A Grammar of Ajagbe

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To the Aja people

Contents

Introduction

This book is intended to serve as a modern descriptive grammar of the Aja language, also known as Ajagbe, as spoken in Southwestern Benin. It is my hope that this book can serve two communities. Most importantly, this book is intended to benefit the Aja people of Benin and Togo by providing some of the materials necessary for them to create educational materials in and about Ajagbe. Hopefully linguists will be able to glean some useful, or at least interesting, information from this book as well.

This book is not intended to be extremely detailed, nor is it intended to provide an extensive list of references for Ajagbe or the Gbe languages in general. For this, please see *A Grammar of Fongbe* by Claire Lefebvre and Anne-Marie Brousseau. *A Grammar of Fongbe* has served as a skeleton for this project, thus one will note many similarities between these two books. It is the authors of *A Grammar of Fongbe*, not I, who have done the bulk of the work in writing this grammar. I have merely translated parts of it, in a sense, into Ajagbe.

Another reason for similarity between this book and Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 is that the latter was the best of only a handful of reference books I had access to while writing this. I had Internet access approximately once every other month, no library access, and no other linguists to discuss my work with. I say this not to complain, but rather to explain (to some extent) the quality, and to mention that any contributions to this grammar would be much appreciated. If you have any suggestions, corrections or comments, please email them to me at morleye@gmail.com . Of course, any mistakes within this book are purely my own. I hope the Aja people can find and correct these, and more importantly that they can build upon this work and take pride in their language.

The data in this book was gathered in Klouékanmè, Benin, from 2007-2009 during my service in the Peace Corps.

Orthography

At the time of this book's writing the orthography for Ajagbe had not been finalized. The orthography used for examples in this book is similar but not identical to what will likely become the standard orthography. I have used this slightly modified orthography because I believe that it makes the examples clearer. The orthography used in this books deviates from the standard orthography only in its treatment of spaces and tones as discussed below.

Ajagbe is written phonetically with a few exceptions that will be discussed in this section. This means that for the most part, all letters in Ajagbe represent the same sounds as the identically shaped IPA symbols.

Vowels

Nasal vowels in Ajagbe are written in two ways. In most cases, the nasal vowel is simply followed by *n* as in the following examples: *ehùn* /eχũ/, *aʒin* /aʒĩ/. As explained in Section 1.4.2, nasal consonants are always followed by nasal vowels. As a result, *nV*, *mV*, *ŋV* and *ɲV* are realized as /nṼ/, /mṼ/, /ŋṼ/ and /ɲṼ/ respectively.

Consonants

The consonants *h* and *x* in Ajagbe represent the sounds [ʁ] and [χ]. No other monographs should require any explanation.

There are a few digraphs in Ajagbe. *kp* and *gb* represent [k͡p] and [g͡b] respectively. sh represents [ʃ].

Spaces

The pre-standardized orthography for Ajagbe requires that certain closed-class words be written without a space between it and the previous word, with certain exceptions. One example of this is verbal aspect particles. In standard orthography these particles are written without a space between them and the verb, for example *ɖukɔ* 'is eating'. I have inserted a space before all closed-class words for the following three reasons: (1) the examples are easier to read and understand; (2) when using the standard orthography, the context can determine whether a space appears before certain closed-class words. By always inserting a space before these words, the orthography in this book is more consistent, and therefore hopefully easier to read. (3) The Gbe languages have been analyzed as isolating languages. I do not wish to contest this analysis, and I believe that an orthography with spaces between each morpheme (unless they are part of a compound word) better reflects this fact.

Tones

Standard Ajagbe orthography is intended for primarily for native speakers. The creators of the orthography have decided that the best way of marking tones is to mark only those which are judged as necessary for readability. As non-native speakers and non-speakers of Ajagbe will hopefully use this book, I have written the phonemic (not phonetic) tone for as many of the words in the examples as possible. The tones are as follows: a grave accent (è) indicates a low tone; an acute accent (é) is a high tone; if there is no accent over the vowel then the syllable does not have any underlying tone. The rules in Section 1.3 will allow the reader to infer the phonetic tone for each example.

Cultural Notes

Some of the words used may be foreign to the reader or may simply seem odd. This is largely because the day-to-day life of the Aja is rather different from that of people in Western countries. I do not wish to write anything of an anthropological nature, but in an attempt to avoid misunderstandings, I will simply explain what some of the less familiar words mean.

dough	The staple food of the Aja; it is corn flour boiled in water.
final price	The buyer or seller's final price when bargaining
loincloth	A piece of cotton fabric, generally 2 yards long, with a print on it. It can be used as a towel, sarong, baby-carrier, to make clothes, etc.
sodabi	A type of liquor made from distilling palm wine
solanum	A leafy vegetable

Acknowledgments

Chapter 1

Phonology

This chapter introduces the segmental inventories and phonological processes found in Ajagbe. The phonological processes include interactions of tones, nasal spreading and palatalization. Forms in free varation are discussed at the end of this chapter. While any exposition of a language's phonological structure must necessarily include some theory, an attempt has been made to keep such discussion to a minimum.

1.1   Segmental inventories

The vocalic inventory of Ajagbe, shown in (1), contains seven oral and five nasal vowels.

(1)   INVENTORY OF VOWELS IN AJAGBE

    (a) ORAL

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid-high	e		o
Mid-low	ɛ		ɔ
Low		a	

    (b) NASAL

	Front	Central	Back
High	ĩ		ũ
Mid-low	ɛ̃		ɔ̃
Low		ã	

Feature specifications for these vowels are found in (2). These feature specifications explain the surface forms of the third person pronominal clitic, discussed in Section 1.4.3.

(2)   (a) ORAL

Vowel	high	low	front	nasal
i	+	-	+	-
e	+	+	+	-
ɛ	-	-	+	-
a	-	+	-	-
u	+	-	-	-
o	+	+	-	-
ɔ	-	-	-	-

    (b) NASAL

Vowel	high	low	front	nasal
ĩ	+	-	+	+
ɛ̃	+	+	+	+
ã	-	+	-	+
ũ	+	-	-	+
ɔ̃	+	+	-	+

The consonants in (3) are based on fieldwork. The classification of [b] and [ɖ], however, follows earlier consonant inventories of other Gbe lects (see Brillon-Brousseau, 1986 [3], and Capo, 1991 [6]). Consonants in square brackets are contextually determined phonetic variants. This inventory includes 23 phonemic and 3 phonetic (but non-phonemic) consonants.

(3)   PHONEMIC INVENTORY OF CONSONANTS IN AJAGBE

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveo-dental	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar	Uvular
Stop	p		t d			k g	k͡p g͡b	
Affricate				t͡ʃ d͡ʒ				
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ		ɣ		χ ʁ
Sonorants	b[m]		ɖ[n]		[ɲ]	ŋ		
Liquid			l					
Approximant					y		w	

Notes

[p]: Words containing [p] tend to be loanwords such as *pɔnpi* 'pump' cf. English *pump* or ideophones, for example *pɛpɛpɛ* 'the sound of spitting out phlegm'. There are some exceptions however, such as *pataŋpa* 'duplicity' and *pléŋ́* 'all' (assuming that they are not loanwords).

[l]: [l] surfaces as /r/ after coronal (alveo-dental and alveo-palatal) consonants. [m], [n]: [m] and [n] are the nasalized allophones of [m] and [n] respectively. This is discussed further in 1.4.2.

[ʃ], [ʒ]: These phonemes have been described as allophones of [s] and [z] in some places, and as phonemes in others (Cici 1984 [11]). Historically, [ʃ] and [ʒ] seem to have been allophones of [s] and [z] respectively when they surface before [i]. Words such as *aʒavi* /aʒavi/ 'fiancée' and *mashu* /mãʃu/ show that this is not the only environment in which these two sounds can surface. Finally, the loanword *sha* /ʃa/ 'each' cf. French *chaque* is evidence of [ʃ]'s phonemic status; were it not a phoneme, one would expect *chaque* to have been borrowed as something like /sa/.

[ɲ]: This consonant has traditionally been included in the consonental inventory of Ajagbe and other Gbe lects. The data suggest that this is not a phoneme in Ajagbe, but rather is most likely an allophone of [y] which appears before nasal vowels. The evidence for and against this is presented in 1.1.1.

[ɣ]: This phoneme is pronounced as /j/ by many speakers and as /ɣ/ by others.

1.1.1   Possible Phonemes

Some linguists have accorded [ɲ], [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] phonemic status in Ajagbe. Here the evidence for and against including these phonemes in the inventory is presented.

[ɲ]

Cic presents minimal pairs to distinguish [ɲ] from [n] and [y], among other consonants [11]. His examples are shown in (4). In the original, Cici uses the standard orthography. These examples are presented here using IPA symbols for clarity.

(4)   [ɲ] / [n]   /ɲɔ̃/   'to wake up'   /nɔ̃/   'to stay'
                       /èɲɔ̃/   'question'   /ènɔ̃/   'mother'

        [ɲ] / [y]   /ɲã̀/   'to send back'   /yà/   'to cut'
                       /ɲì̃/   'to raise (animals)'   /yì/   'to go'
                       /èɲɔ̃/   'question'   /èyɔ̀/   'a call'
                       /àɲɔ̃/   'face'   /àyɔ̀/   'pubis'

(b) (from Cici 1984: 40, 44)

Contrary to Cici's claim, the examples above clearly do not contain any minimal pairs for [ɲ] and [y]; all of the examples for [ɲ] contain nasalized vowels, while those for [y] contain oral vowels. No words with syllables of the structure yVn have been found in Ajagbe, and all syllables with [ɲ] have a nasalized vowel in the nucleus. Thus, [y] and [ɲ] appear to be in an entirely predictable complementary distribution.

The Labio-Uvulars

Capo accords [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] phonemic status [6]. There are three major pieces of supporting evidence for this claim: (1) triconsonental onsets are prohibited in Ajagbe, but there are also words such as *xwle* 'to buy', which seemingly have triconsonental onsets; (2) historical evidence; (3) the existence of minimal pairs showing a contrast between [χ] and [χʷ], and [ʁ] and [ʁʷ]. Each of these points will be examined in turn.

If triconsonental onsets are prohibited in Ajagbe, then words such as *xwlè* 'to buy' must have only two consonants in the onset, [χʷ] and [l]. Thus [χʷ] is a phoneme. This argument predicts that no words should then have triconsonental onsets, however this prediction seems to be erroneous as demonstrated by words such as: *adɔkwlɛ* 'last born child', *kɔfwli* 'winged termite', *kotokwli* 'small and round', and *ŋwlè* 'to read'. These words suggest that there is in fact no prohibition against triconsonental onsets in Ajagbe, thus *xwlè*'s onset could contain either two consonants ([χʷ] and [l]) or three ([χ], [w] and [l]).

If [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] were phonemes, then /χʷlw/ or /ʁʷlw/ could be possible onsets because the Clw pattern is attested elsewhere (specifically, the onsets /klw/ and /k͡plw/ both exist). However, neither /χʷlw/ nor /ʁʷlw/ are attested. This could be an accidental gap, or possibly /lw/ is only permitted after [k] and [k͡p]. In any event, phonotactics do not provide any evidence to support [χʷ] and [ʁʷ]'s phonemic status.

A second type of evidence for the phonemic status of [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] is historical. /xw/ and /ɣw/ are present in all Gbe lects except for Vhe and Gen [2]. In these lects /xw/ and /ɣw/ are realized as /p/ and /ɸ/ respectively. Historically [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] do appear to have been phonemes distinct from [χ] and [ʁ]. Diverse origins alone, however, do not mean that these sounds are separate phonemes in synchronic Ajagbe.

The final argument is that there are minimal pairs contrasting [χ] and [χʷ], as well as [ʁ] and [ʁʷ]. An example of such a pair is *xwá* 'to begin to ripen' and *xá* 'to be busy'. Such minimal pairs do not necessarily establish phonemic status for [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] as they can be interpreted as showing a contrast between a complex and simple onset.

Given the data available, eliminating [χʷ] and [ʁʷ] from the phonemic inventory does not make any erroneous predictions and it is still able to capture the data. Since these phonemes seem unnecessary then, they have been removed from the inventory.

1.2 Phonotactics

1.2.1 Syllable Structure

The basic structure of the Aja syllable is C(L)(L)V(N).

The Onset

Syllabic onsets can contain from zero to three consonants. The first consonant can be any of the consonants in Ajagbe's consonental inventory. The second consonant can be any liquid: [y], [l] or [w]. The third consonant can be either [w] or [l] (but it can not be identical to the second consonant). In other words, the sonority of onset consonants must increase toward the nucleus. It is possible that some or even all triconsonental onsets are simply repaired underlying diphthongs. Further research is needed to clarify this.

(5) shows a chart of all possible syllabic onsets. A '+' represents an attested syllabic onset. A '*' represents an onset only attested in loanwords or onomonopoetics. The spaces representing unattested onsets are left blank. As shown in the chart, there are some combinations of C_1C_2 which do not occur in Ajagbe. It is not known whether these are accidental or systematic gaps.

(5)

C_1	l	w	y
[p]	+		*
[t]	+	+	
[d]	+	+	
[k]	+	+	
[g]	+	+	
[k͡p]	+	+	
[g͡b]	+	+	
[t͡ʃ]		+	*
[d͡ʒ]		+	
[f]	+	+	+
[v]	+	+	+
[s]	+	+	
[z]	+	+	
[ʃ]			+
[ʒ]			+
[χ]	+	+	+
[ʁ]	+	+	
[b]	+	+	+
[m]	+	+	+
[ɖ]		+	+
[n]		+	
[ɣ]	+	+	+
[ɲ]	+	+	+

The following triconsonental onsets are attested in Ajagbe: /fwl/, /kwl/, /klw/, /gwl/, /ŋwl/, /k͡plw/, /χwl/ and /ʁwl/.

The Nucleus

The nucleus of the Aja syllable can contain either a single vowel or a syllabic nasal. It is possible that diphthongs are permitted underlyingly. Nevertheless, there are no diphthongs on the surface, possibly as a result of glide formation or insertion. Strategies for resolving hiatus, which occurs with morphemes which lack an onset, are discussed in Section 1.4.3.

Only one nasal phone can be syllabic in Ajagbe: [ŋ]. Note, however, that it is not always syllabic. Regarding the other nasal phones, Neither [m] nor [n] could be a syllabic nucleus because they are the allophones of [b] and [d] respectively when they appear before nasal vowels (see section 1.4.2). [b] and [d] are unable to surface outside of the onset, thus they and their allophones [m] and [n] can not be nuclei.

[ŋ̩] can occur as an independent syllable as in words such as ŋ̩sù /ŋ̩.sù/ 'man' or as a syllabic nucleus in a syllable with an onset as in words such as kŋ̩mɛ /kŋ̩.mɛ̃/ 'dough'. [ŋ] is not always syllabic, however; according to my informants, the word ŋɔci 'nose' must be syllabified /ŋɔ̃.t͡ʃi/, not /ŋ̩.ɔ̃.t͡ʃi/.

The Coda

Contrary to the literature, there is empirical evidence of closed syllables in Ajagbe. The only coda consonant permitted is [ŋ]. Below is an explanation of why this should be the case.

Examples of [ŋ] as an onset or a nucleus have been shown in previous sections. (6) contains examples of [ŋ] as a coda consonant with the syllabification information shown. The syllabifications are based upon informants' judgments about syllabification[1] .

(6)   (a)   σ   σ   σ
            ⤫ ⤫ ⤫ ⤫   *⤫ ⤫ ⤫ ⤫   'all'
             p l e ŋ   p l e ŋ

---
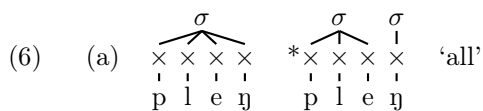
[1] While the 'clapping out syllables' method might not be ideal, there are no known phonological processes in Ajagbe which could be used to investigate the existence of coda consonants. Furthermore, all informants' judgments were quite certain, unlike say an English speaker trying to syllabify the word *seven*.

(b) (diagram: two syllable structures with ×-slots)

$\overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times\ \times}}$ $*\ \overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times}}\ \overset{\sigma}{|\times}$ 'to be able to'
t e ŋ   t e ŋ

(c) (diagram: three syllable structures)

$\overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times\ \times\ \times}}\ \overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times}}$ $*\ \overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times\ \times}}\ \overset{\sigma}{|\times}\ \overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times}}$ $*\ \overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times\ \times}}\ \overset{\sigma}{\overbrace{\times\ \times\ \times}}$ 'flag'
f l ã ŋ g a   f l ã ŋ g a   f l ã ŋ g a
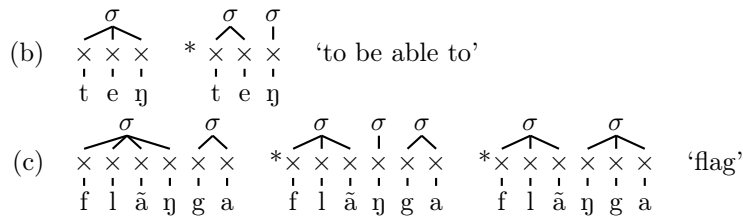
The simplest explanation of why [ŋ] is a legal coda consonant is that only nasal consonants are able to be codas in Ajagbe. There is a natural explanation for why neither [m] nor [n] ever surface as coda consonants: they are environmentally conditioned allophones of the non-nasal consonants [b] and [ɖ] respectively. Since neither [b] nor [ɖ] could be a coda consonant, it is not possible for the environment which conditions [m] or [n] to arise in the coda position.

If nasal codas are permitted, then one might expect [ɲ] to be a possible coda, yet it is not. The distribution of [ɲ] is in this respect similar to the distributions of [m] and [n], which lends support to the claim that [ɲ] is in fact the nasalized allophone of some other consonant, namely [y], as discussed in Section 1.1.1.

1.2.2 Minimal Word Requirements

In Ajagbe different word classes have different minimal words. In closed classes, such as pronouns and words such as *yes* or *no*, the minimal word is simply V (7)[2]. Prepositions are minimally CV.

(7) Pronouns
ŋ̀   1SG
é   3SG

Prepositions
jì   *on*
mὲ   *in*

Function Words
έέ   *yes*
òò   *no*
nɔ́   *if*

In open class words there is not a uniform minimal word. Verbs are minimally CV. Nouns are minimally VCV. Examples of minimal open-class words are seen in (8).

(8) Verbs
ɖù   *eat*
kpɔ́   *see*

Nouns
egbè   *language*
àcì   *tree*

1.2.3 Loanwords

Ajagbe loanwords come primarily from other Gbe lects, French and English. English and French loans undergo several repair strategies, most importantly vowel epenthesis. The quality of the epenthesized vowel varies, as shown in (9) the epenthesized vowel can be: (a)[i], (b) [u] or (c) a copy of the previous vowel.

(9) (a) *cὲŋjì*   'change'   English
         còci   'church'   English
         ɖɔkita   'doctor; hospital'   English

     (b) *bɔ̀lù*   'ball'   English
         jàgù   'jug'   English

---

[2]See 1.2.1 for why ŋ is a permissible pronoun

(c)   *flàŋgá*   'flag'   English
      sùklú   'school   English

Epenthesized [u] is only found in loanwords in which the first vowel is [-front]. This suggests that there may be vowel harmony involved in loanwords (although not visible elsewhere). There is not enough evidence to explain, however, why some such words have an epenthesized [i] (ex. *còcì* 'church') while others have [u] (ex. *bòlù* 'ball'). One possibility is that the vowel harmony is optional, and another is that vowel harmony did exist previously in Ajagbe, but does not anymore (or the opposite). One point suggesting that vowel harmony may have existed at one time in Ajagbe is that certain Fongbe dialects have vowel harmony while others do not. It is possible that Ajagbe and Fongbe's ancestor had vowel harmony which was then lost in Ajagbe and some dialects of Fongbe.

1.3   Tones

Ajagbe, like the other Gbe lects, is a tonal language. It has two main phonetic tones, high (H) and low (L). When the onset of a syllable bearing a high tone contains a nasal consonant the tone is realized as rising rather than simply high. Note that monosyllabic words are inherently simple morphologically. When spoken in isolation such words can have either a L or H tone on the surface. Bisyllabic ones may exhibit the following patterns: L-L, L-H or H-H. Examples of each pattern are given in (10).

(10)   (a)   *sà*   'to sell
             kpɔ́   'to see'

       (b)   *àvù*   'dog'
             jàkpɛ́   'sodabi'
             Bénɛ́   'Benin'

Some, but not all loanwords exhibit the pattern H-L. Examples of loans with this pattern are in (11). Loans with other patterns are shown in (12).

(11)   *bɔ́lù*   'ball'   from English *ball*
       kúkù   'chef'   from English *cook*
       táblù   'table'   from English *table*

(12)   *búcá*   'butcher'   from English *butcher*
       hlɔ́bú   'dress   from French *robe*
       dòtó   'doctor'   from English *doctor*
       flàŋgá   'flag'   from English *flag*

Gerunds and participles, which are reduplicated verbal bases, exhibit the following tonal patterns: L-L, H-H. The reduplication of the verbal base is always complete, thus it is impossible to say whether reduplication involves prefixing or suffixing. Nevertheless, when the verbal base bears a low tone, the reduplicated form is L-L, and when it bears a high tone, the reduplicated form is H-H. Examples are in (13).

(13)   (a)   *nù*   →   *nùnù*   'to drink'
             sà   →   *sàsà*   'to sell'

       (b)   *kplá*   →   *kplákplá*   'to learn'
             kpɔ́   →   *kpɔ́kpɔ́*   'to see'

1.3.1   Underlying Tonal Specification

Syllables may be underlyingly specified as H or L. Alternatively, syllables may be underspecified for tone.

Syllables which lack an underlying tone acquire one through tonal spreading. (15) and (14) contain simple sentences which show that both H and L can be underlyingly specified. In both examples the verb is shown following a word bearing a high tone in (a) and a low tone in (b). The surface tone of the verb in (14), *ɖà* 'to cook', does not change between (a) and (b), and neither does the tone of the verb in (15), *kpɔ́* 'to see'.

(14) (a) *E   ḍà   énú*   → /è ḍà énú/
       2sg cook thing
       'You cooked.'

    (b) *É   ḍà   énú*   → /é ḍà énú/
         3sg cook thing
         'S/he cooked.'

(15) (a) *E   kpɔ́   énú*   → /è kpɔ́ énú/
       2sg see thing
       'You saw something.'

    (b) *É   kpɔ́   énú*   → /é kpɔ́ énú/
         3sg cook thing
         'S/he saw something.'

Some words, mostly closed-class ones, surface with the tone of the word immediately to the left. The most simple explanation for this is that such words do not bear a tone. Their surface tone is a result of rightward tonal spreading, outlined in (16). More research is needed to determine whether any consonants can block rightward tonal spreading.

(16) RIGHTWARD TONAL SPREADING: A tone α spreads to the right until a syllable associated with a tone is encountered.

As mentioned in the introductory discussion of orthography, syllables which do not bear a tone underlyingly are written without an accent. (17)-(19) show that toneless syllables surface with the tone of the preceding syllable: (a) shows the monosyllabic word itself; (b) shows the word following L and surfacing as L while (c) shows it following H and surfacing as H. Note that polysyllabic words with L-L. . . or H-H. . . tonal patterns may have each syllable underlyingly associated with a unique tone, or they may have the observed melody as a result of tonal spreading. I have not found any phenomena which could test between these theories.

(17) (a) *e* 2sg
    (b) *e kpɔ́ énú* → /è kpɔ́/ 'you saw'
    (c) *cí e kpɔ́* → /cí é kpɔ́/ 'which you saw'

(18) (a) *wo* PL
    (b) *ègbɔ̀ wo* → /ègbɔ̀ wò/ 'goats'
    (c) *ègbɔ̀ lɔ́ wo* → /ègbɔ̀ lɔ́ wó/ 'the goats'

(19) (a) *bu* 'other'
    (b) *énú bu* → /énúbú/ 'another thing'
    (c) *ègbɔ̀ bu* → /ègbɔ̀bù/ 'another goat'

1.4 Phonological Processes

1.4.1 Palatalization

The consonant [z] becomes [ʒ] before [i]. The rule showing this is in (20).

(20) PALATALIZATION
    z → ʒ / ＿i

With one known exception, this is the only context in which [ʒ] surfaces. The exception to this is *aʒavi* 'fiancée' or 'mistress'. It is possible that *aʒavi* is a loanword of unknown origin.

There is no corresponding process which would turn [s] into [ʃ] as demonstrated by the minimal pair *asi* /asi/ 'cat', *ashi* /aʃi/ 'woman' or 'hand'.

1.4.2   Nasalisation

Nasilization affects both vowels and consonants. Following Capo 1991, certain consonants ([b], [ɖ] and [y]), which can be analysed as sonorants, are systematically nasalised (to become [m], [n] and [ɲ] respectively) when followed by a nasal vowel. Furthermore, non-nasal sonorants can not be followed by a nasal vowel. This suggests that as in the other Gbe languages, nasalization spreads from the vowel to the onset consonant(s) [6].

Another important piece of evidence supporting this claim is the existence of CV[+nasal] syllables with non-sonorant onsets; in such syllables the onset consonant is not nasalised, thus the [+nasal] feature can not be spreading to the vowel from it. On the other hand, there are no syllables with a nasal onset followed by an oral vowel.

Unlike the other nasal consonants, [ŋ] has no oral counterpart. This strongly suggests that it is underlyingly nasal. The surface distribution of [ŋ] in Ajagbe has two unique characteristics which provides further evidence of its status as the sole underlyingly nasal consonant in the language. First, [ŋ] can be [+/-syllabic] (as in /ŋ̩/ 'I' as opposed to /ŋwlɛ̃/ 'to write'). There is no evidence of any other syllabic consonants in the language. Second, [ŋ] is the only phoneme which can appear in coda position, as in /pléŋ́/ 'all'.

Nasalization spreads to liquids and glides when they are to the left of a nasalized vowel, but not from a nasalized consonant. With the exception of [y], this nasalization is purely phonetic, as there are no data suggesting a contrast between oral and nasal liquids. An example of each consonant which can undergo phonetic nasalization is in (21). As with nasal sonorants, whether a liquid is nasalized is entirely predictable given the following vowel. This being the case, the nasalization of liquids will not be indicated in examples unless this is a particular point of interest.

(21)   nasalization of Liquids

    (a) [l̃ṹĩ] 'shave it!'

    (b) [ek͡plɔ̃] 'table'

    (c) [ŋ̩ʁw̃l̃ɛ̃] 'read'

1.4.3   Hiatus resolution

Hiatus can occur at word boundaries or within a single word. It is resolved based on the feature specifications of the second vowel. We will examine hiatus resolution at word boundaries and within a syllable in turn.

Resolution between Words

First we will examine hiatus over word boundaries, which is essentially hiatus occurring between verbs and their nominal objects. This is because very few words other than nouns are vowel-initial. There is one notable exception, however: the third person object pronominal clitic *é*.

