The Akan Language

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I. Introduction

The Akan Language is spoken by about 44% of Ghana's population as a first language, and is also used as a second language by a large percentage of the remainder (Dolphyne 1996: xi). Indeed, defying arbitrarily defined borders, it is also widely spoken in eastern Côte D'Ivoire. The word "***Akan***" is the name of an ethnic group that, since the 1950's, has been used as an umbrella term to describe the language of the people contained therein (Dolphyne 1988: xi). The word Akan itself is said to be derived from the Twi word ***Kan(e)***, translating into English as "first or foremost" (Kyeremateng 1996: 22). The subdivisions of Akan people are as follows: Asante, Brong, Kwahu (Kwawu), Akwamu, Akyem, Anum, Awutu, Efutu, Akuapem, Agona, Fante, Wassa, Nzema, Ahanta, Aowin, Sehwi (Sefwi), and Baoule, Anyi, Abron, and Nzema in Cote D'Ivoire as well as other minor groups (Obeng 1999: 19). Obeng is careful to point out the fact that although all of these are Akan people, that is to say they belong to the Akan ethnic group, they do not all speak an Akan language (20). For example, the Nsema speak Nzema, while the Awutu, Efutu, and Anum speak Guan. Therefore it has been posited and is generally accepted that speakers of Akan dialects represent only a subgroup of the Akan people proper.

Three of the Akan dialects, Akuapem, Asante, and Fante, have acquired literary status (Dolphyne 1988: xi). Although all of the dialects of the Akan language are largely inherently intelligible differences in orthographical representation makes it difficult for an Asante person, for example, to read a text in Fante and vice versa (Obeng 20). In order to overcome this problematic situation, a unified standard orthography have been devised

through coordinative efforts of the Language Teaching Center and Linguistics Department of the University of Ghana at Legon together with the Akan Language Committee of the Bureau of Ghanaian Languages (20). It may be noted that while Akan functions as an umbrella term of all Akan language dialects, the speech of the Asante and Akuapem is called "*Twi*" (i.e. Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi). Dialects of Akan other than Twi are identified by the subgroups with which they are associated. It is also worthy of note that while there are some standard languages that are actually spoken, Standard Akan is not spoken by anyone. Indeed, based on enunciation and tone variation, one reveals his or her background quite clearly. For our purposes, I will focus on the dialects of Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi, providing examples from each to highlight certain features of the language in general as the two are more similar than either of the two are to Fante, for instance. Let us now move onto an overview of the historical background of the Akan people that we may truly understand exactly who the Akan people are.

II. Historical Background

According to Obeng, the Akan share a common culture with other ethic groups of West Africa. Conversely, other characteristics distinguish the Akan people from other ethnic groups (Obeng 1999: 18). The Akan people, as a distinct ethnic group, trace their history to the Almoravid invasion of ancient Ghana in 1076 CE and the subsequent break-up of the empire (Kyeremateng 1996: 23). The majority of the constituent Akan groups moved towards the coast to escape this scourge of the desert eventually establishing kingdoms to the south such as the Bono kingdom (43). The Asante people emerged as a distinct group after overthrowing the oppressive Denkyira (also Akans) in

1701 and the founding of the Asante state under Osei Tutu (63-64). After the uniting of the Asante Empire, in order to discourage division, it was forbidden for any member of the Asante confederacy to speak of the individual paths by which each Akan group came to form the state. Thus the admonishment "***Obi nkyerɛ obi aseɛ*** (Lit. Someone does not reveal someone (else's) origins)." The Akuapem, located in the mountains of Southeastern Ghana are said to have previously inhabited the coastline and being subsequently displaced by the refugee Ga people. Upon settling in the Akuapem Ridge Mountains, the group the Akan people, later to be known as the Akuapem, were subjected to the oppression of other Akans, the Akwamu. The source of their vulnerability to the Akwamu lay in their lack of organization, in independent groups with no clear central leadership. This lack of organization provided the impetus for their name, ***Akuw-apem***, translating literally to "thousand groups" (58). The Fante people also found their way to the coast after being displaced from their home at Takyiman in the forest belt during the expansion of the Asante and the overthrow of the Bono kingdom (65). Although there has been a history of internecine conflict within the Akan ethnic group, one unifying factor insofar as collective identity is concerned is the unity of culture. One such element is the clan system. The Akan people have eight clans in whose name the founding of settlements or conquests were made. These are the ***Aduana, Agona, Aseneɛ, Asona, Ayokoɔ, Bretuo-Tena, Asakyiri*** *and* ***Ekoɔna***. It is the common thread of a shared ancestry and shared historical experiences that unite the Akan people in identity.

