover all phonological processes such as vowel harmony (Sagey

1986). The Autosegmental representation makes it possible to demonstrate the naturalness of assimilatory processes since it shows how features spread from one tier to affect features on other tiers. Deletion is also naturally shown by delinking association lines that link features on different tiers.

The rest of the sections in this paper shall focus on discussions of data in the following order: section 2 discusses data on progressive harmonic processes; section 3 discusses data on regressive harmonic process; section 4 focuses on consonant opacity in the harmonic processes; and section 5 constitutes the conclusion.

## 2.0 Progressive Harmonic Processes

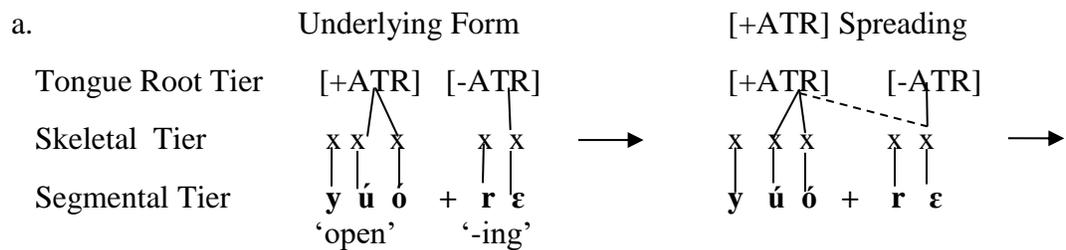
This section discusses harmony between verb stem and progressive suffix, verb stem and nominal suffix, noun stem and nominal suffix, and verb stem and the second part of the discontinuous negative morpheme.

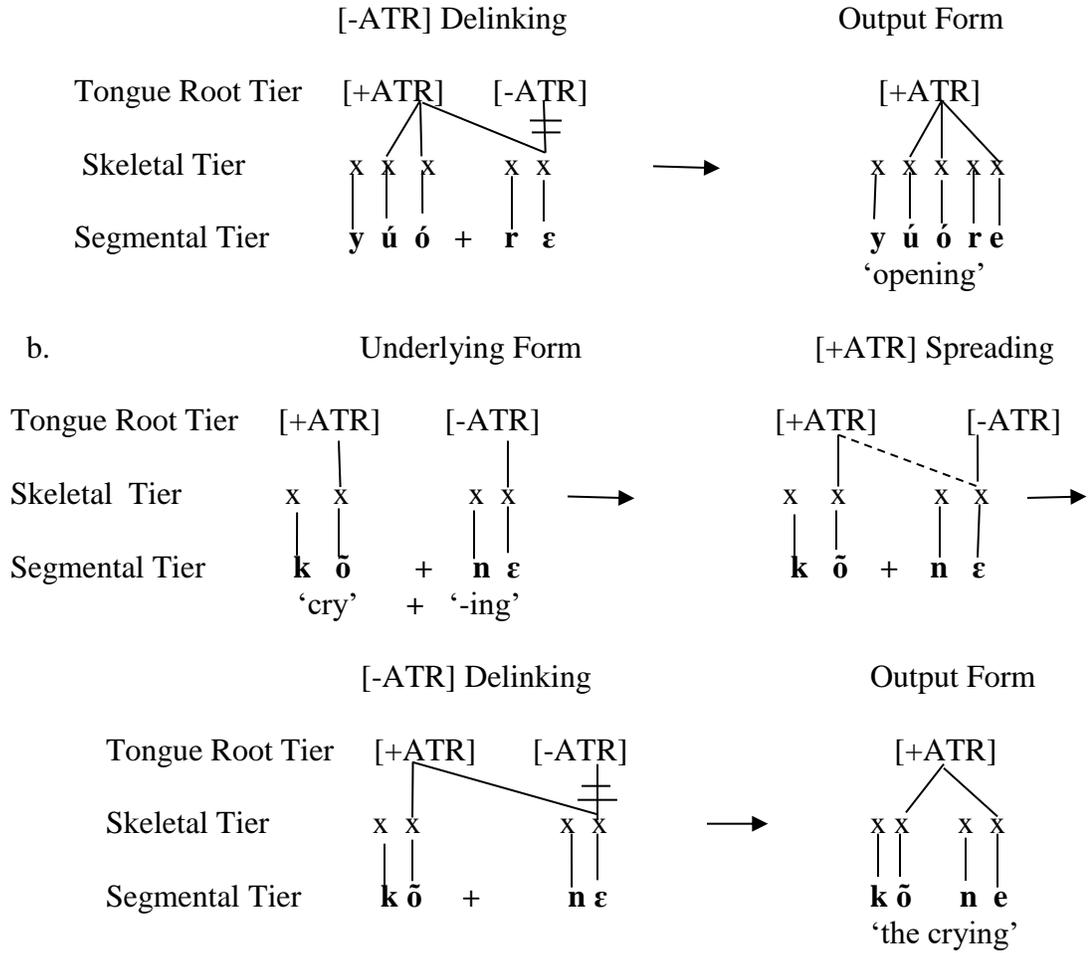
### 2.1 Harmony Between Verb Stem and Progressive Suffix

In Dagara, the progressive suffix in its underlying form is the mid-vowel [-ε] of [-ATR] set, where the verb stem is of a CVC syllable shape, with the coda consonant being a liquid. But when the verb stem is an open syllable (CV) type, the suffix is preceded by an alveolar trill /r/ and surfaces as [-rε], or it is preceded by an alveolar nasal /n/ as in [-nε], where the verb stem ends in a nasal vowel.

However, when the progressive or imperfect suffix is added to a [+ATR] verb stem, it is caused to change to harmonize with the [+ATR] quality of the verb stem to become -e, -re, or -ne. The data in 2 shows the progressive harmonic process between [+ATR] verb stem and the progressive suffix.

(2) [+ATR] verb stem and progressive suffix

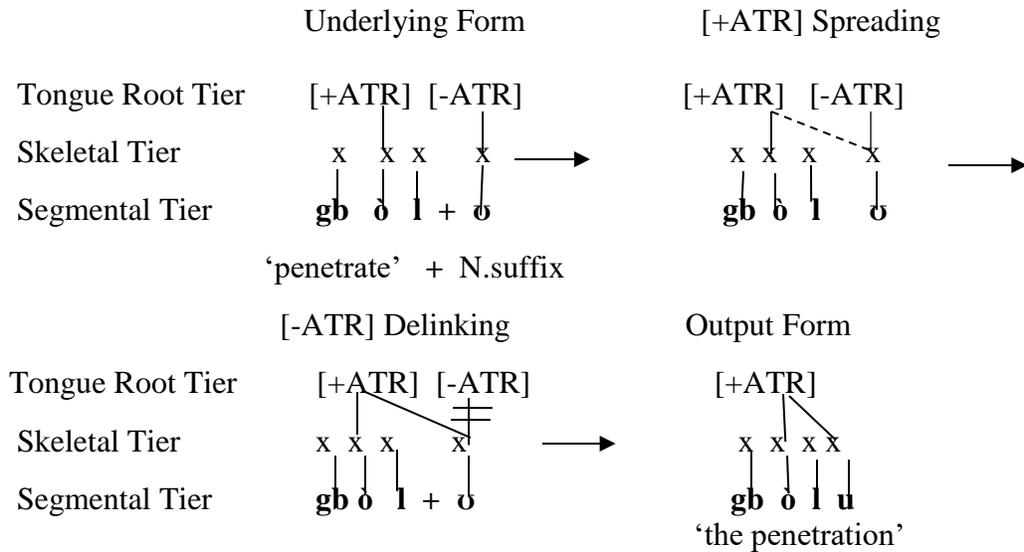




## 2.2 Verb Stem and Nominal Suffix Harmony

Some verbal nouns are derived in Dagara by simply adding nominal suffixes. One of the suffixes is -o, in the underlying form but when the verb stem vowel is a [+ATR], it surfaces as -u, in harmony with the stem vowel quality. The harmony process however fails if the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ intervenes between the suffix vowel and the stem vowel. This opacity phenomenon is discussed in 4.0. The data in (3) show examples of verbal noun derivation process, where the nominal suffix is caused to change from [-ATR] to [+ATR] to harmonize with the verb stem vowels.

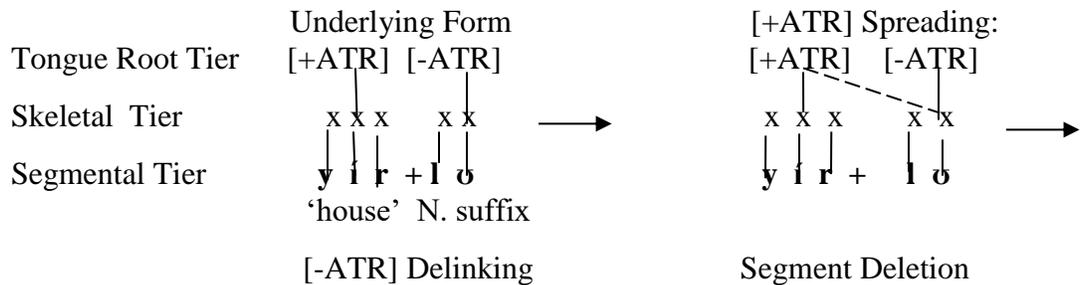
(3) [+ATR] Verb stem harmonizing [-ATR] nominal suffix

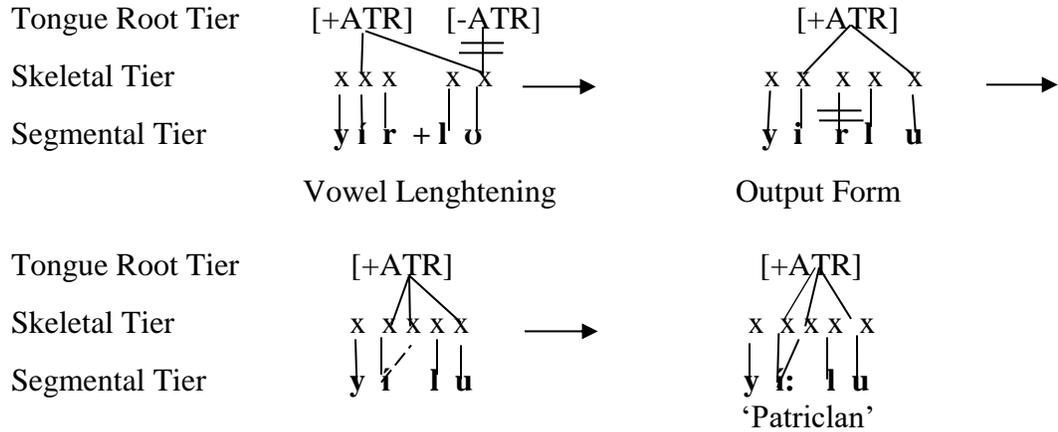


**2.3 Noun Stem and Nominal Suffix Harmony**

Some abstract nouns in Dagara are also derived from concrete nouns by adding the suffix -o or -lo to them in the underlying form. But when combined with a [+ATR] noun stem they surface as -u in stems that end with a consonant, or -lu in stems that end with a vowel as the derivation in (4) shows.

(4) [+ATR] noun stem and nominal suffix harmony





## 2.4 Harmony Between Verb Stem and Second Negative Morpheme

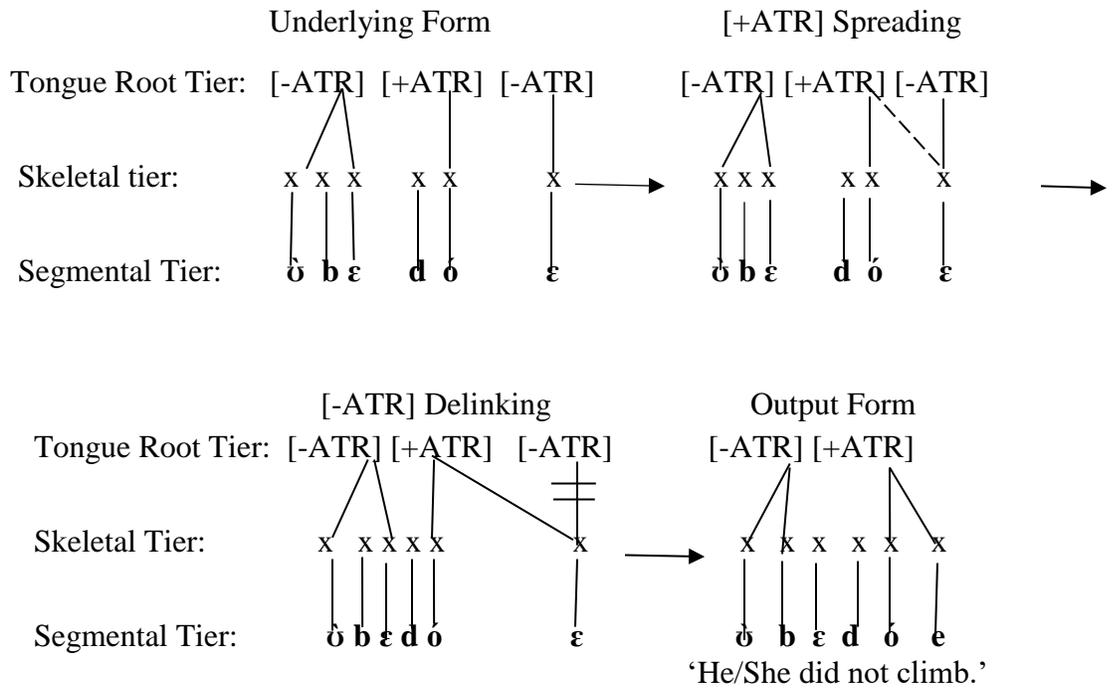
Negation in Dagara is expressed in the indicative and imperative by means of two discontinuous morphemes; 'bɛ...ɛ/ɪ' and 'ta...ɛ/ɪ', respectively. The structural arrangements are similar to the structure of negation in French, where the verb is placed between the two negative morphemes. These morphemes are underlyingly [-ATR], but the second components of the morphemes change to [+ATR] when the verb has [+ATR] vowels, whilst the first component remains invariably [-ATR]. Thus, their allophonic versions are 'bɛ...e/I and 'ta ...e/i', for indicative and imperative, respectively.

The data in (5) below show that failure to trigger ATR harmony so that the [-ATR] quality of the second negative morpheme changes to harmonize with the [+ATR] value of the verb renders the clause ungrammatical. In (6), the harmony process is represented, showing the progressive spread of the [+ATR] feature of the verb to the second negative morpheme.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(5) Indicative</p> <p>a. <b>Ü</b>   <b>bɛ</b>   <b>bɔ̃r</b>   <b>ɛ</b></p> <p>3SG   NEG   loose   NEG</p> <p>'He / She did not get lost.'</p> | <p>Imperative</p> <p><b>Ta</b>   <b>bɔ̃r</b>   <b>ɛ</b></p> <p>NEG   loose   NEG</p> <p>'Don't get lost.'</p> |
|--|---|

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>b. <math>\bar{u}</math>    <b>bε</b>    <b>b̀r</b>    *<b>e</b><br/>         3SG NEG    loose NEG<br/>         ‘He / She did not get lost.’</p> | <p>Ta    <b>b̀r</b>    *<b>e</b><br/>         NEG loose NEG<br/>         ‘Don’t get lost.’</p> |
| <p>c. <math>\bar{u}</math>    <b>bε</b>    <b>dó</b>    <b>e</b><br/>         3SG NEG climb NEG<br/>         ‘He / She did climb.’</p>             | <p>Ta    <b>dó</b>    <b>e</b><br/>         NEG climb NEG<br/>         ‘Don’t climb.’</p>      |
| <p>d. <math>\bar{u}</math>    <b>bε</b>    <b>dó</b>    *<b>e</b><br/>         3SG NEG climb NEG<br/>         ‘He / She did not climb.’</p>        | <p>Ta    <b>dó</b>    *<b>e</b><br/>         NEG climb NEG<br/>         ‘Don’t climb.’</p>     |

(6) Harmony across verb stem to second negative morpheme



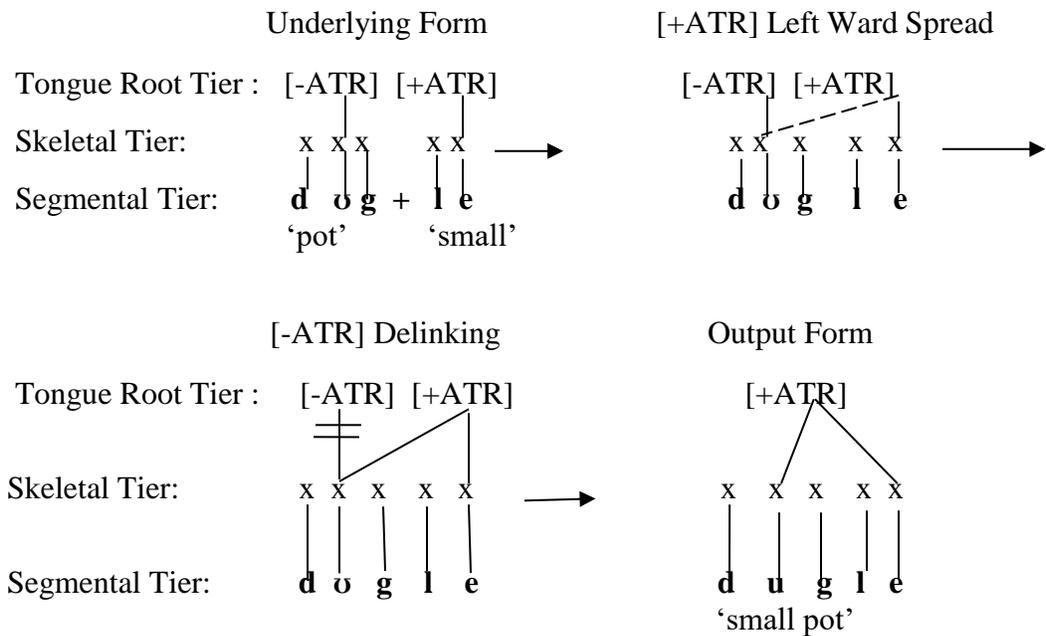
### 3.0 Regressive Direction of Harmonic Process

The Regressive harmonic process is triggered within two types of domains: one domain is a noun stem and a dominant diminutive suffix construction; the other is a noun + noun compound domain, where the second noun is dominant within the domain.

#### 3.1 [-ATR] Noun Stems and Diminutive Suffix Harmony

In diminutive constructions in Dagara involving the diminutive suffix –le ‘small’ (li ‘plural form’), the [+ATR] feature of the diminutive suffix spreads to the noun stem and causes stem vowels to harmonize with it if they are of the opposite value. Dundaa (2013) reports of a similar thing about Birifor, another dialect of Dagaare. In this domain, unlike the progressive harmony spread, the suffix vowel is dominant and therefore the spread is in a regressive direction to the stem. The representation in (7) below shows the regressive spread.

(7) [-ATR] Noun stems and diminutive suffix harmony



### 3.2 Harmony within Compounds

In Dagara compound words, it is common to have both stems of the compound having different tongue root vowels. This seems to be a real phenomenon, and it is manifested in a language like Buli (Akanlig-Pare 1994), Birifor (Dundaa 2013), and Waali (Abdul-Moomen 2015), where within the compound word, the ATR value of both stems may be the same or different. Akanlig-Pare (1994) for example explains that the failure to have a harmony process triggered so that the vowels of both stems of a compound are harmonized is due to the opacity effect created as a result of the adjacency of two-word boundaries, one at the right edge of the first stem, and the other on the left edge of the second stem. The examples in (8) show such compounds in Dagara.

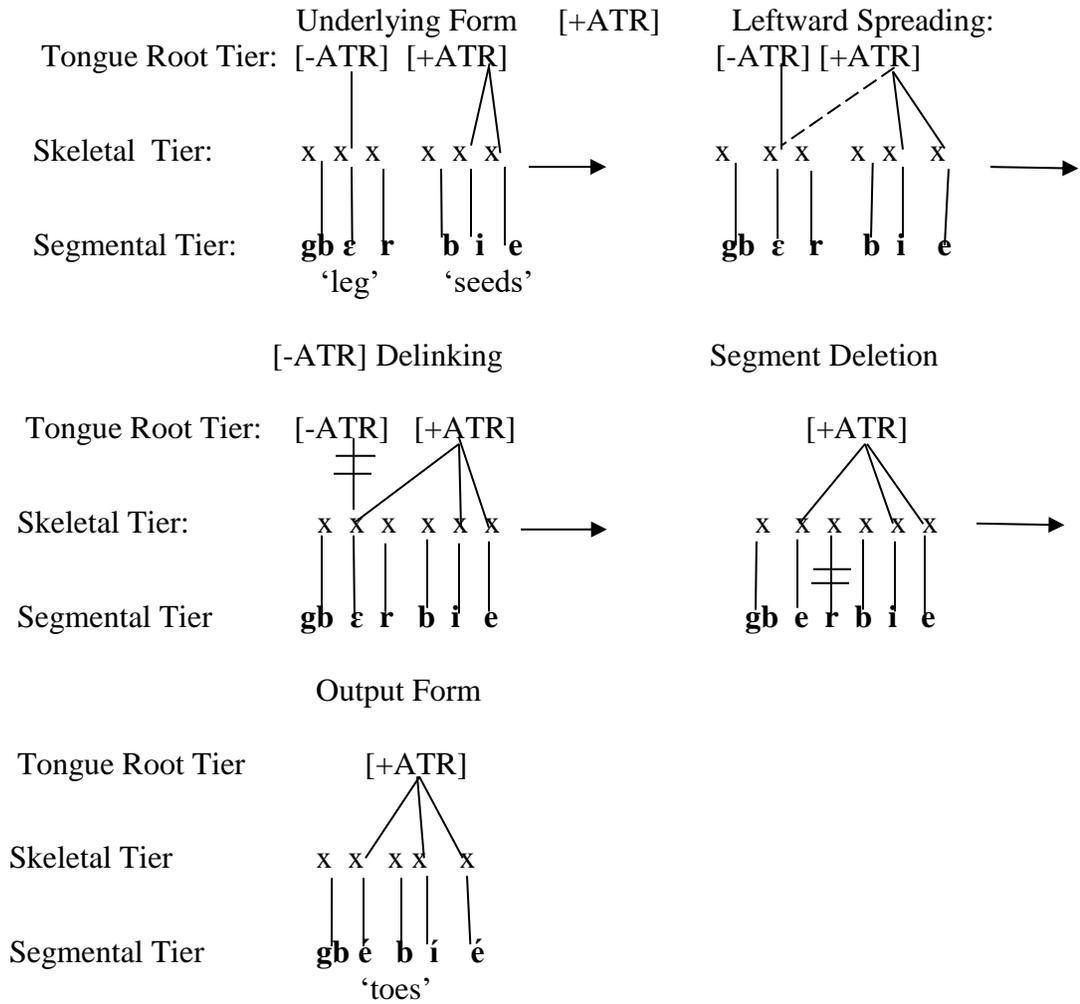
- (8) a. Same ATR value in compounds
- |               |                  |   |                   |         |
|---------------|------------------|---|-------------------|---------|
| <b>#trem#</b> | + <b>#kublu#</b> | → | <b>[tɛŋkublu]</b> | ‘beard’ |
| ‘chin’        | ‘hair’           |   |                   |         |
- 
- |               |                 |   |                  |               |
|---------------|-----------------|---|------------------|---------------|
| <b>#peru#</b> | + <b>#pula#</b> | → | <b>[perpula]</b> | ‘white sheep’ |
| ‘sheep’       | ‘white’         |   |                  |               |
- b. Different ATR values in Compounds
- |              |                  |   |                   |                    |
|--------------|------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>#gaŋ#</b> | + <b>#mimir#</b> | → | <b>[gammimir]</b> | ‘attractive cloth’ |
| ‘cloth’      | ‘eye’            |   |                   |                    |
- 
- |              |                |   |                 |       |
|--------------|----------------|---|-----------------|-------|
| <b>#bie#</b> | + <b>#dɛb#</b> | → | <b>[bidɛ̀b]</b> | ‘son’ |
| ‘child’      | ‘male’         |   |                 |       |

The examples in (8) show compounds where vowels of both stems have retained their ATR values. In (8a) both stems retain their [-ATR] values, while in (8b) there is a mixture of both [+/-ATR] vowels. In the case of (8b) where we have a mixture of ATR values, the expectation is that one value will trigger the harmony process for both stems to surface with a uniform ATR value. This process however does not occur automatically.

However, in one instance of compounding involving a noun stem and the adjectival **bir** ‘seed’ (or its plural form **bie** ‘seeds’), tongue root harmony is triggered. In this domain, the [+ATR] vowel of **bir** ‘seed’ is always dominant and thus causes the vowels of the

preceding stem to harmonize in ATR value with it. The representation in (9) shows this marked harmony process in compounds in Dagara

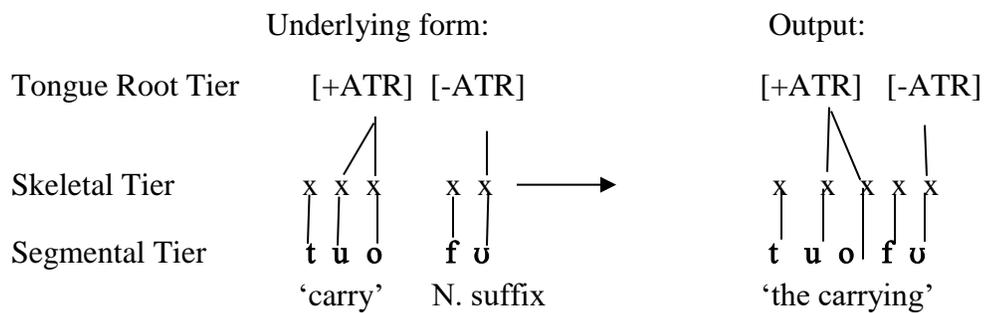
(9) [-ATR] Noun stem and [+ATR] noun suffix harmony



#### 4. Consonant Opacity in The Harmonic Process

As noted in 2.2, there is a constraint on the spreading of the [+ATR] vowel quality from verb stem onto a nominal suffix if the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ is realized in a position between the trigger domain and the target vowel in the suffix. In this case, the variant of the nominal suffix [-fɔ] will not be affected by the presence of a [+ATR] in the noun stem. This opacity effect implies that /f/ is an opaque consonant in Dagara that can block the spreading of the [+ATR] feature from the stem to the suffix. Segment opacity effects on harmonic processes have been described in at least one other Gur language. Hudu (2013) for example, discusses such consonantal opacity in Dagbanli tongue-root harmony noting that, the continuant coronals [l, r, s] block the spread of [+ATR] from root vowels to targets such as epenthetic vowels, affixes and cliticized vowels. The representation in (10) below shows the breakdown of the harmonic process as a result of the presence of /f/ in the onset of the nominal suffix. In this position, the spread of the [+ATR] feature is blocked from spreading to the [-ATR] suffix vowel.

(10) Opacity effect of /f/ on the harmonic process



#### 5. Conclusion

Consistently, Dagara exhibits the strict type of vowel harmony involving the root of the tongue. This strict co-occurrence restriction is both the property of the vowel as well as a process. The harmonic processes occur bi-directionally; progressively from stems to suffixes and regressively from suffixes to stems and between stems in a unique word formation process. Progressive stem vowel triggered harmonic process targets [-ATR] vowels in suffixes. Regressive suffix or stem triggered harmonic processes target [-ATR]

vowels in stem. There is only one opaque consonant /f/ that blocks spreading of [+ATR] vowel feature from verb stems to a nominal suffix. These harmony processes all show that the [+ATR] feature is the dominant one in Dagara.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v6i2.2>

## **VERBAL EXTENSIONS: VALENCY DECREASING EXTENSIONS IN THE BASÀ LANGUAGE**

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### **Abstract**

This work investigates verbal extensions that affect the valency of verbs in the Basà language (Western Kainji). It focuses on verbal inflections that result in the reduction of the verb's valency by one argument with regard to the basic structure. This current study attempts to investigate the morphosyntactic effects of reciprocal and reflexive affixes in the Basà sentences. The significance of this work hinges on the fact that no known work has described these processes in Basà. The language is endangered because its native speakers neglect speaking it in favour of English and Hausa. Furthermore, there is dearth of information on Basà, especially in areas of morphology and syntax, which are basic to the study of language. This study will therefore attempt to fill this existing gap in the literature. In addition to the native intuitions of one of the researchers, as a native speaker of the Basà language, data collected for this work include discourse observation, staged and elicited spoken data from fluent native speakers. It was found in the study that affixes attached to the verb root result in deriving an intransitive verb from a transitive one, and a transitive verb from a bi- or ditransitive. Both operations are triggered by verbal extensions and move the internal argument (object) to the subject position. The derived structure, therefore, is headed by a complex noun phrase but the verb no longer subcategorizes an internal argument. The work explores the morphosyntax of Basà verbs and serves as a springboard for this aspect of Basà morphosyntax. It also contributes to the morphosyntactic literature.

**Keywords:** Basà language, reciprocal, reflexive, valency decreasing verbal extension.

## 1.0 Introduction

Basà language is a native language spoken by the Basà people in Kogi, Nasarawa, Benue, Niger states and all the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) councils of Nigeria. Crozier and Blench (1992) and Blench and Williamson (1988) classify Basà under Western Kainji.

This paper attempts to describe and analyze one of the resultant effects of verbal extensions in Basà, with a special focus on ‘reflexives’ and ‘reciprocals’. No known work has described these processes in Basà. Imoh (2015) attempts a description of verbal extensions. This work is related to his work, but his focus is on causativization and applicativization. The problem this work attempts to solve is to examine whether verbal extensions also result in decreasing the valency of a verb as opposed to Imoh (2016) which studies similar morphological processes, but resulting in an opposite syntactic consequence i.e. valency increase. This will be examined by attaching affixes to verb stems and examining their effects in the sentence as a result of such extensions. The former focuses on verbal extensions that increase the valency of the verb; whereas, the present study focuses on processes that decrease or reduce the verb’s valency. The investigation attempts to answer the question “What is the effect of a verb’s valency when reflexive or reciprocal operator affixes attach to them?”

In addition to the native intuitions of one of the researchers, as a native speaker of the Basà language, data collected for this work include discourse observation, staged and elicited spoken data from fluent native speakers.

Technically, the term valence describes a situation of an atom’s bond-forming capacity with its outer shell electrons (Brady, 1982: 109). Tesniere (1959) was the linguist who adopted this in linguistics. He refers to the bond formed by syntactic elements, which may be formed with each other or another constituent. The verb is the fundamental element of the sentence that determines valency, that is, by the transitivity or intransitivity of the verb. The concept ‘transitive’ refers to whether or not a verb requires an object to fill the NP slot in the predicate as its direct object. Any verb that requires a direct object to complete a sentence is a transitive verb; whereas, a verb that requires a direct object as well as an indirect object is bi- or ditransitive, that is, it is doubly transitive. On the other hand, any verb that does not require a direct object is referred to as an intransitive verb.

Whaley (1997: 199) argues that the valency of a verb is not fixed, “a verb in its basic form will manifest what can be referred to as its core valency”, that it can be “manipulated and the morphosyntax of the language can typically increase or decrease

valency or realign the grammatical relations of the verb's argument". This research is targeted at investigating the decrease in the number of argument(s) as a result of reflexivization and reciprocity in Basà language.