Vowel-initial nouns in Ajagbe start with either [a] or [e]. In the case that a noun starts with [a], hiatus is resolved by inserting a glottal stop (22). When nouns have an initial [e], hiatus is resolved by deleting the [e] as shown in (23).

(22)   yì àfì mɛ̀   /yìʔàfìmɛ̃̀/   'go to the market'
      kpɔ́ àcì   /k͡pɔ́ʔàcì/   'see (a) tree'

(23)   wà èdò   /wàdò/   'do work'
      nù èshì   /nṹʃì/   'drink water'
      kpɔ́ ègbò   /k͡pɔ́ɠbɔ̀/   'see a goat'

Hiatus resolution in the context of the the third person object pronominal clitic is more complicated than before vowel-initial nouns. The clitic is most simply be analysed as an underspecified vowel which surfaces as /i/, /ɛ/ or /ĩ/ depending on the preceding vowel. The feature specifications of this vowel are in (24)[3]. The underspecified features are specified by rightward spreading from the preceding vowel.

---

[3]Note that the resulting feature specification of this vowel after /ã/ does not correspond to a vowel in Ajagbe. The simplest repair strategy is to change the [high] specification to [+high], rather than changing an underlyingly specified feature on *I* or multiple features.

(24) FEATURE SPECIFICATION OF THE THIRD PERSON PRONOMINAL CLITIC $\begin{bmatrix} \alpha & high \\ - & low \\ + & front \\ \alpha & nasal \end{bmatrix}$

In (25) we see how this underspecified vowel surfaces in all contexts. *I* represents the third person pronominal clitic.

(25)

ORAL VOWELS					NASAL VOWELS				
I	→	i	/	i__	I	→	ĩ	/	ĩ__
I	→	i	/	e__			-		
I	→	ε	/	ε__	I	→	ĩ	/	ɛ̃__
I	→	ε	/	a__	I	→	ĩ	/	ã__
I	→	i	/	u__	I	→	ĩ	/	ũ__
I	→	i	/	o__			-		
I	→	ε	/	ɔ__	I	→	ĩ	/	ɔ̃__

The third person pronominal object clitic creates an opportunity for hiatus resolution simply because it is a single vowel which appears after a transitive verb, which like all other words in Ajagbe are vowel-final⁴. There are essentially three ways in which the hiatus created here gets resolved: (1) glide formation; (2) glide insertion; (3) vowel deletion. The manner of resolution depends on the final vowel of the verb. Glide insertion is optional, but it may only occur in the environment {ɔ, ɔ̃}__ *I*. If glide insertion does not resolve the hiatus in this environment, then vowel deletion is obligatory. A table showing the environments resulting in each resolution strategy with examples is shown in (26).

(26) Hiatus Resolution Involving the Third Person Object Pronominal Clitic

    (a) GLIDE FORMATION

    $\begin{bmatrix} +high \\ +back \end{bmatrix} \to ɥ \; /\_\_I$

    Examples:

Underlying Representation	Phonetic Realization	Translation
dù *I*	[dɥí]	'eat it!'
kù *I*	[kɥí]	'drive it!'
lùn *I*	[lɥĩ́]	'shave it!'
dò *I*	[dɥi]	'plant it!'

    (b) GLIDE INSERTION (optional)

    ∅ → w /{ ɔ, ɔ̃}

    __*I*

    Examples:

Underlying Representation	Phonetic Realization	Translation
kpɔ́ *I*	[kpɔwέ]	'look at it!'
bɔ̀ *I*	[bɔ̀wέ]	'bring it together!'

    (c) VOWEL DELETION

    [-back] → ∅ /__*I*

    NB: The vowels which are [- back] are as follows: a, ε, e, i.

    Vowel deletion may apply to [ɔ] and [ɔ̃] as well, as shown after the examples of [-back] vowels.

    Examples:

Underlying Representation	Phonetic Realization	Translation
ʒìn *I*	[ʒĩ̀]	'press it!'
gbèn *I*	[gbĩ̀]	'pick it!'
sà *I*	[sὲ]	'sell it!'
kpɔ́ *I*	[kpέ]	'look at it!'

---

⁴While theoretically possible, I have not come across any verbs aside from the modal verb *teŋ* 'to be able to' which end in a syllabic nasal.

Resolution within a Word

Hiatus resolution within a single word in Ajagbe would occur when there is an underlying diphthong. Since there are no words in Ajagbe which surface with diphthongs, the evidence for underlying diphthongs which undergo phonological alterations would necessarily have to be indirect. The constraints on syllabic onsets and the hiatus resolution strategies seen with the third person object pronominal clitic suggest that there may be underlying diphthongs in Ajagbe, but more research is necessary to be certain.

1.5   Other phonological phenomena

1.5.1   Free Variation

Labiodental fricatives are in free variation with dental fricatives with identical voicing when they occur word-internally before [i]. Thus [f] can be pronounced as [θ] and [v] as [ð] when it occurs intervocallically in the middle of a word. The rules for this is found in (27). (28) shows several examples.

(27) DENTALIZATION OF [f] AND [v]
        f → θ / V__i
        v → ð / V__i

(28)   (a) *kpáví* 'fish' /kpá.ví/ or /kpá.ðí/

         (b) *àfì* 'market' /á.fí/ or /à.θì/

Chapter 2

Nominal Structure

This chapter examines nominal structures in Ajagbe. The relevant structures include various determiners, the plural marker and possesives. The only case marking on nouns is the genitive case marker *tɔ* which is discussed with other posessive structures.

2.1 The Definite Determiner

Ajagbe has a postnominal determiner *lɔ́* as can be seen in (1). It is nearly homophonous with the Fongbe demonstrative *elɔ* (particularly because *elɔ* often surfaces as /lɔ/ in Fongbe due to hiatus resolution).

(1)   *wémá   lɔ́*
      book   DEF
      'the book'

Gender is not lexically encoded in Ajagbe, thus the determiner is not marked for gender. It can appear with a noun of any natural gender (2).

(2)   (a) MASCULINE

          ŋ̀sù   lɔ́
          man   DEF
          'the man'

      (b) FEMININE

          nyɔ́nù   lɔ́
          woman   DEF
          'the woman

      (c) NEUTER

          éhún   lɔ́
          vehicle   DEF
          'the vehicle'

The definite determiner can be separated from the noun by a relative clause as can be seen in (3).

(3)   *ègbɔ̀   [cì   eyí   ŋ̀   kpɔ́]   lɔ́*
      goat   which   CLF   I   see   DEF
      'the goat which I saw'

2.2 The Plural Marker

Ajagbe has a postnominal plural marker *wo* (4).

(4)   *ègbɔ̀   wo*
      goats   PL

    (a) 'the goats'

    (b) #'(some) goats'

Nouns followed by the plural marker are interpreted as [+definite] as seen in (4) and (5). This is similar to the interpretation of the plural marker in Fongbe, but different from the corresponding form in Ewe (see Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 and Westerman, 1930 [13] for more information).

(5)   (a) *Kójó   kpɔ́   èɡbɔ̀.*
         Kojo   see   goat

         'Kojo saw (a) goat(s)'

    (b) *Kójó   kpɔ́   èɡbɔ̀   wo.*
         Kojo   see   goat   PL

         'Kojo saw the goats.'

The plural marker is not obligatory with all plural nouns, particularly nouns which are most commonly used in the plural form. For example, *àyù* 'bean' generally is used to refer to beans in a partitive sense. An example of this usage is shown in (6). If the plural marker is used with such a noun, then the interpretation is definite and plural (7). The most common interpretation of (7) is that Ashiba bought several types of beans.

(6)   *Àshíbá   xwlè   àyù.*
     Ashiba   buy   bean

     'Ashiba bought beans.'

(7)   *Àshíbá   xwlè   àyù   wo.*
     Ashiba   buy   bean   PL

     'Ashiba bought the beans.'

The plural marker can appear with the definite determiner *lɔ́*. The plural marker follows the definite determiner (8).

(8)   (a) *èɡbɔ̀   lɔ́   wo*
         goat   DEF   PL

         'the goats (in question)'

    (a) ***èɡbɔ̀   wo   lɔ́*
         dog   PL   DEF

         [Lit.: the goats (in question)]

2.3 The Indefinite Determiner

Ajagbe uses the numeral *ɖékà* 'one' as an indefinite determiner. The object of the indefinite derterminer must be specific. As will be discussed in section 2.4, unspecific objects are realized either with *ɖékà* or as a bare NP. In (9) we see an example of a noun used with the indefinite determiner.

(9)   *èɡbɔ̀   ɖékà*
     goat   IND

     'a goat'

2.4 Bare NPs

Nouns can surface alone, i.e. without any determiners. In (10) we see that generic nouns are bare. In (11) we see that mass nouns can surface without any determiners as well.

(10)   *Drélé   ná   nɔ   ŋsɛn.*
      moringa   give   HAB   strength

      'Moringa gives strength.'

(11) *Àshíbá xwlè mɔ́lú.*
Ashiba buy rice
'Ashiba bought rice.'

When a count noun is bare, an indefinite singular or plural interpretation results, as shown in (12).

(12) *Àshíbá ɖù ŋ̀cì.*
Ashiba eat orange
'Ashiba ate (some) orange(s).'

2.5 Possession

Ajagbe has two ways of indicating possession: a noun can be precede the noun it possesses (13). This structure will be called the 'compound possessive' due to its similarities with compound nouns, which are discussed in Chapter 9. Alternatively, the genitive case marker *tɔ* can be used to indicate possession(14).

(13) *Kójó fòtò*
Kojo photo
'Kojo's photo'

(14) *fòtò Kójó tɔ*
photo Kojo GEN
'Kojo's photo'

2.5.1 The Compound Possessive

Depending on the possessed noun, the simple possessive can behave in either of two ways. If the possessed noun is consonant-initial, there is no phonetic change to either noun as seen in (15). Changes do occur, however, when the possessed noun is vowel-initial (16) elision is obligatory and the possessed noun is included in the tonal domain of the possessor (16a). This enables a high tone on the final syllable of the possessor to spread rightwards. There does not appear to be any tone spreading in the case that the final syllable of the possessor noun bears a low tone (16b).

(15) *Àshíbá cìcì* → /àʃíbátʃ͡ìtʃ͡ì/
Ashiba glasses
'Asiba's glasses'

(16) (a) *Àshíbá àvù* → /àʃíbávú/
Ashiba dog
'Ashiba's dog'
   (i) */àʃíbáʔávú/ */àʃíbáʔàvù/
   (ii) */àʃíbávù/

  (b) *àvù énú* → /àvùnú/
dog thing
'dog's thing'
   (i) */àvùʔénú/
   (ii) */ávùnù/

2.5.2 Thematic hierarchy

With one noun as the possessor argument

If one noun is the possessor argument it can be assigned either a possessor, thematic or agentive interpretation. Thus, (13) and (14) can be interpreted as meaning any of the following: 'Kojo's photo', 'a photo of Kojo', 'a photo by Kojo'.

With more than one noun as the possessor argument

It appears that at most two nouns can function as possessor arguments in a single clause. This is quite different from Fongbe, which allows many thematic roles to be assigned through iterated possessor arguments (see Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 pp.44-50). Ajagbe speakers would express phrases such as 'Ashiba's picture of Kojo by Komlan' with other structures, for example by saying something like 'Ashiba's photo with Kojo in it which Komlan took.'

When there are two possessor arguments one must appear in the simple possessive structure and the other with the genitive case marker. The noun in the simple possessive is always interpreted as the theme. The noun which appears with the genitive case marker is the possessor (17).

(17)   *Àshíbá   fòtò   Kójó   tɔ*
       Ashiba   photo   Kojo   GEN

       (a) 'Kojo's photo of Ashiba'
       (b) #'Ashiba's photo of Kojo'

2.5.3   Contexts in which the two possessive structures appear

When a partitive meaning is associated with the possessed noun, the compound possessive structure must be used; possession indicated by *tɔ* in these sentences results in ungrammatical readings (18). Note that phrases such as the one in (18) can also be viewed as compound nouns rather than true possessives.

(18)   (a) *byà   ègù   →   /byàgù/*
            beer   bottle
            'beer bottle'
       (b) **ègù   byà   tɔ*
            bottle   beer   GEN
            [Lit.: 'beer bottle']

In the case of inalienable possessions, either structure is permissible (19). More fieldwork is necessary to determine if there is a preference between the two structures.

(19)   (a) *Èvì   àbà   jè   abí*
            child   arm   buy   liquid   wound
            'The child's arm has a wound.'
       (b) *Àbà   èvì   tɔ   jè   abí.*
            arm   child   GEN   buy   liquid   wound
            'The child's arm has a wound.'

2.6   Demonstrative determiners

Ajagbe has two demonstrative terms which occur in the nominative structure. The distinction between the two terms is proximity to the speaker; *cɛ* is proximate while *ŋ́nɔ́* is neutral/distal. My informants are generally able to use *ŋ́nɔ́* for all objects, both proximate and distal, but *cɛ* tends to be used exclusively with proximate objects. Both demonstrative determiners occur postnominally as can be seen in (20).

(20)   *àvù   cɛ   //   ŋ́nɔ́*
       dog   DET   //   DET
       'this/that dog'

The demonstrative determiners *cɛ* and *ŋ́nɔ́* are incompatible with the indefinite determiner *ɖékà* (21).

(21)   **àvù   cɛ   //   ŋ́nɔ́   ɖékà*
       dog   DEM   //   DEM   IND

Unlike in Fongbe, Ajagbe does not permit a demonstrative to determine a NP with a phonologically null head in most contexts. For example, a verbal object can not be a demonstrative with a null head (22).

(22) *Kójó kpɔ́ -   cɛ.
      Kojo   see one DEM

      [Lit.: Kojo saw this (one).']

This prohibition carries over to the heads of relative clauses as well (23).

(23) (a) *-   cɛ   // ŋ́nɔ́   ci   yì
           one DEM   // DEM   who   go

           [Lit.: 'the one who left']

      (b) é   cɛ   // ŋ́nɔ́   ci   yì
           one DEM   // DEM   who   go

           'the one who left'

Stative verbs verbs, such as *gán* 'to be big' appear to be able to modify a phonologically null head which is in turn determined by a demonstrative (24). An alternative interpretation is that the reduplicated stative verb is viewed as a true noun.

(24) Kójó jì   -   gángán cɛ.
      Kojo want one big   DET

      'Kojo would like that big one.'

(25) *Kójó jì   -   gángán cɛ   lɔ́.
      Kojo   want one big   DET   DEF

      [Lit.: Kojo would like that big one.']

2.7 Quantifiers

Quantifiers follow the nouns which they quantify. Furthermore, they must follow modifiers (verbal or adjectival) and determiners. An example is shown in (26).

(26) kòklò   (gángán)   (wo)   pléŋ́
      chicken big   PL   all

      'all (the) (big) chickens'

Chapter 3

Pronouns

3.1 Personal Pronouns

The Ajagbe personal pronoun paradigm is shown in (1). The forms in this paradigm show no distinction for gender. The data show that personal pronouns in Ajagbe are [-nominative].

(1) PERSONAL PRONOUN PARADIGM

Person	Singular	Plural
1	*enyɛ*	*mì wó*
2	*ewò*	*mí wó*
3	*eyɛ*	*wé*

3.1.1 Distribution

Ajagbe appears to have both pronominal clitics and pronouns, as does Fongbe. However, the distribution of each is different from in Fongbe. One effect of this is that the difference between pronominal clitics and pronouns is less clear in Ajagbe than in Fongbe.

I will carry out three of the tests used to distinguish pronouns and pronominal clitics which are applied to their Fongbe equivalents in Lefebvre and Brou-sseau, 2002. In certain tests the Ajagbe pronouns and clitics behave differently while in others they behave in the same manner.

TEST 1: Personal pronouns can be clefted as seen in (2) in contrast to pronominal clitics (12).

(2) *Enyɛ   i   Kójó kpɔ́.*
     1sgPRO   FOC   Kojo see

     'It is me that Kojo saw.'

TEST 2: Personal pronouns can be used in conjunct-adjunct constructions (3), in contrast to pronominal clitics (see (13)). The personal pronoun can appear either before or after *kódó* 'with'.

(3)   (a) *Kójó kpɔ́ enyɛ   kódó Àshíbá.*
           Kojo see   1sgPRO   with   Ashiba

           'Kojo saw me and Ashiba.'

       (b) *Kójó kpɔ́ Àshíbá kódó enyɛ.*
           Kojo see   Ashiba with   1sgPRO

           'Kojo saw Ashiba and me.'

TEST 3: Personal pronouns can be the objects of prepositions (4) and of postpositions (5). In (14) and (15) we see that pronominal clitics exhibit the same behavior.

(4) *Àshíbá xò   nùxù   nɔ̀   enyɛ.*
     Ashiba   hit speech for   1sgPRO

     'Ashiba talked to me.'

(5) *Èvì   lɔ́   lè   enyɛ   jì.*
     child DEF be at 1sgPRO

     'The child is on me.'

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3.1.2 Case

The pronouns in Ajabe, which are listed in (1) are all [-nominative]. The two pieces of evidence supporting this claim are: pronouns can not be verbal subjects (unless participating in a conjunct-adjunct construction); (2) pronouns can appear as verbal or pre-/postpositional objects. When they appear as verbal or pre-/postpositional objects they are in free variation with [-nominative] clitics. Pronouns are not always freely variable with [-nominative] pronominal clitics, however, because the pronouns can participate in conjunct-adjunct constructions (3) while the [-nominative] clitics can not (13).

3.2 Pronominal Clitics

3.2.1 Inventory

Ajagbe has a system of pronominal clitics which is shown in (6). Two of the clitics show variation based on the [nominative] feature. Like the pronouns, the pronominal clitics are marked for person and number, but not gender. If the [+ nominative] and [- nominative] pronominal clitics are phonetically identical, they will not be written twice.

(6)   THE PRONOMINAL CLITICS

	[+ nominative]	[- nominative]
1sg		ǹ̀
2sg	e	eɔ
3sg		é
1pl		mì
2pl		mí
3pl	wò	wè

3.2.2 Case

Pronominal clitics which are [+nominative] can only appear in subject position of verbs. Subjects may not be [-nominative] as shown in (7b). The data in (8) demonstrate that [+nominative] pronominal clitics may not be the object of either prepositions or postpositions.

(7)   (a) *E   kpɔ́   Kójó.*
          2sg[+NOM]   see   Kojo
          'You saw Kojo.'

      (b) **Eɔ   kpɔ́   Kójó.*
          2sg[-NOM]   see   Kojo
          [Lit.: You saw Kojo]

(8)   (a) **Ègbɔ̀   lè   godu   nɔ́   e.*
          goat   be at   behind for   2sg
          [Lit. The goat is behind you.]

      (b) **Èvì   lɔ́   lè   e   jì.*
          child   DEF be at 2sg on
          [Lit.: The child is on you.]

Similarly, all verbal direct objects and pre- or postpositional pronominal clitic arguments must be [-nominative] as seen in (9) and (10). The majority of pronominal clitics, however, have phonetically identical realizations when they are [+nominative] or [-nominative]. In (11) we see that such pronominal clitics can indeed appear as the object of a verb or the argument of a post- or preposition.

(9)   (a) *Kójó   kpɔ́   eɔ.*
          Kojo   see   2sg[-NOM]
          'Kojo saw you.'

      (b) **Kójó   kpɔ́   e.*
          Kojo   see   2sg[+NOM]
          [Lit.: Kojo saw you.]

(10)   (a)   *Evi   ló   lè   eɔ   jì.*
              child   DEF   be at   2sg[-NOM]   on
              'The child is on you.'

       (b)   **Evi   ló   lè   e   jì.*
              child   DEF   be at   2sg[+NOM]   on
              [Lit.: The child is on you.]

(11)   (a)   *Kójó   kpɔ́   ǹ̩.*
              Kojo   see   1sg
              'Kojo saw me.'

       (b)   *Kójó   xò   nùxù   nɔ́   ǹ̩.*
              Kojo   hit   speech   for   me
              'Kojo talked to me.'

       (c)   *Evi   ló   lé   ǹ̩   jì.*
              child   DEF   be at   1sg   on
              'The child is on me.'

3.2.3   Distribution

I will now apply the same three tests from 3.1.1 to the so-called pronominal clitics.
    TEST 1: Pronominal clitics can not be clefted. Compare with the strong pronominal forms in (2).

(12)   **Ŋ   i   Kójó   kpɔ́.*
         1sg   FOC   Kojo   see

       [Lit.: It was me that Kojo saw]

    TEST 2: Clitics cannot participate in a a conjunct-adjunct construction, as shown in (13) (compare
with (3)).

(13)   **Kójó   kpɔ́   ǹ̩   kóɖó   Àshíbá.*
         Kojo   see   1sg   with   Ashiba

       [Lit.: Kojo saw me with Ashiba]

    TEST 3: Clitics can occur as the argument of pre- and postpostions as shown in (14) and (15). In
these situations they appear to be freely variable with the strong pronominal form as can be seen in (4)
and (5). As discussed in 3.2.2, pronominal clitics in these positions must be [-nominative].

(14)   *Wò   xò   nùxù   nɔ́   eɔ.*
         3pl   hit   speech   for   2sg
       'They talked to you.'

(15)   *Èvì   ló   lè   eɔ   jì.*
         child   DEF   be at   2sg   on
       'The child is on you.'

    The clearest difference in the behavior of pronominal clitics and true pronouns is that a pronominal
subject must be realized as a pronominal clitic (unless the subject is participating in a conjunct-adjunct
construction), and not as a true pronoun as shown in (16). (17) demonstrates that pronominal verbal
objects can be realized as either pronominal clitics or as true pronouns.

(16)   (a)   *Ŋ   kpɔ́   Kójó.*
              1sg   see   Kojo
              'I saw Kojo.'

       (b)   **Enyɛ   kpɔ́   Kójó.*
              1sgPRO   see   Kojo
              [Lit. 'I saw Kojo.']

(17)　(a)　*Kójó　kpɔ́　ŋ̀.*
　　　　　Kojo　see　1sg
　　　　　'Kojo saw me.'

　　　(b)　*Kójó　kpɔ́　enyɛ.*
　　　　　Kojo　see　1sgPRO
　　　　　'Kojo saw me.'

3.3　Possession

Ajagbe has two paradigms of possessive pronouns. One is used with family members, the other with all other types of nouns. These will be discussed in turn. Possessive structures can create environments for both tonal changes and vowel deletion to resolve hiatus when the possessor occurs to the left of the possessed noun. See Section 1.3 for more information about these phonological properties. Examples within this section which undergo phonological changes will be accompanied by a phonetic transcription.

3.3.1　Familial Possession

The paradigm of pronouns used to indicate possession of family members, which is shown in (19), is quite similar to the paradigm of pronouns seen in (1). One variant of the third person singular and plural possessive pronouns are homophonous. The singular, however, follows the noun while the plural precedes it. As a result, *fòfò wó* means 'her/his big brother' while *wó fòfò* means 'their big brother'.

(18)

	Person	Singular	Plural
(19)	1	enyɛ	mì wó
	2	ewɔ̀	mí wò
	3	eyɛ/ wó	wó

　　Singular possessive pronouns follow the noun they possess (20).

(20)　*nɔ́vì　　enyɛ*
　　　brother　my
　　　'my brother.'

　　On the other hand, plural possessives precede the noun they possess (21).

(21)　*wó　　fòfò*　　　　　　　/wó fófó/
　　　their　brother
　　　'their older brother'

　　In (22) we see that these possessive pronouns can not be used with non-family members. These include both inalienable possessions (an arm) or alienable ones (a tree).

(22)　(a)　**àlɔ̀　eyɛ*
　　　　　hand　his/her
　　　　　[Lit.: 'his/her hand']

　　　(b)　**àcì　enyɛ*
　　　　　tree　my
　　　　　[Lit.: 'my tree']

3.3.2　Other Possession

There are two paradigms of possessive pronouns used with non-family members. They are shown in (23). While the meanings of these possessive pronouns are identical, the informants seem to prefer those in (23a) to those in (23b).

	Person	Singular	Plural
(23) (a)	1	nyání / nyáŋ	mìwó
	2	wòá	míwò
	3	íyí	òwó

	Person	Singular	Plural
(b)	1	kìnyὲ	mìwótɔ́
	2	tɔ̀wò	mìwòtɔ̀
	3	yìtɔ̀	wótɔ́

The pronouns in (23a) always precede the possessive nouns, and they can be used with both alienable and inalienable possessions (24). If the possessed noun is vowel-initial, the first vowel must be deleted and the posessed noun is incorporated into the tonal domain of the possessive pronoun. Thus it would be ungrammatical to pronounce example (24a) as /nyání ácí/.

(24) (a) *nyání   àcì*   /nyánící/
           my   tree

           'my tree'

      (b) *mìwó   àcì*   /mìwócí/
           your(pl.) tree

           'your(pl.) tree'

      (c) *nyání   àlɔ̀*   /nyánílɔ́/
           my   hand

           'my hand'

      (d) *íyí   àlɔ̀*   /íyílɔ́/
           his/her hand

           'his/her hand.'

The possessive pronouns in (23b), however, always follow the possessed noun. These pronouns can also be used with both alienable and inalienable possessions. Examples are given in (25). Since the possessives follow the possessed nouns there are no phonological changes.

(25) (a) *àcì   kìnyὲ*
           tree   my

           'my tree'

      (b) *àlɔ̀   wótɔ́*
           hand   their

           'their hand'

3.4   Expletives

Ajagbe permits both covert and overt expletive subjects. Unlike in Fongbe, however, the use of the covert expletive subject appears to be highly restricted.

3.4.1   Overt expletive

As in Fongbe (and many other languages), the overt expletive subject is simply the third person singular pronominal clitic, ie *é*. An example of an overt expletive subject is in (26).

(26) (a) *É   nyɔ́   mɔ́   à   yì.*
           it be.good COMP 2sg.IRR go

           'It is good that you leave.'

      (b) **- nyɔ́   mɔ́   à   yì.*
           it be.good COMP 2sg.IRR go

           [Lit.: is good that you leave.]

In Fongbe, covert expletives are permitted with verbs of the 'to seem' class, but not with verbs of the 'to be' class [5]. In Ajagbe, we see that an overt expletive subject must be used with verbs from both classes. (27) demonstrates the ungrammaticality of a covert expletive with a verb from the 'to seem' class just as (26) does with a verb from the 'to be' class.

(27) (a) *É gyí mɔ́ Kójó tó.*
         it seem COMP Kojo leave
         'It seems that Kojo left.'

      (b) **- gyí mɔ́ Kójó tó.*
         it seem COMP Kojo leave
         [Lit.: It seems that Kojo left.]