III. Maps of Akan Speaking Areas and Migration Routes

NOTE: X, Indicates small pockets of Guang Languages
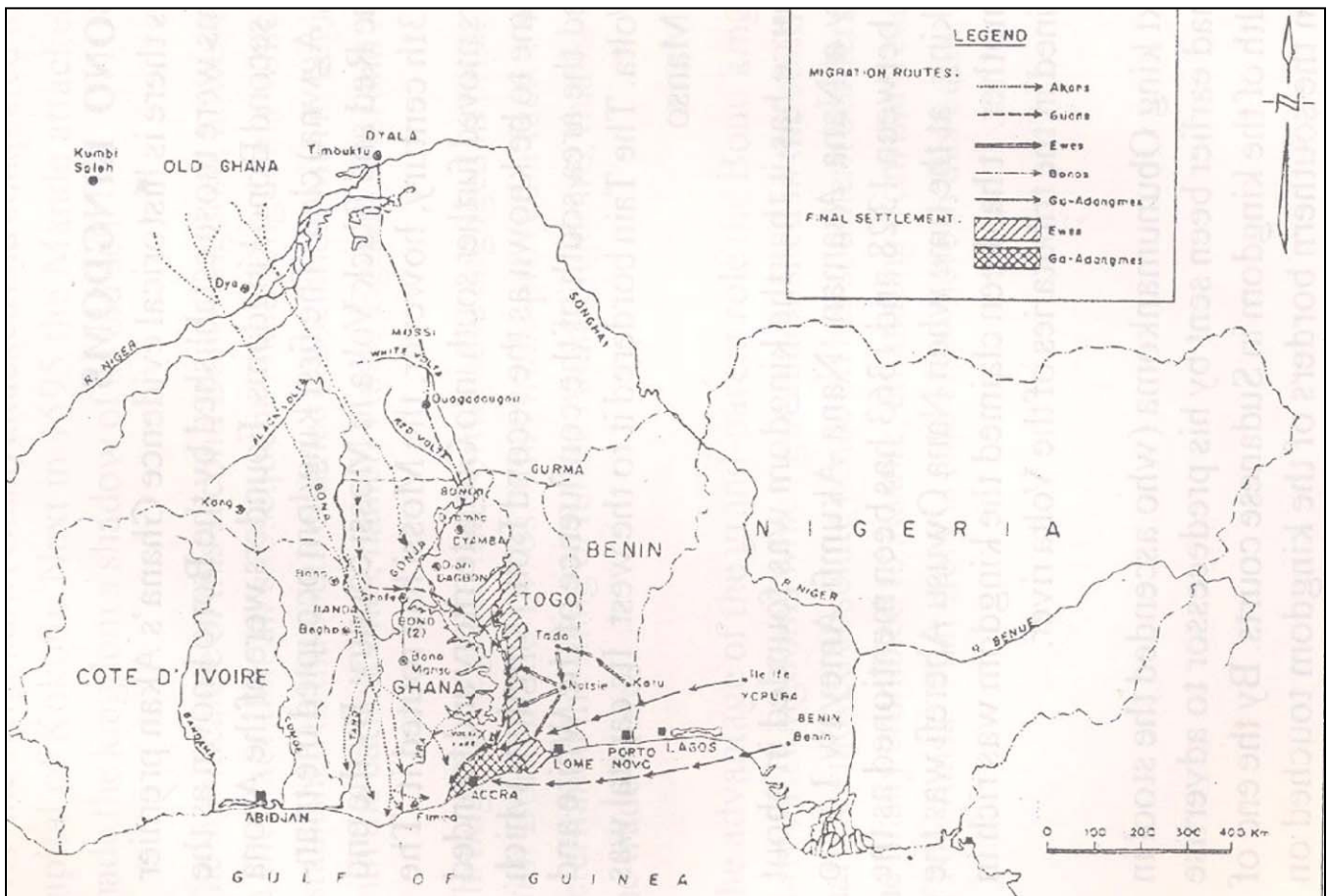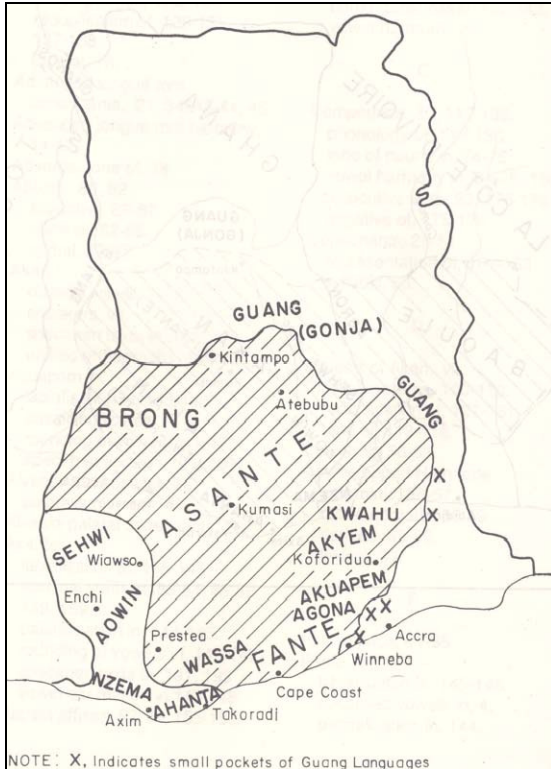
IV. Classification

A. <u>Currently Accepted Model of the Akan Language's Genealogy</u>

Niger-Kordofanian

Niger-Congo   Kordofanian

Atlantic-Congo   **Volta-Congo**   Ijoid   Mande

Kru   **Kwa**   Benue-Congo   Dogon (?)   North Volta-Congo

Left Bank   **Nyo**   Unclassified

Ga-Adangme   **Potou-Tano**   Agneby   Attie   Avikam   Alladian   Unclassified

Basila-Adele   **Tano**   Ega   Lelemi   Logba   Potou

Guang   **Central**   Krobu   Western

Bia   **Akan**

Asante   Brong   Kwahu (Kwawu)   Akyem   **Akuapem**   Agona   Fante   Wassa

Nzema   Ahanta   Aowin   Sehwi (Sefwi)   Baoule   Anyi   Abron

V. Distribution

A. Ghana

The Akan people comprise the most influential and the most populous of the ethnic groups of Ghana. In fact, the term "Akanisation" has been coined to describe the process of Akan influence, due largely to the empires of Akwamu and Asante. The number of Akan speakers in Ghana itself is approximated at 8,900,000 as of 1995 (Ethnologue 2002) comprising as previously stated 44% of the population of approximately 20 million as of 2002 (Ethnologue 2002, CIA The World Factbook 2002). The dialect of Asante Twi is approximated at 4,300,000, while Fante and Akuapem Twi boast 1,170,000, and 230,000 speakers respectively as of 1993 (Ethnologue 2002).

B. Cote D'Ivoire

In Cote D'Ivoire, Akan people make up 42.1 percent of the total population estimated at 16,804,784 as of July 2002 and inclusive of the Baoule, Anyi, Abron, and Nzema subdivisions (CIA The World Factbook 2002). The Akan are likewise the most populous ethnic group of the nation with the next most populous group comprising only 17.6 percent of the total population (CIA The World Factbook 2002). Now that we are familiar with who the Akan people are, we will move onto a linguistic overview of the Akan language in general and the Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi dialects in particular. Similarities and differences between these two dialects will be indicated where necessary.

VI. Phonetics

A. Introduction: Sounds of the Akan Language

Akan is classified as a two level tone language, which is to say, "the pitch at which the syllables in a word are pronounced can make a difference in the word's meaning. (Stewart 2001: 63)" This adds a unique dimension to the significance of the vowels, consonants and syllables of the language. First, we will discuss the nature of vowels in Akan. Phonetically, vowels can be described in terms of the shape of the tongue and lips when the vowel is being made. In the production of nasal vowels, air passes through the nose. Therefore types of vowels will vary based upon the part of the tongue that is closest to the roof of the mouth when the vowel is being made, the height of the tongue in relation to the palate, lip position when the vowel is made, and whether or not the vowel is oral or nasal (Dolphyne 1988: 1-9).