There are various ways valence may be altered. Languages have different strategies to do this. Some may be lexical, in such a case; this notion may be wrapped up in the lexical meaning of the verb without any overt change in its form. Mazengia (2012: 2) exemplifies this in English:

- (1) a. Lemma *killed* a lion
- b. The lion *died*
- (2) a. Lemma *broke* the jar
- b. The jar *broke*

In each of the cases in (a) above, the clauses are bivalent, whereas in (b), they are monovalent. Another way of making valence adjustment is morphological. This requires attaching an affix to the stem thereby creating a new form.

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

This section highlights the problems that are faced by this language that necessitate this investigation. First, the Basà language is endangered because its native speakers neglect speaking it and the language is neither written nor documented, gradually resulting in language endangerment, which is one of the major reasons for doing this research.

Secondly, there is a dearth of information on Basà, especially, in areas of morphology and syntax, which are basic to the study of language. This study will therefore attempt to fill an existing gap in the literature.

Furthermore, where affixes are attached to verb stems in the Basà language, different morphological and syntactic or both processes are triggered. This current study attempts to investigate the morphosyntactic effects of reciprocal and reflexive affixes in the Basà sentences.

### 1.2 Significance of the study

The justification for this work hinges on the fact that the morphosyntax of Basà language is highly under-described. Therefore, studying Basà language at this level will

help to bridge the existing gap and to promote it. This descriptive study will add to the existing knowledge in the linguistic literature and create an awareness of how they operate in Basà language. It will make a meaningful contribution to scholarship and pave way for other language developers as well as for the learning and teaching languages. Furthermore, the study will also benefit other researchers with the greater understanding of the morphology and the syntax of Basà and unveil the interesting processes underlying the interface or the hybrid of morphology and syntax, especially, as it applies to verbal valency.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, nothing has been done in this area of the Basà language; therefore, this work serves as the pioneering work and reference point to other investigators in the language. Finally, several works have been done on various aspects of Basà linguistics, such as syntax, morphology, semantics, etc. but the morphosyntactic literature generally, is very scanty. This work therefore seeks to address this gap and make a contribution to the linguistic literature.

## 2.1 The Concept Reflexivity

Reflexive refers to a process where, in a construction, the subject and the object relate or refer to the same entity (see Crystal 2008; Lyons, 1969). It is an operation where “the agent and the patient are co-referential and can be thought of as occupying a single syntactic function” (Haspelmath & Sims 2012: 239). This process involves the action of the verb affecting the same person who performs the action. Mengistu (2000: 325) exemplifies the concept in Amharic verbs thus:

(3) at ‘t’ə ‘wash’ and lac ‘shave’

Derived with the prefix **t(ə)**, which expresses the action that affects the body parts, he thus suggests that the preferred reading for (3) is that of the reflexive. On the basis of this, he generalizes and defines the concept as “the actions that are normally performed on a body part.” This definition may be associated with some inadequacies with regards to what reflexive actually means. For example, *A* may perform an action on *B* which may never have any reflexive sense, for instance,

(4) **Bill injured Jane**

In (4), the action carried out on *Jane's* body was by *Bill* but does not have any reflexive sense; though the action was carried out on the body but by another person. The

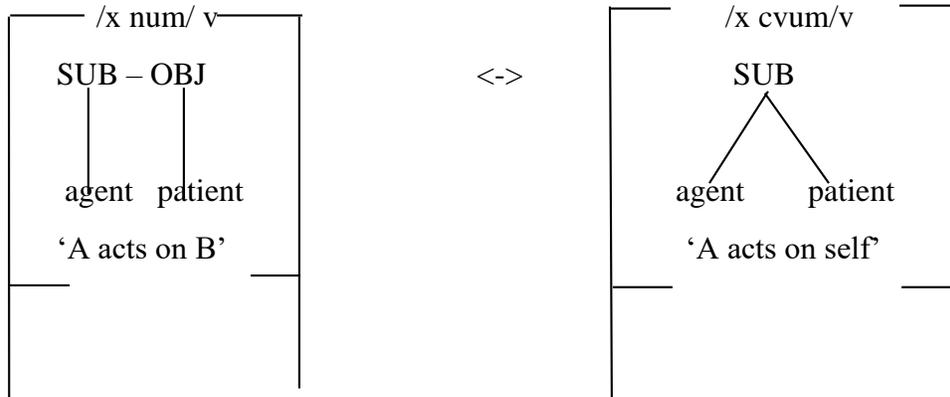
definition of Lyons better defines the concept ‘reflexive’, that is, “a reflexive construction is one which the subject and the object refer to the same person or thing” (1969: 361).

Haspelmath and Sims (2012: 239) argue that the reflexive is a valence changing operation where the agent and the patient are co-referential, therefore can be thought of as performing a single syntactic function. They exemplify this with Eastern American as shown in (5) and the rule given in (6) respectively.

- (5a) **may-ə**                      **iva--um**                      **e**                      **Seda -yi -n.**  
 mother-ART    wash PRS                      AUX                      eda- DAT-ART  
 ‘Mother is washing Seda’

- b. Seda-n**                                      **iva-cv-um**                                      **e.**                      (Kozinceva 1981: 239)  
 Seda (NOM)-ART                      wash-REFL-PRS                      AUX  
 ‘Seda is washing (herself)’

Haspelmath and Sims (2012: 239) express the rule underlying this construction in (6) thus:  
 (6)



They assert that, in the reflexive voice, the meaning of the verb remains the same, but both the agent and patient are co-referential with the same index as shown in the word-schema in (6). In what follows, we shall examine another concept of valence-changing operation, which closely relates to reflexives, that is, ‘reciprocal’.

## 2.2 The concept reciprocity

In a reciprocal construction, two or more participants are involved and they act on one another. That is, semantically, in this type of construction, the two arguments of the predicate act upon each other. In such a case, the subject is equally the object, or both of them are the same. Mazegia (2012:7) opines that “reciprocals are conceptually similar to reflexives; in both cases, the agent is at the same time a patient, which in effect results in argument reduction from both semantic and syntactic viewpoints.” Instead of two distinct Agent-Patient relations, which would result in four participants, the arguments would be limited to only two, i.e. Agent-Patient as well as the relation. This process consequently reduces the valency of the verb from four arguments to two in appearance (see Mazenga 2012). Mazenga (2012: 7) illustrates this in the Amharic language in (7) below:

- (7) **Lemma-(f)**            **nna** **Almazzə-**            **mərarrək’-u**  
 L-                            CONJ A                            RECP-bless REDUP-3PL.PFV  
 ‘Lemma and Almaz blessed each other.’

He reports Leslau (1995:469) as saying; any type A or B in Amharic verb may be converted into type C and preceded by **tə-** so as to express reciprocity. In other words, as shown in (7), the operator that converts any type of verb to a reciprocal is the prefix **tə-** attached to the verb stem.

Furthermore, in his comparative study of reciprocal of Amharic and Oromo languages, he reports that, the Oromo reciprocal construction is simpler. The morpheme which marks reciprocity, that is **wal** ‘each other’ directly attaches as a prefix to any conjugated transitive verb marked for plurality with no further changes to the verb stem. Example:

- (8) **Lemma- fi**            **Almas** **wal’-ejbis-an**  
 L-CONJ                    A                            RECP-bless-3PL. PFV  
 ‘Lemma and Almaz blessed each other.’

The structure of Amharic contrasts with that of Oromo, not only by the reciprocal prefix **tə-** but also the reduplication of the verb stem, see example (7).

Mutaka (2000:181) argues that reciprocal suffix modifies the meaning of the verb by adding the idea of reciprocity. “When suffixed to verb roots, the reciprocal suffix

indicates that the action inherent in the verb is received by more than one element.” They both function as the goal and the action of the sentence. Mutaka (2000) further contends that “inherently, transitive verbs become intransitive as the subjects of the verb (agent of the action) also function at the same time as the objects (goals/recipients of the action). Usually, the subject becomes plural as two (or more) participants in the action are at the same time agents of their own actions and goal/recipient of other’s action.”

The over-generalization opined by Mutaka (2000: 181) above may not account for all languages, that is, “inherently, transitive verbs become intransitive.” Though the derived reciprocal predicate appears to be intransitive in some languages, it is inherently transitive. In English, for example:

(9) **Bill and Jane love each other.**

Example (9) shows that the verb is still transitive, because **each other** is a personal pronoun that refers to **Bill** and **Jane**. For languages that employ only a reciprocal affix, such an affix in such languages implies reciprocity of the action of the verb. If we try to exemplify (9) in (10) below, the sentence will be incomplete, for example:

(10) \***Bill and Jane love** ■

In (10), the sentence is incomplete because it requires an internal argument which serves as the direct object for the predicate to make a complete thought. The dark box indicates a gap.

Mutaka (2000:182-183) illustrates this concept in some African languages such as Bafut, Akɔɔse and Tuki as shown in (11) below:

(11)

a. **Bafut (-nə)**

i) **SùùkɔŋəBì** ‘Suh loves Bin’

ii) **SùùbóBìkɔŋə**

Suh and Bin love+RECP

‘Suh and Bin love each other.’

b. **Akooɛ** (-en (the  $\epsilon$  deletes in front of a vowel))

i) **kòɔ** ‘to hate’ **kòɔ-n** ‘to hate each other’

ii) **Senzenéngomebékooé**

‘Senze and Ngome hate each other.’

c. **Tuki (-na)**

i) **Mbára à dɪngámPùtá**

Mbara he love+IMPPuta

‘Mbara loves Puta.’

ii) **Mbára nàPutavádɪngànam**

Mbara and Puta they love+RECP+IMP

‘Mbara and Puta love each other.’

In each of the three languages above, an infix operator, which attaches to the verb stem, triggers the reciprocal sense in each sentence, implying that the action characterized by the verb stem is reciprocated by the participants.

The preceding discussion has set the framework within which these verbal extensions resulting in valence reduction (reflexives and reciprocals) will be viewed in this investigation. In what follows, reflexives and reciprocals in Basà will be discussed and analyzed to examine their patterns of verbal extensions and the consequent effects.

### 3.1 Reflexives in the Basà language

The following section presents the analysis of reflexives in Basà. Each example consists of (a and b) to examine the basic structure and compare it with the morphologically inflected one to show how the reflexive affix extends the verb stem and syntactically reduce the arguments of the predicate. In each case, the valency of each predicate reduces by one argument. If, for example, a predicate is characterized by a two-place argument (i.e. a transitive verb), the attachment of a reflexive morpheme reduces it to a one-place argument

(intransitive). If, on the other hand, a verb is ditransitive, the reflexive inflectional affix reduces it to a transitive verb where the direct object is deleted and the indirect object becomes a direct object. Consider the following examples.

(12)

a.

i. **Ń**        **swoɕeum**        **wotù**  
 1SG        drive-PST        car  
 ‘I drove a car.’

ii. **Ń**        **màmà-swɕe**  
 1SG        REFL-drive-PST  
 ‘I drove myself.’

b.

i. **Ń**        **shepi**        **Làre**  
 1SG        take-PST        name  
 ‘I took/drove Lare.’

ii. **Gà-Làr**        **emèmè-shepi**  
 NOM name REFL        take-PST  
 ‘Lare took/drove herself.’

c.

i. **Ga**        **Jasà**        **na**        **Zájemè**        **beje**        **Zèyí**  
 NOM        name        CONJ        name        feed-PST        name  
 ‘Jasa and Zajeme fed Zeyi.’

ii. **Ga** **Jasa**        **na** **Zájemè** **à**        **màmà-beje**  
 DET name        CONJ name        AGRS-REFL feed-PST  
 ‘Jasa and Zajeme fed themselves.’

d.

i. **Bò**        **shere**        **bònaà**  
 3SG        cut/slaughter-PST        cow  
 ‘S/he slaughtered a cow.’

- ii. **Bò**                    **màmà-shẹ̀**  
 3SG                    REFL-cut/slaughter-PST  
 ‘S/he slaughter him/herself.’
- e.
- i. **Gè-Jére**            **jibi**                    **Swín**  
 NOM-name    beat-PST            name  
 ‘Jere beat Swin.’
- ii. **Gè-Jére**            **mèmè-jibi**  
 NOM-name    REFL-beat  
 ‘Jere beat himself.’
- f.
- i. **Bú**                    **lubi**            **Shiẹn**  
 2SG                    love            name  
 ‘You love Shien.’
- ii. **Bù**                    **mèmè-lubi**  
 3SG                    REFL-love  
 ‘You love yourself.’

In each of the examples in (12), the verbs in the basic sentences are characterized by two place arguments, that is, the subject and the object. As soon as the reflexive prefix attaches to the verb stem in each example, it changes the verb from its inherent transitivity to intransitive. Hence, in each case in (12ii), the predicate does not subcategorize an internal argument, that is, this verbal extension has the effect of decreasing the verb’s valency by one argument. As such, the valency of the verb is not fixed. This morphosyntactic process manipulates the verb’s valency or realigns the grammatical relations of a verb’s arguments (see Mutaka 1997).

There are few verbs that, despite this process, still retain their transitivity, that is, they do not convert from transitive to intransitive; rather, they remain transitive even when the reflexive prefix applies. This set is exemplified below:

(13)

- a.
- i. **Bì**      **jeji**                      **bùbwa**  
 3SG      cut-PST                      finger  
 ‘S/he cut her/his/self.’
- ii. **Bù**      **mèmè-jeji**                      **bùbwa**  
 3SG      REFL-cut-PST                      finger  
 ‘S/he cut her/himself.’
- b.
- i. **Ń**      **dọ**                      **ẹmèni**  
 1SG bathe-PST water  
 ‘I bathed.’
- ii. **Ń**      **màmà-dọ**                      **meni**  
 1SG REFL-bathe-PST water  
 ‘I bathed myself.’

These categories of verbs are rare in Basà. Generally, when the reflexive affix attaches to the verb stem, it automatically converts a bivalent verb to a monovalent one. The following subsection analyzes reciprocals in Basà.

### 3.2 Reciprocals in Basà

Both reciprocal and reflexive processes employ the same prefix **màmà-**. This prefix can be modified to form different allomorphs based on the verb root to which it attaches (see examples 12 & 13). This is as a result of progressive assimilation; where the prefix, in anticipation of the phonetic properties of its host, assumes a phonetic shape with which it is compatible. They contrast simply by the reciprocal receiving an additional affix, namely, a suffix. Both of them form a single unit around the verb stem. This process is described as ‘circumfixation’, which is a combination of prefix and suffix treated as a single unit (Matthews, 2007: 57). This process is exemplified as follows:

(14)

a.

i. **Gà- Jére lubi Shẹ̀n**  
 NOM-name love name  
 ‘Jere loves Sheen.’

ii. **Gà- Jére na Shẹ̀n mòmò-lubo-nù**  
 NOM-name CONJ name REFL-love-RECP  
 ‘Jere and Sheen love each other.’

iii. **Òdòmòdò-lubo-nù**  
 3PL REFL-love-RECP  
 ‘They love each other.’

b.

i. **Gà- Zájẹ̀mẹ̀ twajẹ̀ Rẹ̀cé**  
 NOM-name insult-PST name  
 ‘Zajeme insulted Rice.’

ii. **Gà-Zájẹ̀mẹ̀ na Rẹ̀cé mà̀mà̀twaga -nọ̀**  
 NOM-name CONJ name REFL-insult-RECP  
 ‘Zajeme and Rice insulted each other.’

c.

i. **Gà-Jére imi Zẹ̀yínàba**  
 NOM-name hate name  
 ‘Jere hates Zeinaba.’

ii. **Gà- Jére na Zẹ̀yínàba mòmò-imo-nù**  
 NOM-name CONJ name REFL-hate-RECP  
 ‘Jere and Zeinaba hate each other.’

d.

i. **Ń zhegeni Hunu**  
 1SG visit-PST name  
 ‘I visited Hunu.’

- ii. **Tú mòmò-zhogo-nù**  
 1PL REFL-visit-HAB-PST-RECP  
 ‘We visited each other.’

e.

- i. **Gà-Sheneni swe Zẹkẹ mayagà**  
 NOM-name drink-PST name wine  
 ‘Sheneni fined/punished Zeke.’

- ii. **Gà- Sheneni na Zẹk ẹmòmò-swo-nù mayagà**  
 NOM-Sheneni CONJ name REFL-drink-PST-RECP wine  
 ‘Shenenin and Zeke fined/ punished each other.’

- iii. **Òd mòmò-swo -nù mayagà**  
 3PL REFL-drink-PST-RECP wine  
 ‘They fined each other.’

In (14), the process is characterized by valence decrease when the affix (circumfix) of reciprocity is attached to the verb stem. The semantics of the derived sentences in (ii or iii) are that, the actions which the verbs describe are mutually received or reciprocated by the same participants. The nouns also serve as the agents of the same action. The effect of this affix is a decrease in the verb’s valency by one argument vis-a-vis the basic sentence. Reflexives contrast with reciprocals in the following ways:

- i. In a reflexive situation, the action of the verb affects the same person(s) who performs the action, that is “the subject and the object refer to the same person or thing” (Lyons 1969:361).
- ii. Reciprocity refers to a situation where two parties or participants mutually act upon each other.

The two processes are similar. In the former, the action goes to the agent or actor, but in the latter, the action is mutually carried out and the agents or participants mutually receive the action.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper has discussed two types of verbal extensions that trigger valency decrease in Basà. The first one is a reflexive construction. In Basà, the process involves prefixing the verb stem with the morpheme **màmà-** which semantically implies that the action of the subject (agent) goes back to the performer of the action. This results in a decrease in the verb's valency. In such cases, a bivalent verb becomes monovalent and a ditransitive verb becomes bivalent, subcategorizing only two arguments instead of its inherent three place arguments. A similar process characterizes reciprocity on the other hand, which means two parties or participants equally acting upon each other. The difference is the effects of the actions, which are mutually received or suffered by both participants, and the fact that two affixal processes, which realize a single unit called 'circumfix' is used.

This study, apart from the findings highlighted above, also found that both processes result in valency decrease and adjustment in semantics of the basic structure.

The findings in this study can be replicated in some related languages or compared to other languages to examine the similarities or dissimilarities of these intricate processes. It can also stimulate further studies in syntax, morphology, and morphosyntax, which will make tangible contribution to the African linguistic literature.

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## THE SYNTAX OF MULTI-WORD EXPRESSIONS IN YORULISH CODE-MIXING

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### Abstract

Scholars have discussed Yorulish (Yorùbá–English) code-switching/mixing from the perspectives of sociolinguistics, contact linguistics and pragmatics, among others; but the syntax–semantics aspect has not enjoyed much scholarly scrutiny, if any. Multi-word expressions (MWEs) are characterised by non-compositionality as they comprise two or more words, which have a unique meaning not traceable to any of the combined words. This study examines the syntactic behaviour of MWEs in Yorulish code-switched grammar, with an eye to the meaning before and after code-switching/mixing. The adopted theoretical framework is a combination of Myers-Scotton’s Matrix Language Frame theory and Chomsky’s Transformational Generative Grammar. Data were purposively sampled from standard dictionaries and textbooks on English and Yorùbá languages, and code-switched/mixed with words from the alternate language. The MWEs selected are idioms (from English and Yorùbá); phrasal verbs, phrasal-prepositional verbs and prepositional verbs (from English); and splitting verbs and serial verb constructions (from Yorùbá). The study suggests that switching is allowed when components of MWEs are relatively free as in English prepositional verbs, but barred when they are fixed as in Yorùbá splitting verbs and idioms. Nevertheless, apart from idioms where both English and Yorùbá substrates resist switching, the other Yorùbá MWEs are more impervious to switching than do those of English origin, which suggests that Yorùbá is the base language.

**Keywords:** Yorulish, code-mixing, multi-word expressions, Matrix Language Frame theory

### 1. Introduction

Yorulish is a term coined by Lamidi and Ajongolo (2001). It is a blend of Yorùbá and English, and refers to the combined substrates of Yorùbá-English code-mixed/switched linguistic variety. Code-switching is described as a switch from one

language to another in the course of speaking with respect to topic, tone, audience, situation, mood, etc. (Bentahila and Davies 1983). Code-mixing on the other hand is the mixture of words from languages in contact (Essien 1995). They are both referred to respectively as inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching (Muysken 2000). This study is based on intra-sentential code-switching, otherwise called code-mixing.

Multi-word expressions (MWEs) are words that are usually collocated everywhere they occur in sentences. Such expressions, which are found in different languages, include (but are not limited to) idioms (from English and Yorùbá), phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal-prepositional verbs (from English); and splitting verbs and serial verbs (from Yorùbá). This paper discusses all MWEs identified in the preceding sentence. The MWEs refer to combinations of a lexical verb and one or more words or particles. The particles are either adverbs or prepositions or both. When the particle is an adverb, the multi-word combination is a phrasal verb. When the particle is a preposition, the combination is a prepositional verb; and when both adverb and preposition particles co-occur with the verb, the combination is a phrasal-prepositional verb (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1979; Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002; van Gelderen, 2010). All these originate from the English language.

The splitting verbs and the serial verbs discussed here originate from Yorùbá language. Splitting verbs have the peculiar nature of either occurring alone or being split into two (Awobuluyi 1978), whereas serial verbs refer to a series of verbs that occur adjacent to one another in a structure (Lawal 1986). Regardless of the combination, the MWE constitutes a unit of meaning; it is not necessarily an aggregate of the meaning of the individual components. The combined words behave like a single verb. In this paper, the behaviour of MWE verbs in Yorulish code-switching is explored within the purview of Matrix Language Frame and Transformational Generative Grammar, a competence grammar. The paper looks at issues of compositionality, grammaticality and acceptability.

## **2. Syntax-semantics interface in Yorulish Code-switching**

This eclectic study is being carried out from a combination of different theories and concepts. The first is Matrix Language Frame (MLF), propounded by Myers-Scotton. Myers-Scotton (1993b, 2002) has tried to formalise a psycholinguistic/grammatical theory of code-switching. She presents the Matrix Language Frame (MLF), which posits the occurrence of a main or base (or host) language and an embedded language in a code-switched grammar. The main language is said to donate most of the functional categories in a code-switched structure. She justifies this through the two twin concepts of (i) Morpheme Order Principle, in which case the order of the morpheme will be in

the Matrix Language (ML) structure and (ii) System Morpheme principle, in which the system morphemes come from the host language.

The second is Chomsky's transformational generative grammar (TGG). Although TGG has many models, this paper will be concerned with the concept of competence, which runs through them all. Competence is the ideal native speaker/hearer's ability to use a language flawlessly. This study is located in this theory, since it is concerned with the acceptability and grammaticality of expressions. A sentence is grammatical if it obeys all the relevant rules guiding the formation of the sentence; otherwise, not. Borsley (1991) draws a line between grammaticality and acceptability. A structure that is grammatical may be acceptable or unacceptable. A structure that violates the rule(s) of grammar is unacceptable. When a structure is too long for the perceptive ability of an individual, it is considered unacceptable. In the same vein, a sentence that requires pen and paper analysis before it can be understood is also unacceptable. This study will be looking at structures in the context of the switching of codes from one to the other of the languages involved in code-switching. In this sense, the switch from one code to another is a major means of determining whether a structure is grammatical or acceptable. In other words, if a structure tolerates switching, the product of the switching will be grammatical and acceptable. If, however, a structure resists switching, the product of switching any of its components will be considered ungrammatical and unacceptable.

Of particular relevance to this study is the concept of head. The head is the most important word in a phrase. It is unique and obligatory in phrases. The head has been defined by many scholars (such as Jackendoff, 1977 and Chomsky, 1986); but we shall be guided by the definitions offered in Hoeksema (1990: 2):

- (A) Semantic: The head of A is a hyperonym of A, i.e. when A denotes a set X, the example of A denotes a superset of X
- (B) Distributional: The head of X is a part with the same distribution as X.
- (C) Morphosyntactic: The head is the locus of Inflection
- (D) Technical: The head of X is the part, which determines the category of X.

This study adopts these definitions as they determine the grammaticality and acceptability of elements under the scope of the head. The study focuses particularly on the implication of the technical and semantic definitions because they account for subcategorisation and semantic selection features.

While syntax deals with the arrangement of words in an expression, semantics deals with the meaning of such expressions. Regardless of the syntactic structure, words

can occur freely or co-occur with other words regularly with constant meaning (collocation). One area of syntax–semantics interface is compositionality. “*Compositionality* refers to the degree to which the meaning of a MWE can be predicted by combining the meanings of its components” (Korkontzelos and Manandhar, 2009: 65). MWEs or collocated expressions are said to be compositional if each word contributes to the totality of the meaning of an expression. According to Carnie (2010: 22),

The hypothesis of compositionality holds that the syntactic tree is the road map for this semantic computation. That is, semantic composition applies precisely in the order specified by the hierarchical constituent structure. If two elements *x* and *y* form a constituent excluding *z*, then the meaning of the (*x*, *y*) pair is computed before *z* is added into the mix.

This means that words participate structurally and semantically in the realization of the structure and meaning of expressions. Each word has a meaning and belongs to a syntactic category. So, when a word is removed from an expression, it leaves a gap in the structure and meaning of the expression. For instance, the expression, a young man, is compositional, referring to a male that has not matured. If we remove young, the meaning is reduced because the meaning of young has been left out in the overall interpretation.

Conversely, a structure is not compositional if we cannot identify the contribution of each of its component parts. In other words, all the words in the structure form a unit of meaning. In this sense, when a word is removed from the group, the initial meaning is disrupted or unrealised. Rather, we get a literal meaning or a nonsense meaning. The whole expression is listed in the lexicon as a unit of meaning. In the following example, for instance, if any word is taken away, the total meaning collapses. In eat humble pie, if we take away humble, the meaning changes and becomes compositional: eat pie. This is a literal translation. Sometimes, however, certain collocated expressions can be twisted or modified. This, however, makes the expression susceptible to literal translations or changes in meaning. For instance, look can be collocated with different particles or prepositions. Hence, we have look out (be vigilant/face), look in (look briefly) and look for (search for). Considering the different meanings indicated against each expression in the brackets, the first two belong to MWEs, the last does not. The expressions with deep/embedded meaning as opposed to those with literal meanings include idioms and metaphors. Regardless of the compositional status of MWEs, however, there is an internal unity orchestrated by the head and the complements in conformity with the rules of the language. If, for instance, a syntactic rule is broken,

the expression becomes unacceptable. Hence, MWEs also have internal syntactic rules guiding their components.

Given the fact that a set of words also with unified meaning allows splits or interchange with particles and some expressions have a unified meaning for a number of words without switches, this study investigates the phenomenon of code-mixing in both cases, to see the speech patterns and how mixing occurs as well as how meaning is affected by the phenomenon. With MLF theory in the background, and Competence and Compositionality at the forefront, the paper is expected to distinguish between literal and idiomatic expressions through the phenomenon of code-mixing. This study looks at the syntax-semantics relationship of words within MWEs. We examine how MWEs behave when they are code-mixed and identify what makes them grammatical or ungrammatical.

### 3. Previous studies

Several studies in code-switching have been carried out on different aspects of the phenomena. These include the motivation for switching between languages (Myers-Scotton 1993a, Auer 1998), classification of switches (Muysken 2000), psycholinguistic perspectives on code-switching (Green 1998, Treffers-Daller 1998, Toribio 2001), the grammatical basis of code-switching as well as constraints that apply to each pair of mixed languages (Poplack 1980, Bentahila and Davies 1983, Myers-Scotton 1993b, 2000, MacSwan 2000, van Gelderen and MacSwan 2008), bilingual children's code-switching (Treffers-Daller 1998, Hoeksema 1990, Carnie 2010, Cantone & Müller 2008, Licerias et al. 2008) and code-switching in e-mails (Hinrichs 2006). Many studies have also been carried out on pairs of languages, but very few exist on code-switching involving more than two languages (Ogechi 2002, Kyuchukov 2002) and, still less are studies on written code-switching especially on virtual speech communities (Montes-Alcalá, 2007; Lamidi, 2013).

Studies have also been conducted on pairs of languages such as Spanish-English (Pfaff 1979; Poplack 1980, Sankoff and Poplack 1981, Franco and Solorio 2007); Arabic-French (Bentahila and Davies 1983), American Sign Language- English (Lucas and Valli, 1992), English-Creole (Hinrichs 2006), Swahili-English (Myers-Scotton 1993 a&b, 2002), Turkish-Dutch (Backus and Eversteijni 2002) and Yorùbá-English (Banjo 1983, Goke-Pariola 1983, Lamidi 2013).

In Yorùbá- English CS, the studies have been largely on sociolinguistics (see Banjo 1983, 1996; Goke-Pariola, 1983; Bamiro, 2006, Ayeomoni, 2006; and Babalola & Taiwo 2009) and on morphology and syntax (see Lamidi & Ajongolo, 2001; Lamidi 2003, 2004, 2008 a&b and 2013). Lamidi and Ajongolo (2001) discuss the morphosyn-

tactic structure of heads in Yorulish code-switched words. The study identifies morphemes from the Yorùbá substrate as heads of their respective code-switched words, thus confirming Myers-Scotton's MLF theory. The same conclusion was reached in Lamidi (2004) which looks at the scopal authority of heads in the Yorùbá-English code-mixed grammar. According to the study, functional heads such as complementiser and determiner regulate the structure of a phrase; lexical heads determine the type of word that follows them. Both head types subcategorise or determine the structure of their complements (which fall within their scope). The study concludes that Yorùbá is the Matrix language. These two papers are relevant to the current effort, which also discusses Yorùbá-English code-mixing. It is important to emphasise that the current study involves syntax-semantics interface, which the earlier study did not consider. The study will benefit from the concept of head and scopal authority within phrases. It will explore grammaticality and acceptability from the perspective of subcategorisation and s-selection.

Another relevant study is Lamidi (2008a). It investigates hybrid verbs in Yorùbá-English code-mixing. The study identifies clean verbs, which exhibit the normal features of verbs from English and Yorùbá from their respective source substrates, and hybrid verbs, which have idiosyncratic features different from what obtains in their respective source languages. Lamidi (2004) is principally on how a head regulates the items that are dependent on it in its scope and Lamidi (2008a) is principally on the nature of lexical verbs. However, the current study is on multi-word expressions; and, to my knowledge, no study so far has discussed Yorùbá-English code-mixing in multi-word expressions, least of all, its syntax-semantics interface, grammaticality and acceptability, which are the foci of the current paper. Therefore, the current study pushes forward the discussion in Lamidi (2008a) as it explores the behaviour of a variety of code-switched MWE structures in different contexts.

#### **4. Data Collection**

Data comprising MWEs were collected from the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of English (for English language) and Awobuluyi (1978) (for Yorùbá language). Additional data were also generated through introspection by the researcher, who has native speaker competence in Yorùbá. The data collected were phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs and phrasal prepositional verbs (from English); serial verb constructions, splitting verbs (from Yorùbá); and idioms (English and Yorùbá). Of all these, those MWEs that are relatively in common use among the Nigerian populace were purposively selected for code-mixing with the other language. The data from English were code-mixed with words from Yorùbá while data from Yorùbá were code-

mixed with words from English. Idioms from English were code-mixed with words from Yorùbá while idioms from Yorùbá were code-mixed with words from English. The products of the code-mixing processes were analysed for grammaticality and acceptability. In the data that follows, English expressions are presented in italic typeface while Yorùbá expressions have normal typeface. This is to distinguish the two codes in each structure. The MWEs are presented in bold print.