3.4.2 Covert expletive

The only case in which a covert expletive subject seems to be permitted is with the verb *yɔ* which means '(it) is'. In 28 we see that the use of the overt expletive subject is optional with this verb. Note that *enyɛ* is not the subject of the verb *yɔ* because it is [-nominative] (see Section 3.1.2).

(28) (a) *É enyɛ yɔ.*
         it me is
         'It is me.'

      (b) *- enyɛ yɔ.*
         it me is
         'It is me.'

3.5 Wh-words and phrases

Ajagbe has both wh-words and phrases. (29) contains a list of all known wh-words, and (30) contains the single known wh-phrase in Ajagbe. There are likely many more wh-phrases to be documented. This does not seem to be the case with wh-words.

(29) mì   who
      nyì   what
      fìnì   where
      hwènù   when
      cì   which
      nɛni   how many
      lé   how

(30) nyì tàɖò   why   [lit.: 'what reason']

All of the wh-words and phrases can be used to form questions. Most wh-words appear sentence-initially in this context. *cì* 'which' and *nɛni* 'how many' however, are exceptions in that they follow the noun being questioned. Some typical wh-questions are shown in (31) and questions using *cì* 'which' and *nɛni* 'how many' are given in (32). Note that like in English, an appropriate response to (32b) could either be some sort of measurement (ex. three handfuls; a lot) or an amount of money (ex. fifty francs worth).

(31) (a) *Nyì tàɖò é yì Zòvì ɔ̀?*
         what reason 3sg go Azové FOC
         'Why did s/he go to Azové?'

      (b) *Fìnì Kójó lè ɔ̀?*
         where Kojo be at FOC
         'Where is Kojo?'

(32) (a) *Àfì cì mɛ́ yi è wà nɔ èdò lè ɔ̀?*
         market which in CLF 2sg do PLA work be at FOC
         'Which market do you work in?'

(b) *Gbòmà   nɛni   Kójó   xwlè   ɔ̀?*
     solanum how much   Kojo   buy   FOC
     'How much solanum did Kojo buy?'

3.6   The *ɖékí* Anaphor

As in Fongbe, only the true pronouns, which are discussed in section 3.1 can combine with -*ɖékí*. There is one exception to this: the third person singular pronoun is pronounced as *ì* in this context rather than *eyɛ* as one might expect. The -*ɖékí* anaphor assigns a reflexive interpretation to the pronoun as seen in (33) and (34).

(33) **Ŋ**   *sɔ́*   *ewí*   *sò*   *enyɛ*   *ɖékí.*
     1sg   take   knife   cut   1sgPRO   ANA
     'I cut myself.'

(34) *Kójó   kpɔ́   ì   ɖékí.*
     Kojo   see   3sg   ANA
     'Kojo saw himself.'

If the -*ɖékí* anaphor is not present, the subject and object must be interpreted as disjoint. Compare (34) with (35).

(35) *Kójó   kpɔ́   é.*
     Kojo   see   3sg

   (a) 'Kojo saw him/her/it.'
   (b) #'Kojo saw himself.'

When -*ɖékí* is used with plural pronouns, the definite plural marker *wo* must be added after it (36). This is similar to the distribution of the English -*self* and -*selves* reflexive endings (for example 'myself', 'themselves', *'themself').

(36) (a) *Wò   xò   nùxù   nɔ́   wò   ɖékí   wo.*
         3pl   hit   speech   for   3pl   ANA   PL
         'They talked to themselves.'

   (b) **Wò   xò   nùxù   nɔ́   wò   ɖékí.*
         3pl   hit   speech   for   3pl   ANA
         [Lit.: They talked to themselves.]

The -*ɖékí* anaphor licences reflexive interpretations of pronouns embedded within PPs as seen in (37) and (38).

(37) (a) *Wò   xò   nùxù   nɔ́   wò   ɖékí   wo.*
         3sg   hit   speech   to   3sgPRO   ANA   PL
         'They talked to themselves'

   (b) *Wò   xò   nùxù   nɔ́   wé.*
         3sg   hit   speech   to   3sg
         'They talked to them.'

(38) (a) *Kójó   sé   èxò   lɔ̀lɔ̀   sò   í   ɖékí   nú.*
         Kojo   hear   story   DEF   told.RED   3sgPRO   ANA   against
         'Kojo heard a story against himself.'

   (b) *Kójó   sé   èxò   lɔ̀lɔ̀   sò   nú.*
         Kojo   hear   story   DEF   told.RED   against
         'Kojo heard a story against him.'

The antecedent and anaphor within the same clause in each of the sentences above. When -ɖékí occurs in more complex sentences, its antecedent must occur within the same clause (39).

(39) (a) *Kójó bù   mɔ́   Àshíbá$_i$ kpɔ́ í$_i$ ɖékí.*
         Kojo think COMP Ashiba   see 3sgPRO ANA
         'Kojo thinks that Ashiba saw herself.'

    (b) **Kójó$_i$ bù   mɔ́   Àshíbá kpɔ́ í$_i$ ɖékí.*
         Kojo   think COMP Ashiba see 3sgPRO ANA
         [Lit.: Kojo thinks that Ashiba saw him.]

3.7 The logophoric pronoun *yé*

Ajagbe has a single logophoric pronoun, *yé*. This pronoun has no independent referent outside of the sentence.

The logophor can only have a second or third person antecedent as seen in (40)-(40).

(40) (a) **Ŋ**   *nú   mɔ́   ɳ̀   wù   Kójó ègbɔ̀.*
         1sg say   COMP   1sg kill Kojo goat
         'I said that I killed Kojo's goat.'

    (b) ****Ŋ** *nú   mɔ́   yé   wù   Kójó ègbɔ̀.*
         1sg say   COMP   LOG kill Kojo goat
         [Lit.: I said that I killed Kojo's goat.]

    (c) *É   nú   mɔ́   yé   wù   Kójó ègbɔ̀.*
         2sg say   COMP   LOG kill Kojo goat
         'You$_i$ said that you$_i$ killed Kojo's goat.'

    (d) *É   nú   mɔ́   yé   wù   Kójó ègbɔ̀.*
         3sg say   COMP   LOG kill Kojo goat
         'S/he$_i$ said that s/he$_i$ killed Kojo's goat.'

The logophor's antecedent can be either singular or plural. If it is singular, the surface form is *yé*. If the antecedent is plural, the definite plural marker surfaces after the logophoric pronoun. In this environment, however, the logophoric pronoun surfaces as *yó*, not *yé*. An example of this is in (41).

(41) *Wò nú   mɔ́   yó   wù   Kójó ègbɔ̀.*
      3pl say   COMP   LOG.PL kill Kojo goat
      'They$_i$ said that they$_i$ killed Kojo's goat.'

The antecedent of *yé* must be the subject of the sentence as can be seen in (42)-(43). In these examples we see that the antecedent can not be an object of any kind.

(42) (a) *Àshíbá bú   mɔ́   yé   nyɔ́.*
         Ashiba think COMP LOG be good
         'Ashiba$_i$ thinks that she$_i$ is good.'

    (b) **Àshíbá$_i$ bú   mɔ́   yé$_j$ nyɔ́.*
         Ashiba   think COMP LOG   be good
         [Lit.: Ashiba$_i$ thinks that s/he$_j$ is good.]

(43) (a) **Ŋ**   *nú   nɔ́ Kójó$_i$ mɔ́   eyɛ$_i$ wú   Àshíbá ègbɔ̀.*
         1sg say   to   Kojo   COMP   3sgPRO kill Ashiba goat
         'I told Kojo$_i$ that he$_{i/j}$ killed Ashiba's goat.'

    (b) ****Ŋ** *nú   nɔ́ Kójó mɔ́   yé   wú   Àshíbá ɡ̀bɔ̀.*
         1sg say   to   Kojo COMP   LOG kill Ashiba goat
         [Lit.: I told Kojo$_i$ that he$_i$ killed Ashiba's goat.']

Sentence (44) has a verb from the 'to say' class followed by a verb not from this class. The antecedent of the logophoric pronoun *yé* can only be the subject of the verb from the 'to say' class; thus, in (44), *yé* can only refer to Kojo (the subject of 'to say'). It can not refer to Ashiba (the subject of 'to kill') or another person. Nevertheless, an intervening verb from another class does not affect *yé* taking an antecedent.

(44) *Kójó nú   mɔ́   Àshíbá dù   ègbɔ̀ cì   yé   wù.*
      Kojo say COMP Ashiba eat goat which LOG kill

    (a) 'Kojo$_i$ said that Ashiba ate the goat which he$_i$ killed'

    (b) #'Kojo said that Ashiba$_i$ ate the goat which she$_i$ killed'

There can be more than one occurrence of *yé* within the same clause. In the sentences in (45) the *yé*s are coreferential because there is only one potential antecedent - Kojo. These sentences also contain *yé* used as a possessor. In (45) we see *yé* used as a possessor. The possessive form of *yé* is two copies of *yé* surrounding the possessed noun.

(45) (a) *Kójó nú   mɔ́   yé   kpɔ́ yé   èdà   yé.*
           Kojo say COMP LOG saw LOG father LOG.

        'Kojo said that he saw his father.'

    (b) *Kójó nú   mɔ́   yé   èdà   yé   kpɔ́ yé.*
           Kojo say COMP LOG father LOG saw LOG

        'Kojo said that his father saw him.'

yé can combine with the -*ɖékí* anaphor (46). This results in a reflexive interpretation. When the logophor's antecedent is plural, the logophor appears in the plural form while -*ɖékí* appears without the definite plural marker (46). Recall that when -*ɖékí* combines with a plural personal pronoun it is obligatorily followed by the definite plural marker (see (36)).

(46) (a) *E   nù   mɔ́   yé   kpɔ́ yé   ɖékí.*
           2sg say COMP LOG see LOG ANA

        'You said that you saw yourself.'

    (b) *Wò   mɔ́   yó   wó   kpɔ́ yó   wó   ɖékí.*
           3pl say LOG PL   see LOG PL   ANA

        'They said that they saw themselves.'

Chapter 4

Tense, Mood and Aspect

As in all Gbe languages, there is no tense, mood or aspect (TMA) morphology on the verb. Verbs do not agree with either subject or object. They may appear with or without TMA markers. This chapter contains a discussion of these markers and how their presence or absence afffects the interpretation of verbs.

4.1 Bare Sentences

Sentences need not contain any TMA particles. Such sentences will be referred to as bare sentences. Such sentences can either describe states ([which are specified as [-durative][-telic]) or achievement ([-durative][+telic]) depending upon the verb.

Bare sentences containing stative verbs always describe states (rather than achievements). Such sentences are assigned a simple present assignment in English (1).

(1)   (a) *Àsíbá sè   Àjàgbè.*
              Asiba hear Ajagbe

              'Asiba speaks/understands Ajagbe.'

    (b) *Ŋ   nyí cícà.*
           1sg be   teacher

           'I am a teacher.'

In 4.4.2 we see that stative verbs denoting non-permanent properties can be used with the progressive marker. These verbs can also appear in bare sentences. To reflect this, we will translate the bare sentences with these verbs with the conditional and those with the progressive with the simple present. Compare (2) and (3).

(2)   *Àsíbá jí   a   yì   sùklú.*
        Asiba want IRR go to school

        'Asiba would like to go to school.'

(3)   *Àsíbá jí   kɔ̀   a   yì   sùklú.*
        Asiba want PROG IRR go to school

        'Asiba wants to go to school.'

4.2 Tense

Ajagbe has no true tense markers. This does not mean that one can not express tense in the language, but rather that tense is a byproduct of other markers. One result of this is that many sentences are ambiguous with respect to tense; it must be inferred from the context. (4) shows an example of a sentence with the progressive marker as the only TMA marker. This sentence can have either a present or past interpretation. It can not have a future interpretation.

(4)   *Kójó yì   kɔ̀   sùklú.*
        Kojo go to PROG school

  (a) 'Kojo is going to school.'

  (b) 'Kojo was going to school.'

  (c) #'Kojo will be going to school.'

A future reading is produced by the presence of the irrealis marker (6). The irrealis marker, however, can also result in a past meaning, but in this case the verb's mood must be interpreted as conditional (10).

Tense in Ajagbe seems to be less salient than either mood or aspect. Without knowing the context of a sentence it is possible to know the mood and the aspect, but it is not necessarily possible to know the tense, which must be inferred from the context. Many sentences are therefore ambiguous with regard to tense, but are not with regard to mood or aspect.

4.3   Mood

4.3.1   The Irrealis Marker

Ajagbe contains a single irrealis marker: a. Its appearance with a verb indicates that the action has not yet happened. This leads to many interpretations: future, conditional, subjunctive, infinitive, etc. depending on the context. We will examine each context in this section.

When the subject of a given verb is a noun, the surface form of the irrealis marker is a. When a is used in conjunction with a pronominal clitic subject, the two combine as in (5):

(5)   COMBINATIONS OF THE PRONOMINAL CLITICS AND *a*

Person	Components			Surface Form
1sg	ǹ	a	→	nà
2sg	e	a	→	a
3sg	é	a	→	á
1pl	mì	a	→	mì à
2sg	mí	a	→	mí á
3sg	wò	a	→	wòà

Sentences with a single clause containing the irrealis marker are generally given a definite future interpretation (6). Note that such sentences can also result in a condtional interpreteation, but this is dependent on the context and is not the default.

(6)   *Nà   yì   àfì   mὲ.*
      1sg.IRR   go to   market   in

      'I will go to the market.'

A subjunctive reading of the irrealis marker *a* occurs in sentences expressing desire or intent. It is used with the verb which is wanted or intended. Examples are seen in (7).

(7)   (a) *Ŋ   yì   kɔ̀   àfì   mὲ   a   xwlè   màdàn.*
          I   go to   PROG   market   in   IRR   buy   banana

          'I am going to the market to buy bananas.'

      (b) *Ŋ   jì   kɔ̀   a   yì   Kutɔnu.*
          I   want   PROG   IRR   go to   Cotonou

          'I want to go to Cotonou.'

The irrealis marker also appears in clauses introduced by the complementizer *mɔ́* (8). A subjunctive reading applies to the verbs in these clauses as well. In Fongbe and Gengbe there is a phonologically distinct subjunctive marker which occurs in this context (9), but this is not the case in Ajagbe [5], [2].

(8)   (a) *Ŋ   jì   mɔ́   Kójó   a   dà   mɔ́lú.*
          1sg   want   say   Kojo   IRR   prepare rice

          'I want Kojo to prepare rice.'

      (b) *Kójó   dó   a   dà   mɔ́lú.*
          Kojo   should IRR   prepare rice

          'Kojo should prepare rice.'

(c) *É   jé   mɔ́   Kójó   ɖó   a   ɖà   mɔ́lú.*
3sg must say Kojo IRR prepare rice

'He said that Kojo must prepare rice.'

(9) *Ùn   jló   ɖɔ̀   Bàyí   ní   ɖà   wɔ́.*
1sg want say Bayi SUB prepare dough

'I want Bayi to prepare dough.

<div align="right">
FONGBE
(=(71) in Lefebvre 1996 [10])
</div>

Finally, *a* is used in clauses where a conditional meaning is desired (10).

(10) *Nɔ́   shìvè   cì   kɔ̀   ɳ̀   ɖ'e,   nà   ɖù   énú.*
if   hunger tire PROG 1sg if   1sg.IRR eat thing

(a) 'If I am hungry, I will eat.'

(b) 'If I were hungry, I would eat.'

4.3.2   The Indefinite Future

The indefinite future tense has two uses: (1) for describing actions that will eventually happen, but not necessarily at any time in the near future; (2) to produce a future perfect interpretation of a sentence.

In Ajagbe, as in Fongbe, the indefinite future marker is a combination of the irrealis marker *a* and the verb *vá* 'to come'. In (11) we see the indefinite future resulting in the 'eventual' reading when the sentence is uttered in isolation. In (12) we see that both the future perfect and 'eventual' readings are possible without any further context.

(11) *Kójó   a   vá   kú.*
Kojo IRR come die

'Kojo will eventually die.'

(12) *Wò   a   vá   xò   àmὲ   ci   wo   kán   ɳ̀sú.*
3pl IRR come hit person which pl tell lie

(a) 'We will beat those who lied.'

(b) 'We will have beaten those who lied.'

4.4   Aspect

4.4.1   The Pluractional Marker *nɔ*

The pluractional aspect is used for describing actions which happen repeatedly. The corresponding aspect in Fongbe has been analyzed as the habitual aspect, but the data in the two languages are not identical. I will argue that the analysis of *nɔ* as a pluractionality marker in Ajagbe is more accurate than its analysis as a habitual marker.

Sentences with *nɔ* will generally be translated with the simple present in English as can be seen in the sentences in (13).

(13) (a) *Kójó   ɖù   nɔ   sàblà.*
Kojo eat PLA onion

'Kojo eats onions.'

(b) *Àsíbá   kplá   nɔ   ŋwleshigbe   sùklúvi   wo.*
Asiba learn PLA English   student PL

'Asiba teaches English to students.

The pluractional marker can not be used with most stative verbs. The most likely reason for this is that the interpretation would be nonsensical. We see two examples of this in (14). I have translated the verbs as 'keep ...' to render the pluractional aspect explicit[1]. In most cases, however, such a translation would not be accurate (because the pluractional marker does not seem to indicate persistence), thus pluractional verbs in Ajagbe will be translated into English with the simple present unless necessary.

(14) (a) *Àsíbá   sè   nɔ   Àjàgbè.
           Asiba   hear   PLA   Ajagbe
           [Lit.: 'Asiba keeps understanding Ajagbe']

      (b) *Kójó   j'i   nɔ   a   xwlè   kéké.
           Kojo   want   PLA   IRR   buy   bicycle
           [Lit.: 'Kojo keeps wanting to buy a bicycle.']

A crucial difference from Fongbe is that in Ajagbe the pluractional marker may be used with some stative verbs as we see in (15), while in Fongbe, it can not be (16). Furthermore, the only possible interpretation of this sentence is a pluractional one; it can not be interpreted as a permanent or habitual state.

(15) Kójó   jè   nɔ   èdò.
      Kojo   buy liquid   PLA   sickness

      (a) 'Kojo keeps getting sick.'
      (b) #'Kojo is always sick.'

(16) *Siká   nɔ̀   jɛ   àzɔ̀n.
      Sika   HAB   fall   sick
      [Lit.: 'Sika is habitually sick.']

                                                                                        FONGBE
                                                                        (=(81) in Lefebvre 1996)

An alternative interpretation of this data is that jè 'to buy a liquid; to catch a disease' is not a stative verb, but rather an achievement verb. If this is indeed the case, then analyzing nɔ as either a pluractional or habitual marker would be appropriate; its analysis as a habitual marker, however, is more in line with the literature. Nevertheless, the fact that nɔ can appear in contexts in Ajagbe where it would be ungrammatical in Fongbe suggests that it is different marker from its Fongbe counterpart. As a result, I have analyzed it as a pluractional rather than a habitual marker.

Following Westerman 1907 [12], the pluractional marker is the result of reanalyzing the verb nɔ̀ 'to stay' as a pluractional marker. In contemporary Ajagbe, nɔ is indeed both the pluractional marker and the verb meaning 'to stay'. In some ways, nɔ still behaves like an independent verb. In (17) we see that a third person object must surface after both the main verb and nɔ. This is not the case with any other TMA marker (18).

(17) (a) Àshíbá   ɖù   é   nɔ   é.
           Ashiba   eat   3sg   PLA   3sg
           'Asiba eats it.'

      (b) *Àshíbá   ɖù   é   nɔ.
           Ashiba   eat   it   PLA
           [Lit.:Ashiba eats it.]

(18) (a) Àshíbá   ɖù   é   kɔ̀.
           Ashiba   eat   3sg   PROG
           'Ashiba is eating it.'

      (b) *Àshíbá   ɖù   é   kɔ̀   é.
           Ashiba   eat   3sg   PROG 3sg
           [Lit.: Ashiba is eating it.]

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[1]Alternatively, one could translate these sentences into English using the word 'repeatedly', thus (14a) would be 'Asiba understands Ajagbe repeatedly.'

4.4.2 The Progressive Aspect

The progressive aspect in Ajagbe is used for actions which are/were ongoing relative to a particular time (present or otherwise). Thus, it is [+ durative][-telic].

Ajagbe has two ways of expressing the progressive aspect: a post-verbal aspectual particle *kɔ̀*, or reduplication. The choice of which to use depends on the dialect. We see examples of these used in (19).

(19) (a) *Ŋ ɖù kɔ̀ màdàn.*
      I eat PROG banana

      'I am eating a banana.'

   (b) *Ŋ yìyì Zòvì.*
      I go.RED Azové

      'I am going to Azové'

When the reference time of the sentence is clearly past, a past progressive interpretation results (20). Note that this is not a compound tense; *esɔ* 'one day from today' simply means 'yesterday' when it appears in a sentence without the irrealis marker.

(20) *Kójó ɖù kɔ̀ màdàn èsɔ̀.*
     Kojo eat PROG banana yesterday

     'Kojo was eating bananas yesterday.'

The progressive marker is incompatible with stative verbs which denote permanent properties of an individual (21). However, unlike the progressive marker in standard English, the imperfective marker in Ajagbe is able to combine with stative verbs denoting temporary properties of an individual (22).

(21) **Àshíbá sè kɔ̀ Ajagbe.*
     Ashiba hear PROG Ajagbe

     [Lit.: Ashiba is speaking/understanding Ajagbe]

(22) *Àshíbá jì kɔ̀ a yì sùklú.*
     Asiba want PROG IRR go to school

     'Asiba wants to go to school.'

4.5 The Anteriority Marker *sá*

The particle *sá* functions as a marker of anteriority in Ajagbe, It will be translated into English with the past perfect or simple past plus the adverb 'already'. A typical example is in (23).

(23) *Kójó ɖù àmɛ́ sá.*
     Kojo eat dough ANT

     'Kojo ate / had eaten dough.'

sá surfaces clause finally unless it is in the same clause as a sentence-final adverb (see Section 12.3). This is particularly relevant to verbs which take clausal complements, such as *sè* 'to hear, to know'. Compare the two sentences in (24).

(24) (a) *Àshíbá sè sá mɔ́ Kójó yì Zòvì.*
      Ashiba hear ANT COMP Kojo go to Azovè

      'Ashiba had known/heard that Kojo went to Azovè.'

   (b) *Ashiba sè mɔ́ Kójó yì Zòvì sá.*
      Ashiba hear COMP Kojo go to Azovè ANT

      'Ashiba knew/heard that Kojo had gone to Azovè.'

Verbs which appear with *sá* are interpreted as having a perfective meaning. The example in (25) illustrates this point clearly.

(25) *Kòjó jé èdɔ̀ sá.*
     Kojo buy liquid illness ANT

     'Kojo fell ill.' (He is not ill anymore.)

     #'Kojo fell ill.' (He is still ill.)

4.6   Combinations of TMA Markers

A single clause may contain more than one TMA marker. The table in (26) contains a summary of all the attested combinations of TMA markers. The tense names are only suggestions and are meant to facilitate discussion of different combinations of TMA markers.

(26)   Tma Marker Combinations in Ajagbe

Markers	Tense Name	Example Number
ANT + PLA	past pluractional	27
ANT + PROG	past progressivie	28
IRR + PLA	pluractional irrealis	29
IRR + PROG	progressive irrealis	30
IRR + ANT	past conditional	31

(27)   *Kójó   yì   nɔ   sùklú   sá.*
       Kojo   go to   PLA   school   ANT

       'Kojo used to go to school.'

(28)   *Àshɩ́bá   ɖà   kɔ̀   ènú   sá.*
       Ashiba   cook   PROG   thing   ANT

       'Ashiba had been cooking something.'

(29)   *Á   sà   nɔ   éhún.*
       3sg.IRR   sell   PLA   vehicle

       'He will sell cars.'

(30)   *Nà   ɖù   kɔ̀   énú.*
       1sg.IRR   eat   PROG   thing

       'I will be eating.'

(31)   *Nà   xwlè   fetri   sá.*
       1sg.IRR   buy   okra   ANT

       'I would have bought okra.'

Ajagbe does not permit the pluractional marker *nɔ* to appear with the same verb as the progressive marker *kɔ̀*. Gengbe (Mina), however, does permit this. This is shown in (32). The following abbreviations are found in the Gengbe example in (c): HAB - habitual; DYN - dynamic; EXP - expansion[2].

(32)   (a)   **Kòjó   yì   nɔ   kɔ̀   Zòvì.*
             Kojo   go to   PLA   PROG   Azové

             [Lit.: Kojo is repeatedly going to Azové.]

       (b)   **Kòjó   yì   kɔ̀   nɔ   Zòvì.*
             Kojo   go to   PROG   PLA   Azové

             [Lit.: Kojo is repeatedly going to Azové.]

       (c)   *É   nòol-nà   jŏjó-ɔ̀.*
             3sg   HAB-DYN   leave-EXP

             'S/he is habitually leaving'

<div align="right">Gengbe
Bole-Richard 1983:326</div>

4.7   Imperative Constructions

The formation of the imperative depends on the person and number of the verb. The bare form is used for the second person singular as seen in (33).

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[2]For more information on verbal aspect in Gengbe, see Bole-Richard 1983 pp. 310-335

(33) *Ɖù!*
    eat
    'Eat!'

The second person plural imperative has an overt subject but is otherwise identical to the second person singular imperative (34).

(34) *Mí   ɖù!*
    2pl eat
    'Eat (pl)!'

The third person imperative is formed with the particle *le* followed by the bare verb (35).

(35) *Le   ɖù   énú!*
    3IMP   eat   thing
    'May he eat!'

Negative imperatives are formed by the addition of *ŋgbe* and the focal marker *ɔ̀* as seen in (36). The object is not obligatorily overt. There is further discussion of negative imperatives in Section 5.4.5.

(36) (a) *Ŋgbe ɖù   ɔ̀!*
           don't eat CLA
           'Don't eat!'

     (b) *Mí ŋgbe   ɖù   ɔ̀!*
           2pl don't eat CLA
           'Don't eat (pl)!'

Chapter 5

Functional Categories in Clause Structure

5.1 Conjunctions

Ajagbe has conjunctions denoting 'and', 'but' and 'or. We will examine each of these.

5.1.1 *yí* - 'and'

The conjunction *yí* denotes the idea 'and'. It can join two clauses as seen in (1).

(1)   *Kójó vá   yí   Àshíbá yì.*
     Kojo come and Ashiba go
     'Kojo came and Ashiba left.'

     The conjunction *yí* can not be used to conjoin two NPs as can be seen in (2). The preposition *kóḍó* is used in this context to produce a meaning such as 'Ashiba *and* Kojo'.

(2)   (a) **Kójó yí   Àshíbá yì   àfì   mɛ.*
          Kojo   and Ashiba go market in
          [Lit.: Kojo and Ashiba went to the market.']
   (b) *Kójó kóḍó Àshíbá yì   àfì   mɛ.*
          Kojo with Ashiba go market in
          'Kojo and Ashiba went to the market.'