B. Oral Vowels of The Akan Language

The vowel system of Akan is characterized by symmetry[1] as shown below:

Oral Vowels of Akan (Dolphyne 1988: 1-9)

	front	back
close (high)	i	u
half-close (mid)	ɪ	ʊ
half-open (mid)	e	o
open (low)	ɛ	ɔ
	æ[2]	a

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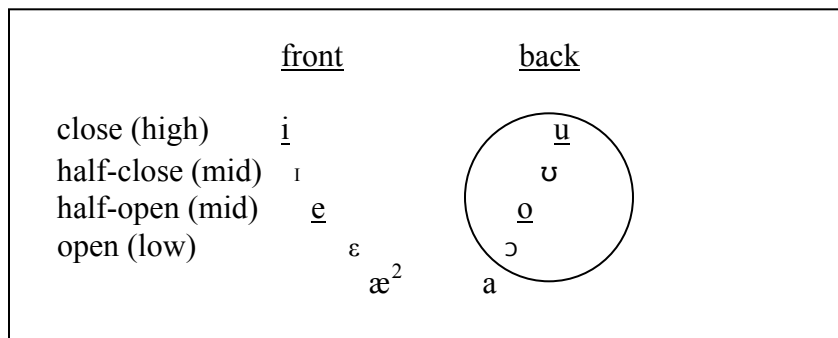
[1] Round vowels appear in the circles while tense vowels are marked by an underline.
[2] This vowel only appears in Akuapem and Asante dialects of Akan and is replaced by **[e]** in Fante (Dolphyne 1988: 2)

Occurence of these vowels in Akan is exemplified in the chart below:

(Dolphyne 1988: 2)

Vowel	Occurrence	Gloss
[i]	**obi**	'somebody'
[ɪ]	**sɪw**	'to sharpen'
[u]	**suw**	'to be worn out/decay'
[ʊ]	**sʊw**	'to bear fruit'
[e]	**gye**	'to receive'
[ɛ]	**sɛw**	'to spread out'
[o]	**dwo**	'to cool down'
[ɔ]	**sɔw**	'to catch'
[æ]	**dææbi**	'no'
[a]	**saw**	'to dance'

As will become evident in the upcoming section on phonology of the Akan language, similar vowels of the language to a large extent manifest themselves as allophones of the same phoneme. That is to say that they occur in predictably complementary distribution, which can be accounted for by the process of vowel harmony. We will return to this topic later in this paper. For now, to convey a more thorough understanding of pronunciation of the vowels of Akan, the chart below shows equivalences between Akan and English in this respect:

Oral Vowels	Values of Vowels	Similar Occurrences in English
[i]	high, front, tense, unrounded	"b<u>ea</u>t"
[ɪ]	high, front, lax, unrounded	"b<u>i</u>t"
[u]	high, back, tense, rounded	"b<u>oo</u>t"
[ʊ]	high, back, lax, rounded	"c<u>u</u>t"
[e]	mid, front, tense, unrounded	"s<u>ay</u>"
[ɛ]	mid, front, lax, unrounded	"b<u>e</u>t"
[o]	mid, back, tense, rounded	"b<u>oa</u>t"
[ɔ]	mid, back, lax, rounded	"b<u>ough</u>t"
[æ]	low, front, lax, unrounded	"<u>a</u>pple"
[a]	low, back, lax, unrounded	"c<u>a</u>ll"

C. Nasal Vowels of Akan

Also prominent in the Akan language is the phenomenon of the nasal vowel. It should be noted that these are indeed *nasal* vowels and not *nasalized* vowels. The difference is that these vowels are intrinsically nasal an do not rather become nasal because of environment (i.e. placement adjacent to a nasal consonant). Akan has five of these nasal vowels as shown. The equivalent sounds in English are nasalized vowels which appear underlined in the chart below:

Nasal Vowels of Akan

ĩ		ũ
	ɪ̃	ʊ̃
	ã	
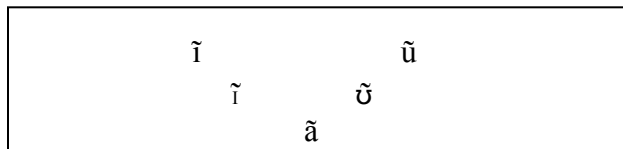
Nasal Vowels	Values of Vowels	Similar Occurrences in English
[ĩ]	high, front, tense, unrounded	"m<u>ea</u>n"
[ɪ̃]	high, front, lax, unrounded	"m<u>i</u>nt"
[ũ]	high, back, tense, rounded	"n<u>oo</u>n"
[ʊ̃]	high, back, lax, rounded	"n<u>u</u>n"
[ã]	low, back, lax, unrounded	"m<u>a</u>n"

Now, a contrastive representation of nasal occurrences within the Akan language itself:

Nasal	Occurrence	Gloss	Non-Nasal	Occurrence	Gloss
[ĩ]	fĩ	'dirty'	[i]	fi	'go out'
[ɪ̃]	sɪ̃	'teeth'	[ɪ]	sɪ / sɪw	'sharpen'
[ũ]	hũ	'see'	[u]	hu / huw	'blow air'
[ʊ̃]	tʊ̃	'bake'	[ʊ]	tʊ / tʊw	'throw'
[ã]	kã	'say'	[a]	ka	'be left behind'

D. Vowel Sequences of Akan

Vowel sequences are very common to the Akan language as shown in the examples and the chart of combinatory sequences and subsequent charts illustrating occurrences within the language. For our purposes, in accordance with Dolphyne's representation, long vowels are analyzed as sequences of two identical vowels (8):

Combinatory Sequences								
	i	**ɪ**	**e**	**ɛ**	**a**	**ɔ**	**o**	**ʊ**	**u**
i	ii		ie	iɛ	ia		io		
ɪ		ɪɪ		ɪɛ	ɪa				
e	ei		ee						
ɛ		ɛɪ		ɛɛ					
a		aɪ			aa				
ɔ		ɔɪ				ɔɔ			
o	oi						oo		
ʊ		ʊɪ		ʊɛ	ʊa	ʊɔ		ʊʊ	
u	ui		ue		ua		uo		uu

Sequences of two identical vowels form a distinctive part of the significant sounds of Akan as illustrated by the following examples:

Phonetic	Gloss	Phonetic	Non-Nasal
[da]	'day'	**[da:]**	'everyday'
[kɔ]	'go'	**[kɔ:]**	'red'

We find a plethora of examples of vowel sequences that occur in a variety of words and environments in Akan (although the environment tends to be the word final position). These are exemplified in the following chart:

Vowel Sequences in Akan		
ii	pii	'many'
ie	sie	'hide'
iɛ	abiɛsa	'three' (Ak)
ia	tia	'step on'
io	bio	'again'
ɪɪ	mɪɪ	'be full/eat enough'
ɪɛ	tɪɛ	'straighten' (Ak)
ɪa	tɕɪa	'be bent'
ei	seesei	'now'
ee	ɕɥee	'empty'
ɛɪ	sɛɪ	'destroy'
ɛɛ	ɔɕɥɛɛ	's/he looked at'
aɪ	kaɪ	'remember'
aa	daa	'everyday'
ɔɪ	ɔkɔɪ	's/he went'
ɔɔ	kɔɔ	'red'
oi	edʑɥoi	'it cooled down' (Ak)
oo	æpoo	'cheating'
ʊɪ	ɔkʊɪ	's/he fought'
ʊɛ	fʊɛ	'be feverish'
ʊa	bʊa	'help'
ʊɔ	ɛbʊɔ	'stone' (As)
ʊʊ	ɔtʊʊ	's/he baked'
ui	ohui	's/he saw it'
ue	bue	'open/uncover'
ua	bua	'cover'
uo	æfuo	'farm' (As)
uu	ohuu	'he saw'

Now that we have an understanding of the nature of vowels in Akan and have seen occurrences of these vowels exemplified, we shall now move on to the consonants of the language.