## 5. Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb consists of a verb and an adverb, both forming a unit of meaning. However, in English grammar, because the adverb ‘no longer always expresses place or direction’ (van Gelderen, 2010: 91), it is called a particle in this context. Quirk and Greenbaum (1979) have classified phrasal verbs into two: intransitive phrasal verbs and transitive phrasal verbs. In Yorulish grammar, the phrasal verb is contributed by the English substrate.

### 5.1 Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

Transitive phrasal verbs take objects while intransitive phrasal verbs do not. Here are some examples of intransitive phrasal verbs from the Yorulish grammar:

1a. *Plane*    **yẹn**            **ti**        *take off*  
 Plane    the            ASP    taken off  
 ‘The plane has taken off.’

b. **Olú** *turn up*                    **ní**        *meeting*        **yẹn**    *unexpectedly*.  
 Olú turned up                    at        meeting        that    unexpectedly  
 ‘Olu turned up at the meeting unexpectedly.’

c. **Şé**        **ó**                    **ń**        *catch on?*  
 Q        3SG                    CONT    catch on  
 ‘Does s/he catch on?’

d. *Man*        **yẹn**                    *break down*    **lójjì**.  
 Man        that                    break down    suddenly  
 ‘That man broke down suddenly.’

- e. Ó ñ *play around*  
 3sg CONT play around  
 ‘He’s playing around.’

The first observation about these sentences is that the system morphemes are usually from the Yorùbá substrate. Normally, Yorùbá verbs are always not inflected for tense and agreement. This lack of inflection also occurs on the first words in the phrasal verbs. In the foregoing examples, for instance, the tense and agreement features of English are replaced by the non-inflected form of Yorùbá, even on English verbs. In addition, function words such as perfective and progressive aspect markers (*ti* and *ń* respectively) are in Yorùbá. The clitic (*ó*), the determiner (*yẹn*) and the question marker (*şé*) are all donated by the Yorùbá substrate. In addition, following the Morpheme Order Principle, we can see that the word order favoured is that of Yorùbá. For instance, *meeting yẹn* has the structure N + Determiner, whereas the reverse, Determiner + N, is the structure permitted in English. English polar questions involve the use of auxiliary-NP inversion, but the polar question in (1c) uses a question marker that is attached sentence-initially. These features are peculiar to the Yorùbá substrate. In these and subsequent examples in this paper, these are the overriding features. Hence, we confirm that Yorùbá is the host language (following the ideas of Myers-Scotton, 1993) in the code-switched grammar under discussion as observed in previous literature.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the examples from the perspective of MWEs, the phrasal verbs, as a unit, do not have objects. Rather, they are either left bare (1a, c & e) or followed by adverbials (1b & d). In all the examples, switching of other elements in the sentences are permitted but switching items within phrasal verbs to Yorùbá is not permitted. Otherwise, the sentence will be barred as in the following:

- 2a. \*Olú *take kúrò*  
 b. \*Olú *turn lókè ni meeting yẹn unexpectedly.*  
 c. \**Man yẹn kán offlójji*  
 d. \*Şé o ñ mú *on?*  
 e. \*O ñ *play àyíká*

<sup>1</sup>To avoid repetitions of the same ideas, the status of Yorùbá as the host language in the code-switched grammar will not be pursued further in other examples below. Readers may wish to read up on the subject in Banjo (1983), Goke-Pariola, (1983) and Bamiro (2006), among others.

As examples (2a-e) show, switching of this class of phrasal verbs into Yorùbá causes ungrammaticality and is therefore barred. What accounts for the ungrammaticality? We can trace this to the heads of the phrasal verbs: **take**, **turn**, **kán**, **mú** and **play**. The heads, following the ideas of Lamidi (2004), have scope over the particles and determine the type of word that follows them and whether such words or particles can be switched from English to Yorùbá without negative repercussions. As observed in examples (2a-e), switching is not allowed between the head and the particle in the intransitive phrasal verb. However, a phrase of Yorùbá origin can come before and/or after the phrasal verb as seen in (1a-e). Hence, the intransitive phrasal verb can be seen as an embedded island (Myers-Scotton, 1993b). The structures also fail on the pedestal of acceptability. This is because the meanings do not tally with the intended ones depicted in the translations.

By invoking Hoeksema's descriptions of head above, we can identify the words **take**, **turn**, **catch**, **break** and **play** as heads in their respective phrasal verbs in (1a-e). The heads have semantic content, which determines the meaning of the respective structures. They occur at the beginning of the expressions (Distributional content), they collocate with the particles and earn the structure its name (Technical content) and they are changeable, depending on agreement or tense factors: **he turned up**; **she turns up** (Morphosyntactic content). Hence, in this and subsequent examples from the English substrate, the first word in the MWE is the head.

This conclusion appears to contradict Williams' (1982) Right Hand Head Rule, which states that the inflection to the head occurs at the right-hand side of the word. To accommodate this claim, we shall posit that the inflections occur to the right-hand side of the word which is within another structure. However, since this is beyond the scope of this paper, and it will no longer be pursued here.

## 5.2 Transitive phrasal verbs

As in lexical verbs, the transitive phrasal verbs require an object. This fact is exemplified in the following:

- 3a. **Wón**        *switch on*        **iná**        *sitting room*  
       they        switch on        light        sitting room  
       'They switched on the light in the sitting room.'
- b. **A**        *set up committee*        **tuntun**  
       we        set up committee        new  
       'We set up a new committee.'

- c. **A ti call off strike yẹn**  
 We ASP call off strike that  
 ‘We have called off that strike.’
- d. **Ó fẹ́ find out ǹnkan tí wọ̀n ń plan**  
 3sg want find out what that they CONT plan  
 ‘S/he wants to find out what they are planning.’
- e. **Òun l’ó bring over àwọ̀n boys yẹn.**  
 3sg FOC bring over PL boys that  
 ‘It was s/he that brought over those boys.’

In examples (3a-e), each of the sentences may not be complete if the noun phrases adjoining the phrasal verbs are removed. Hence, the phrasal verbs are transitive. The phrasal verbs in these examples also reject switching within the components of the phrasal verbs. However, they may allow Yorùbá words to come in-between them. In this sense, we cannot tag them as embedded language (EL) like their intransitive counterparts. Here are examples; they have the respective translations in (3) above.

- 4a. **Wọ̀n switch iná sitting room on.**  
 b. **A set òkè committee tuntun up.**  
 c. **A ti call strike yẹn off.**  
 d. **Ó fẹ́ find ǹnkan ti wọ̀n ń plan out.**  
 e. **Òun l’ó bring àwọ̀n boys yẹn over.**

Again, as the examples from both types of phrasal verbs show, switching is permitted within the sentences containing the multi-word, but the phrasal verbs are not switched into Yorùbá, as exemplified below:

- 5a. **\*Wọ̀n yí on iná sitting room.**  
 b. **\*A set òkè committee tuntun.**  
 c. **\*A ti pè off strike yẹn.**  
 d. **\*Ó fẹ́ find ìta ǹnkan ti wọ̀n ń plan.**  
 e. **\*Òun l’ó mú over àwọ̀n boys yẹn**

Examples (5a-e) demonstrate that switching is barred for this class of phrasal verbs. The question is: what is the nature of switching in these constructions? Consider the following additional examples with variations in switch patterns:

- 6a. **Olú give up**  
 ‘Olu gave up.’  
 b. \***Olú give òkè**  
 c. \***Olú fún up**

- 7a. **Şadé give in**  
 ‘Sade gave in.’  
 b. \***Şadé give inú**  
 c. \***Şadé fún in**

- 8a. **Àwọn terrorists blow up motor yẹn.**  
 b. **Àwọn terrorists blow motor yẹn up.**  
 ‘The terrorists blew up the vehicle.’  
 c. \***Àwọn terrorist fọ motor yẹn up.**  
 d. \***Àwọn terrorists blow motor yẹn sókè.**

In these sentences, the components of the phrasal verbs are switched either into Yorùbá or English (6b&c, 7b&c, 8c&d). While the first item is switched into Yorùbá in (6&7c) the second word is switched into Yorùbá in (6&7b). The position is reversed for (8c&d), respectively. In all cases, the result is ungrammatical and unacceptable.

Nevertheless, there are some good cases, which confirms that individual heads also determine the grammaticality and acceptability of the code-switched expressions:

- 9a. **Ó ní act fún president**  
 ‘He’s acting for the president.’  
 b. **Wọ̀n adhere to/abide by the rule**  
 c. **Wọ̀n adhere sí/abide pẹ̀lú rule yẹn**  
 ‘They abided by/adhered to that rule.’

In these examples, *act for* becomes *act fún*, *adhere to/adhere by* becomes *adhere sí/abide pẹ̀lú*. Instances of these are not many in our data.

Hence, within phrasal verbs, switching components of the multi-word verbs into Yorùbá is usually disallowed as evidenced in the bad cases. The first reason given above is about the head determining what comes after it. This is a syntactic reason. The second possible reason, a semantic reason, is that the multi-word is a unified phrase

with a recurrent meaning. If switching is allowed in any of its components, the meaning may be lost or distorted. This is a confirmation that the phrasal verb is a form of idiom, as widely observed in the literature.

## 6. Prepositional verbs

Prepositional verbs contain a verb and a preposition; hence the name ‘prepositional verbs’. However, if we follow van Gelderen’s (2010) ideas, the preposition may be seen as a particle. Either way, it does not affect the analysis here; hence ‘preposition’ is adopted. In the following examples, there are different patterns regarding switching.

### 6.1 Prepositional verbs that reject switching

In this type of structure, switching is barred within components of a prepositional verb, though other constituents within the sentence in which the prepositional verb occurs may be switched. Consider the following; the prepositional verbs are typed in bold:

- 10a. Adé **look after** bàbá è.  
 Ade looked after father his  
 ‘Ade looked after his father.’  
 b. \*Adé **wo after** bàbá è  
 c. \*Adé **look** léyìn bàbá è
- 11a. Excitement wọn ti **die down**  
 Excitement their ASP die down  
 ‘Their excitement has died down.’
- 12.a. \*Excitement wọn ti **kú down**  
 b. \*Excitement wọn ti **die sílẹ̀**  
 c. \*Excitement wọn ti **kú sílẹ̀**
- 13a. Wọn **put off** *decision* wọn  
 They put off decision their  
 ‘They put off their decision.’  
 b. \*Wọn gbé **decision** wọn *off*  
 c. \*Wọn **put decision** wọn *kúrò*

- 14a. **Wón** *stand up nígbà t'ó* **dé**  
 They stand up when that: he arrive  
 'They stood up when he arrived.'
- b. \***Wón** *stand dúró nígbà tó arrive/when he arrived*  
 c. \***Wón** *dìde up nígbà tó arrive/when he arrived*  
 d. **Wón** *dìde dúró when he arrived/nígbà tó arrive*
- 15a. *Discussion go on* **fún ìgbà pípé**  
 Discussion go on for time late  
 'The discussion went on for a long time.'
- b. \**Discussion* **lọ on** *fún ìgbà pípé*  
 c. \**Discussion* **went síwájú** *for a long time*

In these examples, the first word in each prepositional verb is the head. The switching of either part of the prepositional verb is not allowed, as the starred (b & c) examples in all the examples show. Note, however, that in (14d), both components of the prepositional verbs are switched into Yorùbá. This is possible because the two words collocate in Yorùbá but a Yorùbá word and an English word that jointly form a prepositional verb may not collocate.

## 6.2 Preposition deletion pattern

Another pattern is that in which the English preposition is elided in the code-switched grammar, leaving only the lexical verb. Notice also that this elision does not affect the original meaning of the multi-word verb. This is another method of avoiding ungrammaticality in the code-switched grammar. Consider the example below.

- 16a. **Ó** *approve of your behaviour*  
 3sg approve of your behaviour  
 'S/he approves of your behaviour.'
- b. **Ó** *approve* – *behaviour* ẹ  
 c. **Ó** *approve* (?of) *behaviour* ẹ

In this example, the second part of the prepositional verb (**of**) occurs in (16a) in what Myers-Scotton (1993b) calls embedded language (EL) (a structure that is wholly of a particular substrate in a code-switched language and thus maintaining the rules of that language only). It is deleted in (16b), following the rules of the matrix language (in this case, Yorùbá). In (16c), however, the structure is of doubtful acceptability. Further data may be required to establish its status.

### 6.3 Prepositional verbs that permit switching

The third pattern is that in which the preposition is switched from English into Yorùbá. Again, the original meaning of the multi-word prepositional verb is not affected. This is exemplified in (17-22).

- 17a. *Principal call fún water*  
 ‘The principal called for water.’  
 b. \**Principal call for omi*  
 c. *Heavy smoking ní lead to sí cancer*  
 ‘Heavy smoking leads to cancer.’
- 18a. *Ó blame accident yẹn on the driver (embedded language)*  
 ‘She/He blamed the accident on the driver.’  
 b. *Ó blame accident yẹn l’órí driver.*
- 19a. *Ó lè order drink fún mi*  
 ‘He/she can order a drink for me.’  
 b. *Ó lè order drink for me (embedded language)*
- 20a. *Ó explain fún mi*  
 ‘He/She explained to me.’  
 b. *Ó explain to me (embedded language)*
- 21a. *Ó forgive mi fún rude remarks mi*  
 ‘He/She forgave me for my rude remarks’  
 b. *Ó dárí jì mí for my rude remarks (embedded language)*
- 22a. *Ó congratulate è fún convocation è*  
 ‘She/he congratulated him/her on his/her convocation’  
 b. *Wọ̀n abide pẹ̀lú terms wa*  
 ‘They abided with our terms’  
 c. *Ó refer sí article yẹn*  
 ‘He/she referred to that article.’

In these examples, the prepositional verbs are **call for**, **lead to**, **blame on**, **order [something] for**, **explain to**, **forgive for** and **congratulate on**. These are switched respectively, to **call fún**, **lead sí**, **blame l’órí**, **order fún**, **explain fún**, **forgive fún** and

**congratulate fún.** The possibility of switching here ensued from the fact that the lexical verbs have the major meaning while the preposition is merely playing a supportive role by just linking the verb to the NP that serves as the complement. Again, switches are allowed only on the second element of the prepositional verbs without any negative repercussion. However, when the second element of the MWE is in English, an embedded language must be formed with this second element as in (18a, 19b, 20b, 21b) to avoid ungrammaticality. Finally, the structure is grammatical if the prepositional verb occurs with a switch (as in 17a, 18b, 20a, 21a & 22), with an intervening element (18, 19, 21 & 22a) and along with embedded language (18a, 19b, 20b & 21b), which are all good cases.

## 7. Phrasal-Prepositional Verbs

These are verbs followed by two particles: an adverb and a preposition (in that order). Just like what obtains under prepositional verbs, some prepositional phrasal verbs allow switching of their components, but some do not as in the following examples:

- 23a. Wọn      ò                      **look down on**      àwọn      *neighbours*      wọn  
 They      CONT                      look down on      PL                      neighbours      their  
 ‘They are looking down on their neighbours/They look down on their neighbours.’
- b. O                      **walk out on me!**  
 ‘You walked out on me!’

There is also a pattern where switching is allowed. However, only the last component of the MWE can be switched.

- 24a. Wọn      **put**                      **è up**      **fún**      *eviction.*  
 They      put                      3sg up      for                      eviction  
 ‘They put her/him up for eviction.’
- b. Ó **put problem**      yẹn      **down sí**      *inexperience.*  
 3sg put problem that down to inexperience  
 ‘She/He put the problem down to inexperience.’
- c. Mi                      ò                      lè                      **put up**      pẹ̀lú                      è                      mọ́.  
 I                      NEG can                      put up      with                      3sg                      again  
 ‘I can’t put up with her/him/it any longer.’

- d. Biola *come up*      *pẹ̀lú* *new ideas/theory* tuntun.  
 Biola come up      with new ideas/theory new  
 ‘Biola came up with new ideas/a new theory.’

In comparison with what happened in the discussion on prepositional verbs, the preposition is observed to be the only item that switches to Yorùbá wherever switching is permitted. This means that the lexical verb and the adverbial particle are not switched. Again, while some phrasal-prepositional verbs allow switching, some do not. This implies that there are different levels of non-compositionality among the MWEs. The more compositional an expression is, the more it permits switches; the less compositional it is, the less it permits switching.

## 8. Splitting Verbs

Splitting verbs are contributed to the code-switched structure by the Yorùbá substrate. They refer to verbs that have two parts each of which cannot occur independently and be meaningful. Hence, they normally co-occur either as a combined word or as splits in a sentence. According to Awobuluyi (1978: 53), “when used with an object, each verb in this class is always split into two halves, and their object is inserted between them... Many of them have idiomatic meanings.” Examples include *bàjẹ* ‘spoil’, *gbàgbọ* ‘believe’ and *túká* ‘disperse.’

When they occur together as a word, splitting verbs can be switched wholly into English as in the following examples:

- 25a. *Computer* yí ti *bàjẹ/crash*  
 ‘This computer has got spoilt/crashed’  
 b. *Àwọn students* ti *túká/disperse*  
 ‘Students have dispersed’  
 c. *Ó gbàgbọ/believe* pé *man* yẹn *try*  
 ‘She/He believed that that man tried.’

However, when they are split, neither part of a splitting verb may be switched into English, but rather English nouns/words can come in between them.

- 26a. Ó            **ba**            *bike* mi            **jẹ**  
           3sg            -            bike my            -  
           ‘S/he spoilt my bike.’
- 27a. Ọlọpàá **tú**            àwọn *rioters* yẹn **ká**  
           Police loosen pl rioters those around  
           ‘The police dispersed those rioters’  
           b. \*Ọlọpàá **loosen** àwọn *rioters* **ká**
- 28a. *Farmer* yẹn            **fón**            *oranges* yẹn **ká**  
           Farmer that spray oranges those around  
           ‘The farmer threw those oranges about/around.’  
           b. \**Farmer* yẹn **spray** *grains* yẹn **ká**
- 29a. Adé            **tún**            *bike* mi            **şe**  
           Adé again bike my do  
           ‘Adé repaired my bike.’  
           b. \*Ade **again** *bike* mi **şe**
- 30a. Bíolá            **bá**            *man* yẹn            **wí**  
           Biola with man that talk  
           ‘Biola rebuked that man.’  
           b. \*Biola **with** *man* yẹn **wí**
- 31a. *Teacher*            **rẹ**            *student*            è            **jẹ**  
           Teacher cut student his eat  
           ‘The teacher cheated his student.’  
           b. \**Teacher* **cut** *student* è **jẹ**
- 32a. Àwọn *church members* **gba** *pastor* wọn **gbọ**  
           Àwọn church members accept pastor their hear  
           ‘The church members believed their pastor.’  
           b. \*Àwọn *church members* **accept** *pastor* wọn **gbọ**

- 33a. *Pastor be àwọ̀n brethren wò*  
 Pastor check pl brethren look  
 ‘Pastor visited the brethren.’  
 b. \**Pastor check àwọ̀n brethren wò* (with the interpretation of 33a)
- 34a. *Boy kan tan friend è je*  
 Boy certain trick friend 3sg eat  
 ‘A certain boy tricked his friend.’  
 b. \**Boy kán tan girlfriend è eat*
- 35a. *Chameleon pa colour è dà*  
 Chameleon paint colour 3sg -  
 ‘The chameleon changed its colour.’  
 b. \**Chameleon paint colour è dà*
- 36a. *Bag yẹ̀n kò bá shoes mu*  
 Bag that not with shoes parallel  
 ‘That bag does not match the shoes’  
 b. \**Aşọ yẹ̀n kò bá ara match*  
 ‘The clothes did not match his body.’
- 37a. *Títí di pillar mú*  
 Títí hold pillar take/catch  
 ‘Títí held on to the pillar’  
 b. \**Títí hold pillar mú*
- 38a. *Man yẹ̀n pa second wife è tì.*  
 Man that - second wife his -  
 ‘That man abandoned his second wife.’  
 b. \**Man yẹ̀n pa second wife è aside.*

- 39a. *Attitude* yẹn **bu** *master* wá **kù**  
 Attitude that cut master our remain  
 ‘That attitude ridiculed our master.’  
 b. \**Attitude* yẹn **cut** *master* wá **kù**
- 40a. Wọ́n **pa** *ideas* wọ́n **pọ**.  
 They combine ideas 3pl together  
 ‘They combined their ideas.’  
 b. \*Wọ́n **pa** *ideas* wọ́n **together**.

In these examples, it is difficult to find meanings to parts of the splitting verbs. Hence, ‘-’ is often used instead in some cases. In other cases, meaning that approximates to each half of the splitting verb is presented. The first part of the splitting verb seems to have some sort of meaning which approximates partially to the intended meaning. Throughout these examples, we can see that the splitting verbs are impervious to switching. However, splitting verbs generally allow English words to come in-between them as demonstrated in all the examples presented above.

So, what accounts for the ungrammaticality of the other examples? The major reason for the unacceptability of switching is that each part of the splitting verb is meaningless without the other part. Although each of the parts may be meaningful in some contexts as an individual word, such meanings may not be sustainable when the words are switched into English. This explains why certain halves of the splitting verbs are translatable while the other parts are not.

We conclude, therefore, that splitting verbs maintain their identity in code-mixed structures. Switches of either part of the splitting verb may render the expressions ungrammatical and unacceptable.

## 9. Serial Verb Constructions

Serial verb constructions (SVCs) are a series of two or more verb roots that co-occur but are not compounded in a sentence (Payne, 1997: 307). However, the tense is often reflected on the first verb (Lawal, 1989; Collins, 1997). The Yorùbá part of the code-switched grammar contributes the SVC structure and English words are switched with them. Again, this confirms the Yorùbá substrate as the host language. Here are some examples: (41-46) are borrowed from Lamidi, (2003):

41. Mo            fẹ            lọ            *pray*.  
 I                want            go            pray  
 ‘I want to go and pray.’

42. Kí ni o *fi* *register?*  
 What you use register  
 ‘What did you use to register?’

43. Mo *fẹ́* *record* è.  
 I want record it  
 ‘I want to record it.’

44. Òjọ́ *grumble wá* síbí.  
 Òjọ́ grumble come here  
 ‘Òjọ́ grumbled as he came here.’

45. O *se rice je*.  
 You cook:pst rice eat:pst  
 ‘You cooked rice and ate it.’

46. Sọjà *plan coup dáràn*.  
 Soldier plan coup get:into:trouble  
 ‘A soldier planned a coup and got into trouble.’

We can subject these examples to different switch patterns and see how the SVCs behave.

- 47a. \*Mo *fẹ́ go pray*.  
 b. \*Mo *like lo pray*.  
 c. \*Kí ni o *use register?*  
 d. \*Mo *like record(V) é*.  
 e. \*Òjọ́ *grumble come* síbí (Lamidi, 2003: 315)

From the good examples, we can see that switches are permitted among components of SVC. From (41-43), the first word in the SVC is in Yorùbá, while the second/third word is in English. In (44 & 46) the second word of the SVC is Yorùbá; and in (45), the SVC is purely in Yorùbá. However, in the bad examples (47a-e), it is shown that it is not every component of the SVC that can be switched; the switches are peculiar to each SVC structure. The ungrammaticality shows that those components of the SVCs

that were switched made the structures ill-formed. Most especially, all the components of the SVC may not be switched (as in 47c-e).

## 10. Idioms

An idiom is a combination of words with a figurative meaning. Idiomatic expressions can be words, phrases, clauses or sentences. Idioms have a unique meaning, which cannot be pieced together (following the concept of compositionality) from the meaning of individual words in an expression. Rather, the expression has only one unified meaning. In English and Yorùbá (as well as other natural languages), idioms and metaphors have a unified meaning that cannot be deduced from the surface structure of individual words. Consider the following code-switched examples:

48a. He *kicked the bucket*. ‘He died.’

b. Ó *kick bucket náà* (literal translation results: He kicked the bucket.)

c. Ó *ta bucket nípàá* ‘He kicked a (particular) bucket.’

49a. He is *pulling your leg* ‘He is joking with you.’

b. Ó *ń pull leg/ẹ̀sẹ̀ ẹ̀* (literal translation: He’s pulling your leg.)

50a. *Lead a dog’s life* ‘live an unhappy life.’

b. *Eat humble pie* ‘show remorse.’

c. *Throw in the towel* ‘surrender.’

These idioms are of English language origin. As they are, they may permit switching (as in 49b), but at the cost of the intended meaning. In (48b&c), the meanings of the expressions are literal. Both expressions refer to a particular bucket that an individual kicked or a leg that is pulled. This is different from the intended meaning of someone’s death (48a) and joking (49a). Hence, English idioms do not allow switching, if they must maintain their meaning.

Consider the following Yorùbá idioms.

51a. Ó *ta téru nípàá* ‘He died’

b. \*Ó *kick téru*

3sg kick white-cloth

52a. Gbogbo *attempts* yẹn **fi** orí **şánpón**

All attempts that use head -  
‘All the attempts failed.’

b. \*Gbogbo *attempts* yẹn **fi** head **şánpón**

53a. Àwọn *workers* yẹ **leader** wọn ní **sáà**/\*period

Pl workers dislodge leader them at period  
‘Workers disgraced/lowered the status of their leader.’

b. \*Àwọn *workers* **remove** leader wọn from **sáà**.

In these examples, the idioms of Yorùbá origin resist switching. Apart from the fact that switching makes the expression unacceptable, it is not amenable to literal translations. So, if any word is changed, the meaning of the expression collapses.

## 11. Conclusions

Having gone through the analyses of different MWEs, we have come to the following conclusions. Switching in MWEs is effected through scopal authority and semantic selection. In scopal authority, the heads subcategorise the particles (if required), determine the kind of particles/words that should follow them and the possibility of switching them to the other language (as we find in 5 and other sections). The first word in a MWE serves as the head which determines whether the next or subsequent word will be switched. Semantic selection determines the logical form or meaning of an expression before and after switching. When switches occur, the meaning may become literal (as in idioms) or remain intact (as in other cases).

Two patterns of switching are found in Yorulish MWEs: (a) Total rejection of switching and (b) partial rejection of switching. While splitting verbs and idioms (especially from Yorùbá) (sections 8 & 10) totally reject switching of their components into the other substrate language, phrasal verbs (section 5), prepositional verbs (section 6), phrasal-prepositional verbs (section 7) and serial verbs (section 9) allow switching in some cases but reject it in others.

This means that there is a hierarchy, starting from the most impervious to the least impervious to switching. The reason for the rejection of switching can be traced to the non-compositional nature of the expressions that reject switching and the flexibility in the composition of those expressions that partially tolerate switching. Hence, we can observe levels of compositionality between two opposites. Those that are impervious to switching are non-compositional, while those that allow mixing are partially

compositional, mixing/switching being more difficult as expressions become more non-compositional.

Finally, although both English and Yorùbá are similar in their sentence typology (they have Subject Verb Object word order), the order of words in each code-mixed structure usually conforms to the pattern in Yorùbá (as discussed in section 5.1). In the few cases where they do not conform, they are embedded language. This confirms that Yorùbá is the matrix language in Yorulish.

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## THE STRUCTURE OF FACE-TO-FACE CASUAL CONVERSATION AMONG THE AKANS

*Felix Kpogo and Kofi Busia Abrefa*

### Abstract

The social act of conversation passes through routine procedures before it is achieved. This paper tries to find out the structure of face-to-face casual conversation openings and closings among the Akans. It also seeks to juxtapose the structure of face-to-face conversation to that of telephone conversation as proposed by Coronel-Molina (1998). 20 dyads of natural conversation from the residents of Amamoma are sampled for the study. Recordings of the conversations of residents of the community serve as the corpus for analysis of the study. The study considers the structure of openings in two forms: presence and absence of interlocutors, and that in whichever case we could have greetings and how-are-you sequence. The identification and recognition sequence only occurs in the absence of interlocutors. However, the closing section of conversations are categorized into three: introductory closings – announcing closure and new topic introduction/recapitulation, intermediate closings – future arrangements and transmitted greetings, and final closings – terminal exchanges. Also, even though conversations occur across different modes, that is, face-to-face and telephone, there seem to be some sort of generality and universality in the structures of conversation (especially, openings) that occur through those media.

**Keywords:** Conversational analysis, conversational participant, dyad, topic, terminal exchange.

### Résumé

L'acte social de conversation traverse des procédures de routine avant qu'il soit accompli. Ce papier essaie de découvrir la structure d'ouvertures de conversation familière face à face décontractées et de fermetures parmi les Akans. Il cherche aussi à juxtaposer la structure de conversation face à face à celle de conversation téléphonique comme

proposée par Coronel-Molina (1998). 20 données d'enregistrement de conversation naturelles des résidents d'Amamoma sont essayées pour l'étude. Les enregistrements des conversations de résidents de la communauté servent du corpus pour l'analyse de l'étude. L'étude considère la structure d'ouvertures dans deux formes : la présence et l'absence d'interlocuteurs et par n'importe cas dans lequel nous pourrions avoir des salutations et un ordre "comment allez-vous". L'ordre de reconnaissance et d'identification se produit seulement faute des interlocuteurs. Cependant, la section finale de conversations sont classés par catégories en trois : fermetures préliminaires – annonce de la fermeture et la nouvelle introduction/récapitulation de thème, les fermetures intermédiaires – dispositions futures et salutations transmises et fermetures finales – échanges terminaux. Aussi, même si les conversations se produisent à travers de différents modes, face à face et au téléphone, il semble y avoir une sorte de généralité et universalité dans les structures de conversation (surtout, les ouvertures) qui se produisent par ces médias.

## **1. Introduction**

Language serves as the most potent tool for communication and it is unique to humans. Communication, is however, seen as a “transactional process of creating meaning”. By ‘transactional process’, it is considered as “one in which those persons communicating are mutually responsible for what occurs” (Verderber, 1981: 4). Communication is therefore not a one-party phenomenon; rather, it ensues between two or more individuals. Communication taking place means that individuals are involved in a conversation since there is turn-taking or allocation of turns at reasonable intervals among conversational participants (CPs). Conversations are never the same even if CPs are conversing about the same conversational topic. However, there are certain components in a conversation that will appear very alike or completely alike in social interaction. A very good example is the way conversations begin and the way they end. According to Kiss (2002: 2), conversation is a string of at least two turns produced by different speakers. In it, only a speaker is supposed to speak at a time. Conversations do not just start and end; they go through series of procedures or sequences before some required information is transmitted among CPs. These sequences are what conversational analysts are particularly interested in, whether in institutional talk (for example, in doctor-patient interaction) or in everyday interaction. According to Paltridge (2008: 107), conversational analysis (hereinafter CA) is an approach to the analysis of spoken discourse that looks at the way people manage their everyday

conversational interactions. The focal point of CA is talk, and it extends to non-verbal aspects of interaction. CA therefore examines how spoken discourse is structured as speakers carry out the interaction (Silvia 2012). Conversational Analysts have digested conversational structure in different domain such as CA, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, stylistics etc. (see Schegloff 1986; 1973 with Sacks; 1979; Hopper 1989; Placencia 1997; Coronel-Molina 1998; Taleghani-Nikazm 2002 etc.).

Initiating and ending conversations are some of the many ways that individuals can have a social relationship started, broken or maintained. This implies that the way individuals open or close conversations are very important in one's social life. Opening, as well as closing a conversation goes through an elaborate ritual before the initiation or closing is achieved. It could however vary from one person to another due to the kind of relationship that exists between CPs.

It is apparent that communication goes through a series of procedures regardless of the mode of communication. For instance, whether in face-to-face, telephone, or in internet chatrooms, one will have to go through the routine of opening and closing in an automated manner.