5.1.2 *vɔ̀* - 'but'

The conjunction *vɔ̀* denotes the idea 'but'. It can conjoin two clauses (3) but can not conjoin two NPs (4).

(3)   *Ŋ   vá   vɔ̀   é   trɔ́   yì   sá.*
     1sg come but 3sg return go ANT
     'I came but he had already left.'

(4)   **Kójó vɔ̀   Àshíbá ḍù   kpàvì.*
     Kojo   but Ashiba eat fish
     [Lit.: Kojo but Ashiba ate fish.]

5.1.3 *àló, àbí* - 'or'

The conjunctions *àló* and *àbí* denote the idea 'or'. They are completely interchangeable in the sense that *àló* can always be replaced with *àbí* without changing the meaning of the sentence. Nevertheless, the examples here all contain *àló* rather than *àbí* because this is how the informants first produced them. Unlike *yí* 'and' and *vɔ̀* 'but', *àló* can join both clauses and nouns as seen in (5). Note that in yes/no questions, the interrogative marker *à* appears after each item conjoined by *àló* 'or'.

(5)　(a)　*E　ɖù　kpavi　à　àló　aʒin　à?*
　　　　　2sg　eat　fish　Q　or　egg　Q

　　　　　'Did you eat fish or egg?'

　　(b)　*É　yì　Zòvì　à　àló　wà　èdò　lè　àfì　mὲ　à?*
　　　　　3sg　go　Azové　Q　or　do　work　be at　market　in　Q

　　　　　'S/he went to Azové or worked in the market.'

5.2　Complementizers

In this section we will examine complementizers which introduce tensed complements of verbs of the SAY- and WANT- classes and those which introduce purposive clauses.

5.2.1　Complementizers with SAY- and WANT-class verbs

Tensed complements of verbs of the SAY- and WANT-classes are introduced by the complementizer *mɔ́*, which can also be used as a verb 'to say' as shown in (6). In this sentence, *nú* 'to say' is optional, and its presence or absence does not change the meaning of the sentence.

(6)　**Ŋ**　*(nú)　mɔ́　a　yì.*
　　　1sg　say　COMP　2sg.IRR　go

　　　'I said that you left.'

　(7) shows that this complementizer can also be used to introduce tensed complements of verbs in the WANT-class, and (6) showed this for the SAY-class. In (8), we see that this complementizer can occur with certain stative verbs, such as *nyɔ́* 'be good'.

(7)　**Ŋ**　*jì　mɔ́　a　yì.*
　　　1sg　want　COMP　2sg.IRR　go

　　　'I want you to leave.'

(8)　*É　nyɔ́　mɔ́　a　yì*
　　　It　be good　COMP　2sg.IRR　go

　　　'It is good that you go.'

　The complementizer *mɔ́* is present only if the matrix subject and the embedded subject are disjoint. If the subjects are not disjoint, there is no complementizer (9).

(9)　**Ŋ**　*jì　kɔ̀　a　yì.*
　　　1sg　want　PROG　IRR　go

　　　'I want to leave.'

5.2.2　Complementizers introducing purposive clauses

nɔ̀ 'for' can be used to introduce purposive clauses as seen in (10).

(10)　**Ŋ**　*xwlè　éhún　ɖékà　nɔ̀　Kójó　a　xó　nɔ.*
　　　1sg　buy　drum　one　for　Kojo　IRR　hit　PLA

　　　'I bought a drum for Kojo to play.'

5.3　Markers expressing the speaker's point of view

5.3.1　The yes-no question marker

Yes-no questions in Ajagbe are indicated by a sentence-final *à* as seen in (11).

(11)　*E　ɖù　kpáví　à?*
　　　2sg　eat　fish　Q

　　　'Did you eat fish?'

Questions terminated with the yes-no marker may be answered simply *ɛ* 'yes' or *o* 'no'. Embedded yes-no questions can not be terminated with *à* (12).

(12) **Ŋ*   *byɔ́sè*   *mɔ́*   *Kójó*   *ɖù*   *mɔ́lú*   *à.*
      1sg   ask   COMP   Kojo   eat   rice   Q

      [Lit.: 'I asked did Kojo eat rice.']

5.3.2   Presentative markers

Ajagbe has two presentative markers: *kè* 'here (is)' and *nɛ́(ɖá)* 'there (is)'. The French translations of the prospective markers, respectively 'voici' and 'voilá' render their meanings more closely. The presentative markers can appear with nouns as shown in (13).

(13) *Kpáví*   *kè*   /   *nɛ́(ɖá).*
      fish   here   /   there

      '(T)here is a fish.'

When the presentative markers are used in a more complex clause, they tend to appear immediately after the subject (14).

(14) *Kòjó*   *kè*   /   *nɛ́(ɖá)*   *ɖù*   *kɔ̀*   *énú.*
      Kojo   here   /   there   eat   PROG   thing.

      '(T)here, Kojo is eating.'

Presentative markers may also appear clause-finally, in which case they function as insistence markers. An example of this is given in (15).

(15) *Kòjó*   *ɖù*   *kɔ̀*   *énú*   *nɛ́(ɖá).*
      Kojo   eat   PROG   think   there

      'Kojo is eating!'

The presentative markers can be used in embedded clauses (16). The English translations of such sentences are somewhat awkward if not ungrammatical. Nevertheless, my informants accept the sentence in (16).

(16) *Àshĭbá*   *nú*   *mɔ́*   *Kójó*   *kè*   /   *nɛ́(ɖá)*   *ɖù*   *kɔ̀*   *énú.*
      Ashiba   say   COMP   Kojo   here   /   there   eat   PROG   thing

      'Ashiba said that (t)here, Kojo is eating.'

5.4   Negation Markers

Ajagbe has many negation markers: *gò*, which has the widest distribution, *dé*, *da*, *bá*, *o*, and *ŋgbe* which occurs in imperatives. Each will be treated in its own section.

5.4.1   *gò*

gò is used to negate simple indicative sentences. It does not show the speaker's point of view on the proposition being negated (as, for example, an insistence marker does). The negation marker *gò* can appear in simple clauses as seen in (17). *gò* always appears clause-finally.

(17) *Kójó*   *yì*   *gò.*
      Kojo   go   NEG

      'Kojo did not leave.'

5.4.2 *dé*

On its own, *dé* is used to negate conditional clauses and wh-questions. It appears immediately after *nɔ́* 'if' in conditional clauses and after the subject in wh-questions. Examples are given in (18) and (19).

(18) *nɔ́   dé   é   ɖù   kpáví   ɖé*
     if   NEG   3sg   eat   fish   -
     'if (s)he didn't eat fish'

(19) *Nyì   eyí   ná   tàɖò   Kòjó   dé   yì   Zòvì   ɔ̀?*
     what   CLF   cause   reason   Kojo   NEG   go   Azové   FOC
     'Why didn't Kojo go to Azové?'

    dé also appears with the particles *bá* and *ò* to form yes-no questions expecting a positive reply. These structures are described in the next sections.

5.4.3 *dé . . . ò*

The negation marker *dé . . . ò* appears in embedded clauses introduced by *mɔ́* as can be seen in (20). *dé* appears immediately after the subject of the negated clause; *ò* appears clause-finally.

(20) *Kójó   mɔ́   ye   dé   a   yì   ò.*
     Kojo   say   LOG   NEG   IRR   go   NEG
     'Kojo_i said that he_i would not go.'

    dé . . . ò is also used to form questions which expect a positive response (21). In this case, *dé* appears immediately after the subject and *ò* appears clause-finally.

(21) *Kójó   dé   yì   ò?*
     Kojo   NEG   go   NEG
     'Hasn't Kojo left?'

5.4.4 *bá*

The negation marker *bá* is used in two different negation structures. The first of these is simple negation. In this case, *bá* appears clause-finally as seen in (22). My informants agree that sentences negated with *bá* in this manner have the same meaning as if they were negated with *gò*.

(22) *Kójó   yì   bá.*
     Kojo   go   NEG
     'Kojo did not go.'

    bá also appears in sentences with *dé*. In this case it forms a yes-no question expecting a positive reply. *dé* occurs clause-initially while *bá* occurs clause-finally (23).

(23) *Dé   Kójó   yì   bá?*
     INT   Kojo   go   NEG
     'Didn't Kojo go?'

5.4.5 *ŋgbe*

Negation of imperative clauses is expressed with the negation marker *ŋgbe* and the focus marker *ɔ̀*. *ŋgbe* surfaces after the subject if it is overt, or at the beginning of the clause in case of a covert subject (as is the case with 2sg imperatives). *ɔ̀* appears clause-finally. *ŋgbe ... ɔ̀* appears to be the only negative marker permitted in the imperative. Examples of *ŋgbe ... ɔ̀* used with 2nd and 3rd person imperatives can be seen in (24).

(24) (a) *Ŋgbe   ɖù   ɔ̀!*
        NEG   eat   FOC
        'Don't eat!'

(b) *Mí   ŋgbe   ɖù   ɔ̀!*
    2pl   NEG   eat   FOC

    'Don't eat!' (pl.)

(c) *Kójó   ŋgbe   ɖù   ɔ̀!*
    Kojo   NEG   eat   FOC

    'May Kojo not eat!'

Chapter 6

Clause Structures

6.1 Copular Structures

Ajagbe has two copulars: *nyí* 'to be' and *lè* 'to be at'. Both of these will be discussed in this section.

6.1.1 *nyí* - 'to be'

nyí 'to be' is used to relate an NP to a subject in either a predicative or equative manner, or to relate an adjective to a subject. Examples of its use in predicative sentences are given in (1-4).

(1) *Kójó nyí cìcá.*
    Kojo be teacher

    'Kojo is a teacher.'

(2) *Kójó nyí cìcá nwí.*
    Kojo be teacher good

    'Kojo is a good teacher.'

(3) *Ègbò wo nyí èlàn wo.*
    goat PL be animal pl

    'Goats are animals.'

(4) *Kójó nyí Bénètò.*
    Kojo be Benin.PR

    'Kojo is Beninese.'

    Examples of *nyí* used in equative structures can be seen in (5-6).

(5)   (a) *Kójó nyí nóvì nyɛ.*
        Kojo is brother 1sg

        'Kojo is my brother.'

    (b) *Àshíbá nyí nyání éxlɔ́.*
        Ashiba be 1sg:POS friend

        'Ashiba is my friend.'

(6) *Ŋ nyí Kójó.*
    1sg be Kojo

    'I am Kojo.'

    Possessed NPs may also appear in equative structures with *nyí* (7).

(7) *Wémá ce nyí kìnyè.*
    book this be 1sg:POS

    'This book is mine

Finally, we see *nyí* with an adjectival complement in sentence (8).

(8) *Sàblà   lɔ́   nyí   mùmù.*
     onion   DEF   be   raw

     'The onion is raw.'

One can question the NP in predicative structures with *nyì* 'what'. In equative structures, *mì* 'who' is be used to question the NP.

6.1.2   *lè* - 'to be at'

lè 'to be at' is used for expressing location in state, space and time. It can take a NP, PP or adjectival complement. Adjectival complements appear to have the same meaning when they appear with *lè* as when they appear with *nyí*, as can be seen by comparing sentences (8) and (9).

(9) *Sàblà   lɔ́   lè   mumù.*
     onion   DEF   be at   raw

     'The onion is raw.'

lè most often appears with nouns. If the compliment is a proper noun, it appears without a postposition (10). Otherwise, the NP complement must appear in a postpositional phrase (11).

(10) *Àshíbá   lè   Kutɔnu .*
      Ashiba   be at   Cotonou

      'Ashiba is in Cotonou.'

(11) *Ègbɔ̀   lè   èbò   jì*
      goat   be at   field   on

      'The goat is in the field.'

lè can be used with times as well, but it is not always obligatory (12). While there are native Ajagbe words (or at least non-French words) for days of the week, the French ones are often used, at least in Klouekanme. In part this seems to be because the traditional Aja week has five days rather than the seven days in a Western week. Nevertheless, today the seven day Western week is used in most contexts thus making the French words more commonly used. Note, however, that there seems to be evidence of Ajagbe words for each of the days in the Western-style week. More fieldwork is necessary to see whether this is the case.

(12) *Nà   yì   Zòvì   (lè)   lundi.*
      1sg.IRR go to Azové (be at)   Monday

      'I will go to Azové on Monday.'

lí - 'to exist'

lí is used to mean 'to exist', but it is most likely *lè* followed by the 3rd person singular pronominal clitic. The clearest evidence for this claim comes from the response to yes-no questions with *lè*, such as the one seen in (13).

(13) *Kójó   lè   axwè   mè   à?*
      Kojo   be at   house   in   INT

      'Is Kojo at home?'

If the response to this question is a complete sentence (rather than simply 'yes' or 'no'), then there are two possibilities (14). The second of these (14b) is pronounced /élí/.

(14) (a) *Ɛ̃ɛ,   é   lè   àxwè   mè.*
           yes   3sg   to be at   house   in.

           'Yes, he is at home.'

(b) *Ɛɛ, é lè é.*
yes, 3sg to be at 3sg
'Yes, he is there.'

Following the phonological rules (hiatus resolution and the pronunciation of the 3rd person pronominal clitic) from Section 1.4.3, one can see that the pronunciation of *le é* should be /lí/, and this is indeed what we observe. The pronunciation of (14) is therefore /élí/. For the sake of clarity, however, *lí* will be glossed as 'exist' in the rest of this section.

lí can be used in clauses which are clearly existential (15).

(15)   (a) *Eju ḍékà lí, é nyí Bénέ.*
country one exist 3sg be Benin
'There is a country that is Benin.'

(b) *Wémá ḍékà lí nɔ́ Àjàgbè.*
book one exist for Ajagbe
'There is a book about Ajagbe.'

(c) *Ŋsúkántɔ wo lí.*
liar PL exist
'There are liars.' / 'Liars exist.'

(d) *Mawu lí.*
god exist
'God exists.'

6.2 Wh-movement

6.2.1 Focus

Focused nouns occur clause initially. The focused noun is followed by the focus marker ɔ̀. Subjects and objects may be focused, but subject/object asymmetries are present. There is an obligatory resumptive pronoun at the extraction site when subjects are focused. When an object is focused, however, the resumptive pronoun at the extraction site is optional (as indicated by parentheses in the examples.) Examples of a focused. subject and object are in (16) and (17) respectively.

(16) *Kójó ɔ̀, é kpɔ́ àvù lɔ́.*
Kojo FOC RES see dog DEF
'Kojo, he saw the dog.'

(17) *Kójó ɔ̀, Àshíbá kpɔ́ (é).*
Kojo FOC Ashiba see RES
'Kojo, Ashiba saw him.'

Nouns within positional phrases may be focused as well. In this case, the noun is fronted while the postposition is stranded without a resumptive pronoun as shown in (18a). This sentence is rendered ungrammatical if a resumptive pronoun is inserted as in (18b).

(18)   (a) *Èbà lɔ́ ɔ̀, àvù mlɔ́ jì.*
bed DEF FOC dog lie on
'The bed, the dog lay in it.'

(b) **Èbà lɔ́ ɔ̀, àvù mlɔ́ é jì.*
bed DEF TOP dog lie 3sg on
[Lit.: The bed, the dog lay in it.]

Plural nouns may be focused. When the focused noun is plural the resumptive pronoun is plural. Curiously, rather than using the plural marker *wo* in the focused phrase, *we* is used. *we* is homophonous with the third person plural object pronominal clitic and the third person pronoun, thus it may be either one of these or something else altogether. I will gloss it as a plural marker in this context. Examples of focused plural nouns are in (19).

(19) (a) *Àmὲ lɔ́ we ɔ̀,   wò kpɔ́ àvù lɔ́ wo.*
        man DEF PL FOC 3pl see dog DEF PL
        'The men, they saw the dogs.'

   (b) *Àvù lɔ́ we ɔ̀,   wò kpɔ́ àmὲ lɔ́ wo.*
        dog DEF PL FOC 3pl see man DEF PL
        'The dogs, they saw the men.

Movement into topicalized position can be non-local as in (20).

(20) (a) *Kójó ɔ̀,   Àshíbá nú mɔ́   é   kpɔ́ àvù.*
        Kojo FOC Ashiba say COMP RES see dog
        'Kojo, Ashiba said he saw a dog.'

   (b) *Àvù lɔ́ ɔ̀,   Àshíbá nú mɔ́   Kójó kpɔ́ é.*
        dog DEF FOC Ashiba say COMP Kojo see 3sg
        'The dog, Ashiba said that Kojo saw it.'

6.2.2   Clefting

Clefted phrases occur clause initially and are headed by *eyi*. An example of a clefted noun is given in (21). Within the data available, the only context in which one finds *eyi* is in clefted phrases. Note that this includes PPs which are questioned with wh-words (discussed in Section 6.2.3) As a result, I will gloss *eyi* as 'it.is'. This should not be thought of as a good translation for *eyi*, however, because it can not head a sentence as shown in (22).

(21) *Mɔ́lú eyi ŋ̀   dù   tᵢ.*
     rice it.is 1sg eat
     'It is rice that I ate.'

(22) **Mɔ́lú eyi.*
     rice   it.is
     [Lit.:'It is rice.']

   It is possible to cleave positional phrases. Unlike topicalized positional phrases, the pre- or postposition moves with the noun to the front of the sentence. An example of a clefted positional phrase is in (23).

(23) *Àfì   mὲ eyi Kójó wà nɔ́   èdò lè   tᵢ.*
     market in CLF Kojo do PLA work be at
     'It is in the market that Kojo works.'

   Adjectival predicates can be clefted as well, as shown in (24). There is no resumptive pronoun when an adjective is clefted. My informants agree that while sentences such as this one with clefted adjectives are grammatical, they are rare.

(24) *Nyídé eyi Àshíbá lè   tᵢ.*
     well   CLF Ashiba be at
     'It is well that Ashiba is.'

6.2.3   Wh-Questions

Wh-questions in Ajagbe are introduced by a wh-word or phrase. They obligitorily end with the focus marker ɔ̀. (25) contains examples of questions with wh-words.

(25) (a) *Nyì   Kójó wà kɔ̀   ɔ̀?*
        what Kojo do PROG FOC
        'What is Kojo doing?'

   (b) *Nɛni   à   xwlè ɔ̀?*
        how much 2sg.IRR buy Foc
        'How much will you buy?'

(c) *Lé   é   tò   mɔ́   ò?*
how 3sg respond COMP FOC

'What is his/her name?'

(d) *Fìnì   Àshíbá   yì   ò?*
where Ashiba go FOC

'Where did Ashiba go?'

(e) *Hwènù   Kójó   jè   àhà   lò   ò?*
when Kojo buy liquid drink DEF FOC

'When did Kojo buy the drink?'

In (26) we see questions formed using wh-phrases.

(26) (a) *Éhún   ci   Kójó xwlè ò?*
vehicle which Kojo buy FOC

'Which vehicle did Kojo buy?'

(b) *Ŋkéké   nɛni   à   yì   Kutɔnu   ò?*
day how many 2sg go to Cotonou FOC

'In how many days are you going to Cotonou?'

(c) *Nyì   jɔ́   é   jè   àhà   lɔ́   ò?*
what be right 3sg buy liquid drink DEF FOC

'Why did (s)he buy the drink?'

In the above questions, wh-words or phrases are used to question nouns. It is also possible to question positional phrases as shown in (27). The structure used to question positional phrases is nearly identical to clefts.

(27) *Àfì   ci   mè eyi   é   wà nɔ   edo   lè   ò?*
market which in CLF 3sg do PLA work be at FOC

'Which market does (s)he work in?'

Mì 'who' can occur with the plural marker *wo* if the asker expects the answer to involve many people. If the asker is not necessarily expecting the answer to involve many people, *mì* is used without *wo*. An example of this is in (28).

(28) *Mì   wo   Kójó kpɔ́ ò?*
who pl Kojo see FOC

'Who (pl) did Kojo see?'

Indirect wh-questions have two major differences from direct questions: 1) the cleft marker *eyi* is obligatory after the wh-word; 2) *ma* replaces the focus marker *ò* at the end of the question. *ma* seems only to mark indirect questions and will therefore be glossed IQ. (29) contains examples of indirect questions.

(29) (a) *Iŋ   byɔ́ eɔ   sè   mɔ́   hwenu eyi   é   sɔ́   ma.*
1sg ask 2sg hear COMP when CLF 3sg leave IQ

'I asked you (sg) when (s)he left.'

(b) *Kójó   byɔ́ Àshíbá sè   mɔ́   nyì   eyi   è   dù   ma.*
Kojo ask Ashiba hear COMP what CLF 2sg eat IQ

'Kojo asked Ashiba what she ate.'

(c) *Àshíbá   mɔ́ nyì   táɖò   Kójó lè   èdò   ma.*
Ashiba say what reason Kojo be at sick IQ

'Ashiba said why Kojo is sick.'

Wh-questions with an echo interpretation are formed with the wh-word in situ followed by *mɔ́*. This *mɔ́* is homophonous to the complementizer *mɔ́*, but as it functions as a question-marker in this context, I will gloss it as Q. An example of several echo questions are in (30).

(30)   (a) *Àshíbá   nɔ̀   nɔ   fìnì   mɔ́?*
             Ashiba   stay   PLA   where   Q

             'Ashiba lives WHERE?'

        (b) *E   ɖù   nyì   mɔ́?*
             2sg   eat   what   Q

             'You ate WHAT?'

        (b) *Wò   gbɔ̀   hwènù   mɔ́?*
             3pl   return   when   Q

             'They came back WHEN?'

6.2.4   Relative clauses

The formation of relative clauses is similar to that of wh-questions with the word *ci* 'which'. As in such
questions *ci* follows the head of the relative clause and the cleft marker *eyi* is obligatory. Plural markers
occur immediately to the right of *ci*. Examples of relative clauses can be seen in (31).

(31)   (a) *àmɛ̀   ci   (wo)   eyi   só*
             man   which   PL   CLF   leave

             'the man/men who left'

        (b) *àvù   ci   (wo)   eyi   Kójó   kpɔ́*
             dog   which   PL   CLF   Kojo   see

             'the dog which Kojo saw'

   Relative clauses may also be made from positional phrases. The cleft marker *eyi* is absent from such
relative clauses. The postposition surfaces immediately to the right of *ci*. An example of a relative clause
made from a postpositional phrase is in (32).

(32)   *èbà   ci   jì   Kójó   mlɔ́*
        bed   which   on   Kojo   lie

        'the bed in which Kojo lay'

   Relativized posessive phrases are made by having the possessed noun follow *ci*. An example of this
is in (33).

(33)   *àmɛ̀   ci   àvù   e   kpɔ́*
        man   which   dog   2sg   see

        'the man whose dog you saw'

   Both *fìnì* 'where' and *hwecinu* 'when' are able to head relative clauses. When they do, *ci* 'which' is
omitted from the relative clause. The cleft marker *eyi* is present. Examples of such clauses are given in
(34).

(34)   (a) *fìnì   eyi   e   nɔ̀   nɔ*
             where   CLF   2sg   stay   PLA

             'the place where you live'

        (b) *hwecinu   eyi   ɲ̀   kpɔ́   àvù   lɔ́*
             when   CLF   1sg   see   dog   DEF

             'the moment when I saw the dog'

6.3   Conditional Clauses

Conditional clauses are always introduced by *nɔ́* and generally end with *ɖé* or *ɔ̀*. A typical example is in
(35). While my informants produce conditional sentences such as the one in (35) with *ɖé* at the end of
the conditional clause, they agree that *ɖé* is optional. In short, the sentence is grammatical and has the
same meaning even if *ɖé* is omitted.

(35) *Nɔ́ étá   ɖù kɔ̀   ɲ̀ (ɖé), nà   yì   dotoxwe.*
      If   head eat PROG 1sg -   1sg.IRR go to hospital

      'If my head hurts, I'll go to the hospital.'

Conditional clauses may precede the main clause, as in (35), or they may follow it as in (36). Although my informants tended to produce sentences in which the conditional clause preceded the main clause, they do sometimes produce ones in which the main clause precedes a conditional clause. I take this to mean that the order main clause - conditional clause is grammatical, but not preferred. When the conditional clause follows the main clause, *ɖé* is omitted.

(36) *Nà   ɖù gboma   nɔ́ ɲ̀ ɖà   é.*
      1sg.IRR eat solanum if   1sg cook 3sg

      'I will eat solanum if I cook it.'

Conditional clauses are negated by *dé* (also discussed in Section 5.4.2), while the main clause is negated by *gò*. This can be seen in (37).

(37) *Nɔ́ dé   é   yì   Kutɔnu ɖé,   á   xwlè éhún ɖékà.*
      if   NEG 3sg go to Cotonou 3sg.IRR buy   vehicle one

      'If (s)he does not go to Cotonou, (s)he will buy a car.'

The above conditional clauses contain bare verbs (ie ones which appear without any TMA markers), but the interpretation is always non-past. A critical example is conditional clauses containing the temporal deictic *ès̀ɔ* which means 'tomorrow' if it appears in the same (non-conditional) clause with the irrealis marker *a*, or yesterday if it does not. In conditional clauses with bare verbs, *ès̀ɔ* always means 'tomorrow'. If *ès̀ɔ* is to be interpreted as 'yesterday', the anteriority marker *sá* must be present. This is shown in (38).

(38) (a) *Nɔ́ é   yì   Kutɔnu esɔ   ɖé, á   xwlè éhún ɖékà.*
           if   3sg go to Cotonou tomorrow -   3sg.IRR buy vehicle one

           'If (s)he goes to Cotonou tomorrow, (s)he will buy a car.'

     (b) *Nɔ́ é   yì   Kutɔnu esɔ   sà   ɖé, á   xwlè éhún ɖékà.*
           if   3sg go to Cotonou tomorrow ANT -   3sg.IRR buy vehicle one

           'If (s)he had gone to Cotonou yesterday, (s)he would have bought a car.'

Conditional clauses may contain verbs with some, but not all of the TMA markers. They may have the anteriority marker *sá* as shown in (38) and (39). They may also contain the progressive marker *kɔ̀* (40).

(39) *Nɔ́ ɲ̀   sè   sá   mɔ   ewɔ̀   yì   Kutɔnu ɖé, ɲ̀   da   jì   eɔ   kpɔ́*
      if   1sg hear ANT COMP 2sg.PRO go to Cotonou -   1sg NEG.IRR want 2sg see
      lè   àxwè mɛ   ò.
      be at house in   NEG

      'If I had known you went to Cotonou, I would not have looked for you at home.'

(40) *nɔ́ Àshíbá ɖù kɔ̀   énú   ɖé*
      if   Ashiba eat PROG thing -

      'if Ashiba is eating'

The pluractional marker *nɔ* may not occur in sentences with a conditional clause even if a habitual meaning is desired 41). This is quite similar to English in the sense that 'I do not eat pork' is how the habit is expressed if it occurs as its own sentence, but if it occurs with a conditional clause, it must be 'I would not eat pork'.