E. Consonants of Akan (26-51)

Phonetic description of consonants is usually described in terms of the following:

> A) place of articulation
> B) manner of articulation
> C) presence or absence of voicing
> D) secondary articulation (Dolphyne, 1988: 26)

Akan has thirty-four consonants represented in the orthography by sixteen letters of the alphabet. The following chart provides a visual representation of each of these elements:

Occurrence of Akan Consonants		
Phonetic Representation	Orthographic Representation	Gloss
[pa]	pa	"good"
[ba]	ba	"to come"
[tɔ]	tɔ	"to buy"
[da]	da	"day"
[kã]	ka	"to speak"
[ɔkwaŋ]	ɔkwan	"road, way, space"
[gu]	gu	"to abolish, to place, to annihilate"
[gwa]	gua (Akuapem)	"market"
[itsir]	itsir (Fante)[3]	"head" (Dolphyne 1988: 32)
[dzi]	dzi (Fante)	"eat" (Dolphyne 1988: 33)
[tɕɛ]	kyɛ	"to distribute"
[dʑe]	gye	"to receive" (Dolphyne 1988: 30)
[tɕɥe]	twe	"to pull" (30)
[dʑɥiriw]	dwiriw	"to pull down" (30)
[akɔlaa]	akɔlaa (Asante)	"child" (30)
[ma]	ma	"to give"
[nim]	nim	"to know"
[ɲin]	nyin	"to grow" (30)
[eɲɥini]	enwini	"shade"
[ŋgo]	ngo	"palm oil" (30)
[aŋwa]	anwa	"cooking oil" (30)

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[3] Fante is used solely for the purpose of illustrating these two sounds in this section of the paper. Otherwise Asante and Akuapem will be used. Where applicable, differentiations/unique characteristics of these two dialects will be marked.

[fa]	fa	"to take" (30)
[asɔ]	asɔ	"hoe" (30)
[ɕɛ]	hyɛ	"to wear" (30)
[ɕɥie]	hwie	"to pour out" (30)
[hũ]	hu	"to see"
[hʊam]	huam	"pleasant smell"
[ware]	ware	"to marry" (30)
[ɥie]	wie	"to finish" (31)
[sɔre]	sɔre	"to get up, to rise"
[yi]	yi	"to remove"

Now that we have seen words in which these consonants occur in the language, it is now possible to further illustrate by grouping these consonants into natural classes by manner of articulation:

i. Consonants of Akan By Manner of Articulation

1. Plosives

1. **[p]** is a voiceless bilabial plosive may be labial-palatalized in **[pɥie]** 'to appear', or palatalized as in the following examples.

   [pyii] 'many'   **[pyɛ]** 'like'

   [p] regularly occurs, however in words such as:

   [po]   'ocean'   **[papa]** 'good'

2. **[b]** is a voiced bilabial plosive and appears in the following words:

   [bu] 'break'   **[ba]** 'come'

   [b] can also be labial-palatalised as in the following Asante examples:

   [bɥie] 'open'   **[bɥia]** 'cover'

   In both Asante and Akuapem, **[b]** is replaced by **[m]** when preceded by a nasal in the same word as in the following examples:

   mbu → **[mmu]** 'not break'
   mba → **[mma]** 'not come'

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3. **[t]** is a voiceless velar plosive as in:

      [tɔ] 'buy'   **[tɔn]** 'sell'

      [t] is also subject to labio-palatalization as in:

      [tɥia] 'pay for'   **[tɥie]** 'remove from stove'

4. **[d]** is a voiced alveolar plosive which occurs in the following words:

      [da] 'sleep'   **[dɔ]** 'love'

      [d] is also labial-palatalized in the following words:

      [dɥia] 'tree'   **[adɥianĩ]** 'food'

5. **[k]** is a voiceless velar plosive which occurs in:

      [kã] 'speak'   **[kɔ]** 'go'

      [k] undergoes labio-palatalization in words such as:

      [ækɥia] 'Wednesday-born girl' **[okɥiafʊ]** 'farmer'

6. **[g]** is a voiced velar plosive that appears in words like:

      [gu] 'be spread out'   **[gam]** 'grab/clutch at'

7. **[kw]** labialised voiceless velar plosive occurring only before the low vowel **[a]** or its allophone.

      [ɔkwaŋ] 'road way space'   **[kwa]** 'without reason/free'

8. **[gu]** labialised voiced velar plosive that occurs in Akuapem and is a free variant of the Asante **[ʥɥ]**. See the examples below:

	Akuapem		Asante
[gua]	'market'	**[ʥɥa]**	'market'
[guan]	'run/escape'	**[ʥɥanɪ]**	'run/escape'

2. Affricates

9. **[tɕ]** is a voiceless pre-palatal (alveolo-palatal) affricate occurring mainly before front vowels as in:

[tɕe] 'fry' **[tɕɛ]** 'distribute'

[tɕ] occurs in front of the low vowel **[a]** only in the following words:

[ætɕatɕa] 'hunchback' **[tɕawtɕaw]** 'a type of sandals'

10. **[ʥ]** is a voiced pre-palatal (alveolo-palatal) affricate occurring in:

[ʥe] 'receive' **[ʥɪna]** 'stand'

[ʥ] is replaced by **[ɲ]** when preceded by another nasal as in:

[ɲɲe] 'not receive' **[ɲɲɪna]** 'not stand'

11. **[tɕɥ]** is a labialised voiceless pre-palatal affricate appearing in:

[tɕɥe] 'pull' **[tɕɥɛn]** 'wait'

12. **[ʥɥ]** labialised voiced pre-palatal affricate

[ʥɥiriw] 'pull down' **[æʥɥuma]** 'work'

In negation, **[ʥɥiriw]** > **[ɲɲɥiriw]** and in plural form **[æʥɥuma]** > **[ɲɲɥuma]**

3. Nasals

13. **[m]** is a voiced bilabial nasal appearing in:

      [ma] 'give'   **[fam]** 'ground'

      [m] may appear labial-palatalized in Asante as in:

      [mɥia] 'close/shut'   **[mmu]** 'not break'

14. **[n]** voiced alveolar nasal

      [nom] 'drink'   **[num]** 'suck'

      this **[n]** may be labial-palatalized in:

      [nɥĩã] 'sibling'

      It may be said that this n is the phoneme for a variety of allophones, which occur in differing environments. This topic will be picked up in the phonology section in our discussion of homorganic nasal assimilation.