Researchers like Schegloff (1968; 1979; 1986), Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Jefferson (1984) introduced the study of telephone conversations while others like Calvo (1995), Coronel-Molina (1998) and Taleghani-Nikazm (2002), Sun (2005), Raclaw (2008), Prace (2009) and Bon-Franch (2011) researched into opening and closing through different mediums, especially in telephone calls and internet chatrooms. These researchers have proposed a canonical order for either opening or closing, trying to either justify or denounce the earlier proposal by researchers like Schegloff (1968; 1979; 1986), and Schegloff and Sacks (1973). However, to the best of our knowledge, there has not been any such works on face-to-face conversations either in Akan or other related languages that proposes any canonical sequence for conversations in general, though conversations began through the face-to-face medium even before the emergence of technology.

It is in this regard that the present researchers seek to juxtapose the structure of face-to-face casual conversation openings and closings in Akan to that of telephone calls to ascertain the relationship between the structures of the two modes of conversation.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Coronel-Molina's (1998) theory of telephone conversation is adopted for the analysis in this paper. The framework is a further development of Schegloff (1986) and Schegloff and Sack (1973). His framework attempts to identify telephone conversations; specifically, if there appears to be a standard formula used in beginning

a telephone conversation as suggested by Schegloff. The framework also identifies if CPs of a telephone conversation move immediately to the purpose of the call or they do follow a pattern of information exchange before the real conversation begins among others. Coronel-Molina (1998) in trying to explain the fundamentals of his framework put things into two perspectives. First, he considers how many of the categories for openings (Schegloff, 1986) and closings (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) appeared in his data. Second, he considers how closely his information fit with the extant theories of universal functions.

Like Schegloff (1986), Coronel-Molina postulates summons/answer, identification/recognition, greeting tokens and initial inquiries ‘how-are-you’ and answer. In conversational closings, he explains that closing of conversations were difficult to determine because Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 303-304) identified markers like “pre-closing” or indicators that show that one participant is ready to terminate the conversational process but he/she is offering the other participant the opportunity to open another topic. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) did not create any specific model to indicate these indicators other than the pre-closings. However, Coronel-Molina (1998) gave precise names of such kinds of indicators that were used to terminate Spanish telephone conversations. He called these closing indicators in addition to that of Schegloff and Sack’s pre-closings as new topic introduction, recapitulation and final closing. New topic introduction simply refers to an introduction of a new topic of conversation after a pre-closing gambit. For recapitulation, it involves a brief summarizing of topics discussed and/or arrangements made.

Coronel-Molina (1998) claims that though the four opening sequences identified by Schegloff (1986) and the four closing sequences he (Coronel-Molina) identified recur constantly in conversations, such closing sequences may not occur in Schegloff’s canonical order. Coronel-Molina, having identified the canonical order for openings and closings, posits that in general, there are close correspondences in conversations in telephone calls, although not necessarily exact matches between the predicted categories and what appears in his framework. In this regard, he then argues that the correspondences support the idea of universal functions in telephone conversations across cultures while there also remain reflections of cultural differences.

### **3. Methodology**

The study employed a qualitative research design. This was chosen because the research is aimed at bringing out a deeper knowledge of a social structure, that is, casual conversational openings and closings among the Akan. The setting of the study is the

Akan society, specifically, Amamoma, Cape Coast, Ghana. Twenty (20) dyads of natural conversations were collected. The 20 dyads of natural conversations were not only collected from the indigenes of Amamoma but also from other people like students and lecturers who are Akans and live within the community. Thus, though majority of the data came from Fante, the main dialect of the community, a few came from the Asante-Twi, and these have been indicated in the introductory information about the dyads that contain such data.

The simple random sampling technique was used in collecting the twenty (20) dyads of naturally occurring conversation. This technique was employed because they consider every member of the target population as having an equal chance to be selected for the study. Every member of the community is seen by the researchers as initiating and ending conversations and that has necessitated this sampling technique in gathering the data. A recorder was used to audio-tape the 20 dyads of natural conversations. In the process of data collection, the recorder was used to tap the conversation when CPs were very close to the researchers. In cases where the recorder could not capture the conversation well as a result of distance, recording was done through writing. The recorded data helped determine the structure of face-to-face conversational openings and closings.

The data was collected within two periods: the first, from the 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 to 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2014; the second, from March 6 to March 28, 2014. The researchers recorded the conversations without the knowledge of the interlocutors in order not to influence the conversation. This is because the researchers wanted naturally occurring data. Nonetheless, the CPs were later prompted that their conversation was recorded and that they were going to be used for a study. The data for the analysis, however, came from only those who gave the permission for their conversation to be used for the study. Data from those who did not give their consent were rejected.

In order for the data to be presented naturally, Jefferson's (1984: ix-xvi) conventions for transcribing spoken data were employed. These conventions for transcribing spoken discourse (where applicable) were used to compliment the speeches in the written text.

Below are some of Jefferson's conventions for transcribing spoken data employed in the data transcription.

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Use</b>
hh		- Audible exhalation/out-breath

:::	Colon(s)	- Speaker stretches the preceding sound or letter
(( <i>italic text</i> ))	Double Parentheses	- Annotation of non-verbal activity
//	Slashes	- Overlap
ALL CAPS	Capitalized text	- Indicates shouted or increased volume speech

#### 4. Analysis

The structure of face-to-face openings, per our data, could broadly be grouped into two: presence of interlocutors and absence of interlocutors. Though both forms have greetings and how-are-you sequences, the identification and recognition sequence precedes the greetings and how-are-you sequences in the absence of interlocutors. In relation to the conversational closings, we shall discuss announcing closure, new topic introduction or recapitulation, future arrangement and transmitted greeting, and terminal exchanges. It is important to note that the sequences for various openings and closings usually do not all occur at the same time in a conversation – they do not appear in a strict orderly pattern even though those that occur are perfunctory.

#### 4.1 Structure of face-to-face casual conversational openings

##### 4.1.1 Presence of interlocutors

In dyadic face-to-face casual conversations, there are many cases where both conversational participants are in sight before a conversation begins. This could happen in the case where one or both conversational participants are approaching each other from a distance and eventually meet at a point. From the data, in cases where both participants are in sight, conversational participants begin with an interrogation or any form of address term to signal the commencement of the conversation. The example below shows a situation where both conversational participants were in sight and an interrogation is used to signal one of the participants to demonstrate the initiation of a talk:

Dyad (1): A conversation between a trader and a customer, where the trader appears and meets the customer in front of her house.

Trad. = Trader, Cust. = Customer

- 
1. Trad: **Mo do, e-siw fufu?**  
 1SG.POSS love, 2SG.SUBJ-pound fufu  
 ‘My dear, have you pounded fufu?’
2. Cust: **O! mo dofo, seisei ara na me-fii**  
 Oh 1SG.POSS love, now EMP FOC 1SG.SUBJ-come  
**haban mu bae oo.**  
 farm inside come oo  
 ‘Oh! My dear, I just returned from farm ooh.’
3. Trad: **Aaa, Afenhyia pa!**  
 aah, year.round good  
 ‘Aah, Happy New Year!’
4. Cust: **Afe n-ko m-bo-to hen bio!**  
 year IMP-go IMP-MOT-meet 1PL.OBJ again  
 ‘Many happy returns!’
5. Trad: **Na obiara ho ye dze?**  
 so everyone body good Q  
 ‘Hope everybody is fine?’
6. Cust: **Onyame n’-adom, obiara noho ye. //**  
 God 3SG.POSS-grace, everyone self fine//  
**Na hom so ε?**  
 and you Q  
 ‘By God’s grace, everyone is fine. // How about your end?’
7. Trad: **O! obiara noho ye.**  
 oh! everyone self fine  
 ‘Oh! Everyone is doing well.’

From the example above, it is obvious that both conversational participants, the trader and the customer, were present as they eventually met in front of a house. Within this context of face-to-face opening, the CPs exchanged the adjacency pair of greetings and the how-are-you sequences. But we can see that prior to the greetings and how-are-you sequence there was some fraternal exchangers between the CPs to initiate the conversation. Specifically, we can see that the addresser, the trader who commenced the conversation, began with an interrogation so as to draw the addressee’s attention in order to advance the talk. And this is quite common among the Akans. Sometimes, depending on the relationship between the CPs, some kind of fraternal discussion may precede the greetings and how-are-you sequence.

According to Firth (1972: 1), greeting is the recognition of an encounter as socially acceptable. The significance of greetings among the Akans, as a culturally distinct group cannot be underestimated. They view greetings not just as a merely social

phenomenon but rather a socio-cultural phenomenon that binds them as a cultural group to depict a sense of belonging. This is why we do not entirely agree with Malinowski's (1926) view that greetings form part of exchanges in which words are used merely to maintain ties of union or human relationships. Evidence from our data indicates that greetings perform a wide range of sociolinguistic functions such as showing politeness, displaying affection or a sense of belonging to conversational partners. It is in this respect that we argue that greetings perform a social function of promoting social cohesion, and can therefore be differentiated from other adjacency pairs like questions-and-answers as they basically seek to give real information. The form of greeting and responses such as the one in dyad (1) above or the example below is present in the data:

8. A: **Me-ma wo akye!**  
 1SG.SUBJ-give 2SG.OBJ morning  
 'Good morning!'
9. B: **Yaa anua/Yaa oba**  
 response brother/sister/child  
 'Good morning, my brother/sister/child.'

The above greeting exchanges that occur even in cases where the conversational participants are not blood related demonstrates how Akans as a culturally-minded group of people solidify ties among themselves.

The *how-are-you* sequence is the point which marks the end of the initiation process of a conversation. In the *how-are-you* sequence, conversational participants inquire about the well-being of each other. After a set of *how-are-you* has been exchanged, as Schegloff (1986) indicates, the initiator of the conversation uses the anchor position to introduce the first topic as the example below portrays.

Dyad (2): A conversation between two strangers who meet at a point S1 = Stranger 1, S2 = Stranger 2.

10. S1: **ohembaa, me-ma wo afrinhyia pa!**  
 queen, 1SG.SUBJ-give 2SG.OBJ year.round good  
 'Dear, Happy New Year!'
11. S2: **Afe n-ko m-bo-to hen!**  
 year IMP-go IMP-MOT-meet 1PL.OBJ  
 'Many happy returns!'
12. S1: **Na me-pa wo kyew wo ho ye a?**  
 so 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.OBJ beg 2SG.POSS body good Q

- ‘Please, how are you doing?’
13. S2: **Nyame n’-adaworoma, mo ho ye.**  
 God 3SG.POSS-grace, 1SG.POSS body good  
 ‘By the grace of God, I’m fine.’
14. S1: **Yε-da Onyame ase.// Me- pa wo kyew,**  
 1SG.SUBJ-lie God under. 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.OBJ beg,  
**hemfa na mo-bo-hu ‘Methodist pastor’ no?**  
 where FOC 1SG.SUBJ-FUT-see Methodist pastor DEF?  
**I-bo-tum dze m-a-kɔ ho a?**  
 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-able take 1SG.SUBJ-CONS-go there Q  
 ‘We thank God. // Please, where can I find the Methodist pastor? Can you take me there?’

It can be observed from both dyad (1) and (2) that the *how-are-you* sequence immediately follows the greetings sequence. In fact, though usually conversational openings of strangers are mostly interactionally compact, the *how-are-you* sequence was exchanged as if they knew each other already. It could be that the addresser, Speaker 1, used this strategy to win favour from the addressee so that she could return the favour by honouring her request; it was either she was influenced by her religious teachings of showing care and compassion to everyone, or she was just communicatively competent.

One thing that is prevalent in the data is that, after conversational participants have inquired about the well-being of each other, they extend the inquiries to other members of the family. A clear case of that is the example in dyad (1) above where CPs inquired about the well-being of themselves and their respective families altogether. This phenomenon was also present in Teleghani-Nikazm (2002), where he posited that for Iranians, it was not enough for a participant to inquire about only a co-participant’s well-being, rather, the *how are you* sequence was extended to the families of the conversational participants. Some studies have claimed that the *how are you* sequence is an instance of phatic communion. As quoted in Saadah (2009), phatic communion refers to a type of speech people get involved to create ties of union which merely fulfil a social function, and it is a term attributed to Malinowski (1923). We, however, disagree with this assertion because Akans, as a culturally-minded people, extend the inquiries about the well-being of CPs to their respective families to show a sense of belonging and oneness and not to ‘merely’ fulfill a social function.

### 4.1.2 Absence of an interlocutor

The absence of interlocutor happens in cases where one of the participants of the yet to be started conversation is not in sight. When that happens, the conversational participant making the approach will summon the other person to assume a participant position. This is what we refer to as identification and recognition. This refers to a situation where a conversational participant (who has been summoned) tries to find out the addresser who is addressing him/her. Sometimes, the addressee is able to assume correctly, using the voice of the addresser to detect who the addresser is. In that regard, the addresser will only have to confirm or deny the claim of the addressee. An example of such form of identification and recognition is what is seen in dyad (3) below. In cases of such nature, the addresser or “summoner” does that by addressing the person by name – first or last name. After the summons, the response makes the “summonee” assume a participant position in the conversation. An example of such a discourse is demonstrated below.

Dyad 3: A conversation between two siblings; Nana and Ekuwa. Nana was approaching from afar.

15. Nana: **Sista Ekuwa e::!**  
sister Ekuwa PART  
'Sister Ekuwa e!'
16. Ekuwa: **Ye::s!//Na woana koraa na e-re-frɛ**  
yes// so who even FOC 3SG-PROG-call  
**me ewia dem yi?**  
1SG.OBJ sun that DEF  
'Y::es! // So who's calling me this sunny afternoon?'
17. Nana: **ɔ-ye m-ara.**  
3SG.SUBJ-be 1SG.OBJ-EMPH  
'It's me.'
18. Ekuwa: **Aaa, Nana?**  
PART, Nana  
'Aah, Nana?'
19. Nana: **Nyew oo // Na wo ho ye dze?**  
yes PART and 2SG.POSS.body good EMPH  
'Yes oh // Hope you are fine?'
20. Ekuwa: **Nyame n'adom, mo ho ye.**  
God 3SGPOSS.grace, 1SG.POSS.body good

21. 'By God's grace, I'm fine.'  
 Nana: **Mbofra no ε?**  
 children DEF Q  
 'How about the children?'
22. Ekuwa: **Obiara no ho ye. // Me-gye**  
 everyone 3SG.POSS.body good// 1SG.SUBJ-receive  
**dzi de nde dze, Ata no ho ye a?**  
 eat COMP today EMPH Ata 3SG.POSS.body good Q  
 'Everybody is fine. // I believe Ata is fine today?'
23. Nana: **Nde dze, o-ye papaapa./ Na**  
 today EMPH, 3SG.SUBJ-good very // and  
**ø-a-nn-ko beebiara nde?**  
 (2SG.SUBJ)-PST-NEG-go anywhere today  
 'As for today, he's very fine. // Didn't you go anywhere today?'

In dyad (3), the addresser or "summoner", Nana, who was approaching from afar, summoned the "summonee", Ekuwa, who was out of sight (Ekuwa was indoors). In this context, it was apparent that the last resort that the summoner or addresser could rely on was Ekuwa's name, in order to bring the summonee into sight for the conversation to continue. It is also clear that since the persons who would want to assume the role of conversational participants are physically absent, one of the two create that enabling environment to set the conversation rolling. This situation is similar to what happens in a telephone conversation.

Within the context of absence of an interlocutor, evidence from our data indicates that greetings and *how-are-you* sequences do not occur concurrently in a single conversation. In many cases, the *how-are-you* sequence occurred but greetings were absent. It is only in one situation that both sequences did not occur at all, that is in dyad (4) below. This particular scenario in dyad (4) could be due to the fact that both CPs have had an earlier encounter (probably in the course of that day), hence, making the openings brief. Greetings and *how-are-you* sequences occurred in both the presence and absence of an interlocutor; conversely, identification and recognition, was only evident in the absence of an interlocutor.

Also, from the data, there were some cases where after the addressee had inquired of the addresser, the addresser went ahead and mentioned his/her name. This occurrence, made the identification and recognition process brief and concise. The brief and concise identification and recognition paved way for the addresser, to proceed to the reason for her visit. An example of such form of a conversation is that which ensued between Ekuwa and her customer (Amelia) as evident in dyad (4) below:

Dyad (4): A conversation between a trader (Ekuwa) and a customer (Amelia). Ekuwa was indoors as Amelia comes around.

24. Amelia: **Sista Ekuwa**  
sister Ekuwa  
'Sister Ekuwa.'
25. Ekuwa: **Woana?**  
who  
'Who's that?'
26. Amelia: **ɔ-ye m-ara Amelia a.**  
3SG.SUBJ-be 1SG.OBJ-EMPH Amelia PART  
'It's me, Amelia.'
27. Ekuwa: **Hee! ø bue no**  
PART (2SG.SUBJ) open 3SG.OBJ  
'Hey, open the door for her!'
28. Amelia: **Me-sre wo, e-re-nn-tsew**  
1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.OBJ, 2SG.SUBJ-PROG-NEG-reduce  
'mat' no do?  
mat DEF POSTP  
'Please, could you reduce the price of the mat?'

## 4.2 Structure of face-to-face casual conversational closings

Just like Schegloff and Sacks (1973) put it, conversations do not just end; rather, they go through elaborate rituals before they are brought to a close. Determining the structure for closings in face-to-face dyadic casual conversation is not an easy task. Based on the available data, the following structure is identified: announcing closure (Liddicoat, 2007), introducing new topic/recapitulation (Coronel-Molina 1998), future arrangements and transmitted greetings/appreciations, and terminal exchanges. It is very important to note that the proposed procedures for closing do not necessarily occur simultaneously in a single dyadic conversation, just like it is in the opening sequences. These sequences are elaborated below.

### 4.2.1 Announcing Closure

According to Liddicoat (2007), announcing closure is by some external circumstances that force one of the parties to close the conversation. With this phenomenon, as depicted in our data, a conversational participant put forward a claim that makes it obvious that a conversation will have to come to an end. Conversational participants who announce the closure of a conversation mostly use excuses as



conversation to an end. They both go ahead to exchange some pleasantries to establish social warmth.

In most cases, as found in the data, the announcement of closure does not directly lead to the terminal exchanges. Other elements of closing occur before the final closing. However, there is a deviant case where an announcement of closure immediately led to the terminal component. That deviant case is shown below:

Dyad 6: The closing sections between two friends (names of interactants were unknown)

37. A: **Sɛ hom be-hia mo mboa so a,**  
 If 2SG.SUBJ FUT-need 1SG.POSS help also PART,  
**mo-wɔ ho ae.**  
 1SG.SUBJ-be there PART  
 ‘If you’ll be in need of my help, I’m around ok.’
38. B: **Yoo, mo nua m-a-tse.**  
 ok, 1SG.POSS brother 1SG.SUBJ-PERF-hear  
 ‘Alright, my brother, I hear you.’  
**//Awo dze, mo-ro-ko a-ba ae.**  
 2SG EMPH, 1SG.SUBJ-PROG-go CONS-come PART.  
**Me-ba a, ye-be-kasa ae.**  
 SG.SUBJ-come, PART 1PL.SUBJ-FUT-talk PART  
 ‘You, I’ll be back ok. We’ll talk when I return ok.’
39. A: **Yoo, mo nua**  
 ok, 1SG.POSS brother  
 ‘Ok, my brother!’  
**//KWASEA!**  
 fool  
**//‘FOOL!’**  
 ((hand shake))
40. B: **KWASEA E!**  
 fool PART  
 ‘FOOL!’

In the above example, Speaker A makes an announcement to close the conversation when he uses the excuse strategy to end the conversation, of which Speaker B accepts. Immediately after the announcement, they shake hands and the terminal exchanges follow.

#### 4.2.2 Introduction of new topic/recapitulation

From the notion of announcing closure, we realized that once an announcement is made, then, a conversation is drawing to a close. However, there are some cases where a conversational participant raises a new topic after an announcement has been made. According to Coronel-Molina (1998), new topic introduction means a topic after a pre-closing gambit. The pre-closing gambit in this case is what has been equated to announcing closure. An example of this phenomenon in the data is dyad 7:

Dyad 7: A conversation between a student and his lecturer-friend in Asante-Twi

41. S: **Asuo, ε-ye m'-ahiasem pa**  
 A. 3SG.SUBJ-be 1SG.POSS-important.matter very  
**ara oo.**  
 EMPH PART  
 'Asuo, it's of importance to me oh.'
42. L: **Wo dee ø-kɔ na akyire yi na wo-**  
 2SG. TOP (2SG.SUBJ)-go CONJ later DEF CONJ 2SG.SUBJ-  
**a-ba. M-a-nya ɔhɔhɔ wɔ fie nti**  
 CONS-come. 1SG.SUBJ-PERF-get visitor at home so  
**akyire yi bra be-gye.**  
 later DEF come MOT-take  
 'You go and come later. I have a visitor in the house so come for it later.'
43. S: **M-a-te**  
 1SG.SUBJ-PERF-hear  
 'I hear (you)'  
 //Na 'machine' no nso wo-a-n-ka ho  
 CONJ machine DEF also 2SG.SUBJ-PST-NEG-say body  
**hwee? Anka m-ε-ba a-be-ye no**  
 nothing? COND 1SG.SUBJ-FUT-come CONS-MOT-do 3SG.  
**ye a-ma wo.**  
 well CONS-give 2SG.OBJ  
 'And you didn't say anything about your machine too? I  
 would have come to repair it for you.'
44. L: **Wo dee ø-bra akyire yi, na ye-n-**  
 2SG.TOP (2SG.SUBJ)-come later DEF CONJ 3SG.SUBJ-IMP-  
**ka ho asem.**  
 talk body matter  
 'You, come later and let's talk about it.'
45. S: **M-a-te owura.**  
 1SG.SUBJ-PERF-hear sir

- ‘I hear you sir.’  
 46. L: **Yoo.** // **baabae oo!**  
 ok    bye    PART  
 ‘Okay’ // ‘bye bye ooh!’  
 47. S: **Baee!**  
 bye  
 ‘Bye!’

From the above dyad, Speaker L announces closure in line 42 of which Speaker S accepts. However, immediately after the acceptance of Speaker L’s proposal, Speaker S introduces a new topic in line (43) but the newly introduced topic is put on hold for future discussion.

For recapitulation, conversational participants recall or recollect an earlier conversation either as a reminder or giving a summary of an earlier conversational topic. One thing about recapitulation in the data is that, after a conversational participant recapitulates a conversational topic, it could either lead to other closing sequences like showing appreciation or even final closings. Evidence from the data illustrating this phenomenon is given in dyad 8 below:

Dyad 8: A conversation between two strangers: Stranger = Str., Kuukua = Kuu.

48. Str.: **Me-pa                    wo kyew,                    i-bo-tum**  
 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.POSS beg    2SG.SUBJ-FUT-able  
**a-kyere                    me                    bea    a                    EPP ‘bookshop’ wo?**  
 CONS-show 1SG.OBJ place REL EPP bookshop be  
 ‘Please, can you direct me to the EPP bookshop?’  
 49. Kuu: **ɔ-nn-ye ‘problem’.**  
 3SG.SUBJ-NEG-be problem  
 ‘No problem.’  
**//ø-kɔ                    w’-enyim                    tsee,    e-bo-**  
 (2SG.SUBJ)-go 2SG.POSS-face straight 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-  
**to    nkwanta    bi.                    ø-fa                    kwan no a**  
 meet junction INDEF (2SG.SUBJ)-take way DEF REL  
**o- dzi                    w’-enyim                    no    do,    i-bo-**  
 3SG.SUBJ-eat 2SG.POSS-face DEF POSTP 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-  
**hu wo    wo                    nsa benkum    do    de    sikakorabea**  
 see PREP 2SG.POSS hand left                    POSTP COMP bank  
**bi                    a    wo-fre    no                    Zenith si ho. Wo ‘Zenith**

INDEF REL IMP.-call 3SG.OBJ Zenith be there PREP Z.  
**bank' no nkyen ho ara i-bo-hu EPP**  
 bank DEF side there EMPH 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-see EPP  
**bookshop no.**  
 bookshop DEF

//‘Go straight till you meet a T-junction. Take the road ahead of you, on the left-side of the road, you’ll see a bank called Zenith Bank. Just beside the bank is the EPP bookshop.’

50. Str.: **Me-da wo ase! Me-dze Laud.**  
 1SG.SUBJ-lie 2SG.POSS under 1SG.SUBJ-call Laud  
 ‘Thank you! I’m Laud.’  
 //**Wo so ε?**  
 2SG. also Q  
 //‘what about you?’
51. Kuu: **Aseda n- nyi ho, Kuukuwa**  
 Thank NEG-be there Kuukuwa  
 ‘You’re welcome, Kuukua.’
52. Str.: **ε-se mo-n-ko m’-enyim tsee**  
 2SG.SUBJ-say 1SG.SUBJ-IMP-go 1SG.POSS-face straight  
**na mo-bo-to nkwanta bi e-hu?**  
 CONJ 1SG.SUBJ-FUT-meet junction INDEF 2SG.SUBJ-see  
 ‘You said I should go straight and I will get to a junction, right?’
53. Kuu: **Nyew!**  
 yes  
 ‘Yes!’
54. Str.: **Na me-m-fa kwan a ε-da**  
 CONJ 1SG.SUBJ-IMP-take way REL 3SG.SUBJ-lie  
**m’-enyim tsentsendo no do, ‘bank’ bi wo**  
 1SG.POSS-face straight DEF POSTP bank INDEF be  
**me nsa benkum do na ho ara na**  
 1SG.POSS hand left POSTP CONJ there EMPH FOC  
**EPP wo?**  
 EPP be  
 ‘Then, I take the road ahead of me, there’s a bank on my left and EPP is just there?’
55. Kuu: **Nyew. Nara nye no.**  
 yes that be 3SG.OBJ  
 ‘Yes. That’s it.’
56. Str.: **ε-ye me ahomka de mi-hyia-a**

- 3SG.SUBJ-be 1SG.OBJ nice COMP 1SG.SUBJ-meet-PST  
**wo.**  
 2SG.OBJ  
 ‘It was nice meeting you.’  
 57. Kuu: **Mo so dem ara**  
 1SG. also that EMPH  
 ‘It was nice meeting you too.’

In the above illustration from the data, the Stranger recapitulated in lines 52 and 54. He recollected the information that he was given by summarizing it through interrogation with the other conversational participant, Kuukua. It is observed that immediately after the recapitulation process, the terminal components were exchanged between the conversational participants.

#### 4.2.3 Future Arrangements and Transmitted Greetings

In face-to-face dyadic casual conversations, conversational participants may schedule a meeting for a later date or refer to some future interaction that they are supposed to have. Like Schegloff and Sacks (1973) indicated, in arrangements, conversational participants may give directions, arrange for later meetings, offer invitations, make a ‘reinvocation of certain sort of materials talked about earlier in the conversation’ like ‘see you later in the day’ and also make a summary of the conversation about to be closed. In spite of the views put forward by Schegloff and Sacks (1973), we have limited the arrangements in our data to arranging for a later meeting and offering invitations. An illustration of a future arrangement in the data is given in dyad 7 above in Asante-Twi (but restated below):

S = Student, L = Lecturer

58. S: **M-a-te**  
 1SG.SUBJ-PERF-hear  
 ‘I hear (you)’  
 //Na ‘**machine**’ no nso wo-a-n-ka ho  
 CONJ machine DEF also 2SG.SUBJ-PST-NEG-say body  
**hwee? Se anka me-be-siesie ma-a**  
 nothing PART would 1SG.SUBJ-FUT-repair give-PST  
**wo.**  
 2SG.OBJ  
 ‘And you didn’t say anything about the machine? I would have come to repair it for you.’

59. L: **Wo dee, bra akyire yi na ye-n-ka**  
 2SG. TOP come.IMP later DEF CONJ 1PL.SUBJ-IMP-talk  
**ho asem.**  
 body matter  
 ‘You, come later and let’s talk about it.’
60. S: **M-a-te owura.**  
 1SG.SUBJ-PERF-hear sir  
 ‘I hear you sir.’
61. L: **Yoo. // baabae oo!**  
 ok bye  
 ‘Okay // bye bye ooh!’
62. S: **Bae!**  
 bye  
 ‘Bye!’

In the above illustration, it is obvious that Speaker L makes a future arrangement with Speaker S after Speaker S raised a new topic when an announcement had already been made for a closure. Like Button (1987) put it, arrangements make it possible for other potential topics to be dealt with in the future encounter and closing will be likely.

It is also possible for one or both participants to transmit or send greetings after an announcement for closure has been made. In transmitted greetings, a conversational participant extends his/her regards to his co-participant’s family. The greetings that are extended to the family could be for the father/ husband, mother/wife of the family or even the children. This form of greeting extension is meant to create, maintain and solidify the bond that exists between a conversational participant and the other members of his/her co-participant’s family. Evidence of this form from our data is given in dyad 9 below:

Dyad 9: A conversation between an elderly man and a young man. Papa Kwesi = PK, Young Man = Adu

63. Adu: **Me-pa wo kyew, me maame na**  
 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.POSS beg 1SG.POSS mother FOC  
**ɔ-soma-a me wɔ wo nkyen de**  
 3SG.SUBJ-send-PST 1SG.OBJ POST 2SG.POSS side COMP  
**me-m-bra m-bɔ-hwe de e-wɔ**  
 1SG.SUBJ-IMP-come IMP-MOT-see COMP 3SG.SUBJ-be  
**ho a?**  
 there Q  
 ‘Please, my mother sent me here to find out if you are around?’

64. PK: **Aaa yoo.** //**ε-ko**                    **a,**    **ka kyere no**                    **de**  
           PART ok 2SG.SUBJ-go CONJ tell show 3SG.OBJ COMP  
**mo-wɔ**                    **hɔ**    **ae.**  
           1SG.SUBJ-be there ok  
           ‘Aah okay.’ //‘When you go, tell her that I’m around, okay?’
65. Adu: **Yoo, Egya.** //**Me-pa wo**                    **kyew,**  
           ok father 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.POSS beg  
**m-ε-srɛ**                    **kwan kakra.**  
           1SG.SUBJ-FUT-beg way little  
           ‘Okay, Sir. //Please, I would want to take a leave.’
66. PK: ‘**Yoo**’  
           ok  
           ‘Okay’  
           //**ε-ko**                    **a,**    **ø-kyea**                    **w’-egya**  
           2SG.SUBJ-go CONJ (2SG.SUBJ)-greet 2SG.POSS-father  
**ma me ø-a-tse?**  
           give 1SG.OBJ (2SG.SUBJ)-PERT-hear  
           //‘When you go, my regards to your father okay?’
67. Adu: **Me-pa**                    **wo**                    **kyew, yoo.**  
           1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.POSS beg, ok  
           ‘Please, alright.’
68. PK: **ɔno dze baabae!**  
           3SG. TOP bye  
           ‘Then, bye!’
69. Adu: **baee!**  
           bye  
           ‘Bye!’

From the illustrations above, it is observed that Papa Kwesi extends greetings through Adu to be conveyed to his father. Even though Adu’s father was not the one to have sent him to Papa Kwesi, Papa Kwesi transmits greetings to Adu’s father so as to maintain and solidify a bond that exist between them. It can also be seen from the above conversation that conversational participants can immediately go ahead and terminate the conversational process.