(41) (a) *Nɔ́ ɲ̀   nyí enukitɔ sá   ɖé, nà   ɖù eha gò.*
           if   1sg be   Muslim   ANT -   1sg.IRR eat pig NEG

           'If I were a Muslim, I would not eat pork.'

(b) **Nɔ́ ŋ;   nyí enukitɔ sá   ɖé, ɲ̀   ɖù nɔ   eha gò.*
    if 1sg be   Muslim ANT -   1sg eat PLA pig NEG

[Lit.:If I were a Muslim, I don't eat pork.]

As in Fongbe and many other languages, conditional clauses can result in ambiguity between a conditional and temporal interpretation. This is shown in (42). For more discussion of this, see Kinyalolo, 1993 p. 162 [8].

(42) *Nɔ́ èshì jà   kɔ̀   ɖé, vuvɔ wà nɔ.*
    if water fall PROG -   cold do PLA

   (a) 'When it is raining, it is cold.'

   (b) 'If it is raining, it is cold.'

The conditional clause appears neither to restrict nor be restricted by the contents of the main clause. For example, the main clause may contain the irrealis marker (35), but it does not have to (42). The conditional clause does not change if it is followed by an imperative, unlike in Fongbe (43).

(43) (a) *Nɔ́ shívé cì   wò, ɖú énú.*
        if hunger tire 2sg eat thing

       'If you are hungry, eat!

   (b) *Nú   mɔ̀lìkún ɔ́   jóló mí hùn   mí ɖù!*
        COMP rice   DEF like 2pl hence 2pl eat

       'If the rice pleases you, eat it!'

<div align="right">

Fongbe
(from Akoha 1990 p. 286 [1])

</div>

6.3.1 Concessive Clauses

Concessive clauses appear to be a subcategory of conditional clauses. The only difference between conditional and concessive clauses is that in the latter, *can* must appear immediately before *ɖé*. *cán* is glossed as 'too' following the Ajagbe-French lexicon [7]. An example of a concessive clause is shown in (44).

(44) *Nɔ́ énú cì   kɔ̀   nɔ́ ɲ̀   cán ɖé, nà   yì.*
    if thing tire PROG for 1sg too -   1sg.IRR go to

'Even if I'm tired, I'll go.'

6.4   Temporal Clauses

In this section we examine different sorts of temporal clauses. The structure of temporal clauses is very similar to conditional clauses, although different words replace *nɔ́* 'if', depending on the meaning desired. Temporal clauses, like conditional clauses, may precede or follow the main clause of a sentence. If they precede the main clause, then they end in *ɖé*. My informants accept these clauses without *ɖé* when I produce them, but they do not produce them this way independently. If temporal clauses follow main clauses, then *ɖé* is omitted.

6.4.1   'when'

Clauses meaning 'when . . . ' are introduced by *hwènù* 'when'. Such clauses tend to precede the main clause. A typical example is in (45).

(45) *Hwènù é   yì   axwe ɖé, ɲ̀   kpɔ́ Kójó.*
    time   3sg go to house 1sg see Kojo

'When you went home, I saw Kojo.'

6.4.2 'before'

Clauses meaning 'before ...' are introduced by *gbɔxwe* 'before'. An example is in (46). Note that if the action in the clause introduced by *gbɔxwe* has not yet happened, thus the irrealis marker is obligatory.

(46) *Á   yì   àfì   mɛ̀   gbɔxwe   mí   a   dà   énú.*
     2sg.IRR go to market in   before   1pl   IRR   cook   thing.

     'You will go to the market before we cook.'

(47) and (48) demonstrate that temporal clauses with *gbɔxwe* can either precede or follow main clauses. The main clauses in both cases happen to contain imperative verbs, but this does not change the behavior of the temporal clauses.

(47) *Gbɔxwe   à   yì   sùklú   dé,   dù   énú!*
     before   2sg.IRR go to school -   eat   thing

     'Before you go to school, eat something!'

(48) *Ŋgbe   dù   énú   gbɔxwe   a   yì   cɔ̀cì!*
     NEG   eat   thing before   2sgIRR go to church

     'Don't eat before you go to church!'

6.4.3 'since'

Temporal clauses meaning 'since ...' are introduced by *ci*. As in English, these clauses can result in a temporal reading as in (49), or they can express a reason for something as in (50)'.

(49) *Ci   e   yì   Kutɔnu   dé,   nyì   e   wà   ɔ̀?*
     since 2sg   go to Cotonou -   what   2sg   do   FOC

     'Since you went to Cotonou, what have you done?'

(50) *Ci   shive   cì   kɔ̀   ɳ̀   dé,   nà   dù   koklozin.*
     since hunger   tire   PROG   1sg   -   1sg.IRR   eat   egg

     'Since I'm hungry, I'll eat an egg.'

6.5   Causal Clauses

Ajagbe has two ways of expressing clausal clauses. One is similar to the cleft structure seen in Section 6.2.2. Both involve the word *tádò* 'reason'.

   The cleft-like structure requires the causal clause to precede the main clause. It is followed by the cleft-marker *eyi* and *tádò* 'reason'. The other structure uses the phrase *ŋcí ná tádò* or *ŋcí eyi tádò* to mean 'because'. An example of each is given in (51).

(51) (a) *Àshíbá   dù   énú   eyi   tádò   é   vò.*
         Ashiba   eat   thing CLF   reason   3sg   be happy

         'Because Ashiba ate, she is happy.'

   (b) *Àshíbá   dù   énú   ŋcí   ná   tádò   é   vò.*
         Ashiba   eat   thing about   give   reason   3sg   be happy

         'Because Ashiba ate, she is happy.'

   There do not appear to be any restrictions on the TMA markers which may appear in causal clauses. The examples in (52) show causal clauses with the irrealis and progressive markers.

(52) (a) *Àshíbá   wá   nɔ   shíshí   ŋcí   ná   tádò   shívé   a   cí   é.*
         Ashiba   do   PLA   sad   about   give   reason   hunger   IRR   tire 3sg

         'Ashiba is sad because she will be hungry.'

   (b) *Àshíbá   wá   nɔ   shíshí   ŋcí   ná   tádò   shívé   cí   é   kɔ̀.*
         Ashiba   do   PLA   sad   about   give   reason   hunger   tire 3sg   PROG

         'Ashiba is sad because she is hungry.'

Negation of causal clauses is accomplished with the *ḍé...ò* marker discussed in Section 5.4.3 as can be seen in (53).

(53) *Àshíbá ḍé   ḍù   énú   ò,   eyi   táḍ'o   shívé   cì   kɔ̀   é.*
      Ashiba NEG   eat   thing NEG   CLF   reason   hunger   tire PROG   3sg

'Because Ashiba did not eat, she is hungry.'

Chapter 7

Derivational Affixes

Ajagbe, like the other Gbe lects, does not have inflectional morphology of any kind. As in the other Gbe lects, however, there is derivational morphology. The two main strategies employed in Ajagbe for derivation are affixes and reduplication. I will use the same terminology as Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 to describe the Ajagbe affixes to facilitate comparison between Ajagbe and other Gbe lects. This chapter examines derivational affixes; reduplication is addressed in the next chapter.

There are many words in this chapter which are lacking tone markings. Some of them are truly underspecified for tone, but many of the nouns are not. I did not record the tones of these words when doing fieldwork and there are no recordings of the relevant sessions.

7.1 Inventory of Affixes

The only known prefix in Ajagbe is the negation prefix *má-*,. There are several suffixes in Ajagbe. They are listed in (1).

(1) AJAGBE DERIVATIONAL SUFFIXES

Suffix	Function	Gloss
-*ví*	diminuative	DIM
-*tɔ̀*	agentive; provenance; ordinal	AG; ORD; PR
-*nɔ*	attributive	AT

7.1.1 The Diminuative Suffix -*ví*

ví is the diminuative suffix in Ajagbe. When -*ví* appears with animate nouns, it can mean either 'baby' or 'small' as shown in (2). When occuring with inanimate nouns, -*ví* often means 'small' as seen in (3). There are, however, many examples where the interpretation of -*ví* is unpredictable. Some such nouns are shown in (4). It is unclear whether all of the words in this last group actually are derived from the base nouns with the diminuative suffix, or whether they simply look like it.

(2) Animate Nouns
  àvù-ví [dog-DIM] 'puppy' or 'small dog'
  klòkpὲ-ví [turtle-DIM] 'baby turtle' or 'small turtle'
  èdàn-ví [snake-DIM] 'baby snake' or 'small snake'

(3) Inanimate Nouns
  nyɔ́nù-ví [woman-DIM] 'girl'
  gaci-ví [spoon-DIM] 'teaspoon'
  kpɔnnɔ-ví [bread-DIM] 'cookie'

(4) Inanimate Nouns with Unpredictable Interpretations
  àfɔ̀-ví [foot-DIM] 'big toe'
  àlɔ̀-ví [hand-DIM] 'finger'
  (a)dɔ-ví [stomach-DIM] 'intestines'; 'inner tube'
  hamɛ-ví [camaraderie-DIM] 'colleague'
  kéké-ví [bicycle-DIM] 'rickshaw' or 'walker' (like a cane)

I have found a single example of a word appearing to have two diminuative suffixes attached to it: *xévíví* 'baby bird'. *éxé* means 'flying animal' and it includes bats and birds, but *xéví* means 'bird' exclusively.

-ví is similar to the noun *evi* 'child', thus one may suggest the above words (among others) could be analyzed as compound words or simply noun phrases rather than positing *-ví* as a diminuative suffix. This line of analysis could neatly explain why *-ví* with animals results in the 'baby ...' interpretation: it is just the possessive structure (ex. *avu evi* /avuví/ 'dog's child' would become 'baby dog'). However, it does not account for the 'small...' interpretation, which is available with animate and inanimate nouns alike, let alone the inanimate nouns with unpredictable interpretations when *-ví* is suffixed.

7.2   The Suffix *-tɔ̀*

-tɔ̀ has three primary uses in Ajagbe: (1) as an agentive suffix; (2) as an ordinal suffix; and (3) as a provenance suffix. Each of these is addressed in turn. Note that there does not appear to be a tone associated with the vowel in *-tɔ̀*.

As an agentive suffix, *-tɔ̀* can be suffixed to a simple or compound noun. The resulting word is always a noun. *-tɔ̀* does not appear to be related to any completely homophonous nouns, but it may be related to *etɔ* 'boss'. This is similar to the Fongbe agentive suffix *-tɔ́* which is homophonous with the Fongbe noun *tɔ́* 'father' [5]. *-tɔ̀* is used in Ajagbe to indicate one who performs the characteristic action associated with a noun. Typical actions include doing, making and selling. Examples of simple nouns occurring with *-tɔ̀* are shown in (5).

(5)   *abɔ-tɔ̀*   [snail-AG]   'snail seller'
      agbe-tɔ̀   [life-AG]   'human being'
      ajɔ-tɔ̀   [trade-AG]   'trader'
      xɔse-tɔ̀   [faith-AG]   'believer'

-tɔ̀ can combine with cardinal numerals to make an ordinal number. All ordinal numbers with the exception of *ɖékà* 'one' / *ŋkɔtɔ̀* 'first' are formed in this way. Examples are in (6.

(6) | Cardinal | Ordinal | Value |
      |----------|---------|-------|
      | *àmɛ̀vè* | *ɖékàtɔ̀* | 2 |
      | *àmɛ̀tɔ̀n* | *àmɛ̀tɔ̀ntɔ̀* | 3 |
      | *àmádín* | *àmádíntɔ̀* | 6 |
      | *èwì* | *èwìtɔ̀* | 20 |

Finally, *-tɔ̀* can be suffixed to place names to show where someone or something is from originally, as opposed to where someone resides. Thus, for example *Bénétɔ̀* 'Beninese' can refer only to someone who was born in Benin. *-tɔ̀* is the only provenance suffix in Ajagbe. *-tɔ̀* can attach to any place name. Some examples are given in (7).

(7)   *Ámélíká-tɔ̀*   [America-PR]   'American'
      Zòvì-tɔ̀   [Azove-PR]   'from Azove'
      axwe-tɔ̀-wò   [house-PR-PL]   'the people at home; neighbors'

7.3   The Attributive Suffix *-nɔ*

Like the agentive suffix, the attributive suffix *-nɔ* can combine with a simple or compound noun to produce another noun. Its function is similar to that of the attributive suffix in Fongbe in that it denotes 'characterized by BASE' or 'posessor of BASE' [5]. Nevertheless, the intrpretation of a noun appearing with the attributive suffix is not necessarily predictable (as in the example meaning 'person with a long beard'). Examples of Ajagbe words with the attributive suffix are given in (8).

(8)   *edɔ-nɔ*   [illness-AT]   'sick person'
      egɛn-nɔ   [chin-AT]   'person with a long beard'
      emyɔ-nɔ   [left-AT]   'left-handed person'
      etrɛn-nɔ   [male celibacy-AT]   'bachelor'
      flafi-nɔ   [theft-AT]   'thief'
      dɔku-nɔ   [treasure-AT]   'rich person'

The attributive suffix appears to be less widespread in Ajagbe than in Fongbe. The Ajagbe equivalent of many Fongbe words with the attributive suffix has not only the attributive suffix as one would expect, but rather what appears to be both the agentive and attributive suffixes. This combination of suffixes is discussed in the next section.

7.4 A Combined Agentive/Attributive Suffix

Some Ajagbe nouns are derived by suffixing -tɔnɔ, which I believe is simply the agentive suffix followed by the attributive rather than an entirely new suffix. Its meaning appears to be similar to both the agentive and the attributive suffixes'. The informants prefer -tɔnɔ with some bases, although they may also accept either -tɔ or -nɔ alone. Examples of bases where -tɔnɔ is preferred, but the other suffixes are acceptable are in (9). Note that in most cases all three suffixes result in the same meaning. Nevertheless, I have found one example (9) in which the same base combined with -tɔnɔ or -nɔ results in a different meaning from when it combines with -tɔ. This is a result of the base being ambiguous (or simply two different homophonous bases): abɔ 'poverty; snail'. When it appears with any of the three suffixes, the resulting word is not ambiguous.

(9) (a) *ahiʒi-tɔ-nɔ*   [dishonesty-AG-AT]
         ?ahiʒi-tɔ   [dishonesty-AG]   'dishonest person'
         ?ahiʒi-nɔ   [dishonesty-AT]

     (b) *ale-tɔ-nɔ*   [taboo-AG-AT]
         ?ale-tɔ   [taboo-AG]   'one who commits taboo'
         ?ale-nɔ   [taboo-AT]

     (c) *abɔ-tɔ-nɔ*   [poverty-AG-AT]   'pauper'
         abɔ-tɔ   [snail-AG]   'snail seller'
         ale-nɔ   [poverty-AT]   'pauper'

With some bases, -tɔnɔ is either the only suffix accepted or is strongly preferred to either suffix alone (10). The potentially acceptable forms are marked as ungrammatical here because they are often described as comprehensible, but very strange sounding. I take this to mean that they would be able to understand a foreigner if they used such a form, but would never use it themselves.

(10) (a) *aye-tɔ-nɔ*   [hyppocricy-AG-AT]   'hyppocrite'
         *aye-tɔ   [taboo-AG]
         *aye-nɔ   [taboo-AT]

     (b) *exo-tɔ-nɔ*   [money-AG-AT]   'rich person'
         *exo-tɔ   [money-AG]
         *exo-nɔ   [money-AT]

7.5 The Place Suffix -*xu*

The suffix -*xu* indicates a place where something takes place. This suffix is not clearly derived from any word in Ajagbe; *exu* 'bone' and *xú* 'to be difficult; to dry' are phonetically the closest words I have found in the language. -*xu* is generally suffixed to a verb which itself is usually, but not obligatorily, preceded by a noun. The resulting word is a noun. Examples are given in (11).

(11) *áhá-nù-xu*   [beverage-drink-PLC]   'bar'
      én'u-ɖù-xu   [thing-eat-PLC]   'restaurant'
      cìkè-sà-xu   [medicine-sell-PLC]   'pharmacy'
      xɔ̀-xu   [recieve-PLC]   'final price'

7.6 The Negative Prefix *má-*

Negation of gerunds and participles, both of which are reduplicated verbs, is accomplished with the prefix *má*. Interestingly, *má-* itself is reduplicated along with the verbal base. An example of a verb with the prefix *má-* is given in (12).

(12) *cìcì*   *mácɔ́n mácɔ́n*
      glasses   NEG.RED.wear
      'not wearing glasses'

In some cases *má-* inverts the meaning of a reduplicated verb rather than negating it (as does the prefix *un-* in English). I suspect that *má-*'s interpretation as a negating or inversive prefix depends on the meaning of the verb to which it is attached. An example of *má-* functioning as an inversive suffix can be seen in (13).

(13) (a) *Ègbɔ̀   bláblá   nyɔ́.*
           goat   RED.tie   to be good
           'Tying up goats is good.'

      (b) *Ègbɔ̀   máblámáblá   nyɔ́.*
           goat   NEG.RED.tie   to be good
           'Untying goats is good.'

Such inversion can only occur with the reduplicated form of the verb. When *má-* is prefixed to a non-reduplicated verb, the result is ungrammatical. Instead, a different verb must be used. An example of this is shown in (14).

(14) (a) **Kɔ́jó   máblá   ègbɔ̀.*
           Kojo   NEG.tie   goat
           [Lit.: Kojo untied the goat.]

      (b) *Kɔ́jó   cù   ègbɔ̀.*
           Kojo   untie   goat
           'Kojo untied the goat.'

7.7   Nominal Classifiers

Nouns in Ajagbe are minimally bisyllabic. The majority of Ajagbe nouns begin with either /è/ or slightly less commonly, /à/, thus raising the possibility of positing two nominal classifier prefixes *à-* and *à-*. The distribution of these two potential prefixes is essentially identical to those of *à-* or *ò-* in Fongbe. Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 analyze these morphemes as "morphological units that can be separated, but have neither semantic nor syntactic properties."(195) In this chapter we will see that the same holds true of *è-* and *à-* in Ajagbe. For a more detailed version of the arguments put forth in this section, please see Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002: 193-195.

Given that nouns are minimally bisyllabic while verbs are almost always monosyllabic, one possibility is that *à-* and *à-* are used to derive nouns from verbs. If this is the case, then one would expect most derived nouns to be semantically related to the corresponding verb. Such verb-noun pairs exist, but they are not common (15).

(15)   Verb   Derived Noun
      kú   'to die'   *èkú*   'death'
      kplá   'to learn'   *èkplá*   'lesson'

Most nouns beginning with *è-* and *à-*, do not appear to be related to phonetically similar verbs. More importantly, there are cases where the supposed verbal base can not be identified. This is illustrated in (16). This demonstrates that the distribution of *è-* and *à-* is restricted, and that they are unproductive, thus they will not be included in the inventory of derivational affixes.

(16)   Verb   Noun
      gbɔ̀   'to return'   *ègbɔ̀*   'goat'
      zò   'to fly, to jump'   *èzò*   'fire'

The fact that nouns are minimally bisyllabic presents the possibilty that *è-* and *à-* are used to repair degenerate monosyllabic nouns. This explains their absence in loans: all known loan nouns are polysyllabic and therefore are well-formed (at least in terms of metrical structure). This analysis explains why many nouns with these prefixes do not correspond to any verb in the language: these prefixes are not (usually) derivational.

Chapter 8

Reduplication

Ajagbe exhibits reduplication of verbal bases and adverbs. Reduplication of verbal bases yields a variety of lexical items in Ajagbe and is productive. These include adjectival and nominal forms of verbs, and in some dialects, the progressive aspect of the verb. Reduplication of adverbs does not appear to be productive. In this chapter we will first examine the phonology of reduplicated forms, which is indeed quite simple, then we will look at the distribution of reduplicated forms.

8.1 Phonology

The reduplicated form in Ajagbe is a perfect copy of the entire base. As the entire base is copied, it is not possible to say whether the reduplicated form is a prefix or a suffix. In (1) we see that monosyllabic words with simple and complex onsets, as well as bisyllabic words undergo complete reduplication. Note that the last reduplicated word in this example is a noun. It is the only example of a fully reduplicated noun that I have found in Ajagbe. Furthermore, there is no clear relation between the base and the reduplicated form.

(1)   *ɖù*   'to eat'   →*ɖùɖù*   'eating'
       kplá   'to learn'→*kplákplá*   'studying'
       kpekpwi   'gravel'   →*kpekpwikpekpwi* 'hiccups'

8.2 Reduplication of Adverbial Bases

Adverbs in Ajagbe can be divided into four groups with respect to reduplication: (1) adverbs which can be reduplicated; (2) adverbs which can not be reduplicated; and (3) adverbs which appear to be reduplicated, but which do not have a non-reduplicated form. Examples of these three groups are found in (2)-(4). The reduplicated forms of adverbs which can be reduplicated tend to be more intense forms of the corresponding non-reduplicated form. I have not found a reason why adverbs should be placed into one group rather than another; it appears to be random.

(2)   ADVERBS WHICH CAN BE REDUPLICATED   *ègbɛ́* 'today'   →*ègbɛ́ègɛ́*   'now', 'nowadays'
                                            kábá   'quickly'→*kábákábá*   'quickly', 'often'

(3)   ADVERBS WHICH CAN NOT BE REDUPLICATED   *àhán*   'thusly'→**àhánàhán*

(4)   ADVERBS FOR WHICH A NON-REDUPLICATED FORM DOES NOT EXIST
       ceɖeceɖe   'truly'   →**ceɖe*
       cekeceke   actively→**ceke*

8.2.1 Partial Reduplication and Triplication

Neither partial reduplication nor triplication is a productive process in Ajagbe, regardless of the lexical item involved. However, there are several examples of partial reduplication and triplication deriving adverbs (and no other lexical items) from other adverbs. The base for partially reduplicated lexical items appears to always be bisyllabic. Furthermore, the base often appears to be reduplicated, but the potential base is not in the Ajagbe lexicon. An example of partial reduplication us shown in (5).

(5)   *dandan* 'certain'→*dandandan*   'necessarily' │ **dan*

Both of the triplicated forms I have found are given in (6) with their bases. I have not included forms which appear to be triplicated but do not have a corresponding base, such as *fɛɖɛfɛɖɛfɛɖɛ* 'light' (**fɛɖɛfɛɖɛ* and **fɛɖɛ*).

(6)   *cu*   'almost' →*cucucu*   'exactly'
        fli 'vaguely'→*fliflifli*   'so far as to be indistinguishable'

8.3   Reduplication of Verbal Bases

Reduplication of verbal bases is productive in Ajagbe. In general, reduplication is used for deriving gerunds or participles from verbal bases. In certain dialects reduplication of verbal bases is also used to indicate the progressive aspect. Phonetically, all three forms are identical, thus without context, it is impossible to determine the function a reduplicated serves. Each of these uses of reduplicated verbal bases will be examined in turn.

8.3.1   Gerunds

Reduplicated verbal bases can share syntactic properties with NPs. There are, however, differences in the distribution of such reduplicated verbs and true NPs. These differences mean that reduplicated verbs used like an NP are best analysed as gerunds rather than derived nominals. This section will examine the similarities and differences between true NPs and gerunds.

Like true NPs, gerunds can be the subject of a verb (7) or the object of a transitive verb (8).

(7)   *Àjàgbè   kplákplá   ji   nɔ   jɔ   nɔ́   Kójó.*
        Ajagbe   RED.learn   like PLA   like for Kojo

        'Ashiba likes learning Ajagbe.'

(8)   *Àshíbá   nyá   Àjàgbè   ŋwlèŋwlè.*
        Ashiba   know   Ajagbe   RED.write

        'Ashiba knows how to write in Ajagbe.'

Unlike NPs, gerunds can not appear with any quantifiers or the plural marker (9).

(9)   (a) **Àjàgbè   kplákplá   *(wò)*
             Ajagbe   RED.learn   PL

        (b) **Àjàgbè   kplákplá   *(pléŋ́)*
             Ajagbe   RED.learn   all

Gerunds may appear with the definite determiner *lɔ́*. In some cases the resulting phrase is marginally acceptable at best. If the resulting phrase with *lɔ́* is completely acceptable, *lɔ́* is optional and the meaning is essentially the same as without *lɔ́*. It appears as if the factors deciding the acceptability of the definite determiner with a particular gerund are semantic, but more research is necessary to determine whether this is the case. Two examples of gerunds with the definite determiner are in (10).

(10)   (a) *Àjàgbè   kplákplá   (lɔ́)*
             Ajagbe   RED.learn   DEF

             'learning Ajagbe'

        (b) *éxlɔ̀   kpɔ́kpɔ́   (#lɔ́)*
             friend   RED.see   DEF

             'seeing a friend'

NPs can not of course be negated, but gerunds can be with the prefix *má* as shown in (11). *gò* can not be used to negate gerunds, as can be seen in (12).

(11)   *jàkpé   másàmásà*
        sodabi   NEG.RED.sell

        'not selling sodabi'

(12) *Jàkpɛ́   sàsà   nyɔ́   gò*
      sodabi   RED.sell   be good   NEG

      'Selling sodabi is not good.'

      #'Not selling sodabi is good.'

The agent of the gerund can appear to the left of the gerund (and its object, if present), or to the right of the gerund. This construction is essentially identical to possession: when the agent appears on the left, there is no case marking; when it appears on the right, it must appear with the genitive case marker *tɔ*. Examples are found in (13).

(13) (a) *èjè   sàsà   Àshíbá   tɔ*
          salt   RED.sell   Ashiba   GEN

          'Ashiba's selling salt'

      (b) *Àshíbá   jàkpɛ́   másàmásà*
          Ashiba   sodabi   NEG.RED.sell

          'Asiba's not selling sodabi'

8.3.2 Participles

Reduplicated verbal bases can be used as participles to modify nouns. The meaning is generally past perfective as illustrated in (14). As participles are phonetically identical to gerunds, some sentences may be ambiguous, as can be seen in (14b).

(14) (a) *Nà   ná   ŋ̀cì   xwlexwle   Kójó.*
          1sg.IRR   give   orange   RED.buy   Kojo

          'I will give the bought orange to Kojo.'

      (b) *Gbòmá   ɖàɖà   nyɔ́.*
          solanum   RED.cook   be good

          'Cooked solanum is good.'

          'Cooking solanum is good.'

Participles often appear in compound words (which are discussed in Chapter 9). Specifically, the relevant compound words have the following structure: noun + participle. In many such compounds (but by no means all of them) the meaning of the participle is not past perfective, but rather it expresses potential (like English words with the suffix *-able*, for example *lovable*). Examples of such compounds are given in (15). An example of this type of compound used in context is given in (16).

(15) *énú.ɖùɖù*   (thing.RED.eat)   'food' (edible thing)
      énú.wùwù   (thing.RED.kill)   ' something killable'

(16) *Àvù   nyí   énúwùwù.*
      dog   be   thing.RED.kill

      'A dog is something killable.'