15. **[ɲ]**, a voiced palatal nasal occurs in:

      [ɲa] 'to obtain'   **[ɲin]** 'to grow'

16. **[ɲɥ]** is a labialised voiced palatal nasal occurring in:

      [ɲɥini] 'shade'   **[ɲɥene]** 'to weave'

17. **[ŋ]** is a voiced velar nasal that appears in:

      [ŋkɔ] 'not go'   **[daŋ]** 'turn over' (Akuapem)

18. **[ŋw]** is a labialised voiced velar nasal, the occurrence of which may be shown in the following words:

      [ŋwansi] 'sneeze'   **[ɔŋwam]** 'a large bird'

4. Liquids

19. **[l]** is a voiced alveolar lateral. Alternation occurs between **[l]**, **[r]** and **[d]** and is more general in Asante than in other dialects of Akan. This process of alternation will likewise be discussed later in the paper.

As: **[akɔla:]** / **[akɔra:]** / **[akɔda:]** 'child'
[bla] / **[bra]** 'come'
[bidie] / **[birie]** 'charcoal'

20. **[r]** manifests as a voiced alveolar trill for some Akuapem speakers and is a frictionless continuant in Asante. To illustrate:

Akuapem   Asante

[merɪkɔ] 'I am going'   **[mɪɪkɔ]** 'I am going'

5. Fricatives

21. **[f]** is a voiceless labio-dental fricative as in:

[fie] 'home'   **[fɔw]** 'wet/drenched'

22. **[s]** is a voiceless alveolar fricative

[sũ] 'cry'   **[sa]** 'dance' (Asante)

[s] may be labial palatalized in:

[sɥĩã] 'learn'

23. **[ɕ]** is a voiceless pre-palatal (alveolo-palatal) fricative:

[ɕe] 'be hot/burn'   **[ɕɛ]** 'arrange/force'

24. **[ɕɥ]** is a labialised pre-palatal fricative:

[ɕɥie] 'pour out'   **[ɕɥɛ]** 'look'

25. **[h]** the voiceless glottal fricative occurs in:

    [ɛha] 'here'   **[hu]** 'blow air'

26. **[hu]** labialised glottal fricative during which the back of the tongue assumes the position of the high advanced vowel **[u]**. This sound does not occur in Asante as the corresponding sound is **[hw]**:

    [hʋã] 'beg for food'   **[hʋãm]** 'be sweet scented'

6. Semivowels (glides)

27. **[w]** is a labial-velar semivowel occurring in:

    [ɔwɔ] 'snake'   **[saw]** 'dance' (Akuapem)

28. **[ɥ]** is a labial-palatalised semivowel which appears in:

    [ɥe] 'chew'   **[ɥɛn]** 'to watch'

29. **[y]** is a palatal semivowel which occurs in:

    [yere] 'wife'   **[yɛn]** 'to rear'

E. Consonant distribution (47)

    Consonant distribution in Akan may be summarized as follows:

1. Labial and alveolar consonants occur before all vowels.

2. Non-labialised palatal consonants occur primarily before front vowels and are in complementary distribution with non-labialised back consonants.

3. Labialised palatal consonants occur primarily before front and back vowels and appear in complementary distribution with labialised back consonants. These consonants occur before **[a]**.

4. All consonants except **[r]** and **[ŋ]** occur in the stem initial position in Akan.

5. When nasal consonants precede other consonants, they assimilate homorganically, taking on the other consonant's place of articulation.

6. Very few consonants occur in word final position. These are **[m]** in all dialects, **[w]** in Akuapem and **[ŋ]** in Akuapem.

F. The Glottal Stop

In addition to these consonants, Akan also features the glottal stop: **[ʔ]**. While the glottal stop occurs in the following words, it has been observed by Obeng that it also features prominently in pausing and utterance finally within the context of conversations (1999: 12). The glottal stop is featured in the following examples:

Orthographic	Phonetic	Gloss
sa/saw	**[sawʔ]**	"to dance"
hu	**[huʔ]**	"to see"
nom	**[nomʔ]**	"to drink"
dan	**[daŋʔ]**	"to turn over"

It is worth noting that these glottal stops are derived from longer stems ending in tense vowels: **[sawo]**, **[hunu]**, **[nomo]**, and **[dane]**, respectively (Dolphyne 1988: 49).

G. Akan Vowel Chart

Now that we have seen the consonants and vowels of the language it is now possible to depict these in the vowel and consonant charts shown below:

front	central	back
i		u
High		round
I		ʊ
e		o
Mid	ɛ	ɔ
æ	Lax	a
Low	Tense	
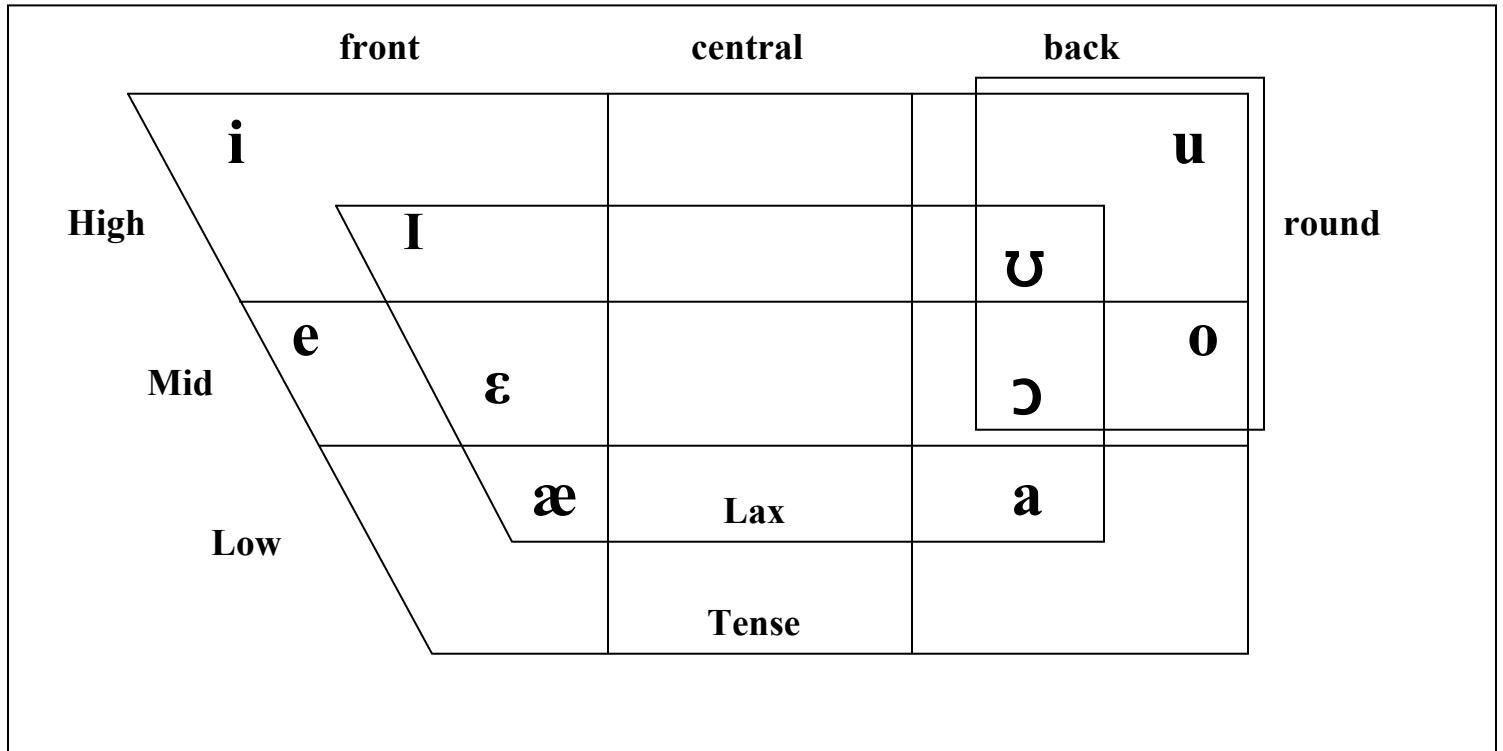
H. Akan Consonant Chart[4]