#### 4.2.4 Terminal Exchanges

The terminal exchanges are actually the final remarks that conversational participants make to finally draw the curtain on the conversation. The terminal component could be a goodbye (just like the terminal exchange in any other mode), or others such as thank you. Among Akan conversational participants, the expression, ‘yoo’, an equivalent of ‘okay/alright’ in English is mostly used to finally close a conversation. In other cases too, a repeat of a catch phrase could be used to terminate the conversation. A clear evidence of such form is given in dyad 6 above (but restated below):

70.     A: **Yoo, mo            nua**  
           ok   1SG.POSS brother  
           ‘Okay, my brother.’  
           //**KWASEA!**  
           fool  
           ‘FOOL!’  
           ((hand shake))

71.     B: **KWASEA E!**  
           fool  
           ‘FOOL!’

So far we have identified five procedures that the closing sequences go through before a face-to-face casual conversation is brought to a close based on our data. These are announcing closure, new topic introduction/recapitulation, future arrangements and transmitted greetings, and terminal exchanges. These procedures can however be categorized into three structural elements. These structural elements are introductory closings which cater for the very procedures that occur at the early stages of the closings (such as announcing closure and new topic introduction/recapitulation), intermediate closings which occur in-between the introductory closings and the final closings (such as future arrangements and transmitted greetings), and final closings which deal with the terminal components that are used to terminate the conversation (such as the terminal exchanges).

#### 4.3 Juxtaposing the structure of face-to-face casual conversation to telephone conversation model

Face-to-face and telephone conversation occurs in two different modes but there seem to be some sense of generality in conversational pattern occurring in the two modes. Coronel-Molina’s (1998) model for telephone conversation openings and

closings are not extremely different from the form proposed for the face-to-face conversations. In relation to the openings, the only change that occurs in telephone conversations is in connection with the summon-answer sequence. Apart from this sequence, all other forms of sequences in the openings occur in both modes. There is, however, a considerable change in the closings across both channels. These sequences that seem to differ or recur in different forms are discussed below.

### **4.3.1 Juxtaposing Openings in Face-to-face and Telephone Modes**

Coronel-Molina (1998) proposed a canonical order for openings: summon-answer sequence, identification and recognition, greeting token and *how-you-are* sequence. All these forms of openings recur in the openings of face-to-face conversations except the summon-answer sequence which changes insignificantly.

#### **4.3.1.1 Summon-answer sequence vs. presence/absence of interlocutors**

The summon is the signal that catches the attention of another that a talk is (to be) initiated. The response to a summon serves as an answer to the summon. In telephone conversation, there is a fixed summon-answer sequence. Schegloff (1986) points out that in routine cases, the telephone ring functions as the summons, to which the opening utterance, such as 'hello' or identification, is the answer. However, within the context of face-to-face, based on our data, we identified two forms in openings, presence and absence of interlocutors. The absence of an interlocutor is very similar to the situation in the summons-answer in telephone conversation. That is, in the absence of an interlocutor, only one conversational participant is readily available to initiate a conversation. So, for the other person to assume a participant position, the initiator summons the other (this time not by noise such as the ringing of the telephone but by address term) to assume a participant position. The response of the second party to the summons serves as the answer.

The point of contrast here occurs in the situation where both conversational participants are present. In this context, conversational participants use forms such as interrogation, and various forms of addresses as the first signals.

#### **4.3.1.2 Interrogation**

Based on the evidence in the data, it is realized that most CPs use interrogations as their first signal so as to attract the attention of the other interlocutor unto himself/herself. It was observed that this form is frequently used when the initiator is approaching from a far distance. An instance from the data collected is given in dyad 11 below:

Dyad 11: A conversation between a woman and her boss' wife.

**Subordinate = Sub, Master's Wife = MW**

72. Sub.: **Jollof no a-ben anaa? //Mi-ri-be-dzi**  
 jollof DEF PERF-cook Q 1SG.SUBJ-PROG-MOT-eat  
**jollof oo.**  
 jollof PART  
 'Is the jollof ready?' // 'I'm coming to eat jollof oh.'
73. MW: **Nna a-nn-ka ma m-a-n-noa**  
 CONJ PST-NEG-say CONJ 1SG.SUBJ-PST-NEG-cook  
**jollof no? e-nn-ye hwee fufu na**  
 jollof DEF 3SG.SUBJ-NEG-be nothing fufu FOC  
**i-be-nya e-dzi.**  
 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-get CONS-eat  
 'And why didn't you inform me to prepare jollof?  
 Don't worry, you'll get fufu to eat.'

In the above conversation, the subordinate, who is the initiator of the whole conversation (since she is paying the visit), begins with an interrogation so as to draw the attention of the Master's Wife to herself. Master's Wife's response to the signal of the initiator (Sub.) also begins in a rhetorical question. The initiator/addresser used question and not a declarative, imperative or exclamative because she resorted to making a 'playful request'. Thus, the addressee is given options while the 'playful' request is made. This situation of using interrogatives to initiate a talk does not only show politeness but also depicts intimacy.

## 4.3.1.3 Address Forms

According to Afful (2006), terms of address constitute an important part of verbal behaviour through which the behaviour, norms and practices of a society can be identified. The use of address forms is one of the ways that conversations are initiated in the face-to-face context. According to Oyetade (1995), as quoted by Afful (2006), address terms refer to words or expressions used in an interactive, dyadic and face-to-face situation to designate the person being talked to. The forms of address identified in our data are titles plus greeting, first names plus greeting, endearment terms plus interrogation and catch phrases.

In the analysis of the data, one form of address that conversational participants used to initiate a conversation is title plus greeting. From the data, it is realized that an interlocutor may employ title plus greeting when there is a significant age difference or difference in status. Just as Afful (2006) points out, titles are usually associated with hierarchical institutions. Evidence from the data is shown in dyad 12 below:

74. Adu: **Egya, me-pa wo kyew, good morning!**  
 father 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.POSS beg good morning  
 ‘Sir, please, good morning!’
75. PK: **Yaa õba**  
 response child  
 ‘Good morning, my child!’

The use of “Egya” (Sir) complementing the greeting in the data above is used to initiate the conversation. Among the Akan, it is impolite to address an elderly without a title or name and even, sometimes, without a courtesy marker ‘please’. This, to quote Afful (2006), is markedly used to show deference to the addressee.

As humans who live in societies, every individual has a name that serves as an identity. In initiating a conversation, CPs may use a first name plus greeting. The example below in dyad 13 indicates the use of first name plus greeting to initiate a conversation.

76. Gina: **Canon, me-pa wo kyew, me-ma**  
 canon 1SG.SUBJ-beg 2SG.POSS beg 1SG.SUBJ-give  
**wo adwe**  
 2SG.OBJ evening  
 ‘Canon, please, good evening!’
77. Canon: **Yaa õba**  
 response child  
 ‘Good morning my child!’

This discourse was carried out between a youth leader, Gina, and her priest, Canon. The addresser, Gina, uses an address term plus greeting complemented with the courtesy marker, ‘please’ to initiate the discourse. This form, again, indicates how politeness as a cultural value is rooted in Akans in demonstrating deference.

Another way a conversation is initiated is by the use of endearment terms plus interrogation/greeting. According to Frimpomaa (2012), endearment terms are usually soft terms that show affection towards the addressee or the attempt to endear oneself to the addressee. An example in dyad 2 is restated below:

A conversation between two strangers; Stranger 1 = S1, Stranger 2 = S2

78. S1: **ohembaa, me-ma wo afrinhyia pa!**  
 queen 1SG.SUBJ-give 2SG.OBJ year.round good

- ‘Dear, Happy New Year!’  
 79. S2: **Afe n-ko m-bo-to hen!**  
 year IMP-go IMP-MOT-meet 1PL.OBJ  
 ‘Many happy returns!’

Endearment terms are usually used among friends to show that there is a symmetrical relationship between them. However, in the context of the above dyad, Speakers S1 and S2 are both strangers so the use of the endearment term, **ɔhemmea** (which literally means queen) is probably performing the function of luring the other conversational participant for a favour. It could also probably be that through the use of that endearment term, a relationship is created among both CPs.

Some CPs also use catch phrases to initiate the conversation. Catch phrases are address terms or mottos used to express transient communicative intent such as sharing a common fate, the mood of the moment or the aim of a group or the invention of particular individuals who are often friends. They function in the same manner in which adjacency pairs function in a conversation. They operate on the basis of call-response pattern (Afful, 2006). They can be used to begin a conversation as well as end a conversation, as evident in dyad 6 which is restated below:

80. A: **KWASEA BI NTSI!**  
 fool INDEF because  
 ‘ALL BECAUSE OF A FOOLISH PERSON!’  
 81. B: **KWASEA BI NTSI OO!**  
 fool INDEF because PART  
 ‘ALL BECAUSE OF A FOOLISH PERSON OH’

It is obvious in the above that Speaker A and B in a call-response pattern use catch phrases to initiate the conversation. Also, these insults perform the function of greeting among conversational participants. And just as Sekyi-Baidoo (2009) put it, contrary to social breakdowns, insults are also used to foster social cohesion and maintain relationships.

From the discussions above, it is presented that despite the fact that there seem to be some generality in the openings in both face-to-face and telephone modes, the way first signals are sent when both conversational participants are present is different as compared to that of summon-answer sequence in telephone conversations. However, there is no significant difference between the summon-answer sequence in telephone conversations and face-to-face conversation when an interlocutor is absent so far as first signals are concerned.

### **4.3.2 Closing Model in Face-to-face and Telephone Conversations**

Coronel-Molina (1998), in the closing sections proposed some procedures that conversations go through before they are brought to a close. He indicated that before the final closings are issued, CPs prepare the grounds for the terminal exchanges. In that regard, pre-closing gambits like okay/alright are issued so as to offer a CP an opportunity to raise another topic. Coronel-Molina (1998) earlier on posited that because Schegloff and Sacks (1973) did not give precise names to the indicators that lead to the final exchanges. As a result, his telephone model posited new topic introduction and recapitulation as the indicators that Schegloff and Sacks failed to give precise names to.

Terminal exchanges in the telephone mode are not different from that of face-to-face terminal exchanges since the usual goodbye, see you later, thank you and okay/alright all recur in the face-to-face mode. The point of contrast is in the presence of closing sequences like announcing closure, future arrangements and transmitted greetings which are absent in her telephone mode. These sequences were consistently found in the data and it thus, presents a slightly different structure of closings in the two modes.

## **5. Conclusion**

The primary objective of this research was to present a description of the structure of face-to-face dyadic casual conversations in the Akan context. Also, since research into telephone conversations served as the bedrock for the research in face-to-face conversations, the model for telephone conversation openings and closings were juxtaposed to that of face-to-face dyadic conversation. On the one hand, the study revealed Akan face-to-face casual conversational openings to be in two forms: presence and the absence of interlocutors; and that in whichever case we could have greetings and how-are-you sequence. It was also revealed that identification and recognition only occurred in situations where one party of the yet to be started conversation is not in sight. On the other hand, closings were categorized into three: introductory closings (announcing closure and new topic introduction/recapitulation), intermediate closings (future arrangements and transmitted greetings), and final closings (terminal exchanges). All these sequences, even though are perfunctory, do not occur in a strict orderly pattern.

Finally, in juxtaposing the structure of face-to-face casual conversations to that of telephone conversations, even though the conversations occur in two different modes, (face-to-face and telephone) the study revealed some sense of generality in the

pattern of conversation across both modes. This, however, brings about some form of universality in the structure of conversations across different modes. We believe that the similar structures in both modes (especially, openings) can be alluded to the fact that, with the advent of technology, the form of conversation that occurs within the face-to-face context was transferred to a mode like telephone.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v6i2.5>

## NON-AFRICAN LINGUISTS BE LIKE, “THIS IS A NEW WAY TO QUOTE!”<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The objectives of this paper are to show that quotative **like**, while relatively new to colloquial varieties of (white) English, is attested in varieties of African speech of the continent (represented by Akan (Asante Twi)) and the diaspora (represented by Anti-American African (AAA))<sup>2</sup> decades, if not over a century prior. Secondly, we show that there are similar bases for grammaticalization for Akan (Asante Twi) **se** and AAA **like** whereby they have gone from showing resemblance/approximation to serving as quotatives. Thus, we provide examples from AAA and Akan (Asante Twi) to demonstrate correlations between the two quotatives using primary text research and analyses based on a variety of sources placing the putative origin of quotative **like** into the collective African context. In doing so, we find that both AAA quotative **like** and Akan (Asante Twi) **se** are attested prior to what seems to be the relatively recent adoption of AAA’s pre-existing quotative into colloquial white American English, which is only first attested in the 1980s. We also find that quotative **like** and **se** follow

<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank the organizers and participants of the 8<sup>th</sup> Linguistics Association of Ghana Annual Conference held in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, for the opportunity to present and discuss our ideas in this paper. However, all errors remain our own.

<sup>2</sup> The commonly used term African-American is a marker of the integrationist tradition among Black people in the United States. However, we are of the view that the quotative **like** construction – before being absorbed into colloquial (white) American speech – was more reflective of the Anti-American African tradition in which Africans consciously and subconsciously maintained a distinct African identity in the face of enslavement, oppression and Eurasian linguistic and cultural hegemony. Also, due to the pioneering work of linguists like Lorenzo Dow Turner (1949), it has been demonstrated that varieties of speech of Africans of the Diaspora have maintained aspects of African languages from throughout the continent while conscientiously and sub-conscientiously remaining distinct from Standard (white) American English – a remarkable feat considering the extenuating circumstances under which they exist. Thus, Anti-American African (AAA) is preferred to other terms in the literature such as so-called African American Vernacular English/Black English.

similar trajectories in terms of grammaticalization. In conclusion, we argue that quotative **se** and **like** represent a common African source of a similar linguistic phenomenon.

**Keywords:** quotative like, Anti-American African, grammaticalization, resemblance/approximation

## 1.0 Structure of Article

In this article, we will discuss correlations between quotative **like** in Anti-American African (AAA) speech and writing (also known as “Black English”) and **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ in Akan (Asante Twi dialect). In doing so we will provide a brief introduction, followed by a presentation of the specific research questions to be addressed (section 2). We will then provide a concise review of thematically-related literature in section 3. Our methodology will be explicitly delineated in section 4. As we are tracing the path of grammaticalization, sections 5.1 and 5.2 will show the source constructions for what later develops into full quotative **like** in AAA and Akan (Asante Twi), respectively. In section 5, each of our research questions will be addressed with data from each language and an analysis of these data. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 demonstrate a later stage along the grammaticalization path as **like** and **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ are both used to report situations, manner and sounds. Sections 5.5 and 5.6 demonstrate the full quotative form for **like** and **se** ‘like resemble’. In section 6, we will provide our own hypothesis regarding the putative diachronic development of the grammaticalization of both **like** and **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ from verbs of similarity/resemblance, which eventually become complementizers capable of introducing quotes. Finally, in section 7, we will make our conclusions and provide recommendations for potential directions this type of research should take in the future (section 8).

## 2.0 Introduction

In a January 25, 2015 Boston Globe article, a Globe Correspondent, Britt Petersen, reported that there is a developing trend in English which involves the use of the verb **like** “to introduce a quote, a thought, or a feeling” (Peterson 2015).<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> We would like to express our profound gratitude to Dr. Beth Bennett, a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the Department of English, University of Ghana, Legon, who drew our attention to this Boston Globe article.

article noted that quotative **like** has become especially widespread in so-called “Black English” of the US. Even so, the use of ‘(be) like’<sup>4</sup> to introduce quotes, thoughts or feelings is taken by many non-African linguists to be a rather recent trend starting a few decades ago somewhere from the early 1980s (Butters 1982). However, as we will argue below, incipient examples of quotative **like** are attested in US varieties of AAA speech going back at least to the 1800s and early 1900s (Dunbar 1898, Chesnutt 1887, Project (1936-8) 2001, Chesnutt 1899). Thus, firstly, our main claim in this article is a radical departure from the null hypothesis that quotative **like** began in the 1980s. The decade of the 1980s is, rather, the earliest attestation of quotative **like** in colloquial white English that scholars have been able to find. We posit that their lack of ability to find quotative **like** is due to them restricting themselves to the limited sources—varieties of white English—while consciously or unconsciously ignoring AAA. Also, it is worth noting that the construction is still not fully accepted in Standard (white) American English and can be found predominantly in Colloquial (white) English. Secondly, we challenge the notion that quotative **like** developed from “focuser **like**” by tracing an alternate route of grammaticalization through what we term reportative **like** as found in AAA (Meehan 1991).

Similarly, from the other side of the globe in the region of Africa now known as Ghana, for well over a century, the development of the verb **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ into quotative **like** has been attested and well-reported for Akan (Asante Twi) (Christaller 1875, Christaller 1881, Lord 1993, Riis 1854).

In light of this emerging information on the pre-existence of this phenomenon of quotative **like** and the possible correlations between and/or common African source of the Continental and Diaspora forms, our primary research questions are as follows:

1. What is the nature of the correlation between **like** in AAA varieties of speech and writing of the United States and **se** in Akan (Asante Twi)?
2. Is quotative **like** a recent development as claimed by some non-African linguists?
3. What are the bases for the development/grammaticalization of **se/like** into a quotative complementizer in Akan (Asante Twi) and AAA speech of the United States (so-called “African American Vernacular English/Black English”)?

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<sup>4</sup> Non-inflected **be** in AAA usage is necessary for a habitual reading more so than as an obligatory collocation with **like**.

### 3.0 Literature

The earliest attestation of **be like** in quotative function is Butters (1982: 149), who reports that American speakers use ‘**to be**’ (usually followed by **like**) where what is quoted is an unuttered thought, as in **And he was like ‘Let me say something’** or **I thought I was going to drown and I was (like) ‘Let me live, Lord’** (Buchstaller 2013:5, emphasis ours)

Indeed, noted specialist of quotatives in white English, Buchstaller’s (2004) earliest attestation of quotative **like** is Zappa and Zappa (1982). According to D’Arcy (2007: 393, italics in original), “*be like* is an innovation, representing ongoing change.” Current research on the origins of quotative **be like** has suggested that it developed (or grammaticalized) from “*focuser like*,” as in **We watched this John Wayne movie that was like really bad** (Underhill 1988, Meehan 1991, Romaine and Lange 1991, Ferrara and Bell 1995, Eriksson 1995, Buchstaller 2001, Cukor-Avila 2002: 3, also see Buchstaller 2004 for a derivation of Quotative **like** from Focuser **like**). However, we argue that quotative **like** is not used in this focuser role in either AAA speech of the US or Akan (Asante Twi) and that such comparatively recent usage is typical of non-standard colloquial white American varieties of English (perhaps due to a re-analysis or misinterpretation of the way quotative **like** was originally used in AAA). Further, we argue that quotative **like** is derived from what we term “*reportative like*” which reports the manner in which an event or situation occurred. Reportative **like** is, in turn, derived from **like** of similarity or resemblance.

On the Akan (Asante Twi) side, there has been an ongoing debate in terms of some scholars arguing that the quotative complementizer **se** is derived from **se** ‘say’ (Amfo 2010, Osam 1994, Osam 1996: 99, 102, Osam 1998, Duah 2013)<sup>5</sup>, while others argue that Akan (Asante Twi) complementizer **se** is derived from **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ (Riis 1854, Christaller 1875, Christaller 1881, Lord 1993). It should be noted that the generalized complementizer and the quotative complementizer are one and the same in Akan (Asante Twi). While we will not address the contentious issue of whether or not this complementizer is derived from **se** ‘say’, we are of the opinion that even if ultimately derived from **se** ‘say’, quotative **se** may, itself, represent a diachronic reanalysis - possibly a phonetic and semantic

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<sup>5</sup> One of the arguments, which has been adduced to support the grammaticalization of the lexical verb **se** ‘say’ into a complementizer **se** ‘that’ is that such an analysis is “typologically sound” and in line with the cross-linguistic fact that in various languages, including those that are very close to Akan areally and/or genetically, the complementizer which can be translated into English as ‘that’ developed from the verb meaning ‘say’ (see Lord 1993, Osam 1996: 99, 102, Güldemann 2008: 525). However, Güldemann (2008:80-81) notes that “several default QI-verbs [i.e. quotative index verbs] are synchronically or derive diachronically from something other than a generic speech verb.”

convergence with the preexisting **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ in the language.

In the following section, we will provide the data that supports this type of analysis.

#### 4.0 Methodology

We engaged in purposive selection of attested examples from various existing texts including transcriptions of interviews, commonly attested proverbs and other published works for **like** in AAA from late-19<sup>th</sup> century to date (Delany 1859-62, Chesnutt 1887, Turner 1949, Green 2002) as well as for quotative **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ in Akan (Asante Twi) (Twi dialects), e.g. (Opoku 1969, Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001), Agyekum (2008) and Edward (2015).

#### 5.0 Data and Preliminary Analysis

The first of our three research questions to be addressed is “What is the nature of the correlation between **like** in AAA of the United States and **se** in Akan (Asante Twi)?” In addressing this question, it is most helpful to delineate the properties of approximation, reportative and quotative **like** and **se** to see convergences and divergences. First in terms of properties of **like**—which has an original semantic domain expressing similarity and from which, we argue, the quotative **like** is ultimately derived—we find that **like** as a quotative complementizer introduces a quotation or impersonation giving the manner in which an utterance occurred. This is done through what has been referred to as a sort of quotation by means of comparison (Buchstaller 2001). Given that it signals an approximation, as the examples below will show, it functions less as a direct quotation than a kind of provision of an overall general feel.<sup>6</sup> **Like** collocates with verbs like **be**, **say**, **think**, **go**, etc. (Butters 1980, Buchstaller 2001, Cukor-Avila 2002, Fox and Robles 2010, Peterson 2015). According to D’Arcy,

As a quotative, *like* occurs with the dummy form *be* to support inflection and to satisfy the requirement that the clause have a lexical verb (see Romaine and Lange 1991, 261-62). This collocation performs the specialized role of introducing reported

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<sup>6</sup> This phenomenon is discussed in Buchstaller (2004).

speech, thought, and nonlexicalized sounds, among a range of other content (2007: 446, italics in original).

However, this collocation is not mandatory in AAA as quotative **like** can be used without **be**<sup>7</sup> or any other verbs, as in the following examples:

1. AAA:
  - a. **And then he like**, “**Damn, there go that bastard again, he the (Postman)**”  
(Wayne 2006)
  - b. **And then she like** “**bring back my change**”  
(correction\_queen\_ 2015)

Thus, non-inflected **be** in AAA usage is necessary for a habitual reading more so than as an obligatory collocation with **like**.<sup>8</sup> Copula-less AAA sentence structure parallels similar structures found in African languages—particularly in the case of adjectival verbs—where no copula occurs (Duah, Ayiglo, and Blay 2011, Kambon 2015). Further, **like** is used for enactments which extend to verbal and non-verbal mimetic performances, including, but not limited to, ideophones, gestures, movements and facial expressions (Fox and Robles 2010). We will return to this point below in our discussion of Internet memes.

**Se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ similarly introduces a quotation or impersonation which seems to imitate the manner in which an utterance was made. According to Romaine and Lange, “When *like* is used in a quotative function, it allows the speaker to retain the vividness of direct speech and thought while preserving the pragmatic force of indirect speech” (1991: 228, italics in original). As in the case of AAA speech **like**, we find that it is not limited to faithfulness to a direct quotation but rather gives a general feel or approximation. In terms of collocation, **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ tends to collocate with verbs like **ka** ‘speak’, **bisa** ‘ask’, **dwene** ‘think’, **ne** ‘be’ etc.<sup>9</sup> Also like **like**, **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ is utilized in enactments of both verbal and non-verbal mimetic performances.

As such, we argue that Akan (Asante Twi) **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ is very much like what may be referred to as the AAA “quotation through simile,”<sup>10</sup> with a root meaning of **se** ‘resemble, be like.’ Appealing to grammaticalization theory, we view this transition as exemplification of semantic

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<sup>7</sup> In AAA, **be** is not a dummy form, but is necessary for an aspectual (habitual) reading.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion on the use of Habitual **be** in AAA, see Green (2002: 44).

<sup>9</sup> See Boadi (2005: 55-58) for a comprehensive list of predicates which collocate with **se**.

<sup>10</sup> See Addison (1993), Fishelov 1993) for more on simile – from literal to figurative meanings and the structure, semantics and rhetoric of simile in English.

persistence (see Section 6 below) (see Hopper 1991: 28-30, also see Romaine and Lange 1991: 244 for a trajectory of grammaticalization similar to the one discussed here).

Thus, in terms of grammaticalization of AAA **like** of the United States and in Akan (Asante Twi) **sɛ** ‘like, resemble,’ both are used primarily to signal resemblance/similarity/ approximation, then as reportative (of manner) **like/sɛ** and finally as quotative **like/sɛ** (see Meehan 1991, also see Buchstaller 2002, Buchstaller 2004 for an illustrative model of this claim). Each of these types of usages will be given in the next section with examples to illustrate the putative diachronic development of the form across each of these stages.

### 5.1 ‘like’ of Similarity/Resemblance/Approximation

First, we will provide examples of **like** of similarity, resemblance and/or approximation as the first step in the grammaticalization process as we posit a development from similes to quotatives. It should be noted that **like** as it occurs in the following AAA examples is different from the more recent use of **like** in colloquial (white) American English, some of the first instances of which are related to focus. According to Meehan (1991), when **like** is used in recent colloquial (white) English in this way, it can be omitted without the remaining construction being rendered ungrammatical or without fundamentally changing the meaning of the construction. That is not how **like** is being used in the constructions below as removing it would turn the simile ( $\approx$ ) into a metaphor ( $=$ )<sup>11</sup> (cf. 2a, 2c), which gives a different reading, or would result in an ungrammatical utterance (2b). Different from Focuser **like**, **like** of similarity/resemblance/approximation is crucial for the quotation through simile, as we will show in section 5.6.

#### 2. AAA:

- a. “I don’t mean to brag; I don’t mean to boas’, but we’re like hot butter on a breakfas’ toast.” (Green 2002: 156)
- b. “He may be very sexy, or even cute, But he looks like a sucker in a blue an red suit.” (Green 2002: 157)
- c. “big, wuit hol, luik ə grew; luik ə grew.” (Turner 1949: 268)  
Standard American English: ‘big white hole, like a grave; like a grave.’

<sup>11</sup> Here, we are using mathematical operators  $\approx$ , which denotes similarity between that which occurs before and after and  $=$ , which denotes identity/equality between the two elements.

- d. “I was lookin like a ol man.” (Green 2002: 252)
- e. “You a stone junkie just like the rest.” (Wideman 1984: 94)

In each of these examples, a simple simile-type of comparison is made in various contexts with various types of nominals. It should be noted that (2a, 2c, 2e) are different syntactically from (2b, 2d) in that in the former, the equivalence/approximation relationship seems to be between the whole main NP and the post-**like** NP with no linkage via a verb, but primarily **like**.<sup>12</sup> This has been referred to as bare **like** and can be illustrated as NP  $\approx$  NP, where  $\approx$  represents similarity. The fundamental point of using **like** in this instance is to hedge to show that the two NPs are similar, but not equal. The functional utility of such hedging is carried over into reportative and quotative **like**. According to Buchstaller (2013: 21), “the hedging function of approximative/comparative quotative frames is especially useful for the reporting of stance, feelings or attitudes, opinions or point of view.” Indeed, we posit that this type of simile construction forms the prototypical source of the subsequent two types of constructions to be discussed below—reportative **like** and quotative **like**. In (2b, 2d), **like** is used as a preposition which compares two noun phrases; thus, **like** maintains its lexical properties. We will show that a comparable situation obtains in the case of Akan (Asante Twi) **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ with regard to the use of **se** for nominal comparison.

## 5.2 **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ of Similarity/Resemblance

In Akan (Asante Twi) **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ is used in similar ways for illustrating a comparison typically between two nominals. As shown in the examples in (3), **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ of similarity functions as a lexical verb, much like it does in AAA, showing verbal trappings such as negation, motional markers and person marking. Furthermore, as the examples in Akan (Asante Twi) demonstrate, **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ of similarity does not require any other verb to be able to link two noun phrases which are being compared.

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that, unlike in Standard (white) American English, in this and other instances in AAA, **like** may, indeed, have verbal properties.



which continental Africans were still being kidnapped and transported to the western hemisphere.

### 5.3 Manner/Situation-Reportative ‘like’

The next usage of **like** in AAA is that which is followed by an expression of the manner or the nature of a situation. This is referred to by Buchstaller (2001: 7) as a situational **like** in that it works in a similar manner to Standard (white) American English ‘as if’ or ‘as though’ or, much more recently, the “new” colloquial (white) American English ‘like.’ The following examples can be linked conceptually through the concept of epistemicity. Epistemicity relates to the “speaker’s attitude regarding the reliability of the information, the judgment of the likelihood of the proposition, the commitment to the truth of the message” (Macerata 2012). By means of hedging using quotation through simile, the speaker is then able to report a sense of what transpired or what was heard. It should be noted that ideophones, exemplified below, are introduced by **like** just like any other words, phrases and sentences. Thus, the grouping below is for the sake of organization and presentation of data more than due to language-internal motivation apart from on the basis of word class or phrase type that follows **like**. Below, we group the two types of reportativity in terms of whether the report is a situational or an auditory event. Although the following examples are arranged chronologically for the sake of presentation, it should be noted that there is nothing linguistically different between the 1800s (examples (4a-e)) and the examples from the 1980s (f-g) and after. Rather, we have a case of continuity throughout for AAA.

#### Reportative of that which transpired (situational):

##### 4. AAA:

- a. **“Case den da would’n be so many ole wite plantehs come an’ look at us, like we was show!”** (Delany 1859-62: Ch 18)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘Because then there wouldn’t be so many old white planters coming and looking at us as though we were for show (i.e. entertainment).’
- b. **Mars Dugal’ ax ‘im, sorter keerless, like es ef he des thought of it.** (Chesnutt 1887: 7)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘Master McAdoo asked him, in a sort of careless way, as though he had just thought of it.’

- c. **Sho nuff, when Henry begun ter draw up wid de rheumatiz en it look like he gwine ter die fer sho, his noo master sen' fer Mars Dugal.** (Chesnutt 1887: 7)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'Sure enough, when Henry began to come down with rheumatism and it looked as though he was going to die for sure, his new master sent for Master McAdoo.'
- d. **Bimeby here come Marse Dugal' hisse'f, mad as a hawnit, acussin' en' gwine on like he gwine ter hurt somebody.** (Chesnutt 1887: 64)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'After a little while here comes Master McAdoo himself, as mad as a hornet, accusing and going on as though he was going to hurt somebody.'
- e. **Mars Dugal' sorter smile' en laf ter hisse'f, like he 'uz might'ly tickle' 'bout sump'n.** (Chesnutt 1887: 54)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'Master McAdoo sort of smiled and laughed to himself, as though he found something very humorous.'
- f. **He come walking in here like he owned the damn place.** (Spears 1982: 852)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'He came walking in here as though he owned the damned place.'
- g. **They come walking in here like they was gon' make us change our minds.** (Green 2002:79)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'They came walking in here as though they were going to make us change our minds.'

**Reportative of the nature of the sound:**

- h. **Harry, Nuny and me are making sounds like "whew!" and we're slapping five.** (Cole and Black 1971: 271)
- i. **"when I saw Willie, it was like — whew"** (Daly and Bergman 1975: 79)
- j. **Zoom, I hit the mic like boom** (Smith 1993)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'Zoom, I'll hit the mic making a sound like boom.'