      'A dog is something killed.'

Chapter 9

Compound Words

Compounding, that is the concatenation of two or more words, is quite widespread in Ajagbe. The data suggest that in Ajagbe, as in Fongbe, the result of compounding is only ever nouns [5].

9.1 Differences Between Compounds and NPs

9.2 Typology

This section examines the structural variety seen in Ajagbe compound nouns. Factors that will be considered include: headedness; whether the compound is synthetic or primary; and the number of constituents. Briefly, headedness means whether or not a constituent can be said to head a compound. There are two necessary conditions for this: (1) the head must have identical syntactic and semantic properties to the compound; (2) the head noun must be a hypernym of the compound noun. Synthetic compounds have two defining characteristics: (1) they are headed by a deverbal noun; (2) the other constituent is an argument of the verb from which the deverbal noun is derived. Throughout this chapter, the head of a headed compound noun will always be underlined.

9.2.1 Headed Compounds

Right-headed

Right-headed compounds can have the following constituent structures: N-<u>N</u>, PP-<u>N</u>. Examples of compounds with the structure N-<u>N</u> are given in (1).

(1) | | | |
|---|---|---|
| *alɔ-gavi* | (hand-<u>little metal</u>) | 'ring' |
| *ezo-keke* | (fire-<u>bicycle</u>) | 'motorcycle' |
| *ègbɔ̀-làn* | (goat-<u>meat</u>) | 'goat meat' |
| *gbòdò-ŋ̀cì* | (smallpox-<u>orange</u>) | 'lime' |
| *jipo-xɔ* | (heavens-<u>house</u>) | 'tower; multi-story house' |
| *kutu-gun* | (cassava-<u>mash</u>) | 'cassava mash' |
| *yovo-gbo* | (foreigner-<u>eggplant</u>) | 'tomato' |
| *yovo-nɛ* | (foreigner-<u>palm nut</u>) | 'coconut' |

(2) contains the only known compound to have a pospositional phrase as the non-head constituent.

(2) *tɔji-hun* (lake.on-<u>vehicle</u>) 'boat'

Left-Headed

Left-headed compounds can have the following constituent structures: <u>N</u>-N, <u>N</u>-A. s of compounds with the structure <u>N</u>-N are given in (3).

(3) <u>koklo</u>-su (<u>chicken</u>-man) 'rooster'

Examples of <u>N</u>-A compounds are found in (4). Note that A here can be either true adjectives, reduplicated verbs (acting as participles), or the participial forms derived from serial verb constructions. This type of compound is very common in Ajagbe.

(4) <u>énú</u>-*ɖùɖù*   (thing-eaten)   'food'
     enyɔ-byɔse   (<u>problem</u>-ask)   'question'
     enyɔ-dradra   (<u>situation</u>-announced) 'advertisement'

9.3 Synthetic Compounds

Synthetic compounds are those compounds which are headed by a deverbal noun. The other constituent is an argument of the verb from which the deverbal noun is derived. Known compounds can be divided into two categories based on the way in which the deverbal noun is formed: with tɔ̀ or by reduplication. Compound nouns in which the deverbal noun is formed with tɔ̀ are always right headed. Compound nouns headed by reduplicated verbs can be either right or left headed, although I know of only one example of the latter case. Examples are given below in (5)-(6). This is unlike Fongbe, in which synthetic compounds are always right-headed [5].

(5) *yòvò.dɔ̀-<u>wà.tɔ̀</u>*   (foreigner work-<u>do-AG</u>)   'functionary'
     àlɔ̀.nú.dɔ̀-<u>wà.tɔ̀</u>   (hand.thing.work-<u>do.AG</u>)   'artisan'
     mɔ́lú-<u>sà.tɔ̀</u>   (rice-<u>sell.AG</u>)   'rice seller'
     àcì-<u>kpà.tɔ̀</u>   (tree-<u>shape.AG</u>)   'carpenter'
     àmɛ̀-<u>má.bù.tɔ̀</u>   (person-<u>NEG.respect.AG</u>)   'impolite person'

(6) (a) Right-headed Compounds
       énú-<u>ɖùɖù</u>   (thing-<u>eat.RED</u>)   'food'
       egbɛ-<u>bɔ̀bɔ̀</u>   (association-<u>assemble.RED</u>) 'organization'
       eju-<u>nɔ̀nɔ̀</u>   (group-<u>accept.RED</u>)   'alliance'
     (b) Left-headed Compounds
       <u>dràdrà</u>-dò   (<u>prepare.RED</u>-work) 'preparation'

Note that the first reduplicated verb in (6b) has an inherent object, thus one must say *drà èdò* 'to prepare', not simply **drà* 'to prepare'.

Chapter 10

Verbs

10.1 The Verbal Lexicon

Ajagbe contains many verbs which are associated with many diverse meanings. In the Hams' lexicon of Ajagbe, verbs are presented with core meanings, followed by verb-complement pairs. This stems from the intuition that the complement can play a large role in determining the meaning of a verb in Ajagbe. For example, (1) contains the entry for *jè*, whose core meanings are 'to touch; to attain; to buy a liquid'.

In the examples shown in (1), *jè* must be assigned a meaning based on its complement, otherwise most of these meanings would be impossible to predict. Thus, *jè*'s meaning must be sufficiently vague to permit it to be used in all of these contexts.

(1)

jè with complement	translation of complement	translation of phrase
jè àbɔ̀	(poverty)	'to be poor'
jè àcɔ̀	(beauty)	'to be beautiful'
jè àdè	(sweat)	'to sweat'
jè àfɔ́kú	(accident)	'to have an accident'
jè àgblà	(effort)	'to make an effort'
jè àglà	(rebellion)	'to rebel'
jè àgò	(liver)	'to finish'
jè àgɔ̀	(error)	'to be wrong'
jè ànyí	(on the ground)	'to fall on the ground'
jè àyè	(mind)	to pay attention'
jè èdɔ̀	(illness)	'to fall ill'
jè èhwὲ	(complaint)	'to complain'
jè éhwí	(rust)	'to rust'
jè èmlɔ̀	(greenish mold)	'to rot'
jè èmɔ́	(road)	'to go'
jè èshì	(water)	'to buy water'
jè ɳ̀mέ	(face)	'to be important'
jè énú jì	(something on)	'to come across'
jè eshi	(water)	'to know'
jè èdò	n/a	'to get used to'
jè fúnfún	(scum)	'to get moldy'
jè gɔ̀nmὲ	(underside)	'to start'
jè ji	(on)	'to finish'
jè kàɖà	(rust)	'to rust'
jè ɳ̀gbe	(behind)	'to follow'
jè ɳ̀kɔ̀	(place in front)	'to go ahead of'

Other underspecified verbs in the Hamms' lexicon of Ajagbe include, but are not limited to the following: *cí, cù, dà, dó* and *sɔ́*. As with *jè*, the object is crucial in determining the meaning of a verb.

On the other hand, certain Ajagbe verbs are highly specified. One example of this is *xwlè* 'to buy'. The complement of *xwlè* may not be a liquid. If one is buying a liquid, *jè* must be used.

10.2 Argument Structures

This section examines the distribution of verbs which take one, two or three arguments, or in other words, intransitive, transitive and ditransitive verbs, respectively. For ease of comparison, I will attempt to subdivide each of these three groups similarly to Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002. Thus, for example, I will divide intransitive verbs into activity, semelfactive, achievement, stative, etc. verbs.

10.2.1 Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs are those which take only one argument. Each verb given in the examples of this section on intransitive verbs can be used to form a sentence as follows: *è* VERB means 's/he/it VERBed' unless noted otherwise. Thus, *zò* 'to fly' could produce the sentence *é zò* 'he flew'. The verbs given in this section can only be intransitive unless noted otherwise.

Intransitive verbs can encode a wide variety of meaning. Among these are activity verbs (2).

(2) *té*   'to jump'
  zò   'to fly; to jump'
  fyá   'to boil'

(3) contains examples of semelfactive verbs.

(3) *fɛ́n*   'to break into pieces'
  gbàn   'to shatter'
  ŋɛ́   'to break'

Some intransitive achievement verbs are in (4). The first two verbs in this list *yì* 'to leave' and *vá* 'to come' can both take locative arguments, which is either a PP or a bare NP. When *yì* is used with a locative argument, it means 'to go to'. Note that *fyɔ́n* 'to burn' is used in contexts such as *àyù fyɔ́n* 'the beans burned'.

(4) *yì*   'to leave'
  vá   'to come'
  fò   'to disappear'
  fɔ́n   'to wake up'
  fyɔ́n   'to burn'
  jwin   'to fall'
  kù   'to die'
  trɔ́   'to return'
  zé   'to appear'
  zè   'to make room'

Stative verbs are often intransitive. Examples of stative verbs are given in (5). When forming sentences of the form *é* VERB, stative verbs are translated with the simple present tense (thus *é nyá* 's/he knows'; *é nyɔ́* 's/he/it is good').

(5) *nyá*   'to know'
  nyɔ́   'to be good'
  kpòn   'to be cheap'
  vé   'to be expensive
  xá   'to be busy'

Two copular verbs *lí* 'to exist', also discussed in Section 6.1.2, and *yɔ* 'it is' are clearly intransitive verbs. The argument must precede both *lí* and *yɔ* (6).

(6) (a) *Àyù   lí.*
      bean   exist
      'There are beans.'

(b) **Lí   àyù.*
    exist   bean

    [Lit.:'exist bean']

(c) *Àyù   yɔ.*
    bean   it is

    'They are beans.'

(d) **Yɔ   àyù.*
    it is   bean

    [Lit.:'these are beans']

WEATHER verbs

According to Koopman 1986 p. 245 [9], no West African languages have WEATHER verbs which appear with an expletive subject. Ajagbe indeed follows this pattern. Weather phrases in Ajagbe consist of a noun describing a natural element followed by an intransitive verb. Some weather verbs occur in other contexts, others do not. Examples of WEATHER verbs are in (7).

(7) (a) *Èshì   jà.*
         water   rain

         'It rained.'

     (b) *Jìhɔ̀n   xɔ̀   .*
         wind   blow

         'The wind blew.'

Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 give the translation of Fongbe weather verbs appearing with no inflectional particles as present progressive [5] p. 245. As can be seen above, weather verbs which appear without inflectional particles are interpreted as past tense. Unlike stative verbs, which can not appear with most TMA particles (discussed in chapter 4), WEATHER verbs must appear with them in order to result in a habitual or progressive interpretation. Examples of WEATHER verbs appearing with TMA particles are given in (8).

(8) (a) *Èshì   jà   kɔ̀.*
         water   rain   PROG

         'It is raining.'

     (b) *Jìhɔ̀n   xɔ̀   nɔ   lè   Bénɛ́   gò.*
         wind   blow   PLA   be at   Benin   NEG

         'It is not windy in Benin.'

10.2.2   Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs take two arguments. In Ajagbe one argument, the subject, precedes the verb, while the other, the object, follows it. As in other languages, transitive verbs are the most common type of verb in Ajagbe. Transitive verbs are divided into the following categories: simple transitive; control verbs; and those which alternate between transitive and intransitive. I have also included with transitive verbs those verbs which license an expletive subject with the transitive verbs because they take two arguments, one of which is the expletive subject.

Simple Transitive Verbs

Simple transitive verbs are those verbs which can take nearly any noun as an object. Both the subject and the object contribute semantic content in simple transitive verbs. Examples of simple transitive verbs are given in (9).

(9) (a) *Kójó   xwlè   ègbɔ̀.*
         Kojo   buy   goat

         'Kojo bought a goat.'

(b) *ègbɔ̀ ɖù báfò.*
goat eat corn
'The goat ate corn.'

(c) *Kójó xò ègbɔ̀ lɔ́.*
farmer hit goat DEF
'The farmer hit the goat.'

Objects of Transitive Verbs

Even if the speaker does not wish to specify an object, there must be an overt noun serving as the complement of the transitive verb. In such cases, a generic object is used. For verbs which are sufficiently specified semantically, the generic object tends to be *énú* 'thing' as demonstrated in (10).

(10) *Àshíbá ɖù énú.*
Ashiba eat thing
'Ashiba ate.'

When simple transitive verbs are used in the imperative, the generic object is optional as can be seen in (11). While my informants all accept imperatives without the generic object, they seem to produce such utterances with the generic object more often than without.

(11) *Ɖù (énú)!*
eat thing
'Eat!'

Some verbs require a generic object which is verb-specific. An adverb, however, can be used instead of the object. An example of this is in (12).

(12) (a) **Kójó dɔ̀n.*
Kojo sleep
[Lit.: Kojo slept.]

(b) *Kójó dɔ̀n àlɔ̀n.*
Kojo sleep slumber
'Kojo slept.'

(b) *Kójó dɔ̀n nyídé.*
Kojo sleep well
'Kojo slept well.'

Semantically underspecified verbs must also appear with an overt object. The generic object is the most general noun able to trigger the desired meaning of the semantically underspecified verb. For example, consider the verb *dó* 'to plant; to speak; to carry; to drive; to place; etc.'. According to my informants, *dó* means 'to plant' when *énú* 'thing' is the object, thus 'to plant' is likely its primary meaning. However, should the speaker wish to use *dó* to mean 'to drive', then *éhún* 'vehicle' must be the object because it is the most general noun specific enough to trigger this particular meaning.

The interpretation of a verb stays the same whenever a hyponym of the generic object is used. Thus when *zòkéké* 'motorcycle' is used as an object of *dó*, this verb is interpreted as meaning 'to drive' because 'motorcycle' is a hyponym of 'vehicle'. Examples of semantically underspecified verbs used with generic objects are given in (13) and (14). Both examples are structured as follows: in (a) the verb is used with a generic object; in (b) the same verb is used with a hyponym of the object in (a); in (c) the verb is used with a different generic object, thus resulting in a different interpretation.

(13) (a) *Àshíbá dó éhún.*
Ashiba drive vehicle
'Ashiba drove.'

(b) *Àshíbá dó kéké.*
Ashiba drive bicycle
'Ashiba rode a bicycle.'

(c) *Àshíbá   dó   énú.*
Ashiba   plant   thing
'Ashiba planted something.'

(14)   (a) *Àshíbá   jè   èdɔ̀.*
Ashiba   contract illness
'Ashiba contracted an illness.'

(b) *Àshíbá   jè   gbòdò.*
Ashiba   contract smallpox
'Ashiba contracted smallpox.'

(c) *Àshíbá   jè   énú.*
Ashiba   buy liquid   thing
'Ashiba bought something (liquid).'

BODY states

All BODY-state constructions are formed in the same way: the agent (usually a body part, but potentially a physical state such as 'hot' or 'hungry') is the subject and the patient is the object. The choice of verb depends on what is affecting the patient and in some cases the manner in which the patient is affected. For example, if the patient feels hot, the verb *wà* 'to do' is used. If a body part hurts from an injury, *vé* 'to hurt' is used, but if the pain is from an illness *ɖù* 'to eat' is chosen instead. Examples of different BODY-state constructions are found in (15).

(15)   (a) *Ètà   ɖù   kɔ̀   Àshíbá.*
head   eat   PROG   Ashiba
'Ashiba has a headache.'

(b) *Ètà   vé   kɔ̀   Àshíbá.*
head   hurt   PROG   Ashiba
'Ashiba's head hurts (from an injury).'

(c) *Énú   cì   kɔ̀   ɲ̀.*
thing   tire   PROG   1sg
'I am tired.'

(d) *Shìvè   cì   kɔ̀   ɲ̀.*
hunger   tire   PROG   1sg
'I am hungry.'

(e) *Vùvɔ̀   wà   kɔ̀   ɲ̀.*
cold   do   PROG   1sg
'I am cold.'

The choice of verb depends primarily upon what is affecting the patient, but in some cases it is difficult to predict what verb should be used. For example, *fyɔ́nfyɔ́n* 'heat' takes the verb *wà* 'to do', but *nyidɔn* 'sun' is used with either *ve* 'to hurt' or *ɖù* 'to eat'.

Verbs Which Can Be Intransitive or Transitive

Certain verbs can appear with either one or two arguments, or in other words, they can be intransitive or transitive.

Some verbs of motion can be either intransitive or transitive. As intransitive verbs they are achievement verbs. They are activity or accomplishment verbs when transitive. Two examples are *yì* 'to leave; to go to' and *vá* 'to arrive; to come'. The contrast between their transitive and intransitive uses is shown in (16) and (17).

(16)   (a) *Àshíbá   yì   Zòvì.*
Ashiba   go   Azove.
'Ashiba went to Azove.'

(b) *À shíbá   yì.*
Ashiba   leave.
'Ashiba left.'

(17)   (a) *À shíbá   vá   èlɛ́.*
Ashiba   come   here
'Ashiba came here.'

(b) *À shíbá   vá.*
Ashiba   arrive
'Ashiba arrived.'

The verb *trú* 'to throw up' is normally intransitive, but if something particular is vomited, then it can be used transitively. This is illustrated in (18).

(18)   (a) *À shíbá   trú.*
Ashiba   throw up
'Ashiba threw up.'

(b) *À shíbá   trú   énú.*
Ashiba   throw up   thing
'Ashiba threw up something.'

(c) *À shíbá   trú   sàblà.*
Ashiba   throw up   onion
'Ashiba threw up some onion.'

Ditransitive Verbs

Ditransitive verbs are those which take three arguments: one subject and two objects. An example in English is 'to show' as in 'Anne showed Mike the school.' There are only two ditransitive verbs that have been found in Ajagbe, and they are shown in (19).

(19)   (a) *À shíbá   ná   ègbɔ̀   Kòjó.*
Ashiba   give   goat   Kojo
'Ashiba gave Kojo a goat.'

(b) *À shíbá   kplá   Flansegbe   Kòjó.*
Ashiba   teach   French   Kojo
'Ashiba taught Kojo French.'

The theme must always precede the goal in ditransitive constructions as demonstrated by the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (20).

(20)   (a) **À shíbá   ná   Kòjó   ègbɔ̀.*
Ashiba   give   goat   Kojo
[Lit.: Ashiba gave Kojo a goat.]

(b) **À shíbá   kplá   Kòjó   Flansegbe.*
Ashiba   teach   French   Kojo
[Lit.: Ashiba taught Kojo French.]

10.3   Argument Alterations

This section shows the results of tests for various argument alterations in Ajagbe. Theoretical discussion is avoided here, but can be found in Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002, which contains the same tests run on Fongbe. Brief explanations of each test are included.

10.3.1   Middle Constructions

Brousseau describes middle constructions as "generic, they describe a habitual property of an object rather than an event located in time" [4] p. 159. The example that will be used in this section is 'beans burn easily'.

By default, middle constructions contain the pluractional marker *nɔ* (discussed in Section 4.4.1). These constructions also contain adverbs. The most basic middle construction is shown in (21).

(21) *Àyù   fyɔ́n   nɔ   kábá.*
        bean   burn   PLA   easily
        'Beans burn easily.'

Middle constructions describe habitual properties of an object, but in Ajagbe they are also able to describe temporary properties. Thus, the middle construction can appear without the pluractional marker, and with the irrealis marker. An example of each is given in (22). These examples are not particularly natural, but they are acceptable to the informants.

(22)   (a) *Àyù   lɔ́   fyɔ́n   kábá   èsɔ̀.*
                bean   DEF   burn   easily   yesterday
                'The beans burnt easily yesterday.'

       (b) *Àyù   lɔ́   a   fyɔ́n   kábá   èsɔ̀.*
                bean   DEF   IRR   burn   easily   tomorrow
                'The beans will burn easily tomorrow.'

Nevertheless, the progressive marker is incompatible with middle constructions as can be seen in (23). This constraint suggests that the middle construction in Ajagbe is habitual, while its compatibility with the irrealis marker and temporal adverbs show that it is not necessarily generic.

(23) **Àyù   fyɔ́n   kɔ̀   kábá.*
        bean   burn   PROG   easily
        [Lit.: 'Beans are burning easily.']

10.3.2   Unexpressed Objects

Unexpressed object alternations are those in which the object remains unpronounced but is still understood. Only one type of this alternation is available in Ajagbe.

Indefinite Object

This alternation is one in which the object of the verb is simply omitted, as in the English 'Anne drank juice' / 'Anne drank'. Most verbs in Ajagbe can not undergo this alternation because transitive verbs always require an overt object. However, certain transitive verbs, such as *yì* 'to go; to leave' can become intransitive when the object is omitted. In this case the intransitive version has a different meaning from the transitive. Examples of this alternation can be found above in Section 10.2.2.

10.3.3   Internal Argument Alternations

The SPRAY/LOAD Alternation

An example of this alternation in English is 'Mike loaded corn onto the truck' / 'Mike loaded the truck with corn'. This alternation is unavailable with the verb *dò* 'to load' in Ajagbe as (24) illustrates.

(24)   (a) *Àshíbá   dó   bàfò   ɖò   èhùn   mὲ.*
                Ashiba   load   corn   at   vehicle   in
                'Ashiba loaded corn onto the car.'

       (b) **Àshíbá   dó   èhùn   kóɖó   bàfò.*
                Ashiba   load   vehicle   with   corn
                [Lit.: Ashiba loaded the car with corn.]
                'Ashiba drove a car with corn.'

This alternation is also unavailable with *dó* 'to stuff' as demonstrated in (25).

(25) (a) *Kòjó dó ɖeci èkòɖònú mὲ.*
       Kojo stuff cotton pillow in
       'Kojo stuffed cotton into the pillow.'

  (b) **Kòjó dó èkòɖònú kóɖó ɖeci.*
       Kojo stuff pillow with cotton
       [Lit.: Kojo stuffed the pillow with cotton.]

The Reciprocal Alternation

An example of a reciprocal object alternation in English is 'Mike agreed with Anne' / 'Mike and Anne agreed'. This alternation might be available in Ajagbe. (26) contains an example of this alternation. However, (26b) is ambiguous; it could be that Kojo and Ashiba agree with each other or with someone else. The sentence in (27) is unambiguous. It is for this reason that the alternation has been described as possibly available rather than available.

(26) (a) *Àshíbá xɔ̀ ègbè nɔ́ Kòjó.*
       Ashiba receive speech for Kojo
       'Ashiba agrees with Kojo.'

  (b) *Àshíbá kóɖó Kòjó xɔ̀ ègbè.*
       Ashiba with Kojo receive speech
       'Ashiba and Kojo agree.'

(27) *Àshíbá kóɖó Kòjó xɔ̀ ègbè nɔ́ wò nɔ́nɔ́ wo.*
    Ashiba with Kojo receive speech for 3pl each other PL
    'Ashiba and Kojo agree with each other.'

Another example of this alternation is 'Anne separated the yolk from the white'/'Anne separated the yolk and the white'. As in Fongbe, Ajagbe uses adverb meaning 'to extract' rather than one meaning 'to separate'. (28) contains these two sentences and shows that this alternation is available in Ajagbe.

(28) (a) *Àshíbá ɖè klòʒìncù kóɖó klòʒìniɣinu*
       Ashiba extract yolk with egg white
       'Ashiba separated the yolk and the white.'

  (b) *Àshíbá ɖè klòʒìncù tɔ́xú só klòʒìniɣinu*
       Ashiba extract yolk part leave egg white
       'Ashiba separated the yolk from the white.'

The Instrument/'Against' Alternation

An example of this sentence in English is 'Mike hit the wall with a stick'/'Mike hit the stick against the wall'. It is difficult to say whether this alternation is available in Ajagbe because the 'against' sentence uses a serial verb construction while the instrumental variant does not. The data are shown in (29).

(29) (a) *Kòjó xɔ̀ èglì kóɖó èbà.*
       Kojo hit wall with stick.
       'Kojo hit the wall with a stick.'

  (b) *Kòjó sɔ́ èbà xò dò èglì nù.*
       Kojo take stick hit at wall against
       'Kojo hit a stick against the wall.'

10.3.4   The Causative/Inchoative Alternation

This alternation turns the object of a change of state verb into the subject, as in the English pair 'Mike melted the ice' / 'the ice melted.' This alternation is available for certain verbs in Ajagbe. In most cases, however, the informants prefer the impersonal passive to the inchoative variant (to the extent that they will accept the inchoative, but they never volunteered it as an option). A pair showing this variation is shown in (30).

(30)   (a)   *Kòjó   hùn   èhɔ̀n   lɔ́.*
             Kojo   open   door   DEF
             'Kojo opened the door.'

       (b)   *Èhɔ̀n   lɔ́   hùn.*
             door   DEF   open
             'The door opened.'

   A list of all of the verbs in Ajagbe known to undergo this variation is found in (31).

(31)   *cì*   'to extinguish' (as in a flame)
       cú   'to close'
       hùn   'to open'

10.3.5   The Passive/Active Alternation

Two types of passive/active alternations are available in Ajagbe: verbal and adjectival. These two constructions are formed with copular verbs followed by a participle. According to the informants, the two constructions are equivalent. It should be noted, however, that the informants prefer the impersonal construction to the passive.

The Verbal Passive

The verbal passive is introduced by *nyí* 'to be', which is followed by a fully reduplicated verbal base (ie a participle). This construction is shown in (32).

(32)   *Àvù   lɔ́   nyí   wùwù.*
       dog   DEF   be   RED.kill
       'The dog is/was killed.'

The Adjectival Passive

The verb-like *lè* 'to be at' introduces the adjectival passive. As in the verbal passive, the copular verb is this construction it is followed by a participle. An example of such a construction is given in (33).

(33)   *Àvù   lɔ́   lè   wùwù.*
       dog   DEF   be at   RED.kill
       'The dog is/was killed.'

   The adjectival passive can also be used with the anterior marker *sá* as shown in (34).

(34)   *Àvù   lɔ́   lè   wùwù   sá.*
       dog   DEF   be at   RED.kill   ANT
       'The dog had been killed.'

10.4   Modal Verbs

Ajagbe appears to have three modal verbs: *ɖɔ́* for obligation, *téŋ* for permission or possibility; and *sèŋ* for ability. In most cases, the modal verb is followed by the irrealis marker *a*.

10.4.1 Ðɔ́- Obligation

The modal verb *ɖɔ́* is used to express obligation or recommendations, corresponding to the English 'must' and 'should'. Sentences with this modal verb which do not contain a TMA marker can be interpreted as past, present or future as shown in (35). The context makes clear which sense is meant.

(35) *Àshíbá   ɖɔ́   a   wà   èdɔ̀.*
      Ashiba   must/should IRR   do   work

      'Ashiba must/should/will have/had to work.'

When this modal verb is used in conjunction with the anteriority marker *sá*, it is interpreted as describing a past obligation as shown in (36)

(36) *Àshíbá   ɖɔ́   a   wà   èdɔ̀   (sá).*
      Ashiba   must/should IRR   do   work   ANT

      'Ashiba had to work.'

(37) contains an example showing that *ɖɔ́* can be negated by the standard marker of negation, *gò*.