Akan	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Pre-palatal/ Palatal	Velar	Glottal[5]
Voiced Plosive	b		d		g gu	
Voiceless Plosive	p		t		k kw	
Voiced Affricate				dw [ʤɥ], gy [ʤ]		
Voiceless Affricate				tw [ʨɥ], ky [ʨ]		
Nasal	m		n	nw [ɲɥ], ny [ɲ]	n [ŋ], n[ŋw]	
Lateral			l			
Trill			r (Ak)			
Voiced Fricative			su			hu
Voiceless Fricative		f	s si [sy]	hy [ɕ] hw [ɕɥ]		h
Approximant/Glide	w, w [ɥ]		r	y [ɥ]	(w)	

---

[4] Corresponding phonetic representations of Akan consonants are given in brackets

[5] Some dialects of Akan, like Nzema for example, still have doubly articulated stops **[kp, gb]** (Mutaka 2000: 46). These have disappeared from most Akan dialects, however, although they were once widespread amongst the Akan, with **[kp]** only relatively recently replaced by **[p]** (Brokensha 1972: 84).

I. Elements Unique to Akan:

i. Introduction: Tone and Syllable Structure in Akan

Tone refers to the relative pitch on which a sound is spoken. According to Dolphyne, tt is related to the rate at which the vocal cords vibrate. Thus a high rate of vibration corresponds with the auditory sensation of a high pitch, while a low rate of vibration manifests as a low pitch (Dolphyne 1988: 52). As a tone language, the meaning of words in Akan is dependent upon both the vowels and consonants and the relative pitch with which each syllable a particular word is pronounced (52). In the following examples low tones will be marked with the (`) diacritic mark while high tone will be marked with (´).

Tone 1	Gloss	Tone 2	Gloss
pápá	'good'	pàpà	'fan'
dá	'day'	dà	'never'
ɔ̀bɔ̀fó	'hunter'	ɔ̀bɔ́fó	'creator'

ii. The Syllable and Basic Tones in Akan

Because the syllable is the tone-bearing unit of Akan, syllable structure is important to our analysis of tone in the language. According to Dolphyne, possible syllabic structures in Akan are **V, CV, C,** while simple stem structures may follow any one of ten possibilities (52). Below are examples of syllabic tone units in the language and occurrences their occurrences within the words of the language.

V Syllable Structure		
Tone-bearing syllable	Occurrence	Gloss
ɔ́, ɔ̀	ɔ́-fa, ɔ̀-fá	's/he takes it'
è	tì-è	'listen'
ò, ì	ò-hú-ì	's/he saw it'

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CV Syllable Structure		
Tone-bearing syllable	Occurrence	Gloss
kɔ́	**kɔ́**	'go'
tì	**tì-è**	'listen'
bì, sá	**ò-bì-sá**	's/he asks'

C Syllable Structure		
Tone-bearing syllable	Occurrence	Gloss
ǹ	**ǹ-sú**	'water'
ḿ	**sò-ḿ**	'hold it'
ŋ́	**ɔ̀-dà-ŋ́**	's/he turns it over'

As mentioned and illustrated above in our analysis of syllable structure in Akan, the basic tones of Akan are the High and Low tones respectively. However, Akan also possesses unique features such as Downdrift and Downstep. In the process of downstep, a second high tone may have a slightly lover pitch than that of the preceding High tone. This is expressed with (**!**) as the downstep symbol occurring before the downstepped High tone. Dolphyne notes that this downstep High tone, in earlier studies of the language, was referred to as a Mid tone. However, due to the predictable nature of its occurrence, it was reassessed as a downstepped high tone occurring only after another high tone. Let us examine the following example:

Contrastive Downstepped High Tone in Akan			
High tone	Gloss	Downstepped HT	Gloss
ɔ□bɔ□fó	'creator'	**ɔ̀bɔ́!fó**	'messenger'

This phenomenon also occurs whenever a low tone appears between the two high tones. This is referred to as automatic downstep. In this scenario, the pitch of the low tone lowers the pitch of the following high tone (56). An example of this is as follows:

H – L – H → H – L – !H

Kòfí àgyá | (tone diagram) | 'Kofi's father'
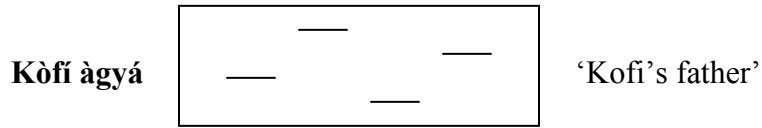
When this occurs in the context of an utterance with successive Low-High sequences, the result is a gradual dropping of pitches of the High tones from the beginning of the utterance to the end (57). In fact, the high tone at the end of an utterance can be lower than the low tones at the beginning (Schleicher PC). As we can see from the data at hand, tone is significant in determining meaning within the Akan language. Now that this has been established, we will return to this point later in the paper in our discussion of tonal function in reference to morphology, syntax, etc. For now, we will briefly mention two other processes that are unique to Akan, which will also be dealt with further in later sections.

iii.   Labio-Palatalization

Labio-palatalization is also a process common to Akan as evinced by data shown above concerning the consonants of the language. A few examples that were given for labio-palatalization of **[n]** and **[k]** respectively were:

[nɥĩã] 'sibling'   **[okɥiafʊ]** 'farmer'

This will be discussed more fully below in Phonology of Akan.

iv.   Vowel Harmony

Another important distinctive characteristic of Akan is the process of Vowel Harmony, which will be discussed in full below in the Phonology section.