- k. I'll fuckin - I'll fuckin tie you to a fuckin bedpost with your ass cheeks spread out and shit, right, put a hanger on a fuckin stove and let that shit sit there for like a half hour, take it off and stick it in your ass **slow like \*Tssssssss\***. (Smith 1993)

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘slowly, making a sound like Tssssssss’

- l. **Coming like rah ooh ah achie kah.** (Smith 1993)

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘Coming making a sound like rah ooh ah achie kah.’

As can be seen in reportative **like** (4a-g), consistency with the manner in which the situation or event transpired is preferred. Further, we can see that this type of usage even includes ideophones, as in (4h-l). This is significant in that it highlights the utility of this usage of **like** given the oral moment wherein a vivid enactment of the manner in which a situation or event transpired as can be reported by the speaker to the presumed auditory delight of the listener. With regard to epistemicity, (4c) specifically can be thought of as an instance of visual epistemicity in which the speaker reports the situation based on the information to which he/she has access (see Spronck 2012 for a discussion of speaker attitudes in quotative constructions). In this function, **like** tends to collocate with verbs such as **ax** ‘ask’, **look**, **gwine on** ‘going on’, etc. However, in the case of ideophones as a word category, concepts may be understood as being linked to specific sounds. In many African languages, ideophones can be thought of as a word category unto themselves (Childs 1996, Agyekum 2008, Kranenburg 2014).

#### 5.4 Reportative *se* ‘like (be similar to), resemble’

Similarly, in Akan (Asante Twi), we also have cases of *se*, which may be glossed as ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ followed by expression of manner or nature of situation. Essentially, this type of usage indicates that one situation is like or resembles another. Consider the following examples in (5).

5. AKAN:

- |    |                  |                 |           |                  |           |
|----|------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| a. | <b>Ohiani di</b> | <b>pɔw-adee</b> | <b>a,</b> | <b>ɛ-te</b>      | <b>se</b> |
|    | Pauper eat       | coin-thing      | COND,     | 3SG.SBJ.INA-feel | like      |
|    | <b>ɔ-a-di</b>    | <b>dwan.</b>    |           |                  |           |
|    | 3SG.SBJ-PRF-eat  | sheep           |           |                  |           |

(Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 124)

AAA: 'If a bum eat cheap food, 's like he ate mutton.'

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'If a poor man eats a small coin's worth of something, it's like he eats mutton.'

- b. **Ohiani pam akoroɔ a, na ɛ-ye**  
 Pauper mend bowl COND PRT 3SG.SBJ.INA-do  
**no se ɔ-didi sanyaa.**  
 3SG.OBJ like 3SG.SBJ-eat.INTR tin plate

(Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 125)

AAA: 'When a bum fix his wood bowl, 's like he eatin' off a tin plate.'

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'When a poor man repairs his broken wooden bowl, it seems to him like he ate off a tin plate.'

- c. **Obi bo wo dua se "Ma**  
 someone strike 2SG stick like CAUS  
**ɔ-n-wu!" a, ɛ-n-ye ya**  
 3SG.SBJ-IMP-die cond 3SG.SBJ.INA-NEG-do pain  
**se ɔ-se "Ma ohia n-ka no!"**  
 like 3SG.SBJ-say CAUS poverty IMP-touch 3SG.OBJ

AAA: 'If somebody cuss you like: "Let 'im die!" it don't hurt like if he say: "Let 'im be po(or)!"

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: 'If someone curses you saying 'Let him die!' it's not as painful as if he says "Let him be impoverished!"

It should also be noted that, as a word category in Akan (Asante Twi), the ideophone "may occur sentence-finally as an adverb or as a sentential noun phrase complement" as in the following examples (Agyekum 2008: 116):

6. AKAN:

- Akwasi tea-a mu se, ka-a-a-a-e! (ka-a-a-a-e-e!)**  
 Akwasi shout-PST inside like ka-a-a-a-e! (ka-a-a-a-e-e!)  
 'Akwasi shouted/indicated that *he was in serious pain/danger.*' (Agyekum 2008: 116)

7. AKAN:

<b>Adehyeɛ nyinaa</b>	<b>a-gye</b>	<b>a-to</b>	<b>mu</b>	<b>de</b>	<b>stamp</b>
royals all	PRF-take	PRF-throw	inside	take	stamp
<b>a-bo</b>	<b>so</b>	<b>sɛ</b>	<b>pãŋ!</b>		
PRF-hit	on	like	IDEO		

‘All royals have accepted and stamped it IDEO.’ (recorded voice) (Edward 2015: 78)

8. AKAN:

<b>Ɛ-ma</b>	<b>wo</b>	<b>honam ani</b>	<b>yɛ</b>	<b>sɛ</b>	<b>nahanaha</b>
3SG.INA-give	2SG.SBJ	skin. eye	do	like	IDEO

‘It makes your skin brighter IDEO.’ (Advert on Pure Skin body cream.) (Edward 2015: 79)

What is apparent in the above examples (6-8) is the epistemic/reportative quotative complementizer use that was exemplified in (4h-l) to introduce sound. Reportative **like/se** is used to report the nature of a situation or the manner in which a sound was made. By logical extension, the report of sounds, which forms a word category in African languages, is extended to utterances (which are obviously also sounds). We argue that this is the nexus between reportative **like/se** and quotative **like/se**.

### 5.5 Quotative ‘like’

This brings us to our second research question which asks “Is quotative **like** a recent development as claimed by some linguists?” The simple answer is that it is not recent by any means in AAA, although, as claimed by non-African linguists, it may certainly be new to colloquial (white) American English, and it is yet to make substantive inroads into Standard (white) American English as it is still actively resisted in the standard register (Peterson 2015). Indeed, we find early attestations of quotative **like** in AAA speech going all the way back to the 1800s. We further speculate that if AAA speech had benefitted from better written documentation, it may be traced back even further than that—perhaps all the way back to the continental Africans who introduced it from the pre-existing structures in their native languages. Nevertheless, we argue that these attested examples of quotative **like** are a logical extension of situational/manner-reportative **like**—discussed in the previous section—which reports the similarity of manner in which a situation was experienced or a sound was heard from the subjective view of the speaker (Buchstaller 2001). In

an extension of this basic semantic core idea, quotative **like** reports an approximation of the manner in which an utterance was made, again through the intentionally subjective lens of the speaker, which is related to notions of epistemicity and evidentiality (see Meehan 1991, Buchstaller 2002, Buchstaller 2004). The following are quotes exclusively from AAA—not white speech—from the late 1800s and early 1900s in which quotative **like** introduces direct quotes of various types of utterances (9a-e). What is notable here is the fact that all of the following data precedes the null hypothesis of non-African authors who trace the origin of quotative **like** only to the earliest attestations that they can find in colloquial (white) American English from the 1980s while intentionally ignoring and/or being ignorant of the source construction in AAA and the African languages from which the source construction may have been derived.

9. AAA:

- a. **Him sez brave lak, “Ise know what it am, it am simple. Youse have heah of de person dat can throw de voice, aint youse?”** (Mauchison 1936-38)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘He said bravely, “I know what it is, it is simple. You have heard of a person who can throw his voice, haven’t you?”’
- b. **“[...] an’ say, jes’ ez solerm-lak ‘When I gits big, I gwine to ma’y Nellie.’”** (Dunbar 1898: 139)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: “‘[...] and say, just as solemnly ‘When I get big, I’m going to marry Nellie.’”
- c. **“His pappy jump lak he was shot, an’ tu’n right pale, den he say kin’ o’ slow an’ gaspy-lak, ‘Don’t evah let me hyeah you say sich a thing ergin, Tho’nton Venable.’”** (Dunbar 1898: 139-40)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: “‘His father jumped as though he was shot, and turned quite pale, then he said kind of slowly and gaspingly ‘Don’t ever let me hear you say such a thing again, Thornton Venable.’”
- d. **She come right down dem steps ‘mongst all dem mad folks an’ say, calm an’ lady-lak, ‘Gent’mun, my brother-in-law is here, cert’ny.’** (Henry 1936-38: 43)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘She came right down those steps among all those mad folks and said calmly and lady-like, ‘Gentlemen, my brother-in-law is here, certainly.’’

- e. “W’en dey comes to de home wid de chil’s, dey says p’lite lak, ‘Sir, Ise brought your chil’s safe home.’” (Thompson 1936-38)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: “When they come to the home with the child, they say politely, ‘Sir, I brought your child home safely.’”

The above examples illustrate the development of quotative **like** used like a possible adverbial suffix **-ly**. Etymologically, **-ly** is derived from **liche** meaning ‘having the form of’. As such, it may be understood as a syntactic reanalysis in which the adverbial reading of **adj + like = adv** is replaced by one in which **like** comes to be understood as a stand-alone complementizer. In this position, it would regularly occur in a position in which it would necessarily introduce quotations. However, below in example (10), we will provide additional examples from AAA wherein such an adverbial reading is not possible.

Particularly in narration, the quotative **like** illustrated in (9) approximates the manner in which a quote (esp. song) took place. This is a similar phenomenon to that of approximation **like** and situational/manner-reportative **like**. The functional utility of this type of construction is through approximation, which allows for the leeway of quotation through simile ( $\approx$ ). A deixis-based explanation of quotative **like** has also been articulated that

*like* draws the listener to the internal state of the speaker in introducing constructed dialogue that dramatizes internalized feelings [...] In this respect the grammaticalization process, whereby *like* comes to introduce a mimetic performance, is [...] motivated since in its traditional meaning *like* means ‘similar to’ (Romaine and Lange 1991: 266, italics in original; also see Clark 1974).

As such, it becomes clear that quotative **like** results from reportative (a situational **like** of manner; mimesis of situation and/or sound) which, in turn, arises from similarity/approximation/resemblance **like** (cf. Meehan 1991, Buchstaller 2001). While we find that these earlier attestations of quotative **like** are compelling, at the same time, we must take into account that oftentimes, enslaved Africans were not allowed to write under threat of torture or death. This pervasive situation of oppression and repression is relevant with regard to why the quotative **like** of AAA speech may not have been appropriated into colloquial white speech until the 1980s (Jones 1990). As such, although we have found many examples of quotative **like** in just this cursory survey of available literature on AAA, we would doubtlessly have thousands more examples if not for the constraining nature of the prevailing historical

circumstances that curtailed documentation of AAA speech of the United States. With this in mind, we will continue to present a few further examples illustrating the manner origins of quotative **like** in AAA going back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. This relates directly to our second research question, which asks if quotative like is a recent phenomenon from the 1980s as is universally stated in the literature. It should be noted that the examples below have no possible suffixal/adverbial interpretation and are thus, instantiations of true quotative like:

10. AAA:

- a. **“You could hear ‘em singin’ a mile away dem old songs lak: ‘On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand,—Roll, Jordan Roll.’”** (Crew, Bunch, and Price (1936-8) 2014: 33)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ““You could hear them singing a mile away those old songs, such as: ‘On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand,—Roll, Jordan Roll.’””
- b. **“He would git ‘em started off singin’ somethin’ lak, ‘Sallie is a Good Gal,’ an’ evvybody kept time shuckin’ an’ a singin’.”** (Thomas 1936-38: 8)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ““He would get them started off singing something like, ‘Sallie is a Good Gal,’ and everybody kept time shucking and singing.”” (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18485/18485-h/18485-h.htm>)
- c. **“Us march’ ‘roun’ de room an’ sorter sing—lak, ‘De Yankees is comin’! De Yankees is comin’!”** (Henry (1936-8) 2006: 64)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ““We marched around the room and sort of sing (in a manner like) ‘The Yankees are coming! The Yankees are coming!’””
- d. **I use to sing a few songs dat I heard de older folks sing lak:  
“Cecess [Secession, i.e., Southern] ladies thank they mighty grand  
Settin’ at de table, coffee pot of rye,  
O’ ye Rebel union band, have these ladies understan’  
We leave our country to meet you, Uncle Sam.”** (White 1936-38: 290)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘I used to sing a few songs that I heard the older folks sing like:  
“Secession ladies think they’re very grand

Sitting at the table, coffee pot of rye,  
O ye Rebel union band, have these ladies understand  
We leave our country to meet you, Uncle Sam.”

In shoring up our claim with data, it should be readily apparent that quotative **like** in AAA is attested long before the conventional wisdom of the null hypothesis of non-African linguists as has been postulated for colloquial (white) English. In terms of the manner origins of quotative **like**, it should be noted in the examples above, as they are quotes of songs, there is a heavier emphasis on approximation of how the song was actually sung. This is in perfect alignment with the approximative meaning of **like**. As similar structures are readily apparent in continental African languages, it is likely that AAA speakers drew upon the limited lexical tools available within the English language to accomplish the type of approximation that they already knew of as being possible in African languages from which such constructions likely originated.

In arguing for the manner origins of modern quotative **like**, in AAA, which we argue has been co-opted into colloquial (white) American varieties of English among other (white) varieties of English, it seems as though **like** has the ability to function as a sort of shorthand for “**like this**” in which the speaker makes it known to the listener that he or she is going to attempt to approximate the manner in which the following utterance was made (see Macaulay 2001). An example of this is found in (11) below.

11. “Dere am a song ‘bout de Patter Rollers. Ise can’t ‘membahs it as ‘twas, but its somethin’ lak dis: ‘Up the hill and down the holler’” (Thompson 1936-38).

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ““There is a song about the patrollers. I can’t remember it as it was, but it’s something like this: ‘Up the hill and down the holler’””

Having shown copious examples of instantiations of quotative **like** prior to the 1980s, we will now turn our attention to more modern examples which permeate memes generated on the Internet. Attributed to Richard Dawkins (1976), the word “**meme**” actually originates in scientific literature but has since been appropriated into popular culture on the Internet. Modeled on the word gene, meme is an abbreviation of the word *mimeme* from Greek **μίμημα** *mīmēma* ‘imitated thing’ from **μιμεῖσθαι** *mimeisthai* ‘to imitate’ and ultimately derived from **μῖμος** *mimos*, ‘mime’ (Pickett 2000). Popular memes are relevant to our discussion of quotative **like** as the quotative **like** typically occurs on the top of the image, while the quoted phrase is typically featured on the bottom (with or without quotation marks). Further, a meme

represents/enacts the feeling/emotion of the sender/poster via a written quotation introduced by **like**. Thus, the meme, like mimetic (re)enactment, creates a holistic impression via approximation in line with the intrinsic lexical/semantic properties of **like**.

Figure 1: Memes with quotative **like**

a.



Women be like “nope I ain’t mad”  
(Anonymous 2015b)

b.



Girls be like “you my one and only”  
(Anonymous 2013b)

c.



Girls be like “yeah, I know how to cook”  
(Anonymous 2013a)

d.



Dudes be like “your beautiful” I be like “you’re”  
(Anonymous 2015a)

Each one of these memes shows the quotative **like** in various contexts and also what we argue to be the logical extension of the transition from **like** of similarity to reporting the manner in which the situation occurred (reportative **like**) to quoting the manner in which the quote was made (quotative **like**). It is to be noted that oftentimes in speech situations, the quote features an imitation of the speaker’s tone of voice and/or movements/behavior. In the case of memes, however, the mimesis is provided by the facial expressions and physical presentations in the image—similar to the function of in-person gesticulations—which serve to provide a sense of (re)enactment to go with the quote introduced by **like**. It should be noted that the above memes happen to have non-inflected **be** collocating with **like** providing a habitual reading in standard AAA. However, when the habitual reading of AAA non-inflected **be** is not called for, **like** readily collocates with other elements such as in **he all like...**, **she straight (up and down) like**, etc. Such forms have not yet been as thoroughly coopted into colloquial (white) American English to the degree of inflected **be like**. However, as we have demonstrated above, quotative **like** is attested in AAA at least as far back as the 1800s and it most likely occurred in the language well before this time. Indeed, below we will show that a parallel form exists in the Akan (Asante Twi) language of West Africa, which may well have been transported by kidnapped and enslaved Africans to the Americas.

### 5.6 Quotative **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’

We now turn our attention to the (**ne**) **se** ‘(be) like’ quotative in Akan (Asante Twi). There are various instances of quotative **se** in Akan (Asante Twi). As in the case of quotative **like**, **se** may collocate with **ne** ‘be’, **fre** ‘call’, **bisa** ‘ask’, **se** ‘say’ and a whole host of other verbs. Thus, we find that quotative **se** in the Akan (Asante Twi) context is similar to quotative **like** as attested in AAA of the United States. As in the case of quotative **like**, quotative **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ provides an approximative rendering of the gist of the speech act. It should be noted that the examples in (12) are not (yet) full quotative uses of **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ in that the primary role of the semantic notion of reportativity is carried by the verbum dicendi (or a verb of ‘saying’). For **like** to be fully quotative, it would need to occur without a verbum dicendi, as in (13) below.

12. AKAN:

- a. “**Asem a**                      **ɔ-ka-e**                      **ne se: ‘Kwaku,**                      **sɔre**  
 word    REL                      3SG.SBJ-speak-PST                      be like: Kwaku                      rise  
**na**                      **wo-re-ye**                      **a-wu’”**  
 PRT                      2SG-PROG-do                      CONS-die  
 (Opoku 1969: 145)  
 AAA: ‘What he/she said was like ‘Kwaku, get up cuz you fin’ta die.’’  
 STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘What he/she said was: ‘Kwaku, get up because you are on the verge of death.’’

- b. **Ayie ba**                      **a,**                      **na**                      **ye-fre**                      **ɔbetwani**                      **se**  
 funeral come                      COND    PRT                      1PL-call                      palm-wine-tapper                      like  
 “**Nana.**”  
 grandparent  
 (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 310)  
 AAA: ‘If a funeral come, we call the palm wine man like “Elder.”’  
 STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘If a funeral comes, we call the palm wine man “Elder.”’

- c. **Ye-re-yi wo**                      **agoro mu a,**                      **wo-n-se**                      **se**  
 1PL-PROG-remove                      2SG    game inside COND,                      2SG-NEG-say like  
 “**M-a-kae**                      **dwom.**”  
 1SG-PRF-remember                      song  
 (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 310)  
 AAA: ‘When we kick you out the show, you don’t say like “I remember a song.”’  
 STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘When you are removed from the performance, you don’t say “I have remembered a song.”’

In (13) we illustrate examples wherein *se* ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ carries the semantic force of reportativity as it occurs without a *verbum dicendi*.

13. Akan:

- a. “**Bra**                      **be-hwe**                      **bi”**                      **n-kyere**                      **se**                      “**Be-hunu**  
 come                      INGR-look                      some    NEG-show                      like                      INGR-see  
**sene**                      **me.”**  
 pass                      1SG

AAA: “Come check it out” don’t mean like “See it betta than me”  
 STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘Telling someone “come and look at something” doesn’t mean “see it better than me.”’

- b. **Wo**            **biribi**            **ne**            **akyenkyena**    **a,**            **anka**    **eka**  
 2SG            something        be            allied hornbill    COND, would    debt

**re-m-pa**            **wo**            **so**            **da,**            **ε-firi**            **se**  
 FUT-NEG-wipe    2SG            top            never, 3SG.INA-from    like  
**obi**            **re-pae**            **n’adee**            **a,**            **a-gye**  
 someone    PROG-split        3SG.POSS.thing    COND,            PRF-receive  
**ma ne**            **ho**            **se:**            **“Mea!**            **Mea!”**  
 give            3SG            body        like:        “Just.me!        Just.me!”

(Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 48)

AAA: ‘If yo relative a hornbill, you won’t neva be outta debt ‘cause when somebody shout ‘bout his (missin’) thang, he a-been done admitted to it fo’ his own seff like “It was me! It was me!”’

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘If your relation is an allied hornbill, then you will not stop paying debts, because whenever someone is shouting for a lost thing, it takes responsibility crying: “It is I! It is I!”’

- c. **Aboa**            **abirekyie**            **na**            **a-bu**            **ne**            **be**  
 animal        goat            PRT        PRF-break        3SG.POSS        proverb  
**se**            **“Ade pa**            **na**            **ye-kata**            **soo.”**  
 like            thing    good    PRT        1PL-cover        top.”

(Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 52)

AAA: ‘Da goat break off his proverb like “Good thangs, we cova ‘em up.”’

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘The goat has a proverb which says: “A good thing is sure to be covered over.”’

- d. **Dee**            **ɔ-re-pe**                            **da-bere**            **n-kyere**  
 REL            3SG-PROG-search            sleep-place        NEG-show  
**n’akyi**                            **se**            **“Me-dwonsɔ**            **ketɛ**            **so.”**  
 3SG.POSS.back    like        1SG-urinate        mat        on

(Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 82)

AAA: ‘Somebody that want a place to sleep don’t let nobody know like “I pee the bed.”’

STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘He who wants a sleeping place does not reveal: “I am a bed wetter.”’

## 6.0 Grammaticalization path of ‘like’ and ‘se’

The development of lexical words into functional and/discourse words, particles and affixes is a prominent feature of language (see Hopper and Traugott 2003). This process, referred to as grammaticalization, represents a high level of functional organization in language where pre-existing words, which encode clearly delineated, usually concrete, concepts are extended in their usage to refer to other related and/or relatable concepts via some specific cognitive processes. As we have shown above, **like** in AAA and **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ in Akan (Asante Twi) have uses and functions beyond their core meaning. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the path of grammaticalization that we believe the two forms **like** and **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ have undergone. First, as has been demonstrated above, there are substantive similarities in the development and use of quotative **se** and **like**. Primarily, both seem to start from a root meaning of similarity, which is the underlying meaning of the lexical verb. However, as noted by Romaine and Lange (1991), **like** can also be used as an auxiliary and a preposition as in Figure 2 for AAA. Since grammaticalization takes place in stages, it is reasonable to expect that the function of **like** as an auxiliary will precede that of a preposition, since auxiliaries can be considered a subset of verbs in many languages. In Akan (Asante Twi), however, there is no evidence of **se** used as an auxiliary or a preposition (indeed, Akan (Asante Twi) lacks the category of prepositions altogether with the exception of **wɔ** ‘be, exist, LOC’, see Osam 1994; Osam, Duah and Blay 2011). Nevertheless, we see a further development of the root meaning of **like/se** to function as a reportative complementizer, which provides the manner in which a situation or event occurred. As a further development, **like/se** are both used as quotative complementizers, which derive their utility via the flexibility and expressiveness of “quotation through simile.” In this function, the complementizer allows for a greater degree of hedging. It also incorporates the expressiveness of enactment rather than the adherence to the constraint of the reproduction of an exact quote word-for-word. We argue that these points of utility, to a large degree, form the bases for the extensive grammaticalization of **like/se**. Consequently, in Akan (Asante Twi), **se** has developed into a generalized complementizer which can be used to express a wide range of other propositions (see Figure 3).

Figure 1: Putative diachronic development of AAA Quotative **Like**:

**Like**

main verb > (auxiliary > preposition >) reportative/manner complementizer > quotative complementizer (> verbum dicendi)

Figure 2: Putative diachronic development of Akan (Asante Twi) Quotative **Sɛ**:

**Sɛ**

main verb > reportative/manner complementizer > quotative complementizer (> generalized complementizer)<sup>14</sup>

## 7.0 Conclusion

In this article, we have addressed our three primary research questions, which were: (1) What is the nature of the correlation between **like** in Anti-American African varieties of speech and writing of the United States and **sɛ** in Akan (Asante Twi)? In section 5.0, we argued that both AAA **like** and Akan (Asante Twi) **sɛ** are used primarily to express similarity, resemblance and/or approximation and to report the manner or nature of a situation and ultimately as a grammaticalized quotative complementizer. (2) Is quotative **like** a recent development as claimed by some non-African linguists? We answer no, it is not a recent development in Anti-American African (AAA) speech. More likely, the construction has, rather, recently been adopted into colloquial (white) American English, but remains outside of the pale of standard (white) American English with African languages with which AAA is genetically related, such as Akan (Asante Twi), as the ultimate source. (3) What are the bases for the development/grammaticalization of **sɛ/like** into a quotative complementizer in Akan (Asante Twi) and Anti-American African speech of the United States (so-called African American Vernacular English/Black English)? On this question, we argue that the primary basis is approximation from a simple simile ( $\approx$ ) extended into other domains (approximation of likeness, situations, sounds, and utterances). Having addressed our three primary research questions through the course of this paper, we conclude that both quotative **like** and **sɛ** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ appear to provide a common African (Continental and Diaspora) solution to a common linguistic problem. Thus, there are functional bases

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<sup>14</sup> Parentheses indicate that each may also be used in this way, but not exclusively nor obligatorily.

for the initial development of quotative **like** and **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ which predate hitherto commonly accepted dates in colloquial (white) English typically attested in the literature (i.e. the 1980s). However, beyond this discussion of anteriority, the poignant correlation between Akan (Asante Twi) and AAA speech calls for linguists in general and African linguists in particular, to problematize Standard (white) English as the global standard after which all other languages are evaluated or into which they are glossed/translated. Similarly, it may prove useful to problematize glossing African languages into white varieties of English over varieties of African = Black speech, such as AAA, which may be more similar and may mutually provide synchronic and diachronic insights that may otherwise be obscured by taking a circuitous and tangential journey through Standard (white) English. In this vein, we may ask ourselves “So why not translate from African languages directly into AAA and vice versa rather than take a detour through the elusive hypernym, ‘English?’”

## 8.0 Future directions

In the future, we would like to do further research into the extended grammaticalization found in AAA of the US in the case of the non-obligatory collocation where **like** alone can be used as a complementizer. Examples of this include:

### 14. AAA:

- a. **And then he like, “Damn, there go that bastard again, he the (Postman)”** (Wayne 2006)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘And then he says, “Damn, there’s that bastard again, he’s the (Postman)”’
- b. **And then she like “bring back my change”** (correction\_queen\_2015)  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘And then she says “bring back my change”’

In this and other instances, we find that **be** in **be like** is primarily necessary for a habitual interpretation rather than for collocation with a verb as is found in other cases outlined above and in Akan (Asante Twi). Thus, it is necessary to disaggregate the quotative **like/se** from other verbs with which they may or may not collocate in any given situation. In other words, in the context of AAA speech, it may be a

misnomer to speak of quotative **be like** whereas, it may be more appropriate to talk of quotative **like** that happens to collocate with non-inflected/habitual **be** in addition to various other verbs and parts of speech<sup>15</sup> (cf. Cukor-Avila 2002, Buchstaller 2013).

On the Akan (Asante Twi) side, we look forward to engaging in further research into related items which feature **se** ‘like (in the sense of be similar to), resemble’ such as **sedee** ‘the manner in which’, **senea** ‘the manner in which’, **ase** ‘seems like’ and **sei (se eyi)** ‘like this.’

15. AKAN:

- a. **mi-gyina**            **ho**    **sei**            **‘gonn.’**  
1SG-stand            there    like-this        ‘gonn.’  
(Opoku 1969:14)  
AAA: ‘I stand there like ‘yo.’’  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘I stand there ‘ta-daa.’’
- b. **wo-be-ye**            **sei**            **‘gonn.’**  
2SG-FUT-do            like-this        ‘gonn.’  
(Opoku 1969:14)  
AAA: ‘You’ll be like ‘yo.’’  
STANDARD (WHITE) AMERICAN ENGLISH: ‘You will do ‘ta-daa.’’

These are particularly interesting lines of inquiry in that each one extends the discussion of the similarity of manner origins for the “quotation by simile” evident in quotative **like/se** as discussed in the current paper.

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<sup>15</sup> Note aforementioned AAA examples like **he all like...**, **she straight (up and down) like**.

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## **TWISWAHILI OR KISWATWILI: A STUDY OF PARALLEL PROVERBS IN AKAN (TWI) AND KISWAHILI**

*Obádélé Kambon and Josephine Dzahene-Quarshie*

### **Abstract**

In Akan and Kiswahili, there are several proverbs that express the same underlying idea, oftentimes in the exact same or similar ways. There are several possible reasons why these parallel proverbs exist. In one line of thinking, the similarities may be due to contact phenomena facilitating shared cultural and/or historical experiences. Another perspective is that the similarities may be due to the demonstrably genetic relationship between Akan and Kiswahili as languages of the Niger-Congo phylum. In this study, however, we will examine these proverbs in parallel or near-parallel and demonstrate that regardless of the facts of the two aforementioned lines of inquiry, they attest to a shared African worldview and can be analyzed in terms of measured proximity and similarity.

**Keywords:** Akan, Swahili, proverb, comparison, proximity, similarity, PPP matrix

### **1.0 Introduction**

Although easily identifiable within their cultural-linguistic context, proverbs tend to elude a universal consensus definition. Various definitions have been proposed over the years. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as “a brief popular saying... that gives advice about how people should live or that expresses a belief that is generally thought to be true.” Here, a definition is given based on prescriptiveness in that it directs people as to how they should live or confirms their beliefs.

Nabifar (2013) provides a more comprehensive definition of the proverb as:

a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form, which are handed down from generation to generation and since they belong to the common knowledge of basically all native speakers they are indeed very effective devices to communicate wisdom and knowledge about human nature and the world at large. (Nabifar 2013:2287)

This definition takes into account various evaluative criteria with regard to what a proverb is in terms of its content, form and its link to culture and history. However, since we are discussing African proverbs specifically, it is appropriate to note a few African meta-proverbs by way of definitions:

1. **Bí òwe ò bá jọ òwe, a**  
 When proverb NEG COND resemble proverb, 1PL.SBJ  
**kì í pa á.**  
 NEG.HAB cite 3SG.OBJ  
 ‘If a proverb does not apply to a situation, one does not cite it. (Owomoyela 2005: 159) (Yorùbá)
  
2. **Asem ba a, na abe-buo a-ba.**  
 issue come COND, FOC proverb-citing PRF-come  
 ‘When the occasion arises, a proverb comes to mind.’ (Akan) (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 247)

These meta-proverbs provide a sense of the importance of appropriateness in a given context. The idea is that a defining feature of proverbs and that which imbues them with a sense of truth is their propriety with relation to the context in which they are cited. This is in alignment with the ancient African concept of *m³t Maat* ‘truth, right-doing, righteousness, justice, rightness, orderly management’ that also includes ideas of harmony, balance and propriety, which are fundamental to the African worldview (Dickson 2006: 236).

A belief that is shared by many scholars is the potential global/universal application of a large percentage of proverbs irrespective of their geographical origin. It is also a fact that even if not identical in lexical composition, some proverbs from different languages may express the same concepts or ideas because some situations are common to human experience (Škara 1995).

Nevertheless, it is also true that because proverbs tend to be metaphorical and highly historical, and culturally determined/motivated, some proverbs, like metaphors, may require knowledge of the specific cultural setting in order to fully understand them (Lakoff and Johnson 2008). An example of such a proverb in Akan is:

3. **N-ye obi na ɔ-kum Antwi; Boasiako**  
 NEG-be someone FOC 3SG.SUBJ-kill A. B.  
**no ara na ɔ-de ne tiri**  
 DEF merely FOC 3SG.SBJ-take 3SG.POSS head  
**gye-e akyerema**  
 receive-COMPL drummers  
 ‘It was no one who killed Antwi, it was Boasiako (Antwi) who offered his head for execution.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 303)

This proverb is said to emanate from a historical incident. On one account, one Oben Antwi impregnated a royal wife of Ntim Gyakari, the ruler of Denkyira, who was entrusted to his care and was executed for the offense (Reindorf 2007: 52). On another account, a royal returned from war to find his wife pregnant and one Duodu Antwi claimed responsibility to absolve the true culprit who was the ruler of the Asante nation himself (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 303). In either case, it is said that Antwi brought his execution upon himself.