(37) *Àshíbá   ɖɔ́   a   wà   èdɔ̀   gò.*
      Ashiba   must/should IRR   do   work   NEG

      'Ashiba must not work.'

10.4.2 Téŋ - Permission or Possibility

The modal verb *téŋ* is used to express permission or possibility, most closely corresponding to the English verb 'may'. It is ambiguous between these two meanings without further context, as illustrated in (38)

(38) *Àshíbá   téŋ   a   wà   èdɔ̀.*
      Ashiba   may/might   IRR   do   work

      'Ashiba may/might work.'

The irrealis marker does not follow the modal verb in sentences with *téŋ* that describe actions that may be happening at present. Instead, a locative phrase is used, as shown in (39).

(39) *Àshíbá   téŋ   lè   èdɔ̀   wà   kɔ̀.*
      Ashiba   may/might   be at   work   do   PROG

      'Ashiba might be working.'

      [Lit.: Ashiba may be at work-doing.]

gò is used to negate sentences with *téŋ*. Somewhat surprisingly, the negative counterparts of sentences such as (39) do not contain locative phrases. In such cases the progressive marker occurs between the verb and the object. Examples of negated sentences containing *téŋ* are found in (40).

(40) (a) *Àshíbá   téŋ   a   wà   èdɔ̀   gò.*
           Ashiba   may/might   be at IRR   do   work   NEG

           'Ashiba might not work.'

      (b) *Àshíbá   téŋ   a   wà   kɔ̀   èdɔ̀   gò.*
           Ashiba   may/might be at   IRR   do   PROG   work   NEG

           'Ashiba might not be working.'

10.4.3 Sèŋ - Ability

The modal verb *sèŋ* expresses ability, similarly to the English 'can'. An example sentence containing this modal verb is given in (41). Note that without being preceded by the irrealis marker *a*, the modal verb *sèŋ* is interpreted with a past or potential meaning.

(41) *Àshíbá   sèŋ   a   wà   èdɔ̀.*
      Ashiba   can   IRR   do   work

      'Ashiba could work.'

When the irrealis marker *a* precedes *sèŋ*, it is interpreted as having a present or future meaning. An example of this is given in (42).

(42) *Àshíbá   a   sèŋ   a   wà   èdɔ̀.*
      Ashiba   IRR   can   IRR   do   work

      'Ashiba can/will be able to work.'

Chapter 11

Prepositions and Postpositions

Ajagbe has two prepositions and several postpositions. This section first reviews the inventory of prepositions and postpositions. Following this is an examination of the syntactic properties of these lexical items.

11.1 Prepositions

The prepositions in Ajagbe are *kóɖó* 'with', *kéké* 'until' and *nɔ́* 'for'.

11.1.1 *kóɖó* 'with'

kóɖó 'with' can head either comitative, as in (1), or instrumental phrases (2). It selects for a noun (which can be either animate or inanimate), or a pronoun. Note that a comitative phrase headed by *kóɖó* can appear next to a verbal argument (either subject or object) or clause finally, as illustrated in (1).

(1)　　(a) *É　　kpɔ́　Kójó　kóɖó　Àshíbá.*
　　　　　3sg　see　Kojo　with　Asiba

　　　　　'S/he saw Kojo and Ashiba.'

　　　(b) *Kójó　kóɖó　Àshíbá　kpɔ́　é.*
　　　　　Kojo　with　Ashiba　see　3sg

　　　　　'Kojo and Ashiba saw him/her.'

　　　(c) *Kójó　yì　　Zòvì　kóɖó　Àshíbá.*
　　　　　Kojo　go to　Azove　with　Ashiba

　　　　　'Kojo went to Azove with Ashiba.'

(2)　*Àmɛ̀　lɔ́　　wà　èdò　kóɖó　àlìn*
　　　man　DEF　do　work　with　hoe

　　　'The man worked with a hoe.'

　kóɖó can also be used to express manner as shown in (3).

(3)　*Àshíbá　nú　nyɔ̀　lɔ́　　kóɖó　dɔ̀mɛ̀zì.*
　　　Ashiba　say　word　DEF　with　anger

　　　'Ashiba said the word with anger.'

11.1.2 *kéké* 'until'

The preposition *kéké* is able to select for either NP or clausal complements. An example of *kéké* used with a clausal complement is shown in (4). In this case the meaning is clearly 'until'.

(4)　*Àshíbá　wà　èdò　kéké　énú　cì　kɔ̀　nɔ́　é.*
　　　Ashiba　do　work　until　thing　tire　prog　for　3sg

　　　'Ashiba worked until she was tired.'

According to the informants, when *kéké* is used with an NP it means 'all the way'. Rather than changing the meaning of the sentence, it functions somewhat as an insistence marker. Compare the two sentences in (5).

(5)   (a) *Àshíbá   yì   kéké   àxwè.*
          Ashiba go   until home
          'Ashiba went all the way home.'

       (b) *Àshíbá   yì   àxwè.*
          Ashiba go   home
          'Ashiba went home.'

11.1.3   *nɔ́* 'for, to, of'

nɔ́ 'for, to, of' can only select an NP, which most often functions as an indirect object, as shown in (6).

(6)   *Àshíbá   cú   èhò   lɔ́   nɔ́   Kòjó.*
       Ashiba pay money DEF for Kojo
       'Ashiba paid Kojo the money.'

Nɔ́ can also be used to indicate possession, as shown in (7).

(7)   (a) *Àwí   lè   dódó   mɛ̀   nɔ́   èxɔ̀   lɔ́.*
          cat   be at middle in   for room DEF
          'A cat is in the middle of the room.'

       (b) *eɣi   tóxú   nɔ́   kloʒin*
          white part for egg
          'egg white'

11.2   Postpositions

There are more postpositions than prepositions in Ajagbe. This section presents an inventory of them. Their syntactic properties will be examined later in the chapter.

11.2.1   *gbɔ̀* 'near'

The postposition *gbɔ̀* is used in a wide variety of contexts, although it appears to have a basic meaning of 'near'. *gbɔ̀* can also be used to mean 'at the house of', like the French *chez*. Examples are shown in (8)

(8)   (a) *Àshíbá   lè   ètɔ̀   gbɔ̀.*
          Ashiba be at river near
          'Ashiba is near the river.'

       (b) *Kójó   yì   Àshíbá   gbɔ̀.*
          Kojo go Ashiba near
          'Kojo went to Ashiba's (house).'

11.2.2   *jì* 'on; at'

jì is generally used to indicate that something is on the surface of an object. A typical example is given in (9). Note that *jì* can also be used to mean 'at', as when it is used with nouns such as *èbò* 'field'.

(9)   *Àcì   lè   àgbàn   lɔ́   jì.*
       stick be at pot   DEF on
       'The stick is on the pot.'

11.2.3 *mɛ̀* 'in'

mɛ̀ 'in' can be used with a wide variety of nouns, including those with interiors (such as rooms), areas (such as markets) and languages as demonstrated in (10). However, it does not seem possible to predict which nouns can appear with *mɛ̀* as opposed to *jì*. For example, *áfí* 'market' appears with *mɛ̀* while *ebo* 'field' can not. Instead, *èbò* must appear with *jì* 'on'.[1]

(10)   (a) *èxɔ̀   mɛ̀*
           room   in
           'in a room'

       (b) *áfí   mɛ̀*
           market   in
           'in a market'

       (c) *Àjàgbè   mɛ̀*
           Ajagbe   in
           'in Ajagbe'

   mɛ̀ 'in' can be used to indicate location (11a) or direction (11b). Furthermore, nouns which can appear with *mɛ̀* must do so when they follow locational or directional verbs, hence the ungrammaticality of the examples in (12). Note that certain nouns may follow locational or directional verbs without any postposition, for example *yì àxwè* 'go home' or *lè sùklú* '(to) be at school'.

(11)   (a) *Kòjó   lè   áfí   mɛ̀.*
           Kojo   be at   market   in
           'Kojo is in the market.'

       (b) *Kòjó   yì   áfí   mɛ̀.*
           Kojo   go   market   in
           'Kojo went to the market.'

(12)   (a) **Kòjó   lè   áfí.*
           Kojo   be at   market
           [Lit.: Kojo is in the market.]

       (b) **Kòjó   yì   Áfí.*
           Kojo   go   market
           [Lit.: Kojo went to the market.]

11.2.4 *nú* 'against'

nú 'against' can be either locative or directional. (13) shows the locative use, while the directional use is found in (14).

(13)   *Wémá   lè   èglì   nú.*
       book   be at   wall   against
       'A book is against the wall.'

(14)   *Kójó   sɔ́   èbà   lɔ́   xɔ̀   dò   èglì   nú.*
       Kojo   take   stick   DEF   hit   at   wall   against
       'Kojo hit the stick against the wall.'

11.2.5 *ŋkɔ́* 'in front of'

ŋkɔ́ 'in front of' can only be used as a locative. An example is given in (15).

(15)   *Àcì   lè   táblù   lɔ́   ŋkɔ́.*
       stick   be at   table   DEF   in front of
       'A stick is in front of the table.'

---

[1]Markets in the area where Ajagbe is spoken are open-air, thus it is unlikely that the choice between *mɛ̀* and *jì* would be decided by whether or not one is inside something.

The noun ŋkɔ́ 'front' can be used to indicate direction, but the postposition is ungrammatical in this context. This is shown in (16).

(16) (a) *Àshíbá   zɔ̀n   lè   ŋkɔ́   nɔ́   Kòjó.*
           Ashiba   walk   be at   front   for   Kojo
           'Ashiba walked in front of Kojo.'

      (b) **Àshíbá   zɔ̀n   Kòjó   ŋkɔ́.*
           Ashiba   walk   Kojo   in front of
           [Lit.: Ashiba walked in front of Kojo.']

11.2.6   *tú* 'at the edge of'

tú 'at the edge of' can be used as a locative or directional postposition. As a locative, it is generally used to indicate that something is on the edge of an object, as shown in (17). *tú* can also be used to mean 'near', in which case it can be replaced by *gbɔ̀* 'near'. According to the informants, the interpretation in both cases is identical. This is demonstrated in (18). As a directional, *tú* means 'by' as in (19).

(17) *Àcì   lɔ́   lè   táblù   lɔ́   tú.*
      stick   DEF   be at   table   DEF   at the edge of
      'The stick is at the edge of the table.'

(18) (a) *Kòjó   lè   èmɔ́   tú.*
           Kojo   be at   road   at the edge of
           'Kojo is by the road.'

      (b) *Kòjó   lè   èmɔ́   gbɔ̀.*
           Kojo   be at   road   near
           'Kojo is by the road.'

(19) *Áwí   yì   táblù   tú.*
      cat   go to   table   by
      'A cat went by the table.'

11.2.7   Nominal Positional Phrases

Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002 note that almost all Fongbe postpositions have a corresponding cognate noun. In Ajagbe, there appear to be fewer postpositions than in Fongbe. Many phrases which are rendered with postpositions in Fongbe are instead rendered with noun phrases in Ajagbe. Examples (20)-(22) each show a pair of a Fongbe postposition (in (a)) followed by the corresponding noun used in Ajagbe (in (b)). All Fongbe examples below are taken from Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002.

(20) (a) *Kɔ̀kú   ɖò   távò   glúwè.*
           Koku   be at   table   under
           'Koku is under the table.'   Fongbe

      (b) *Kòjó   lè   táblù   gɔn   mɛ̀.*
           Kojo   be at   table   space under   in
           'Kojo is under the table.'

(21) (a) *Ví   ɔ́   ɖò   àlì   tétìn.*
           child   DEF   be at   alley   in the middle of
           'The child is in the middle of the alley.'
                                                                                                      Fongbe

      (b) *Àwí   lè   dòdò   mɛ̀   nɔ̀   èxɔ̀   lɔ́.*
           cat   be at   middle   in   to   room   DEF
           'The cat is in the middle of the room.'

(22) (a) *Kɔ̀kú   ɖò   sò   ɔ́   tà.*
           Koku   be at   mountain   DEF   at the top of
           'Koku is at the top of the mountain.'

(b) *Kójó yì támɛ́ nɔ́ ètò lɔ́.*
Kojo go top   for hill DEF
'Kojo went to the top of the hill.'

(b) *Kójó yì támɛ́ nɔ́ ètò lɔ́.*
Kojo go top   for hill DEF
'Kojo went to the top of the hill.'

Chapter 12

Modifiers

This chapter examines modifiers in Ajagbe. There appear to be three types of modifiers in the language: stative verbs (which function like adjectives in other languages); true adjectives; and adverbs. Each type will be examined in turn. Their distinguishing characteristics will also be examined as this serves as the justification for positing three types of modifiers. This is followed by an examination of numerals and quantifiers.

12.1   Stative Verbs

The most common way of modifying a noun in Ajagbe is with a stative verb. These verbs can be used as a predicate as in (1). Note that nouns and certain modifiers (true adjectives and adverbs as discussed later in the chapter) can not occur as the sole predicate of a clause. In other words, subject + verb can form a grammatical utterance while subject + noun (+ adjective/adverb) can not. This is illustrated in (2).

(1)   *Kójó dɔ̀n.*
      Kojo   be evil

      'Kojo is evil.'

(2)   (a) **Àshíbá nywíɖé.*
           Ashiba   well

           [Lit.: 'Ashiba well']

      (b) **Kójó dòtó.*
           Kojo   doctor

           [Lit.: 'Kojo doctor']

Both nouns and true adjectives can be linked to a subject with the copular verbs *lè* 'to be at' and *nyí* 'to be', but this is not possible with stative verbs. *lè* followed by a stative verb results in an imperative interpretation while *nyí* simply renders the utterance ungrammatical. This is shown in (**??**). Grammatical uses of copular verbs with nouns and true adjectives are shown in (10) for comparison.

(3)   (a) *Kójó lè   dɔ̀n.*
           Kojo   3IMP   be evil

           'May Kojo be evil!'

           *'Kojo is evil.'

      (b) **Kójó nyí dɔ̀n.*
           Kojo   be   be evil

           [Lit.: Kojo is evil.]

To give a definite interpretation to nouns modified by stative verbs, the stative verb must be reduplicated. It is either followed by the definite article *lɔ́* or suffixed with the agentive suffix *-tɔ̀*. These possibilities are shown in (4) and (5) respectively, and the informants judge them as having identical meaning. As can be seen in (5) *lɔ́* may optionally follow the form suffixed with *-tɔ̀*. The informants

tend to reinterpret utterances in which the definite determiner *ló* follows an unreduplicated stative verb as having an emphatic meaning as in (6) (the hearer interprets the definite article *ló* as the emphatic marker *lɔɔ*).

(4) *àmɛ̀   dɔ̀ndɔ̀n   ló*
     person   RED.evil   DEF

     'the evil person'

(5) *àmɛ̀   dɔ̀ndɔ̀ntɔ   (ló)*
     person   RED.evil.AG   DEF

     'the evil person'

(6) *Àmɛ̀   dɔ̀n   ló!*
     person   be evil   (*DEF) / EMPH

     'What an evil person!'

     #'the evil person'

Bisyllabic stative verbs are never reduplicated. Some such stative verbs appear to already be reduplicated, for example *kpòkpò* 'to be short'. These verbs, however, function as a single unit as there is no base. Continuing with the same example then, *kpò* does not mean 'to be short'. Instead, it has the unrelated meanings of 'to be tired; to be dull; to be old'. Since reduplication of bisyllabic stative verbs is ungrammatical, the non-reduplicated forms can function as a predicate as well as a modifier with a definite article. These uses are shown in (7) and (8) respectively.

(7) *Àmɛ̀   (ló)   kpòkpò.*
     person   (DEF)   be short

     '(The) person is short.'

(8) *àmɛ̀   kpòkpò   ló*
     person   be short   DEF

     'the short person'

(9) contains the three known stative verbs which appear to be reduplicated but lack a base form.

(9) *bùbɔ̀*   'to be soft'
     jìnjìn   'to be tall'
     kpòkpò   'to be short'

12.2 True Adjectives

There seem to be fewer true adjectives than stative verbs which can be used in an adjective-like manner. True adjectives differ from stative verbs in several important ways. First, true adjectives can not be used as a predicate without the copular verb *lè* 'to be at' as shown in (10a,b). True adjectives can not undergo reduplication; they are used as is when modifying a noun. As with stative verbs, adjectives always follow the noun they modify. This is shown in (10c).

(10) (a) *É   lè   blibù.*
          3sg   be at   round

          'It is round.'

      (b) **É   blibù.*
          3sg   round

          [Lit.: 'It round.']

      (c) *énú   blibù   ló*
          thing   round   DEF

          'the round thing'

(11) lists all of the known true adjectives in Ajagbe.

(11)   *blibù*   'round'
        gód̩wí   'small and round'
        gbájέ   'flat' (as in thin, not even)
        nywíd̩é   'well', 'good'
        xɔ̀xwí   'old' (usu. with fruit)
        yòyú   'new'

12.3   Adverbs

Adverbs in Ajagbe can surface in three different positions: (1) clause-initially; (2) between the subject
and the verb; and (3) clause-finally. Any given adverb, however, must surface in a fixed position (or
possibly one of two positions), thus an adverb which surfaces clause-finally in one sentence can not surface
between the subject and the verb in the next.

There are relatively few clause-initial adverbs in Ajagbe. The only two I have been able to elicit are
tànfwín and *tànyɔ́*, both of which mean 'maybe'. An example containing these adverbs is given in (12).

(12)   *Tànfwín / Tànyɔ́   wò   wà   èdò   lɔ́.*
        maybe   3sg do   work DEF

        'Maybe they have done the work.'

Most types of adverbs surface clause-finally. Classes of adverbs which tend to surface in this position
include: degree, habitual, manner and temporal adverbs. Examples of each of these groups of adverbs
are given in (13)[1]. Sentences containing adverbs from these lists are found in (14).

Transitive verbs normally require a direct object, as discussed in Section . This is not, however, the
case when they are modified by an adverb. In some, but not all, cases, this seems to be because the
adverb may actually be a noun (for example *xwèd̩èká* 'a little' which can be split into the noun meaning
'a bit' and the indefinite article). Many of the sentences in (14) with *d̩ù* 'to eat' as the main verb are
examples of this.

(13)   (a) ADVERBS OF DEGREE
            dòjí   'more'
            d̩éké   'only'
            sùgbɔ̀   'a lot'
            wùgàn   'too much'
            xwèd̩èká   'a little'

        (b) HABITUAL ADVERBS
            gbèd̩è gò   'never'
            kábákábá   'regularly', 'often', 'constantly'
            kwèshìlà d̩ékà 'weekly'
            ŋkéké d̩ékà   'daily'
            tὲgbὲ   'always'
            wècì d̩ékà   'monthly'
            xwèdònú   'sometimes'

        (c) ADVERBS OF MANNER
            àhán   'like that'
            àkpòàkpò   'separately'
            d̩ɔ̀d̩ɔ̀   'slowly'
            kábá   'quickly'
            nywìd̩é   'well'
            xwíyí   'quietly'
            zèd̩ékà   'directly'

        (d) MODAL ADVERBS
            cánhέnné   'anyway'
            plὲŋplὲŋ   'definitely'
            táŋfwín   'maybe', 'possibly'
            táŋnyɔ́   'maybe', 'possibly'

---

[1]The temporal adverb *gbèd̩è gò* is clearly related to the existential quantifier *gbèd̩è* 'any time'. When the negation
marker *gò* is present in the same sentence, its meaning changes to 'never'. Its behavior is similar to the other existential
quantifiers which are discussed on page 79.

(e) Locative Adverbs
àfì *shá* fì 'everywhere'

(f) Temporal Adverbs
èsɔ̀ 'today'; 'tommorow'
káká 'immediately'

(14) (a) Adverbs of Degree

– *É   ɖù   dòjí.*
3SG eat   more

'S/He ate more.'

– *Àshíbá   ɖù   gbòmà   ɖéké.*
Ashiba   eat   solanum   only

'Ashiba only ate solanum.'

– *Àshíbá   ɖù   sùgbɔ̀.*
Ashiba   eat   a lot

'Ashiba ate a lot.'

– *Àshíbá   ɖù   xwèɖèká.*
Ashiba   eat   a little

'Ashiba ate a little.'

– *É   ɖù   wùgàn.*
3SG eat   too much

'S/He ate too much.'

(b) Habitual Adverbs

– *Kòjó   vá   gbèɖè   gò*
Kojo   come   any time   NEG

'Kojo never comes.'

– *Kòjó   vá   nɔ   kábákábá.*
Kojo   come   PLA   regularly

'Kojo comes regularly/often/constantly.'

– *Kòjó   vá   nɔ   kwèshìlà   ɖékà*
Kojo   come   PLA   week   one

'Kojo comes weekly.'

– *Kòjó   vá   nɔ   ŋkéké   ɖékà.*
Kojo   come   PLA   day   one

'Kojo comes daily.'

– *Shìvè   cì   nɔ   é   tègbè.*
hunger   tire   PLA   3SG   always

'S/He is always hungry.'

– *Kòjó   vá   nɔ   wècì   ɖékà.*
Kojo   come   PLA   month   one

'Kojo comes monthly.'
wècì ɖékà

Kòjó   vá   nɔ   xwèdònú.
Kojo   come   sometimes

'Kojo comes sometimes.'

(c) Adverbs of Manner

– *É   ɖù   ɖɔ̀ɖɔ̀.*
3SG eat   slowly

'S/He ate slowly.'

– *É   ɖù   kábá.*
3SG eat   quickly

'S/He ate quickly.'

– **Ŋ** *yì Kòjó gbɔ̀ zèɖékà.*
1SG go to Kojo near directly

'I went to Kojo directly.'

(d) MODAL ADVERBS

– *É só cánhénné.*
3SG leave anyway

'S/He left anyway.'

– *É kú sá plèŋ plèŋ.*
3SG die ANT all all

'S/He had definitely died.'

12.4 Numerals

This section examines cardinal and ordinal numerals, then fractions.

12.4.1 Cardinal Numbers

The traditional number system of Ajagbe is quite complicated. It is primarily base-40, although it shows some characteristics of base-10 and base-20 systems as well. As a rough overview, the system behaves as if it were base-10 up through 49. From 50 until 1000, it acts as a hybrid base-40/base-20/base-10 system.

The Ajagbe numbers 1-10 have both a long form and a short form. The full and reduced forms appear to be entirely interchangeable. Note, however, that the reduced form *èɖé* 'one' can not function as an indefinite article, while the full form of 'one', *ɖékà*, can. Both forms of the numbers 1-10 are shown in (15).

(15)

Long Form	Short Form	
èɖé	*ɖékà*	one
àmèvè	*èvè*	two
àmètɔ̀n	*ètɔ́n*	three
àménɛ́	*ènɛ́*	four
àmátɔ̀n	*átɔ̀n*	five
àmádín	*ádín*	six
àmádré	*ádré*	seven
àményí	*ènyí*	eight
àmáshíɖèkè	*áshíɖèkè*	nine
àméwó	*éwó*	ten

There does not appear to be much internal structure to the numbers 1-10; specifically none of them appears to be composed of others, which is a major difference from the number system in Fongbe (see [5]:365). Note that *áshíɖèkè* 'nine' (short form) seems to be a combination of *ashi* 'hand' and *ɖékà* 'one', presumably meaning 'hands minus one'.

The long form of each number appears to derive from the short form in most cases. This is the case because [e] will predictably become [ɛ] after [m] (since the vowel [ẽ] does not exist in Ajagbe), but there is no motivation for [ɛ] to become [e] when the preceding [m] is absent.

Numbers 11-19 are formed by concatenating *wí-* ('ten') and the short form of the number needed. The usual rules of hiatus resolution apply, thus if the short form is *è-* initial, the *è-* is dropped, but there is no change to consonant or *à-* initial forms. Thus, we have *wídékà* 'eleven', *wívè* 'twelve' and *wíátɔ̀n* 'fifteen'. Note that 18 and 19 are formed as follows: *vè tó lè èwì mè* 'two leave in twenty', *ɖékà tó lè èwì mè* 'one leaves in twenty'. In neither case is the initial [e] of *èwì* 'twenty' pronounced.

21-29 are formed with *wì-* 'twenty', *vɔ̀n* (meaning unknown) and the short form of a number 1-9. Examples of this are *wìvɔ̀nɖèkà* 21 and *wìvɔ̀nàtɔ́n* 25. The first tone of the word representing the units changes from H to L in this environment. Furthermore, the final syllable of *wìvɔ̀nàtɔ́n* 25 surfaces with a H tone while L would be expected. More research is needed to explain these observations.

Numbers from 30-49 begin with a decimal base, *ègbàn* 'thirty' or *èkà* 'forty', which can then be followed by *xò* 'plus' (in other contexts 'to hit') and the short form of a number 1-10. Examples of this are *ègbàn xò ènɛ́* 34 and *èkà xò ádín* 46.

The number system begins to behave somewhat like a base-40 system at 40, but there are elements of base-20 and base-10 systems clearly visible. The chart in (16) shows the multiples of ten from ten to one hundred while (17) shows that larger numbers follow the same pattern. Each number is accompanied by an explanation of the numeral (for example *ègbàn xò èné* '34', literally '30 add 4' would be explained as '30 + 4'). In the interest of saving space I have written the explanations using arithmetic expressions rather than in words. Note that there is no word used in these numbers for multiplication; the multiplication symbol corresponds to using one number as a quantifier with another number, for example *èkà èvè* '80', which is literally 'two fourties'.

(16)

Number	Word	Explanation
10	*èwò*	10
20	*èwì*	20
30	*ègbàn*	30
40	*èkà*	40
50	*èkà xò èwò*	40 + 10
60	*èkà xò èwì*	40 + 20
70	*èkà xò èwì xò èwò*	40 + 20 + 10
80	*èkà èvè*	40 * 2
90	*èxà èvè xò èwò*	(40 * 2) + 10
100	*èkà èvè xò èwì*	(40 * 2) + 20

(17)

Number	Word	Explanation
150	*èkà ètɔ̀n xò èwì xò èwò*	(40 * 3) + 20 + 10
200	*èkà átɔ̀n*	40 * 5
210	*èkà átɔ̀n xò èwò*	(40 * 5) + 10
480	*èkà wívè*	40 * 12

Other numbers from 41-9997 (inclusive) are formed in two ways, depending upon the value of the units place. If the unit's digit is between one and seven (inclusive), then the number is formed by the multiple of ten followed by *xò* and the units. For example, sixty-two is *èkà xò èwì xò èvè* (forty plus twenty plus two) and seventy-four is *èkà xò èwì xò èwò xò ènè* (forty plus twenty plus ten plus four). If the unit's place is eight or nine, then like 18 and 19, the structure is 'one/two leaves in ...', for example *èvè tó lè èkà xó èwì mè* (two leaves in forty plus ten).