VII. Phonology of Akan

A. Introduction

Phonology can be described as the study of the organization of speech sounds, or significant sounds, in a particular language (Stewart 2001: 69). It is the organization of speech sounds (phonology), rather than the sounds themselves (phonetics) that differentiates languages. A central method in the determination of which speech sounds are significant is the identification of minimal pairs. According to Stewart, a "minimal pair is defined as a pair of words with different meanings that are pronounced exactly the same way except for one sound that differs." By identifying these pairs, one is able to see whether or not sounds can be interchanged in the words of a language to change the overall meaning of the word. If so, this makes the sounds "significant" or contrastive. Sounds that are interchangeable without changing the meaning of a word are examples of free variation, variations of the same basic sound. Sounds that are in complementary distribution, not appearing in the same phonetic environment (position in a word) are seen as being allophones of the same phoneme (Stewart 2001: 73, 74). A list of minimal pairs will be given at the conclusion of this section on phonology. First, however, it is incumbent upon us to discuss phonological processes and phonological rules of Akan.

B. Phonological Processes and Rules

Rules of phonology are basically descriptions of patterns of a language. In Akan, we see that these patterns arise very clearly. Each language features well-defined natural classes, (groups of sounds in a language that share one or more articulatory or auditory property, to the exclusion of all other sounds in that language (Stewart 2001: 77)), which

contribute to assimilation of consonants and vowel harmony. First we will deal with the process of assimilation in Akan. That is, the process of change that a sound undergoes as determined by its environment.

C. Assimilation

i. Homorganic Nasal Assimilation

Homorganic nasal assimilation is a process wherein a nasal consonant undergoes a change wherein it assimilates to the place of articulation of a following consonant. In Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi, unlike Fante, this is also marked by an assimilation of the second consonant of the sequence assimilating into the nasal that precedes it. This will become clearer as the phenomenon is illustrated through examples and subsequent rules are developed. For now, it may be noted that homorganic sequences and homorganic assimilation are quite common in Akan. This complimentary relationship between nasal and non-nasal stems can be seen in **[b]** being replaced by **[m]** before nasal vowels, **[d]** by **[n]**, **[ʤ]** by **[ɲ]** etc. (Dolphyne, 1988). Examples of homorganic nasal sequences of assimilation are as follows (**N** is representative of a nasal consonant without place of articulation):

Akan (Dolphyne 1988)		
N-di	**[nni]**	"not eat"
N-gye	**[ɲɲe]**	"not receive"
N-dwene	**[ɲɲɥẽnẽ]**	"not think"
N-dwom	**[ɲɲɥõ̃m/ ɲɲɥõm]**	"songs"
ɔkwan bɔne	**[ɔkwaŋmmɔne]**	"bad path/way"
me-N-ba	**[memma]**	"i don't come"

Based upon this data, it is possible to develop the following rules to explain this phenomenon:

N	→	C	/	__ C
		[+nasal]		[α place]
		[α place]		

C	→	C	/	C __
[α place]		[+nasal]		[+nasal]
				[α place] [α place]

ii. Labialization (Eshun 1993: 169, 170)

The only inherently labial consonant in Akan is **[w]**. However, other consonants may take on a labial secondary articulation, undergoing labialization. According to Eshun, labialization is a process wherein a consonant obtains a secondary articulation based upon the environment in which it occurs. Examples of labialization, expressed as (ᵂ) after the labialized consonant, are as follows:

Akan	Gloss
[pʷó]	'big'
[bʷɔ́]	'break'
[dʷú]	'reach/arrive'
[nʷʊ□]	'the'

Consonants occurring before back, rounded vowels in Akan are labialized. A phonological rule for this occurrence may be written as follows:

C	→	C	/	#	__ V	#
[-lab]		[+lab]			[+back]	
					[+round]	

iii. Palatalization (171)

The only inherently palatal consonant of Akan is **[y]**. However, other consonants of the language may take on palatal based upon the environment in which they occur. This is similar to the process of labialization, however, consonant palatalization occurs in the environment of the sound being followed by a front vowel. For our purposes palatalized consonants will be marked with (ʲ). Consider the examples below:

Akan	Gloss
[gʲí]	'receive'
[hʲέ]	'wear'
[kʲím]	'doubt'

As a phonological rule, this process may be conveyed thus:

$$
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
\textbf{C} & \textbf{→} & \textbf{C} & / & \# & \_\_ & \textbf{V} & \# \\
\textbf{[+back]} & & \textbf{[+pal]} & & & & \textbf{[-back]} & \\
& & & & & & \textbf{[-low]} &
\end{array}
$$

Now that we have seen occurrences of labialization and palatalization, we shall examine the very common process of labio-palatalization in Akan.

iv. Labio-palatalization (Dolphyne 1988: 31-49)

Akan also features a great deal of labio-palatalization as was shown in our section on the sounds (phonetics) of the language. It is worthy of note that all back consonants have palatalized counterparts that are complementary in distribution. Contrastive examples of labio-palatalized and non-labio-palatalized consonants are given in the following data (Dolphyne 1988: 31-49).

Occurrence of Labio-palatalization in Akan		
twa	**[tɕɥa]**	"to cut"
twe	**[tɕɥe]**	"to pull"
twi	**[tɕɥĩ]**	"Twi language"
ntwo	**[ntɕɥo]**	"defeat" (Akuapem)
tua	**[tɥia]**	"to pay"
dua	**[dɥia]**	"tree"
tu	**[tu]**	"to dig up"
to	**[to]**	"to throw"
mmu	**[mmu]**	"not break"
mua	**[mɥia]**	"to close"
ma	**[ma]**	"to be full"

In Akan, labial-palatalized consonants can only occur before front vowels, or a, however non-labial-palatalized consonants can occur before either. Two general rules may be written to express this distribution.