Another proverb originating from historical circumstances is the following:

4. **Ntim Gyakari a-soa ne man a-ko-bo**  
 N. Gy. PRF-carry 3SG.POSS nation CONS-EGR-ruin  
**Feyiase**  
 F.  
 ‘Ntim Gyakari carried his nation and wrecked her at Feyiase (town).’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 211)

The proverb highlighted in (4) is rooted in a historical reference to the Asante-Denkyira war in which the Denkyira nation fell to Asante at the town of Feyiase. In light of these proverbs related to a culturally and historically specific local context, Nabifar notes that, nevertheless, there is a “common, universal morality, guide for the practice of virtue, similar in all countries, if not in the form, at least in the message; and those which are particular, borne from a historical fact, a local custom or a specific event. They have their own identity signs which characterize the place or time of origin.” (Nabifar 2013:2289-90).

A major feature of proverbs is their deployment in contexts other than those in which they originated such that they relate to the situation at hand by means of analogy to the original situation referenced directly. As such, proverbs exemplify the concept of cognitive economy. In other words, one proverb can be used in various contexts without imposing upon the speaker the necessity of coming up with new constructions in each new instance in which an analogous reply is necessary. According to Holland and Quinn (1987), “As compact expressions of important cultural knowledge, proverbs combine a cognitive economy of reasoning with pragmatic force aimed at influencing other people” (Holland and Quinn 1987:152). This sentiment is echoed in the notion that “Cognitively, proverbs are mentally economical, since from one particular situation presented in them we can understand many others” (Moreno 2005: 42).

Elaborating on the concept of cognitive economy in categorization, Rosch (1978) explains that:

as an organism, what one wishes to gain from one’s categories is a great deal of information about the environment while conserving finite resources as much as possible. To categorize a stimulus means to consider it, for purposes of that categorization, not only equivalent to other stimuli in the same category but also different from stimuli not in that category. On the one hand, it would appear to the organism’s advantage to have as many properties as possible predictable from knowing any one property, a principle that would lead to formation of large numbers of categories with as fine discriminations between categories as possible. (Rosch 1978:28-9)

Thus, while cognitive economy offers substantive benefits, the flip side of the equation is that “the price of this cognitive economy is a bit of rigidity in interpreting the world and a certain slowness in recognizing or learning new models” (Holland and Quinn 1987:391). Thus, as with many phenomena, the diverse application and potential for utilization in a variety of contexts serves as a double-edged sword in the sense that, as with many things, this attribute may be both a strength and a weakness at the same time.

In the literature, some studies have been done on proverbs including comparative studies between languages from perspectives based on characteristic features of proverbs and the cognitive processes associated with their use (Škara 1995, Hong-mei 2013, Gluski 1989, Nabifar 2013, Ying 2013, Ulatowska et al. 2000, Mieder 2003, Moreno 2005). The current study embarks upon a comparative study between Akan (Asante) and Kiswahili (Tanzanian) proverbs. Historically, Akan and

Kiswahili belong to the same African language family, namely the Niger-Congo phylum, although they belong to different sub-groups.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, there is evidence of some linguistic affinity between them (Welmers 1963, Osam 1993, Dzahene-Quarshie 2016). Having established linguistic affinity between Akan and Bantu and by extension Kiswahili, the possibility of a shared cultural and historical experience in the distant past cannot be ruled out.

It is evident from a range of Akan (Asante Twi) and Kiswahili proverbs that several of them are wholly or partly identical in terms of lexical and/or syntactic composition. There are still others that are not parallel in content but parallel in terms of meaning and application. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to examine these proverbs in parallel or near-parallel and demonstrate that they attest to a shared African worldview – most simply put: a common way of viewing the world as African people.

Having given a general introduction, we will now turn our attention to our methodology, followed by our conceptual framework which makes a link between Proximity of People and Similarity of Proverbs of Akan and Kiswahili speakers. We will subsequently introduce a novel framework that we term the People's Proverb Proximity (PPP) Matrix, which will serve as a method of representing the correlation between proximity along various dimensions and similarity of proverbs. We will then provide an analysis of what we term KiswaTwi<sup>2</sup> (parallel Akan (Asante Twi) and Kiswahili) proverbs within the framework of the aforementioned PPP Matrix. Finally, we will present our overall findings and conclusions.

## 2.0 Methodology and Data

In gathering the data for the study, proverbs from several texts (Appiah et al. 2001; Ampem 1998; Ndalu and King'ei 1989; Wamitila 2006) were purposefully selected primarily from Asante Twi (representing Akan) and Tanzanian Kiswahili (representing Kiswahili). As such, proverbs that have identical or similar equivalents with the same or almost the same meaning in the two languages were identified and grouped together. Next, pairs of proverbs which are not necessarily lexically or semantically parallel but depict or express the same or similar ideas were selected.

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<sup>1</sup> In an alternative and more preferable analysis, they belong to the common Négro-Egyptien phylum (cf. Obenga 1993).

Our primary focus was on conceptual/semantic parallels or near-parallels with a secondary focus on identical or similar lexemes. We selected 60 proverbs as part of this exploratory study.

### **3.0 Conceptual Framework: People Proximity and Proverb Similarity**

At this point, we will introduce a framework of dimension of proximity as a measure of proverb similarity. We briefly discuss the dimension of proximity between Akan and Kiswahili speaking people in terms of a Biological (including physiological, anatomical, genetic, phenotypical, etc.) proximity, Cosmological proximity, Cultural proximity and Environmental proximity. From these dimensions of proximity comes our hypothesis that the closer these dimensions of proximity are to each other, the greater the degree of similarity between proverbs.

#### **3.1 Cultural Distance and Proximity**

We found that in the literature, there were established conceptual frameworks in which terms such as cultural proximity and cultural distance have been introduced. Cultural proximity may be generally understood as “the tendency to prefer media products from one’s own culture or the most similar possible culture” (Straubhaar and Elasmir 2003: 85). Cultural Distance, on the other hand, is typically used in business and marketing and is defined “as a function of differences in values and communication styles that are rooted in culture” (demographic or organizational) (Lojeski and Reilly 2008: 665). While these concepts share similar terminology, what we mean by proximity is entirely different and will be explicated below.

With regard to proximity, our use of the term is more closely related to notions that the closer people are geographically, the closer they tend to be culturally, and in various other dimensions due primarily to environmental and other intervening factors. This idea can be found in the literature as seen in quotes such as “There has never been any doubt on the part of observers reflecting on the matter that there is a connection between geographical proximity and the cultural similarity of ethnic units” (Milke, Chrétien, and Kroeber 1949: 237). Also, similar notions can be found in quotes that address cultural distance, such as “[C]ultural differences can be assessed at different levels of analysis, namely by contrasting national differences in values and norms (cultural distance) with individuals’ perceptions of those differences (psychic distance)” (Pinto, Cardoso, and Werther 2010: 4).

It is clear that genetically the Swahili people and the Akan people are of the African/Black race, except that some Swahili people are of mixed race (as a result of the long-standing relationship between the Swahili Coast and various groups of

Arabs). Physically, although Ghana and Tanzania are situated in different parts of Africa (West and East) it can be argued that they are all situated in the middle belt of Africa, a fact that is supported by their belonging to the same language family, Niger-Congo. Further, the climates in the two countries are generally similar. Both have coastal areas, tropical forests as well as arid lands. Due to these similar climates and environments, food stuffs are fairly uniform.

Cosmologically and culturally the two societies share, to a large extent, similar worldviews as expressed through indigenous spiritual systems. In both cultures, family and relationship values generally overlap. One significant distinction is found in the fact that the Akan people are historically matrilineal while the Swahili people are patrilineal. However, Nurse et al. (1985) argue that the Swahili society were originally matrilineal but shifted subtly to patrilineal as ideologies and symbols were gradually transformed (Nurse, Spear, and Spear 1985).

In the two societies, proverbs are also used in similar contexts. So, in terms of dimensions of proximity as a measure of proverb similarity, the level of similarity is quite high although there are marked differences in some variables such as the foods and other aspects of material culture that vary.

### **3.2 Dimensions of proximity as measure of proverb similarity**

We now introduce the concept of dimensions of proximity and similarity. Proximity relates to how close the two (or more) groups of people are to each other with respect to four (4) dimensions. These dimensions are:

- a. **Biological proximity**  
Biological proximity relates to similarity in terms of types of people genetically, phenotypically, physiologically, anatomically, racially, etc.
- b. **Cosmological proximity**  
Cosmological proximity can be understood as similarity of worldview, spirituality, and other related notions between groups of people.
- c. **Cultural proximity**  
Cultural proximity is similarity in material culture, ideational culture, social culture, etc.
- d. **Environmental proximity**  
Finally, Environmental proximity relates to similarity in terms of physical location, climate, topographical features and other such factors between groups of people.

These dimensions of proximity inform our fundamental hypothesis that the closer these and potentially other dimensions of “people proximity” are to each other, the greater the degree of similarity between proverbs of the peoples in question. A related assumption is that greater closeness in one dimension may make up for greater distance in another. As such, we will test these hypotheses against the data found for Akan (represented here by Asante Twi) of Ghana and Kiswahili proverbs of Tanzania.

#### **4.0 People’s Proverb Proximity (PPP) Matrix**

Just as proximity can be measured with regard to the people who originate from the same place and use proverbs, corresponding dimensions of similarity can be measured with regard to proverbs. These dimensions of similarity, when combined with “people proximity” dimensions help us to gauge on a parallel proverb-by-proverb basis how close a set of proverbs from one language group is to that of another.

These dimensions of proverb similarity include:

- a. **Conceptual/Semantic similarity**  
The primary factor relating to conceptual/semantic similarity is for there to exist parallel overall meanings between pairs of proverbs.
- b. **Contextual similarity**  
This dimension calls for parallel contexts in which the proverbs are used. In other words, different proverbs may be used in the same context to convey similar overall meanings or concepts.
- c. **Lexical similarity**  
Lexical similarity may be understood as the utilization of parallel lexemes in the selected set of proverbs. For example, a given pair of proverbs seen as being parallel may use animals like the tortoise to convey an idea of slowness or honey to convey an idea of sweetness in proverbs.
- d. **Syntactic/Structural similarity**  
The last dimension of proverb similarity identified is that of parallel syntactic structures used in each of the proverbs compared. This may be in terms of basic SVO structure or in the use of negation or similar tense/aspect systems in the proverbs being compared.

The nexus or interface between these people/proverb dimensions can be represented in tabular format in what we term the People’s Proverb Proximity (PPP) Matrix:

*Table 1: People’s Proverb Proximity (PPP) Matrix*

	<b>Conceptual/ Semantic Similarity</b>	<b>Contextual Similarity</b>	<b>Lexical Similarity</b>	<b>Syntactic/ Structural Similarity</b>
<b>Biological proximity</b>				
<b>Cosmological proximity</b>				
<b>Cultural proximity</b>				
<b>Environmental proximity</b>				

In both Akan (Asante Twi) and Kiswahili languages, proverbs usually adhere to grammatical rules, although there may be instances where the structure of some proverbs may not follow the general grammatical rules as in the case of some attested Efik proverbs (Mensah 2010). There are several structural types involved, from one-argument constructions, which may constitute phrases, to complex constructions consisting of main and subordinate clauses. As posited in the literature, proverbs in both languages are usually made up of two parts; subject and verb or subject and predicate for simple sentences or a main clause and a subordinate clause for complex sentences (cf. Škara 1995).

## 5.0 Analysis of parallel KiswaTwili proverbs

We will now turn our attention to an analysis of KiswaTwili proverbs using the PPP matrix framework. Our first parallel set features a pair of Akan (Asante Twi) proverbs that use different wording to convey the same core notion and a pair of similar Kiswahili (Tanzania) proverbs:

5.

a. **Ɔkoto n-wo anomaa.**  
 crab NEG-birth bird  
 ‘The crab doesn’t give birth to a bird.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 165)

b. **Adowa/eyuo n-wo ba na**  
 royal antelope/black duiker NEG-birth child CONJ  
**ɔ-n-ko-sɛ ɔwansane.**  
 3SG-IMP-EGR-resemble bushbuck.  
 ‘The royal antelope/black duiker does not give birth to its child for it to resemble a bushbuck.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 98)

c. **Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka.**  
 child GEN snake be snake.  
 ‘The child of a snake is a snake.’ (Wamitila 2001: 193)

d. **Mwana simba ni simba.**  
 son lion be lion  
 ‘The child of the lion is a lion.’ (Wamitila 2001: 206)

These proverbs evince a degree of environmental proximity in the sense that the royal antelope, black duiker and the lion are African animals while the crab and the snake are also found in Africa in addition to other places. Because of similar environments, the KiswaTwili proverb set reference these specific animals while they likely would not feature prominently in proverbs from, say, the arctic circle. The set also displays a measure of cosmological proximity with regard to its latent commentary on the nature of the world in that one’s offspring resembles one, biologically speaking. It also gives a view into ideas of definition and categorization. There is also a conceptual/semantic similarity, which forms the basis of our grouping the proverbs in the set together in that they are all expressing essentially the same concept in different ways. As such, this gives rise to what we refer to as contextual similarity in that they would be expected to be cited in similar contexts in relation to the core concept conveyed in each.

The PPP Matrix expressing the intersection of People Proximity and Proverb Similarity is shown below in Table 2.



Table 3: KiswaTwili Set 2 PPP Matrix

	<b>Conceptual/Semantic Similarity</b>	<b>Contextual Similarity</b>	<b>Lexical Similarity</b>	<b>Syntactic/ Structural Similarity</b>
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

As can be readily observed, each of the proverbs in this set refers to the ripening process and patience necessary to allow this natural process of plant biology to take place. While there is a literal mention of fruits, the notion of cognitive economy allows the citation of these proverbs in any context in which patience is regarded as necessary, making them similar in terms of contextual usage. The core conceptual/semantic correlation between proverbs is also evinced in this pairing, as this similarity is typically the basis for evaluating any pair or set of proverbs as being in parallel. Further, we find in this pairing that the nature of fruits is used to convey similar concepts with regard to the nature of the world comprising the cosmological and conceptual interface. The use of fruits to convey this notion of patience meets a criterion of empirical truth that is readily observed and known in the environment of the perceived world structure.

According to Rosch “the perceived world is not an unstructured total set of equiprobable co-occurring attributes. Rather, the material objects of the world are perceived to possess [...] high correlational structure” (Rosch 1978:29). As such, our individual and collective empirically-obtained knowledge about the objects in the environment and their nature becomes a crucial factor in terms of how said objects may feature in proverbs. A physical environment where fruits are abundant then becomes a milieu in which proverbs may appeal to that which is generally known about the said fruits in terms of the general attributes of such objects in the context of perceived world structure. Also worth noting is the lexical similarity in which

Kiswahili generalizes over fruits as a cogent category while Akan mentions the pineapple specifically.

The flexibility of the PPP matrix is also apparent in that in the case where the lexical similarity is not as strong, it may be represented in a lighter shade to show that the correlation, while it indeed exists, is not complete.

In KiswaTwili Proverb Set 3, we find another parallel which appeals to proximate material cultures and cultural practices between the Akan and Waswahili ‘Swahili people.’

7.

- a. **Ayie ba a, na ye-pa abetwafoo**  
Funeral come COND, FOC 1PL.SUBJ-remove palm-wine-tappers  
**kyew.**  
hat  
‘When the funeral arrives, we are polite to the palm-wine tapper.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 310)

- b. **Msitukane wagama na ulevi**  
2SG-NEG-SBJ-insult palm-wine tappers CONJ drunkenness  
**ungaliko.**  
3SG.INAN-COND-exists.  
‘While drunkenness persists, one should not insult palm-wine tappers.’  
(Wamitila 2001: 186)

Table 4: KiswaTwili Set 3 PPP Matrix

	<b>Conceptual/Semantic Similarity</b>	<b>Contextual Similarity</b>	<b>Lexical Similarity</b>	<b>Syntactic/Structural Similarity</b>
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
<b>Cultural proximity</b>				
<b>Environmental proximity</b>				

Again, in this KiswaTwili proverb set, we find evidence of environmental proximity and cultural proximity. The environmental proximity is seen in that both the Akan speakers and the Kiswahili speakers live in environments which feature palm trees and cultures that employ palm-wine tappers. Further, we find prescriptive statements or observations with regard to treatment of these palm-wine tappers, again appealing proximity with regard to cultural exigencies. In the set, we also observe conceptual/semantic similarity in terms of core meaning with regard to behavior towards palm-wine tappers in the literal sense and in a more metaphorical sense an appeal to the notion that, in times of need, those who may otherwise be regarded as of little consequence may loom large in importance under such circumstances. As the core meaning is similar, we also see an apparent contextual similarity in that the proverbs in both languages would likely be cited when a person becomes elevated in status temporarily due to circumstance or one is admonished to be tactful when dealing with someone on whom one is dependent, despite the fact that they are of a lower social or economic status. Additionally, we find lexical similarities with regard to expressions of politeness and palm-wine tappers. Finally, we observe a degree of syntactic/structural similarity in terms of the employment of conditional statements in each of the proverbs in the set.

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 4 is interesting in that each language employs a few ways to convey the same underlying thought as shown below:

- 8.
- a. **Nsateaa**                **baako** **n-kukuru**                **adee.**  
 finger                    one    NEG-lift                    thing  
 ‘One finger doesn’t lift a load.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 210)
- b. **Nsateaa**                **baako** **n-kum**                    **dwie.**  
 finger                    one    NEG-kill                    louse  
 ‘One finger doesn’t kill a louse.’
- c. **Mkono**                    **mmoja** **hau-chinj-i**                    **ng’ombe.**  
 hand                    one    NEG-slaughter-NEG                    cow  
 ‘A single hand cannot slaughter a cow.’ (Wamitila 2001: 170)
- d. **Mkono**                    **mmoja** **hau-le-i**                    **mwana.**  
 hand                    one    NEG-nurse-NEG                    child  
 ‘A single hand cannot nurse a child.’ (Wamitila 2001: 171)

The KiswaTwili Set 4 PPP Matrix is shown below:

*Table 5: KiswaTwili Set 4 PPP Matrix*

	<b>Conceptual/Semantic Similarity</b>	<b>Contextual Similarity</b>	<b>Lexical Similarity</b>	<b>Syntactic/Structural Similarity</b>
<b>Biological proximity</b>				
Cosmological proximity				
<b>Cultural proximity</b>				
Environmental proximity				

In this set we see several points of intersection with regard to biological limitations common to the human condition. To illustrate the point, human beings do not have 10 legs and 15 fingers. Thus, we don't find proverbs that talk about such configurations. Because of how the human body is configured physiologically, using one finger to kill a louse or lift a heavy load is not a viable proposition. In other words, proverbs that talk about the human body and the human condition will naturally be similar because, as human beings, we all have the same basic physiological configuration from which we work. These proverbs are naturally similar because physiologically, human beings are similar. This point goes beyond worldview or environment to the human condition. For example, proverbs talk about death because human beings die and if we did not die, there would be no proverbs about death. We talk about the difficulty of doing things with one hand or one finger because the vast majority of us have more than one hand or one finger with which we operate. If we only had one hand or one finger, such proverbs would probably not exist because one finger would be the norm and, therefore, would not be remarkable per se. Biological and physiological advantages and disadvantages that come from our physiological makeup are the root of proverbs that discuss human physiology. As Africans were the first humans on the planet, the universality expressed in proverbs related to our anatomy, physiology or biology can be understood as the degree to which other populations retained or diverged from human (African) prototypicality in the areas of genotype, phenotype, anatomy, physiology, biology and behavior (Meredith 2011, Vigilant et al. 1991). Because all humans have retained similar physiological abilities and limitations referenced in the aforementioned proverbs, the dimension of biological proximity tends to be a manifestation of a common human condition as a result of millions of years of evolution except in cases where more nuanced distinctions may be made with regard to phenotype or other diversifying factors resulting from environment, etc.<sup>3</sup> Embedded in the proverbs in example (8) is a latent discussion of the need for collectivity in endeavors of various sorts; this discussion appeals to both cultural practice as well as cosmological worldview.

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<sup>3</sup> An example of human differences as a result of environment can be found in the following Akan proverb, for example: "Obi pe kəkə, ɛna obi na ɔpe tuntum, nti na ɛmma akunafoɔ nyɛ kyɛ na. Someone likes [light, lit. red] colored women and another likes dark-skinned ones, that is why it is easy to share out widows. (In Akan society, when a man dies, the man who inherits him may marry his widows if he wishes. Hence: Every man has his taste)." (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 40). The import is that because these are the two complexions that are found in traditional Akan society, and thus, these are all that are accounted for. If, on the other hand, the environment had given rise to a proliferation of pale white/pink-skinned people (apart from albinos), then we would encounter them in such proverbs as the one above.

At a fundamental level, we see conceptual and concomitant contextual similarities which pervade this set of parallel proverbs. There is syntactic/structural similarity across the proverbs in that they all use negation to convey the underlying thought. Finally, there is a partial measure of lexical similarity in that each proverb speaks to what one hand (or finger) cannot do in the first portion of the utterance while the latter portion of the utterance is variable with regard to specific actions referred to.

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 5 is uncanny in its parallel identity across the two language groups in that the proverbs say almost exactly the same thing in the same way.

9.

a. **Safo**                      **n-sa**                      **ne**                      **ho.**  
healer                      NEG-heal                      3SG.POSS                      body (REFL)  
'The healer doesn't heal himself.' (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 40)

b. **Mganga**                      **ha-ji-gang-i.**  
healer                      NEG-REFL-heal-NEG  
'A healer does not heal himself.' (Wamitila 2001: 162)

The relevant correspondences are illustrated below in the KiswaTwili Set 5 PPP Matrix:

Table 6: KiswaTwili Set 5 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

It is noticeable that both proverbs seem to speak more to cultural proscription rather than biological limitation, although it may be argued that there is some degree of the latter. However, the primary finding is that there is an obvious virtual identity in all respects with regard to the two parallel proverbs with regard to conceptual, contextual, lexical and structural similarity. This seems to answer the question in terms of whether this points to “a parallelism of thought” which stems from the mental construct in related people (Icke 2010: 34).

The next KiswaTwili Proverb is Set 6 as shown below:

10.

- a. **Kwasea ani te a, na agoro no a-gu.**  
 fool eye tear COND, FOC game DEF PRF-spill  
 ‘When the fool wises up, the game is finished.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 180)
- b. **Mjinga a-ki-erevuka mwerevu yu mashakani.**  
 fool 3SG-COND-enlighten wise-one is in doubt  
 ‘When a fool becomes enlightened, the wise man is in trouble.’ (Wamitila 2001: 166)

Again, the KiswaTwili Set 6 PPP Matrix demonstrates the correspondences below:

*Table 7: KiswaTwili Set 6 PPP Matrix*

	<b>Conceptual/Semantic Similarity</b>	<b>Contextual Similarity</b>	<b>Lexical Similarity</b>	<b>Syntactic/Structural Similarity</b>
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

In this parallel proverb set, we see featured an idea of learning from experience as a means of gaining wisdom which interfaces both with cultural proximity and cosmological proximity with regard to the nature of the world's perceived structure. Again, we see similar overarching concepts as the fundamental determining factor for grouping these KiswaTwili proverbs into sets. It is also thought that these proverbs would be cited in similar contexts to convey the underlying philosophical thought that underpins each. In this set, we also see similar lexemes used to convey the concept for the first half of the proverb although there is divergence in the latter portion. Finally, we observe a similarity of syntax as each language employs a conditional sentence structure.

Having introduced and illustrated the PPP Matrix for several examples, however, due to space constraints, from here on we will present the parallel proverbs with a brief inter-textual reference to aforementioned dimensions of people proximity and proverb similarity as an appendix at the end of the paper. In doing so, we will continue to illustrate that the PPP Matrix as a conceptual framework can accommodate these additional parallel KiswaTwili proverbs and, further, could be successfully employed in any cross-cultural comparison of proverbs or any other cultural expression such as idioms, riddles, stories, etc.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

In the literature, several comparative studies on proverbs have been done from various perspectives. This paper has demonstrated a novel perspective from which a comprehensive comparison can be achieved.

Thus, it is clear that the PPP Matrix of Proximity and Similarity can be a useful way of presenting cross-culturally overlapping proverbs and representation of the degree to which they overlap. Further, we see that “People proximity” dimensions and “Proverb similarity” dimensions both provide insights into the Pan-African connections and unicity of worldview and culture with regard to the Akan and Waswahili ‘Swahili people.’ We also observed that despite being at a significant geographical distance (6,287.4 km/3,906.8 km from modern-day Ghana to Tanzania) proverbs are still demonstrably similar in a variety of dimensions as articulated in the analysis above. As such, we find that, indeed, greater closeness in one dimension may make up for greater distance in another.

In the future, we look forward to assembling an annotated corpus to determine the statistical frequencies of common lexemes found in a comprehensive Akan proverb corpus and a parallel Kiswahili proverb corpus. Another future research area of interest is in conducting an in-depth socio-linguistic study observing these proverbs in pragmatic context. Finally, we would like to engage in the translation of Akan proverbs into Kiswahili and vice-versa to enrich both languages and to enable greater social, cultural and economic exchange.

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**APPENDIX**

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 7

11.

- a. **Ɛda a wo-be-fura ntoma pa no,**  
 day REL 2SG-FUT-wrap cloth good DEF,  
**wo-n-hyia w’ase.**  
 2SG.SBJ-NEG-meet 2SG.POSS’in-law.  
 ‘On the day that you wear a good cloth, you don’t meet your in-law.’  
 (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 68)
- b. **Siku u-ta-kayo-kwenda uchi, ndiyo siku u-ta-kayo-kutana-na**  
 day 2SG.SBJ-FUT-REL-go naked, indeed day 2SG-FUT-REL-meet-REFL  
**na mkweo.**  
 with in-law.  
 ‘The day you go naked is indeed the day you meet your in-law.’ (King’ei  
 and Ndalu 1989: 302)

Table 8: KiswaTwili Set 7 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 8

12.

- a. **Aboa bi reka wo a,**  
 animal INDEF PROG-bite 2SG.OBJ COND,  
**o-firi wo ntoma mu.**  
 3SG.SBJ-from 2SG.POSS cloth inside.  
 'If a bug will bite you, it's from inside your cloth.' (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 52)

- b. **Ki-kula-cho ki nguoni mwako.**  
 thing-eat-2SG.OBJ-REL thing cloth-inside 2SG.POSS  
 'That which eats at you is inside your cloth.' (Wamitila 2001: 102)

Table 9: KiswaTwili Set 8 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 9

13.

a. **Wo-tɔn w’asem a, na wo-nya**  
 2SG.SBJ-sell 2SG.POSS’issue COND FOC 2SG.SBJ-get  
**tɔfoɔ.**  
 buyer  
 ‘If you sell your case, you get a buyer.’ (When you explain your difficulties convincingly, you get help). (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 280)

b. **Eleza haja u-pat-e haja.**  
 explain need 2SG.SBJ-GET-SBJV need  
 ‘Explain your need, get what you need.’ (Wamitila 2001: 61)

Table 10: KiswaTwili Set 9 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/ Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 10

14.

a. **Dee**      **ɔwo**      **aka**      **no,**      **suro**      **sonsono.**  
REL      snake      bite      3SG.OBJ,      fear      earthworm  
‘One who has been bitten by a snake fears a worm.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 85)

b. **Mtafunwa**      **na**      **nyoka akiona**      **unyasi (ung’ongo/ukuti)**  
NOM-bite.PASS      by      snake 3SG.INAN-see      reed (palm leaf/twig)  
**hu-shtuka.**  
HAB-startle  
‘One who has been bitten by a snake is startled at the sight of a reed.’  
(Wamitila 2001: 186)

Table 11: KiswaTwili Set 10 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				



KiswaTwili Proverb Set 12

16.

a. **Nkakrankakra akoko be-nom nsuo.**  
 little-little chicken FUT-drink water  
 ‘Little by little the chicken will drink water.’

b. **Haba na haba hujaza kibaba.**  
 Little and little fill pot  
 ‘Little by little, the container gets filled.’ (Wamitila 2001: 265)

Table 13: KiswaTwili Set 12 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 13

17.

- a. **Abaa a ye-de bo Takyi no, eno ara**  
 stick REL 1PL-take strike T. DEF 3SG.INAN merely  
**na ye-de bo Baa.**  
 FOC 1PL-take strike B.  
 ‘The stick that we use to beat Takyi is the one that we use to beat Baa.’  
 (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 14)

- b. **Fimobo impigaye mke mwenzio u-ki-ona**  
 cane 3SG.INAN-beat-INS wife colleague 2SG-COND-see  
**i-tup-e nje.**  
 3SG.INAN-dispose-SBJV out  
 ‘When you see the cane which beat your fellow wife, throw it away.’

Table 14: KiswaTwili Set 13 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 14

18.

- a. **Bede**                      **ayeyie ne**              **sumina**              **so.**  
 carrying-basket              thanks be              rubbish-heap      on  
 ‘The carrying basket’s thanks is the rubbish heap.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 25)
- b. **Fadhila ya**              **punda**              **ni**              **mateke (mashuzi).**  
 gratitude<sub>GEN</sub>              donkey              be              kicks (farts)  
 ‘The gratitude of a donkey is kicks (farts).’ (Mwambao 2001)

Table 15: KiswaTwili Set 14 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 15

19.

- a. **Ɛ-wɔ**                      **me**                      **ne**    **Ɛ-wɔ**                      **yen**  
 3SG.INAN-belong    1SG.OBJ                      CONJ    3SG.INAN-belong    1PL.OBJ  
**Ɛ-n-sɛ.**  
 3SG-NEG-resemble  
 ‘It belongs to me and it belongs to us is not the same.’
- b. **Changu**                      **ni**                      **bora**                      **kuliko chetu.**  
 1SG.POSS                      be                      better                      than    3PL.POSS  
 ‘Mine is better than ours.’ (Wamitila 2001: 48)

Table 16: KiswaTwili Set 15 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 16

20.

- a. **Ade-pa**                      **na**        **ε-ton**                      **ne**                      **ho.**  
 thing-good                      FOC        3SG.INAN-sell                      3SG.POSS                      REFL  
 ‘A good thing sells itself.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 90)
- b. **Ki-zuri cha-ji-uza**                      **ki-baya**                      **chaji-tembeza.**  
 thing-good                      thing-REFL-sell thing-bad                      thing-REFL-advertise  
 ‘The thing sells itself, the bad goes round itself (looking for a buyer).’  
 (Wamitila 2001: 49)

Table 17: KiswaTwili Set 16 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 17

21.

- a. **Dee adeɛ wɔ no na ɔdie**  
 REL thing have/belong 3SG.OBJ FOC 3SG.SBJ-eat  
**na ɛ-n-ye deɛ ekom de no**  
 FOC 3SG.INAN-NEG-be REL hunger take 3SG.OBJ  
 ‘The one who the thing belongs to eats it, not the one who is hungry.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 77)

- b. **Cha wenyewe huliwa na wenyewe.**  
 GEN 3PL.REFL consume-pass by 3PL.REFL  
 ‘What is theirs is consumed by themselves.’ (Wamitila 2001: 46)

Table 18: KiswaTwili Set 17 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 18

22.

a. **Dyare a ε-be-kum wo bo wo**  
 sickness REL 3SG.INAN-FUT-kill 2SG.OBJ strike 2SG  
**a, wo-n-kae oduruyefo.**  
 COND 2SG-NEG-remember medicine-maker.  
 ‘When the illness that is destined to kill you strikes you, you don’t remember the medicine man (who could cure you).’ (Opoku 1997: 53)

b. **Sikio la kufa halisikii dawa.**  
 ear GEN INF-die NEG-3SG-hear medicine  
 ‘The ear of death does not hear medication.’ (Wamitila 2001: 257)

Table 19: KiswaTwili Set 18 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 19

23.