There is a unique word for 'thousand' *kótókún*. Multiples of a thousand are simply *kótókún* followed by the short form of the number by which it is multiplied, for example *kótókún ḍ̀ekà* is 1000. To form a number between 1000 and 2000, the thousand's part is simply followed by the hundreds, tens and so on. For example 1039 is *kótókún ḍ̀ekà (kóḍ̀ó) ḍ̀ekà tó lè èkà mè*, literally 'one thousand (with) one hundred thirty nine'. 998 and 999 both use the word *kótókún* 'thousand'. For example, 999 is *ḍ̀ekà tó lè kótókún ḍ̀ekà mè* 'one thousand take away one'.

èfàn 'half' can be used to express 1.5 times a number. For example *kótókún ḍ̀ekà kóḍ̀ó èfàn* 'one thousand with half' means 1500. I have not been able to elicit it with numbers which are not multiples of 100.

12.4.2 Ordinal Numbers

With one exception, ordinal numbers are simply a cardinal number followed by *tɔ*, the ordinal suffix. If the number is ten or less, then the long form is used. *ŋ̀kɔ̀tɔ̀* 'first' is the exception to this rule. *ŋkɔ̀* means 'in front of', thus *ŋ̀kɔ̀tɔ̀* can be interpreted as 'foremost'. There are several words reported meaning last, as follows: . All of them bear the suffix *-tɔ*. The ordinal numbers 1-10 are found in (18). Higher ordinal numbers are in (19). Further research is necessary to determine why *-tɔ* surfaces with a high tone after *àmáshíḍ̀ekè.* while in all other contexts it surfaces with the same tone as the preceding syllable (the final syllable of the cardinal number).

(18)   *ŋ̀kɔ̀tɔ̀*   first
       àmɛ̀vètɔ̀   second
       àmɛ̀tɔ̀ntɔ̀   third
       àmɛ́nɛ́tɔ́   fourth
       àmátɔ̀ntɔ́   fifth
       àmádíntɔ́   sixth
       àmádrétɔ́   seventh
       àmɛ́nyítɔ́   eighth
       àmáshídèkètɔ́   ninth
       àmɛ́wótɔ́   tenth

(19)   *èkà xò ètɔ̀ntɔ̀*   forty third
       èkà ètɔ̀n xò ényítɔ́   one hundred twenty eighth

12.4.3   Fractions

With the exception of *èfàn* 'half', simple fractions are formed by *mà dó* 'divide in' plus a cardinal number. The long form of a number is used in this context, if it is available. Examples are shown in (20).

(20)   *mà dó àmɛ̀tɔ̀n*   1/3
       mà dó àmɛ́nɛ́   1/4
       mà dó àmɛ́wó   1/10

12.5   Quantifiers

This section looks at universal, existential and negative quantifiers in that order.

12.5.1   Universal Quantifiers

Ajagbe has three universal quantifiers. There are two meaning all, *xlɔ́ŋ* and *pléŋ*, and then *ɖékàɖékà* meaning 'each or every'.

   The words for 'all', *xlɔ́ŋ* and *pléŋ*, appear to be identical in distribution and meaning. Both must be preceded by a plural noun. Examples of these pronouns are given in (21).

(21)   *Ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   wo   xlɔ́ŋ / pléŋ   lè   élé.*
       goat   DEF   PL   all   be at   here

       'All the goats are here.'

   ɖékàɖékà 'each, every' is preceded by a singular noun as shown in (22). Note that *ɖékàɖékà* appears to be a reduplicated form of the indefinite article *ɖékà*, which also means 'one'.

(22)   *Ègbɔ̀   ɖékàɖékà   lè   élé.*
       goat   each   be at   here

       'Every/each goat is here.'

12.5.2   Existential Quantifiers

The 'some-' type of existential quantifiers in Ajagbe all contain the indefinite article *ɖékà*, and they are as follows: *núɖékà* 'something', *mèɖékà* 'someone' and *fiɖékà* 'somewhere'. The origin of these quantifiers is transparent: *núɖékà* comes from *énú* 'thing'; *mèɖékà* comes from *àmè* 'person'; and *fiɖékà* comes from *àfi* 'place'. Examples of the 'some-' type quantifiers are given in (23).

(23)   (a)   *Àshíbá   xwlè   nùɖékà.*
             Ashiba   buy   something

             'Ashiba bought something.'

       (b)   *Kójó   yì   fiɖékà.*
             Kojo   go to   somewhere

             'Kojo went somewhere.'

    (c) *Mèd̩ékà kpɔ́ é.*
        someone see 3sg
        'Someone saw her/him.'

Ajagbe also has existential quantifiers of the 'any-' type. *d̩è*, which means 'any', is present in all of the existential quantifiers of this type. The three 'any-' type quantifiers in Ajagbe are: *fìd̩è* 'anywhere', *núd̩è* 'anything' and *mèd̩è* 'anyone'[2] The roots of these words appear to be identical to those of the 'some-' type quantifiers. Examples of the 'any-' type quantifiers are found in (24).

(24)   (a) *È   kpɔ́ mèd̩è à?*
           2SG see anyone Q?
           'Did you see anyone?'

        (b) *É   xwlè núd̩è à?*
           3SG buy anything Q
           'Did s/he buy anything?'

        (c) *Kójó d̩ù nɔ núd̩è kpókpwí.*
           Kojo eat PLA anything at all
           'Kojo will eat anything (at all).'

To convey the meaning of a negative quantifier, such as 'nobody', the appropriate existential quantifier is used in a negated sentence. Examples of this are shown in (25).

(25)   (a) *Àshíbá xwlè nùd̩é gò.*
           Ashiba buy anything NEG
           'Ashiba bought nothing.'

        (b) *Kójó yì fìd̩è gò.*
           Kojo go to anywhere NEG
           'Kojo went nowhere.'

        (c) *É kpɔ́ mèd̩è gò.*
           3sg see anybody NEG
           'S/He saw nobody.'

The negation marker must occur at the end of the sentence, even if the subject is a negative quantifier. This is illustrated in (26).

(26) *Mèd̩è kpɔ́ Kójó gò.*
     anyone see anything NEG
     'Nobody saw Kojo.'

A single negation marker can have scope over two or more quantifiers. Again, the negation marker is at the end of the sentence. Examples of this are given in (27).

(27)   (a) *Mèd̩è kpɔ́ nùd̩é gò.*
           anyone see anything NEG
           'No one saw anything.'

        (b) *Mèd̩è yì fìd̩è gò.*
           anyone go to anywhere NEG
           'Nobody went anywhere.'

The idea of 'a lot/many/several,etc.' is represented by *sùgbɔ̀* 'to be numerous, plentiful'. It is a stative verb in Ajagbe, thus if it is to be used as a modifier, the agentive suffix *-tɔ̀* is needed. Example comparing its uses as a predicate and as a modifier are found in (28). *sùgbɔ̀* can also modify a VP as in (29).

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[2]The informants translated 'anyone' first as *àmèd̩èkpókpwí*, while they translated 'anything' as *énúd̩è* and 'anywhere' as *àfìd̩è*. Tentatively, it appears as if the difference between *àmèd̩èkpókpwí* and *àmèd̩è* is that *kpókpwí* means 'at all'. More research is necessary to be sure that this is the case.

(28)   (a) *Ègbɔ̀   sùgbɔ̀.*
             goat   be numerous

             'The goats are numerous.' / 'There are many goats.'

        (b) *Ègbɔ̀   sùgbɔ̀   tɔ̀   lè   èlɛ́.*
             goat   be numerous   AG   be at   here

             'Many goats are here.'

(29)   *Àshíbá   ɖù   énú   sùgbɔ̀.*
        Ashiba   eat   thing   be numerous

        'Ashiba ate a lot.'

Chapter 13

Serial Verbs

Ajagbe has a syntactic construction in which two discrete verbs can be used as a single predicate. Such structures are serial verbs, and there are several characteristics which distinguish them from sequential verb structures. The first part of this chapter is an examination of the differences between serial and sequential verb structures. The second part examines the serial verbs available in Ajagbe. Tentatively, it appears as if many serial verb constructions available in Fongbe are ungrammatical in Ajagbe. Further research is needed, however, to provide sufficient evidence for this claim.

13.1 Characteristics of Serial Verbs

First, an example of a sequential verb construction (SqVC) is given in (1). The sentence in (2) contains the same verbs in a serial verb construction (SeVC). The most obvious difference between the two is that the conjunction *yí* 'and' is in the SqVC, while it is absent from the SeVC.

(1) *Àshíbá só ègbò ló yí vá àxwè mè.*
     Ashiba take goat DEF and come home in

     'Ashiba took the goat and came home.'

(2) *Àshíbá só ègbò ló vá àxwè mè.*
     Ashiba take goat DEF come home in

     'Ashiba took the goat home.'

This difference between the SeVC and the SqVC will be used as a test; if *yí* 'and' is required, then it is not a serial verb. At this point, we have only a circular definition of the SeVC, thus other tests are needed to show that the complex predicate in SeVCs functions as a single unit, while the different predicates in SqVCs do not. We will see that SqVCs and SeVCs as defined so far also differ systematically in three ways: 1) behavior with temporal markers; 2) distribution of the irrealis particle *a*; and 3) negation.

SqVCs may have one temporal marker for each verb. In (3) the two verbs have different temporal markers and the resulting sentence is grammatical. When each of the verbs in a SeVC are associated with a different temporal marker, as in (4), the sentence is ungrammatical.

(3) *Kójó só ègbò ló ègà ḍékà yí vá àxwè mè ègà ènɛ́.*
     Kojo take goat DEF metal one and come home in metal four

     'Kojo took the goat at one o'clock and came home at four o'clock.'

(4) **Kójó só ègbò ló ègà ḍékà vá àxwè mè ègà ènɛ́.*
     Kojo take goat DEF metal one come home in metal four

     [Lit.: Kojo took the goat home at one o'clock four o'clock.]

There may be as many irrealis particles as verbs in a SqVC as shown in (5). Each irrealis particle has scope only over the verb it is next to, as can be seen in (6). In SeVCs, however, a single irrealis marker has scope over both verbs, and only one irrealis marker is permitted. This is shown in (7).

(5) *Àshíbá a só ègbò ló yí a vá àxwè mè.*
     Ashiba IRR take goat DEF and IRR come home in

     'Ashiba will take the goat and come home.'

(6) *Àshíbá   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   yí   a   vá   àxwè   mɛ̀.*
    Ashiba take goat DEF and IRR come home in
    'Ashiba took the goat and will come home.'

(7) (a) *Àshíbá   a   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   vá   àxwè   mɛ̀.*
          Ashiba IRR take goat DEF come home in
          'Ashiba will take the goat home.'

    (b) **Àshíbá   a   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   a   vá   àxwè   mɛ̀.*
          Ashiba   IRR take goat DEF IRR come home in
          [Lit.: Ashiba will will take the goat home.]

Negation also behaves differently between SeVCs and SqVCs . SqVCs can have one negation marker with each verb, as shown in (8). Like the irrealis marker in SqVCs, each negation marker takes scope only over the adjacent verb. SeVCs, on the other hand, can only have one negation marker for the entire construction, and this negation marker takes scope over both verbs as shown in (9).

(8) *Àshíbá   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   gò   kpó   dé   vá   àxwè   mɛ̀   ò.*
    Ashiba take goat DEF NEG nor NEG come home in   NEG
    'Ashiba did not take the goat and she did not go home.

(9) (a) *Àshíbá   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   vá   àxwè   mɛ̀   gò.*
          Ashiba take goat DEF come home in   NEG
          'Ashiba did not take the goat home.

    (b) **Àshíbá   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   gò   vá   àxwè   mɛ̀   gò.*
          Ashiba   take goat DEF NEG come home in   NEG
          [Lit.: Ashiba did not take the goat home.]

Serial verbs do not undergo reduplication, thus there is no change in the surface form of a serial verb used as a main verb or as a gerund/participle (which would normally be a reduplicated verb). This is illustrated below, where *sɔ́ wlá* 'to hide' is used as a main verb in (10) and as a gerund in (11).

(10) *Àshíbá   sɔ́   fláfínɔ́   wlá.*
     Ashiba take thief   hide
     'Ashiba hid a thief.'

(11) *Fláfínɔ́   sɔ́   wlá   nyɔ́   gò.*
     thief   take hide be good NEG
     'Hiding thieves is not good.'

13.2   Particular Serial Verbs

There are several SeVCs in Ajagbe, but the variety available is remarkably lower in Ajagbe than in Fongbe. This section describes all of the known SeVCs in Ajagbe, and is organized by the first verb in a series.

13.2.1   *sɔ́* 'to take'

It appears as if any transitive or ditransitive verb may be the second verb in a SeVC introduced by *sɔ́*. They have not all been tested, but none of the ones tested has resulted in an ungrammatical sentence. The meaning of a SeVC introduced by *sɔ́* 'to take' is entirely determined by the second verb, and it in fact appears to be identical to the second verb were it to be used alone. The example in (12) contains only the second verb of the SeVC used in (10), but its meaning is essentially the same. The informant who provided these sentences suggested that (10) could also be translated as 'Ashiba took a thief and hit him'.

(12) *Àshíbá   wlá   fláfínɔ́.*
     Ashiba hide thief
     'Ashiba hid a thief.'

The SeVCs introduced by *sɔ́* 'to take' may only have as many arguments as the second verb alone permits. Thus if a transitive verb such as *wlá* 'to hide' is used, there must be two nominal arguments in the sentence as in (10). If a ditransitive verb is used, then there must be three nominal arguments in the sentence as shown in (13), and the second verb occurs between the two nominal predicates. *sɔ́*, however, can not take one nominal predicate while the second verb in the series takes another, hence the ungrammaticality of (24a).

(13)   *Àshíbá   sɔ́   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   ná   Kójó.*
       Ashiba   take   goat   DEF   give   Kojo

       'Ashiba gave the goat to Kojo.'

13.2.2   *kplɔ̀* 'to lead; to accompany'

kplɔ̀ means 'to lead' or 'to accompany' when in isolation, as can be seen in (14).

(14)   (a)   *Àshíbá   kplɔ̀   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́.*
             Ashiba   lead   goat   DEF

             'Ashiba led the goat.'

       (b)   *Àshíbá   kplɔ̀   Kòjó.*
             Ashiba   accompany   Kojo

             'Ashiba accompanied Kojo.'

kplɔ̀ also means 'to lead; to accompany' in SeVCs. It can combine with motion verbs as shown in (15).

(15)   (a)   *Àshíbá   kplɔ̀   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   yì   àfì   mɛ̀.*
             Ashiba   lead   goat   DEF   go to   market   in

             'Ashiba led the goat to market.'

       (b)   *Àshíbá   kplɔ̀   Kòjó   yì   àxwè   mɛ̀.*
             Ashiba   accompany   Kojo   go to   house   in

             'Ashiba accompanied Kojo home.'

13.2.3   *dɔ̀n* 'to pull', *cùcù* 'to push'

dɔ̀n 'to pull' and *cùcù* 'to push' can be used in a SeVC in Ajagbe as demonstrated in (16). I have only been able to elicit *vá* 'to come' as the second verb in SeVCs when *dɔ̀n* 'to pull' or *cùcù* 'to push' is the first verb in the series.

(16)   (a)   *Àshíbá   dɔ̀n   ègbɔ̀   lɔ́   vá   xèxènú.*
             Ashiba   pull   goat   DEF   come   outside

             'Ashiba pulled the goat outside.'

       (b)   *Kòjó   cùcù   ʒìnkpìn   lɔ́   vá   èlé.*
             Kojo   pull   chair   DEF   come   here

             'Kojo pulled the chair here.'

13.2.4   *trɔ́* 'to turn'

trɔ́ means 'to turn'. It can be either transitive or intransitive as shown in (17).

(17)   (a)   *Àshíbá   trɔ́.*
             Ashiba   turn

             'Ashiba turned.'

       (b)   *Àshíbá   trɔ́   éhún   lɔ́.*
             Ashiba   turn   car   DEF

             'Ashiba turned the car.'

The only verb which I have been able to elicit as the second verb in a series introduced by *trɔ́* 'to turn' is *só* 'to leave'. An example of a series with *trɔ́* 'to turn' is given in (18.

(18) *Àshíbá   trɔ́   éhún   lɔ́   só   àfì   mὲ.*
      Ashiba turn   car   DEF leave market in
      'Ashiba turned the car out of the market.'

If *trɔ́* 'to turn' is used to describe turning towards something, then the preposition *ɖáɖá* 'into' is used as can be seen in (19). This is similar to the behavior of *dɔ̀* 'to throw', *dɔ̀n* 'to pull' and *cùcù* 'to push'.

(19) '*Àshíbá   trɔ́   éhún   lɔ́   ɖáɖá   àfì   mὲ.*
       Ashiba turn   car   DEF into   market in
       'Ashiba turned the car into the market.'

13.2.5   *dɔ̀* 'to throw'

dɔ̀ 'to throw' can be used as the first verb in an SeVC, however, it appears that the only verb which can be the second verb in the series is *só* 'to leave'. The sentence in (20) shows *dɔ̀* 'to throw' in a SeVC while (20) contains an example of another use of *dɔ̀*.

(20) *Kòjó   dɔ̀   sàblà   lɔ́   só   àxwè   mὲ.*
      Kojo throw onion   DEF leave house   in
      'Kojo threw the onion out of the house.'

      Àshíbá   dɔ̀   sàblà   lɔ́   ɖáɖá   èlέ.
      Ashiba throw onion   DEF into   here
      'Ashiba threw the onion here.'

13.2.6   *tàshì* 'to let'

The notion of 'to let' can be conveyed with a SeVC in Ajagbe. It is introduced by the verb *tàshì* 'to let; to abandon'. Examples of this construction are given in (21).

(21) (a) *Àshíbá   tàshì   cùgbàn   lɔ́   gbàn.*
          Ashiba let   bottle   DEF break
          'Ashiba let the bottle break.'

      (b) *Kòjó   tàshì   àmὲ   lɔ́   só.*
          Kojo let   man   DEF leave
          'Kojo let the man leave.'

There appear to be restrictions on the second verb in this SeVC, although more research is necessary to determine what these restrictions are. If a verb is not able to be the second verb in this SeVC, then a SqVC is used instead. An example is given in (22).

(22) *Àshíbá   tàshì   énúɖùɖù   lɔ́   yí   é   xò   èɖyì.*
      Ashiba let   food   DEF and 3sg hit dirtiness
      'Ashiba let the food get dirty.'

13.2.7   Instrumental Constructions

An example of the instrumental serial verb construction found in Fongbe is in (23). Nothing resembling this construction seems to be grammatical in Ajagbe, as shown in (24a). The grammatical translation of this sentence, which uses *kóɖó* 'with', is in (24b).

(23) *Kɔ̀kú   só   jìví   sέn   làn.*
      Koku take knife cut   meat
      'Koku cut meat with a knife.'

<div align="right">

FONGBE

(=(82a) in Brousseau 1998 p. 167)

</div>

(24) (a) *Àshíbá sɔ́ èwì sò sàblà.*
Ashiba   take knife cut onion

[Lit.: Ashiba cut onion with a knife.]

(b) *Àshíbá sò sàblà kɔ́dɔ́ èwì.*
Ashiba cut onion with knife

'Ashiba cut onion with a knife.'

Swadesh Word List

1. hand — *àlɔ̀*
2. left (hand) — *èmyɔ̀*
3. right (hand) — *dùshì*
4. leg — *àfɔ̀*
5. foot — *àfɔ̀*
6. to walk — *zɔ̀nzɔ̀nlìn*
7. road, trail/path — *émɔ́*
8. to come — *vá*
9. to turn / to change one's direction — *trɔ́*
10. swim — *xú èshì / xú ètɔ̀*
11. to wipe — *cúcú*
12. to rub — *cúcú*
13. dirty — *xójì*
14. dust — *jìxóxó*
15. skin — *gbàzà*
16. body — *ŋcílán*
17. back (of a person) — *kpòmɛ̀*
18. belly — *xóḑú*
19. bone — *éxú*
20. guts / viscera — *xɔ́ménú wo / dɔ́ví wo*
21. liver — *dɔ̀ fì*
22. heart — *èjì*
23. to know (a fact) — *nyá*
24. to think — *bù*
25. to fear — *vɔ́n (nɔ́)*
26. blood — *èhùn*
27. head — *étá*
28. neck — *ékɔ́*
29. hair (on head) — *èḑà*
30. nose — *ŋɔ́cı*
31. breath — *gbɔ̀ngbɔ̀n*
32. to smell — *hwɛ́n*
33. mouth — *ènù*
34. tooth — *áḑú*
35. tongue — *àḑè*
36. to laugh — *kò*
37. to cry — *fànvì*
38. to vomit — *trú*
39. to spit — *cú ètàn (lit.: to spit saliva)*
40. to eat — *ḑù*
41. to cook — *ḑá*
42. to drink — *nù*
43. to bite — *ḑù*
44. to suck — n/a
45. ear — *ètɔ̀*
46. to hear — *sè*
47. eye — *ɲ̀kúví*

48.	to see / to catch sight of	*kpɔ́*
49.	to sleep	*dɔ́n àlɔ̀n*
50.	to lie (on one's side)	*mlɔ́*
51.	to sit	*nɔ̀ ànyìnɔ̀nɔ̀*
52.	to stand	*nɔ̀ ètè*
53.	person	*àmὲ*
54.	man	*ŋ̀sù*
55.	woman	*nyɔ́nù*
56.	child	*ɖὲvì*
57.	husband	*ásù*
58.	wife	*áshí*
59.	mother	*ènɔ̀*
60.	father	*èdà*
61.	brother	*fófó* (older) / *nɔ́vì ŋsù* (younger)
62.	sister	*dádá* (older) / *nɔ́vì nyɔ́nù* (younger)
63.	name	*ŋ̀kɔ́*
64.	to say	*nú*
65.	rope	*èkà*
66.	to tie	*sà èkɔ̀n*
67.	to sew	*tɔ̀n*
68.	clothing	*ènùdódó*
69.	to hunt	*dè dádá*
70.	to shoot	*dà ècù*
71.	to stab	*tɔ̀ èwì*
72.	to hit	*xó*
73.	to fight	*wà èvù*
74.	to kill	*wù*
75.	to die	*kú*
76.	to live	*nɔ̀*
77.	to scratch	*klù*
78.	to cut	*sò*
79.	stick	*àcì*
80.	to split	*fέn*
81.	(to be) sharp	*ɖá*
82.	dull	*kpò*
83.	to work	*wà èdò*
84.	to play (a game)	*dà*
85.	to sing	*jì èhà*
86.	to dance	*ɖú èwὲ*
87.	to swell	*tὲn*
88.	to squeeze	*fín*
89.	to hold	*lí*
90.	to dig	*kù*
91.	to give	*ná*
92.	to pull	*dɔ̀n*
93.	to push	*cùcù*
94.	to throw	*dò*
95.	to fall	*jwìn*
96.	dog	*àvù*
97.	bird	*xéví*
98.	egg	*àʒìn*
99.	feather	*éfú*
100.	wing	*àwà*
101.	to fly	*zò*
102.	animal	*èlàn*
103.	meat	*èlàn*
104.	fat (animal)	*àmì*
105.	tail	*shíké*

106.	snake	èdàn
107.	worm	vlɔ́n kú
108.	louse	éwíyé
109.	fish	kpáví
110.	tree	àcì
111.	rotten (as in fruit)	dɔ̀n
112.	leaf	ámá
113.	bark (of a tree)	ákpá
114.	root	éké
115.	seed	ékú
116.	flower	n/a
117.	fruit	àcìkúsénsén
118.	grass	ègbè
119.	soil	nyígbán
120.	stone	èkpè
121.	sand	ékɔ́
122.	water	èshì
123.	to freeze	sɛ́ŋ (lit.: to become solid)
124.	ice	glásì
125.	to flow	sà
126.	to float	n/a
127.	sea / ocean	áxú
128.	salt	èjè
129.	lake	ètɔ̀
130.	river	ètɔ̀
131.	mountain	ètò
132.	woods	àvè
133.	sky	jènkwí
134.	sun	èwè
135.	star	wlécíví
136.	cloud	àzɔ̀
137.	fog	àxù
138.	to rain	èshì jà (lit.: water rains)
139.	snow	n/a
140.	wind	jìhɔ̀n xò
141.	warm	zòzù
142.	cold	vùvɔ̀
143.	dry	xú
144.	wet	fá
145.	smooth	jíjí
146.	heavy	kpèn
147.	fire	èzò
148.	to burn (intransitive)	fyɔ́n
149.	smoke	àzɔ̀
150.	ashes	àfì
151.	black	èyú
152.	white	éyí
153.	red	éjùn
154.	yellow	klɔ̀ʒìncù
155.	green	màkpàfàn
156.	small	xwèxwè
157.	big	gàngàn
158.	short	kpòkpò
159.	long	jìnjìn
160.	thin	xwèxwè
161.	thick	klíklí
162.	narrow	xwèxwè
163.	wide	kéké

164.	straight	*jɔ̀*
165.	old (thing)	*xɔ̀xwí*
166.	old (person)	*shín*
167.	new	*yòyú*
168.	good	*nwì*
169.	bad	*dɔ̀ndɔ̀n*
170.	right (correct)	*nyɔ́*
171.	night	*èzàn*
172.	day (opposite of night)	*ŋ̀kèkè*
173.	year	*éxwé*
174.	when	*hwènù*
175.	at	*lè*
176.	in	*mɛ̀*
177.	here	*èlé*
178.	there	*hùnnɔ́*
179.	this	*yíkétɔ́*
180.	that	*ŋ́nɔ́tɔ́*(nearer) / *ŋ́nɔ́ɖá* (farther)
181.	near	*sɔ̀*
182.	far	*jìnjìn*
183.	where	*àfì / fíní (in questions)*
184.	I	*ŋ̀*
185.	you (sg)	*e*
186.	s/he/it	*é*
187.	we (incl˙ excl̀)	*mì*
188.	you (pl)	*mí*
189.	they	*wò*
190.	what	*nyì*
191.	who	*mì*
192.	other	*xlɔ̀tɔ́ / bù*
193.	some	*ɖɔ̀wò*
194.	many	*sùgbɔ̀*
195.	few	*ɖɔ̀wò*
196.	all	*pléŋ́*
197.	and	*yí*
198.	with	*kóɖó*
199.	because	*ŋcì yì tàɖò*
200.	if	*nɔ́*
201.	how	*lé*
202.	not	*gò*
203.	to count	*xlèn*
204.	one	*èɖé*
205.	two	*àmɛ̀vè*
206.	three	*àmɛ̀tɔ̀n*
207.	four	*àménɛ́*
208.	five	*àmátɔ̀n*
209.	six	*àmádín*
210.	seven	*àmádré*
211.	eight	*àményí*
212.	nine	*àmáshíɖèkè*
213.	ten	*àméwó*
214.	twenty	*èwì*
215.	hundred	*èkà èvè xò èwì*

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