- a. **Wo-hunu**                      **sɛ**    **wo**                      **yɔnko**                      **abodwese**  
 2SG.SBJ-see                      like    2SG.POSS                      neighbor                      beard  
**re-hye**                      **a,**    **sa**    **nsuo**    **si**    **wo**                      **dee**  
 PROG-burn                      COND, collect water    stand    2SG.POSS                      thing  
**ho.**  
 body  
 ‘When you see someone’s beard is burning, you put water by your own.’  
 (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 131)
- b. **Mwenzako**                      **akinyolewa**                      **chako**    **kitie**                      **maji.**  
 fellow    3SG-COND-shave                      2SG    put-IMPER                      water  
 ‘When you see your friend being shaved, put water on yours (in preparation  
 for you could be the next).’ (Wamitila 2001: 217)

Table 20: KiswaTwili Set 19 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 20

24.

- a. **Obi n-kyere otomfo ba atono.**  
 someone NEG-show blacksmith child smithing  
 ‘No one shows the blacksmith’s child smithing.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 38)
- b. **Obi n-kyere osebo ba atoo.**  
 someone NEG-show leopard child springing  
 ‘No one shows the leopard’s child springing.’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 37)
- c. **Mwana wa kuku ha-funz-wi kuchakura.**  
 offspring GEN chicken NEG-teach-PASS  
 INF-scratch-ground  
 ‘The chicken is not taught how to scratch the ground.’ (Wamitila 2001: 206)

Table 21: KiswaTwili Set 20 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 21

25.

- a. **Nea**    **ɔ-da**        **ne**                    **gya**    **na**    **ɔ-nim**        **senea**  
REL    3SG-lay    3SG.POSS        fire    FOC    3SG-know    manner  
**ɛ-hyehye**                    **no.**  
3SG.INAN-burn-burn    3SG  
‘The one sitting next to the fire knows how it burns him/her.’ (Ampem 1998: 91)
- b. **Kitanda usicho**                    **kilala**    **hujui**                    **kunguni**  
bed    2SG.NEG-REL-have    sleep    2SG.NEG-know        bedbugs  
**wake.**  
3SG.POSS  
‘You do not know the bugs in a bed on which you have not slept.’ (Wamitila 2001: 110)

Table 22: KiswaTwili Set 21 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

KiswaTwili Proverb Set 22

26.

- a. **Ɔhohoo na ɔ-di akoko a n'ani**  
 guest FOC 3SG-eat chicken REL 3SG.POSS'eye  
**a-bo.**  
 PRF-burst  
 'It is the stranger who eats the blind chicken.' (Ampem 1998: 136)
- b. **Ɔhohoo n-te dee ne boto re-tee.**  
 guest NEG-hear REL 3SG.POSS bag PROG-hear  
 'The visitor does not hear what his luggage hears.' (Ampem 1998: 136)
- c. **Kutu kuu ni la mgeni.**  
 rust old be GEN stranger  
 'Old rust is for the stranger.' (Wamitila 2001: 124)

Table 23: KiswaTwili Set 22 PPP Matrix

	Conceptual/Semantic Similarity	Contextual Similarity	Lexical Similarity	Syntactic/Structural Similarity
Biological proximity				
Cosmological proximity				
Cultural proximity				
Environmental proximity				

## **DISCOURSE OF DENUNCIATION: A CRITICAL READING OF CHINUA ACHEBE'S MAN OF THE PEOPLE**

*Mawuloe Koffi Kodah*

### **Abstract**

Achebe's narrative text, *A Man of The People* (1966), is a political satire in which he exposes the intricacies of democratic politics in a Nigerian setting. At the heart of this narrative is a clear denunciation of a bastardized political system in a perverse socio-cultural and economic environment similar to what pertains in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), Ahmadou Kourouma's *The Suns of Independence* (1970) and Amu Djoletto's *Money Galore* (1975), among many others. Despite the fact that *A Man of The people* was published in 1966, its central theme, that is politics, corruption and underdevelopment in Africa, is still relevant to contemporary socio-cultural, economic and political context in Africa. No doubt the novel is classified among African classics in literary studies, as it is one of the narrative texts studied in universities across Africa and beyond. This study seeks to critically examine the nature of linguistic tools and stylistic detours that define the satiric outlooks of this narrative text of Achebe as a denunciative discourse and its impact on the effective transmission of the message of socio-cultural and attitudinal transformation for sustainable socio-economic and political development. Considering the nature of literature as a social discourse (Fowler 1981), the study will be posited in the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis CDA (van Dijk, 1993b). Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequalities are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2001).

**Keywords:** Bastardization, corruption, denunciation, discourse, politics, trivialization

## 1.0 Introduction

Achebe's narrative text, *A Man of The people*, is a socio-political satire in which socio-political and economic actors in a fictional Nigerian setting are lampooned for an unprecedented level of corruption and derailment that characterize the country's socio-political life and are tearing it apart, following her independence from British colonial exploitation.

Discourse is severally defined as: serious speech or piece of writing; a serious and lengthy speech or piece of writing about a topic; serious conversation; serious discussion about something between people or groups. In linguistics, it stands for language, especially the type of language used in a particular context or subject. It also looks at discourse as a major unit of language, especially spoken language that is longer than the sentence. Foucault (1972: 29) defines discourse as "Systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, and courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subject and the worlds of which they speak." This definition is perhaps the most pertinent of all, in that it encompasses all the dimensions of the subject matter of this paper. It therefore provides the conceptual tools for the study. In denouncing this state of affairs, Achebe's narrative discourse is predominantly deflationary and condemnatory of the principal political actors. In the succeeding paragraphs, I will critically examine Achebe's use of language in the service of socio-political criticism.

The term "denunciation" refers to "public condemnation: a public accusation or condemnation of something or somebody. It is an open or subtle rejection of what is considered an affront to public morality, legality and sociocultural, economic and political integrity.

Denunciations are spontaneous communications from individual citizens to the state (or to another authority such as the church) containing accusations of wrongdoing by other citizens or officials and implicitly or explicitly calling for punishment (Fitzpatrick and Gellately 1997). A close look at this definition shows that it highlights only the negative side of the concept. Thus, as Gellately (2001: 16-17) notes, "that definition is useful, but it tends to emphasize the negative or repressive side of denunciations." However, he points out that "in fact, denunciations are often used for 'positive' or instrumental purposes." Gellately further intimates that:

Denunciations, by their very nature, lend themselves to being used not only by good intentioned citizens, but as much and more by the unscrupulous ones. That is why in most societies, the very concept of denunciation carries pejorative or negative meanings and implications" (2001: 17).

Indeed, this appears to be the case with its use in Achebe's discourse in *A Man of the People*. The two scenarios are manifest in this narrative discourse and become a major source of conflict which contributes tremendously to the development of the plot and storyline in the text.

The prime nature of the denunciation which marks Achebe's discourse in *A Man of the People* is satirical. A satire is an artistic form in which individual or human vices, abuses, or shortcomings are criticized through the use of certain characteristics or methods. It is usually found in dramas and narrative texts, and in modern media forms such as cartoons, films, and other visual arts. In other words, a satire is a form of irony that ridicules the faults of humanity, but always in the interests of society; it is both kind and cruel.

As a literary technique employed by writers, satire helps to expose and criticize the foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. Achebe in a satirical style uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption and contributions to social perversion.

There are three main types of satire: Horatian satire, Juvenalian satire and Menippean satire. The first two of these are named after ancient Roman satirists – Horace (first century BCE) and Juvenal (late first century BCE to early second century AD) - while the third is named after the ancient Greek parodist Menippus (third century BCE).

Horatian satire playfully mocks the societal norms of its day, and the satire named after Horace is clever, yet gentle. Rather than attacking evils, Horatian satire ridicules universal human folly so that the reader might identify with what is being critiqued and laugh at himself / herself as well as at society.

Juvenalian satire, unlike Horatian satire, attacks public officials and governmental organizations through aggressive invective and overt abuses. It regards their opinions not just as wrong, but instead as evil. Juvenalian satire thus is more contemptuous and abrasive, and uses strong irony and sarcasm. Polarized political satire is often of this nature, and aims to provoke change. Juvenalian satire is not often as humorous.

Menippean satire, on its part, criticizes mental attitudes rather than societal norms or specific individuals. This type of satire often ridicules single-minded people, such as bigots, misers, braggarts, and so on. *A Man of the People*, as a satirical text, is characterized by irony, paradox, antithesis, colloquialism, anti-climax, violence, obscenity, vividness and exaggeration.

Considering the nature of the subject matter of his discourse and the obvious fixation on his main character, Chief the Honourable Nanga, Achebe uses a combined impulse of both Juvenalian and Menippean satirical denunciations which enables him

to employ a more abrasive tone in criticizing social 'evils' or socio-cultural, economic and political corruption in the text through disparaging, offensive and brutal ridicule to reproof the prevailing political bigotry and socio-cultural and economic perversion in *A Man of the People*.

The narrator sounds virtually pessimistic, using sharp sarcasm to criticize these social issues. Through Juvenalian and Menippean types of satire, Achebe's denunciation focuses on morals and social change rather than mere humour. Both are characteristically geared towards political satire meant to bring about positive social changes and reforms. This is indeed the fundamental characteristic of *A Man of the People* as it reflects the prime characteristics of a satire in its harmonization of irony, paradox, antithesis, colloquialism, anti-climax, violence, obscenity, vividness and exaggeration to effectively accentuate the denunciative nature of the text.

In an attempt to establish that Achebe's narrative text is a discourse of satirical denunciation, the study explores the following research questions: What are the choicest satirical linguistic tools used by Achebe in *A Man of the People*? What is the nature of stylistic detours of satirical denunciation in *A Man of the People*? What is the significance of the combined use of these linguistic tools and stylistic detours to attitudinal and behavioural transformation for better democratic governance?

## **2.0 The choicest satirical linguistic tools in use in *A Man of the People***

A critical reading of *A Man of the People* reveals Achebe's predominant use of two main types of linguistic tools in this narrative. These are satirical denunciation lexical items and satirical denunciation syntactic structures.

The satirical denunciation lexical items are characterized by Achebe's choice of appreciative and depreciative modifiers in the text. The satirical denunciation syntactic structure, on its part, is marked by the use of compound sentences in the active voice, dialogue, direct speeches interspersed with infusions of Pidgin English, invectives and first person singular narrative.

A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause which functions as an adjective or an adverb to describe a word or make its meaning more specific. Appreciative modifiers are the types of adjectives, adverb phrases or clauses which put positive qualitative or quantitative values on a person, an animal, an object or a place. On the other hand, depreciative modifiers are the opposites of appreciative modifiers. They confer negative qualitative or quantitative values on persons, animals, objects or places. Both types of modifiers are judgemental and betray the subjectivity and biases of the narrator and any other characters using them in the text. These are further reinforced by

purposeful use of action verbs to enhance the theatrical scenes in the text for effective satirical aesthetic impact.

In the following lines, Achebe's narrator uses appreciative modifiers to set in motion the attempt to expose his main character, Nanga, to public ridicule and reproof. He affirms:

**No one can deny that *Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP, was the most approachable politician in the country. Whenever you asked in the city or in his home village, Anata, they would tell you he was a man of the people.*** (2001: 1).

The italicized modifiers in the above lines from the narrative are appreciative in nature, in that they appear to be extolling the virtues of Mr Nanga. These modifiers though appreciative in nature, are used ironically to expose Nanga as a ludicrous character who epitomizes unscrupulous politicians and public figures in a perverted multiparty democratic setting. Besides, the narrator decries the gullibility of the inhabitants of Anata, Chief Nanga's home village as they congregate to give him a befitting welcome home as *a man of the people*. He intimates "[...] in those *highly political* times the villagers moved in and *virtually* took over. The Assembly Hall must have carried *well over thrice* its capacity. *Many* villagers sat on the floor, *right up to* the foot of the dais" (2001: 1). In this instance, the narrator uses intensifiers to hype his revulsion over the behaviour of these villagers. The hyperbolic stance of the narrator's denunciation of the gullible villagers of Anata is carried further as he highlights their behaviours and apparel. He says: "*Five or six dancing groups* were performing at *different points* in the compound. The popular 'Ego Women's Party' wore a *new* uniform of *expensive Accra* cloth. (2001: 1). Whereas the cardinal numeral adjective 'five' and 'six' in the noun phrase "Five or six dancing groups" exposes the narrator's abhorrence of the villagers' enterprising political patronage as demonstrated in the multitude that gathered on this occasion of the visit of Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP, the mention of 'new uniform of expensive Accra cloth' worn by members of the 'Ego Women Party' is a denunciation of the ostentation and extravagance associated with such 'highly political times'. The narrator further expresses his aversion for political patronage linked to personality cult and praise-singing as he focuses his narrative lenses on one of the women singers in the following lines:

**In spite of the din you could still hear as clear as a bird the *high-powered* voice of their soloist, whom they admiringly nicknamed 'Grammar-phone'. Personally I don't care too much for our women's dancing but you just had to listen whenever Grammar-**

**phone sang. She was now praising Micah's handsomeness, which she likened to the *perfect, sculpted beauty of a carved eagle*, and his popularity which would be *the envy of the proverbial traveller-to-distant-places who must not cultivate enmity on his route*.** (2001: 1)

The italicized modifiers in the above lines are appreciative of Micah's physical appearances. "Micah was of course Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP" (2001: 1). However, the understatement of the narrator in the sentence "Personally I don't care too much for our women's dancing but you just had to listen whenever Grammar-phone sang" reveals his disapproval of such disdainful and debasing acts like political praise-singing and dancing in honour of a dishonourable and despicable character like Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP. This is also a denunciation of moral corruption which propels the people to behave the way they do so as to survive in the perverted setting of the narrative.

The 'Ego Women's Party' is not the only group involved in the ignominious act of political praise-singing. The hunters' guild of Anata, whose "members' arrival *in full regalia* caused a great stir", is also cited for reproof. The italicized prepositional phrase 'in full regalia' highlights the seriousness the hunters' guild attaches to the visit of Chief Nanga. The narrator points out a clear dichotomy between this visit and the unusual apparel of members of the hunters' guild. "These people never came out except at the funeral of one their numbers, or during some *very special and outstanding event*. I could not remember when I last saw them. They wield their loaded guns as though they were plaything" (pp. 1 – 2). Ironically, they are also out on this socio-culturally insignificant event such as the visit of a corrupt and disdainful political figure such as Chief Nanga. This is not "a funeral of one of their numbers" neither is it "some very special and outstanding event." The narrator hereby brings to the fore the bastardization of the people's norms and practices resulting from political patronage and moral corruption. He also alludes to economic and financial challenges which are ironically holding the people in check as they pretend to be actively demonstrating their reverence for the visiting Minister, Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP. He humorously states:

**Occasionally a hunter would take aim at a distant palm branch and break its mid-rib. The crowd applauded. But there were very few of such shots. Most of the hunters reserved their precious powder to greet the Minister's arrival – *the price of gunpowder like everything else having doubled again and again in four years since this government took control*.** (2001: 2)

The parenthetical comment clause in italics in the above quotation evokes the worrying economic status of the people involved in this wasteful dissipation of their scarce resources. This is also a kind of denunciation of governmental failure to check inflationary trends in the country's economy. Chief Nanga, a member of parliament from the ruling party, is jointly denounced and rejected together with the political elite that make this government.

The harmonious combination of these linguistic tools by the narrator and the various characters in the narrative brings out the poignant and condescending nature of the subject matter of the narrative which is the destructive nature of socio-cultural, economic and political perversion in governance and nation building. How does the harmonious combination of these linguistic tools resonate with the corresponding stylistic detours in the production of the satirical denunciation discourse in the narrative? The study seeks to answer this question through the examination of the nature of the stylistic detours of satirical denunciation in the text.

### **3.0 Nature of the stylistic detours of satirical denunciation in *A Man of the People***

Many are the stylistic detours of satirical denunciation in the narrative. Key among these are: first person narration, characterization, conflict, dialogue, flashback and invective. This part of the study focuses on the use of these stylistic detours in the concretization of satirical denunciation in the narrative as a social discourse.

#### **3.1 First-person singular narration**

*A Man of the People* is a first person singular narrative. The narrator, Odili Kamalu is at the same time an active character in the story he relates. The text is entirely his story and how he sees, lives with and relates to other characters in Achebe's textual universe in *A Man of the People*. He therefore moderates the story from a subjective perspective, in that, readers see, hear and know only what he wants and likes to reveal to them. He tells his own story intertwined with those of others. The very first indices of his overbearing presence and moderation of the narrative are found in the following words: **"I have to admit from the outset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense."** The first person singular subject personal pronoun 'I' as used in 'I have ... and I'm going to...' stands for the narrator. He affirms his identity as the owner of the story he is about telling. This overbearing presence of the first-person narrator is a subtle intrusion of the voice of the author in the narrative.

### 3.2 Characterisation

Characterization is the means by which writers present and reveal a character, a fictional individual to whom roles are assigned in a literary text. Achebe reveals his characters in *A Man of the People* through their speech, dress, manner, and actions. This is done by the first person singular narrator who is the sole presenter of characters and events that make the story in the text.

The narrator appears to have a fixation on Mr Nanga who happens to be the main character of the story. The narrator, an apparently idealistic young university graduate, is to some extent, a foil of the main character, a pragmatic and opportunistic politician. Indeed, the title of the narrative is a designation for the main character. This is revealed to the reader in the very first paragraph of the narrative. He states:

**No one can deny that Chief Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP, was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you asked in the city or in his home village, Anata, they would tell you he was a man of the people.** (2001: 1)

The accumulation of nominal titles ‘Chief Honourable M.A. ... MP’ for Mr Nanga brings out the narrator’s aversion for the character as a self-conceited megalomaniac. The name ‘Nanga’ is ironically magnified through the nominal phrases used as descriptive modifiers. This is to denounce Mr Nanga as a selfish, greedy and unscrupulous public figure and politician. The narrator’s hidden ironical intents get unveiled in the subsequent paragraphs as he decries the most elaborate preparations, pomp and pageantry put in place by the people of Anata to feast Chief Nanga “due to address the staff and students of Anata Grammar School [...] (2001: 1). Progressively, Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP’s infamous popularity gets revealed to the reader.

Chief Nanga is obviously an epitome of greedy and unprincipled politicians and public figures who adorn themselves with accumulated empty titles to gratify their egoistic instincts. Hollow as they are, these titles are tools of ambivalent manipulations between them and their equally corrupt and contemptible supporters and followers. Whereas politicians and public figures feel elated and highly esteemed as those titles are poured on them in public, their followers on their part use these titles to seduce and win the favours of these unsuspecting politicians and public figures whose folly is being exposed in this style by the narrator. Come to think of it, it is not out of real reverence that these titles are lavished on such people, since most of them do not live according to the virtues imbedded in those titles. They are actually a distrusted and scornful bunch of people in the eyes and minds of the people. They are mere stooges in the eyes of the

people who manipulate them to satisfy their socio-economic needs while pretending to love and revere them in public.

Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP's insatiable taste for popularity and fame is further rebuffed in the narrative when the narrator makes him to proudly announce his trip to the USA to be awarded a doctorate degree in the following words: "They are going to give me doctorate degree... Doctor of Laws, LL D" (2001: 16). Ironically, Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP has throughout his political life demonstrated an incurable aversion for intellectuals and university-trained and professional men, whose degrees and titles he holds in abject contempt. Yet, here is Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, MP, elated to be given a university degree title which obviously will boost his egocentric character a step further.

The narrator in Achebe's *A Man of the People* is endowed with a strong descriptive prowess through which he forcefully caricatures characters and situations in a lasting pictorial manner. He blends the description with denunciative hyperbole, a kind of deliberate exaggeration through which his heightened aversion for the socio-political ills and actors in the text is affirmed. Hyperbolic denunciation is indeed a driving force in the narrative, considering the level of the narrator's disappointment and anger, as he appears rather as a socio-political misfit in a bastardized society in the wake of political independence, as a result of his incorruptible stands. His idealistic persuasions are in conflict with the pragmatic survival orientations of Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, MP and most of the other characters in the narrative. This conflict contributes immensely to the dynamism of the plot and propels the narrative. Out of this artistic ingenuity come metaphorical and ironical denunciations which reinforce the aesthetic stance of the narrative and the impact of the narrator's denunciative posturing. Whereas the metaphoric denunciation is found in the use of implicit, subtle comparisons through which characters and situations assume bestial characteristics and concrete natures in order to effectively attract the displeasure and scorn of readers, Ironical denunciation results from the narrator's juxtaposition of contradictory viewpoints and incongruities in the speeches and actions of the principal characters so as to expose the hypocrisy and double-stand which are the hallmarks of the perverse socio-political life in the text. What then is the significance of the combined use of these linguistic tools and stylistic detours to attitudinal and behavioural transformation for better democratic governance and sustainable human development in Achebe's *A Man of the People*?

#### **4.0 Significance of the combined use of linguistic tools and stylistic detours to attitudinal and behavioural transformation for better democratic governance**

Achebe's discourse in *A Man of the People* is premised on the satirical denunciation of socio-economic and political corruption in various forms and at varying degrees in a newly independent fictional Nigerian setting. The significance of the combined use of the choicest satirical linguistic tools and stylistic detours examined in the preceding paragraphs is found in the manifestation of satirical denunciation of the above ills in four main categories in the discourse. These are: rejection of socio-economic and political perversion, condemnation of selfishness and greed, denunciation of unhealthy social-political and economic stratification; rising 'intellecto-phobia', and rebuff of media corruption and terrorism.

The narrative denounces the media and media practitioners as incredibly corrupt in the text. The narrator does not mince words in his disapproval of the perversion of journalistic standard and debasement of journalists in the performance of their duties. The media purposefully help politicians to pervert the truth and discredit their perceived opponents. For instance, when the Minister of finance presents "a complete plan" to address the country's "dangerous financial crisis" resulting from the "slum in the international coffee market" (2001: 3), "the Prime Minister said 'No' to the plan. He was not going to risk losing the election by cutting down the price paid to coffee planters at that critical moment" (2001: 3). Alternatively, in the spirit of unethical politics, he directs that the "National Bank should be instructed to print fifteen million pounds" (2001: 3).

Mindful of the dire consequences of such a directive to the national economy in the long term, "[t]wo-thirds of the Cabinet supported the Minister" (2001: 3). The next morning, however, the Prime Minister announces their dismissal in a broadcast to the nation. Characteristic of unscrupulous politicians in such circumstances, the Prime Minister discredits his former colleagues and causes public dissatisfaction from them. As the narrator puts it, "[h]e said the dismissed Ministers were conspirators and traitors who had teamed up with foreign saboteurs to destroy the new nation" (2001: 3). The media lap the contents of this broadcast and press the public destruction button against unfortunate patriotic citizens who rather mean well for their compatriots and their country. Thus [t]he newspapers and the radio carried the Prime Minister's version of the story" (2001: 3). Subsequently, the expected public reactions elicited through this politically and socially damaging broadcasting follow, as matter of course. Knowing not the truth, [w]e were very indignant. Our Students' Union met in emergency session and passed a vote of confidence in the leader and called for a detention law to deal with the miscreants." Besides, the whole country was behind the leader. Protest marches and demonstrations were staged up and down the land" (2001: 3).

In all these, the media fail to do any critical analysis of the situation at hands. Rather, the media get along with the publication of highly subjective views of their political allies and twist the facts in pursuit of their selfish political interests. The terroristic stance of the media is further revealed in the Editorial published by the Daily Chronicle. According to the narrator, "the Daily Chronicle, an official organ of the POP, had pointed out in an editorial that the Miscreant Gang, as the dismissed ministers were now called, were all University people and highly educated professional men" (2001:4 - 5). This editorial exposes what this paper christens 'the spirit of intellectophobia' in the socio-cultural, economic and political setting in the narrative. This unfortunate development defies Plato's position on the significance of the role of philosopher-kings in the development of the Republic. Going by the infusions of this editorial, it is obvious that those who are still in Government, following the dismissal of the 'University people and highly educated professional men', lay no claim to any university degrees, and are not highly educated professional men.

The media, far from assuming their independent, unbiased and objective identity as the fourth estate of the realm so as to hold corrupt and unscrupulous politicians and citizens in check have turned themselves into destructive propaganda conduits for such people, to the detriment of the new nation in the narrative. The media are the driving force behind the 'intellecto-phobic' agenda in the text. Hence the Daily Chronicle's defamatory editorial piece describing the wrongfully expelled Ministers as "the Miscreant Gang" made up of "university people and highly educated professional men" (2001: 4).

The narrator's repugnance for the Daily Chronicle's pronounced destructive campaign against intellectuals and professionals in politics and public administration is heightened through a parenthetical statement as follows: "(I have preserved a cutting of that editorial.). (2001: 4). The choice of the verb 'preserved' in this parenthetical statement is also quite instructive. It reveals the narrator's determination to immortalize authentic historical record to serve as evidential exhibit for the justification of his denunciation of the unholy connivance between unscrupulous politicians and the media to conceal the truth and clamp down on those they consider as working against the selfish interest of self-defined members of the political ruling class in *A Man of the People*. They conspire to turn such people into public enemies, as it is in the case of the dismissed Minister of Finance and his colleagues. Ironically, they are rather portrayed as villains by the 'actual villains and nation-wreckers' in connivance with a perverted gangster media. Moreover, the narrator's attempt to reproduce the integral content of that editorial attests to his desire to be factual and accurate in his denunciation of media as an instrument or a conduit sociocultural, economic and political bastardization in the text. The media denounced as being a medium for character assassination, human rights violation and blackmail. The media aid unscrupulous and perverse politicians like Chief

the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP and his likes to manipulate unsuspecting citizens and expose them to perpetual exploitation. Media negative publications are put up to denigrate and discredit innocent citizens whose only crime is their fierce desire to effectively kick against corruption and help address the basic needs of the people. For instance, the Daily Chronicle editorial reads:

**Let's now and for all time extract from our body-politic as a dentist extracts a stinking tooth all those decadent stooges versed in text-book economics and aping the white man's mannerisms and way of speaking. We are proud to be African. Our true leaders are not those intoxicated with their Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard degrees but those who speak the language of the people. Away with the damnable and expensive university education which only alienate an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people. (2001: 4)**

The media's active involvement in driving far the 'intellecto-phobic' agenda is further denounced when the narrator re-echoes how other newspapers fuelled the hate-speech initiated by the *Daily Chronicle*. According to the narrator,

The cry was taken up on all sides. Other newspapers pointed out that even in Britain where the Miscreant Gang got its 'so-called education' a man need not have an economist to be Chancellor of the Exchequer or a doctor to be Minister of Health. What mattered was loyalty to the party. (2001: 4)

Indeed, these publications enrage the people against the dismissed Minister of Finance and his colleagues.

**That week his car had been destroyed by angry mobs and his house stoned. Another dismissed minister had been pulled out of his car, beaten insensible, and dragged along the road for fifty yards, then tied hand and foot, gagged and left by the roadside. He was still in the orthopaedic hospital when the house met. (2001: 4)**

Elsewhere, the narrator brings to the fore corruption and blackmail in the media, as he narrates the story of the Editor of the *Daily Matchet* who comes to extort money from Chief Nanga to settle his rent.

**I knew the Editor already from a visit he had paid the Minister a few days earlier. A greasy-looking man, he had at first seemed uneasy about my presence in the room and I had kept a sharp look**

**out for the slightest hint from Chief Nanga to get up and leave them. [...] Our visitor took a very long time to come to the point, whatever it was. All I could gather was that he had access to something which he was holding back in Chief Nanga's interest. ...the Minister did not attach very great importance whatever it was; in fact he appeared to be sick and tired of the man but dare not say so. Meanwhile the journalist told us one story after another, a disgusting white foam appearing at the corners of his mouth. He drank two bottles of beer, smoked many cigarettes and then got a 'dash' of five pounds from the Minister after an account of his trouble with his landlord over arrears of rent. (2001: 60)**

The Minister pours out his heart to the narrator over the exploitative role of the media following this visit:

**You see what it means to be a minister' said Chief Nanga as soon as his visitor had left. [...] If I don't give him something now, tomorrow he will go and write rubbish about me. They say it is the freedom of the press. But to me it is nothing short of the freedom to crucify innocent men and assassinate their character. I don't know why our government is so afraid to deal with them. I don't say they should not criticize – after all no one is perfect except God – but they should criticize constructively... (2001: 60)**

The minister's lamentations in the above lines over the media blackmail sums up the narrator's denunciation of how low the media has sunk in corruption and is unable to play a watchdog role in nation building.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

Characters and events which serve as building materials for *A Man of the People* bear a great deal of resemblance with contemporary socio-political and economic characters and events in most African countries. In the light of this observation, we pause to ask the following rhetorical questions, "what lessons have we learnt from the plethora of literary works in our schools, colleges and universities over the many years that have shaped nation building in Africa? Is literature really seen as social discourse or a mere product of the fertile imagination of authors devoid of any serious consideration?"

The significance of satirical denunciative discourse in the text lies in the conscious and successful effort of its narrator to expose the socio-cultural, economic and political corruption which is the hallmark of the emerging nation-state depicted in the narrative. Considering the nefarious impact of these evils on the development and stability of the nation-state, as divulged by the narrator through the satirical denunciative discourse in the narrative, useful lessons should be drawn by contemporary nation-states to guard them in their quest for sustainable socio-economic, political and human development to guarantee peace and security for all.

The combined effect of satirical linguistic denunciation tools and stylistic detours as examined in this paper is that it helps us identify the narrative in *A Man of the People* as a satirical discourse which reveals the dirty intricacies of African politics, names and shames corrupt characters in society while inciting critical minds to take up the mantle of responsibility to redeem the African continent from unscrupulous politicians such as Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP, and his likes. It equally calls for attitudinal and behavioural changes driven by core democratic values such as justice, equality, integrity and meritocracy, and the rejection of moral and political perversion inimical to sustainable human development and security in Africa. The phenomenon as studied further helps to project literary discourses such *A Man of the People* and many others, to be read beyond their aesthetic appreciation as vehicles for socio-cultural, economic and political engineering.

All in all, the study can conclude that satirical denunciative discourse in Achebe's narrative discourse, *A Man of the People*, combines irony, paradox, antithesis, colloquialism, anti-climax, violence, obscenity, vividness and exaggeration to bring to the fore the express need for socio-cultural, economic and political transformation and behavioural change to eschew corruption and ensure sustainable democratic governance. Contemporary socio-economic and political development and governance related challenges in many African countries and beyond show that Achebe's call for democratic behavioural change in a Nigerian setting, well over forty-nine years ago, remains relevant.

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VERBAL EXTENSIONS: VALENCY DECREASING EXTENSIONS IN THE  
BASÀ LANGUAGE

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THE STRUCTURE OF FACE-TO-FACE CASUAL CONVERSATION AMONG THE AKAN

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NON-AFRICAN LINGUISTS BE LIKE "THIS IS A NEW WAY TO QUOTE!"

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TWISWAHILI OR KISWATWILI: A STUDY OF PARALLEL PROVERBS IN  
AKAN (TWI) AND KISWAHILI

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DISCOURSE OF DENUNCIATION: A CRITICAL READING OF CHINUA  
ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

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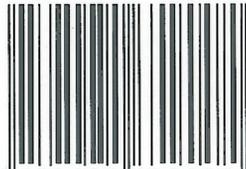
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ISSN 2026 - 6596



9 772 026 659 005

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