C	**➔**	**C**	**/**	**V**	**V**
[-palatalized]		**[+labial]**		**[+high]**	**[+low]**
		[+palatalized]		**[+back]**	
				[+ATR]	
C	**➔**	**C**	**/**	**C**	**V**
[-palatalized]		**[+labial]**		**[+voice]**	
		[+palatalized]		**[+back]**	

We will now move on to the next process of assimilation, termed "glottalization."

v. Glottalization

Akan also features the glottal stop: **[ʔ]**, which, in Akan occurs only at the end of a word that is followed by a pause. The glottal stop is featured in the following examples:

Orthographic	Phonetic	Gloss
sa/saw	**[sawʔ]**	"to dance"
hu	**[huʔ]**	"to see"
nom	**[nomʔ]**	"to drink"
dan	**[daŋʔ]**	"to turn over"

As mentioned earlier, glottal stops are derived from longer stems ending in tense vowels: **[sawo]**, **[hunu]**, **[nomo]**, and **[dane]**, respectively (Dolphyne 1988: 49).

Expressed as a phonological rule, we may say:

> **V** ➔ **[ʔ]** / **C** __ **#**
> **[+tense]**   **[+vc]**   **[+vc]**

It should be noted here, however, that this is not a mandatory phonological rule of Akan, but rather describes how this process occurs.

vi. Phoneme Nasalization

Akan features phoneme nasalization in predictable places. According to Mutaka (2000), phoneme nasalization is defined as "when a phoneme becomes nasalized through the influence of a nasal feature on an adjacent sound in a word." The occurrence of nasalization and nasal vowels in Akan is exemplified in the following. (Nasalization appears on the left side of the table)

Akan (Dolphyne 1988)	
nyam [ɲãm] "to wave"	gyam [ʥam] "to mourn"
ma [mã] "to give"	ba [ba] "to come"
nu [nũ] "to stir"	du [du] "to arrive"
nua [nɥĩã] "give"	bua [bɥia] "cover"
mua [mɥĩã] "to close"	bua [bɥia] "cover"
nya [ɲã] "obtain"	gya [ʥa] "leave behind"
nam [nãm] "walk"	dam [dam] "madness"

Nasalization is an important feature of Akan and is determinative of meaning in the context of speaking. Rules may be formulated for to express phoneme nasalization in Akan:

V → V / C __
[+nasal] [+nasal]

V → V / __ C
[+nasal] [+nasal]

vii. Tonal Assimilation

An interesting assimilation process in Akan is that of tonal assimilation, also called Non-automatic downstep. In this process, the Low tone in a **H-L-H** sequence is assimilated to the pitch of the preceding high tone (Dolphyne 1988: 58). That is to say that the Low tone becomes assimilated to the tone of the preceding High tone. However, this does not occur before the Low tone produces the pitch lowering effect on the following high tone as was discussed briefly at the conclusion of the section on phonetics. Let us examine a few examples of this occurrence (58):

Expressed as an assimilation rule, we have:

H – L – H → H – L – !H → H – H – !H

When deletion of the Low tone occurs, the low tone still has an effect on the following High tone as in the following examples:

Constituent Words	Become	Phrase	Gloss
Kòfí, ɔ̀dán	→	**Kòfí !dán**	'Kofi's house'
né, ɔ̀bó	→	**né !bó**	'its price'

It is interesting to observe how deletion and tone interact in the Akan language, however, deletion as a process will be discussed further later in this section.

viii. Vowel Harmony and Vowel Assimilation

According to Mutaka (2000: 40), "A vowel system is said to have vowel harmony if the vowels in a word share certain features such as the feature **[-back]**, **[+ round]**, and **[+ ATR]**." The combinatory specification in Akan is based upon ATR. That is to say the grouping of specific vowels appear in words depending upon whether the vowels are advanced or unadvanced. The **[+ATR]** series in Akan consists of **[i]**, **[e]**, **[æ]**, **[o]** and **[u]**. The **[-ATR]** series consists of [ɪ], **[ɛ]**, **[a]**, **[ɔ]**, and **[ʊ]**. The chart of Akan vowels found below illustrates this grouping. The Akan language possesses prefixing and suffixing morphology. Therefore vowel harmony propagates outward from the root, both leftward

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toward prefixes and rightward toward suffixes (Bakovic 2000: 9). However, in general, when suffixes do not appear in a word, harmony propagates from left to right.[6]

Akan					
Group 1	i	e	æ	o	u
Group 2	ɪ	ɛ	a	ɔ	ʊ

Examples of Vowel Harmony in Akan are shown in the chart below (Heine, 2000: 136):

Group 1 Vowels		Group 2 Vowels	
e-**bu**-o	"nest"	ɛ-**bʊ**-ɔ	"stone"
o-**kusi**-e	"rat"	ɔ-**kɔdɪ**-ɛ	"eagle"
o-**tɕiri**	"s/he dislikes"	ɔ-**tɕɪrɛ**-ɪ	"s/he showed"
o-be-**tu**-i	"s/he came and dug"	ɔ-bɛ-**tʊ**-ɪ	"s/he came and threw"

As a phonological rule, this may be written wherein ATR represents the feature of Advanced Tongue Root:

V → V / _____ (C) V
[-ATR] [+ATR] [+ATR]

---

[6] Lack of suffixing vowels often occurs in Akuapem (i.e. **ɛbɔɔ** "stone" in Asante would be expressed as **ɔbo**)

D. Other Phonological Processes

While assimilation is the most important phonological process in Akan, other processes also lend to our understanding of what exactly is going on in the language.

ix. Vowel Insertion (Dolphyne 1988: 80)

The phenomenon of Vowel insertion is a peculiar case to Asante wherein a vowel is inserted in between the two stems of a compound in the names of days of the week:

Asante	Akuapem	Stem 1	Stem 2	Gloss
Kwasiada	**Kwasida**	**Kwasi**	**da**	'Sunday'
ɛdwoada	**Dwowda**	**Dwo(w)**	**da**	'Monday'

This is depicted in the following phonological rule:

$$\varnothing \rightarrow \text{V} \; / \; \underline{\quad} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{V}$$

[+low]	[+vc]	[+low]
[+back]	[+alv]	[+back]
	[plosive]	

x. Vowel Elision/Deletion

Vowel Elision also features prominently in the Akan language. To be precise, vowel elision is the deletion of a vowel, which occurs when a word of the **CV** structure joins a word that begins with a **V**. In this scenario, one of the vowels is deleted but its tone may or may not be maintained (Mutaka 2000: 42). In Akan, this occurs only when the initial vowel of the second word is **[e]**, **[ɛ]**, **[o]**, or **[ɔ]**.[7] Additionally, there exists the possibility of an optional deletion of the initial vowel in the second word even when the first word ends in a consonant (Dolphyne 1988: 12-13).

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[7] This also occurs in Fante even when the initial vowel is ɪ or i.

This instance of vowel elision may also be described as deletion wherein a sound is deleted to "save time and effort…without sacrificing much information" (Stewart 2001: 80). Examples of Vowel Elision in Akan:

The process of deletion/vowel elision for the Akan example can be expressed in the following phonological rule as shown in the examples below:

$$V \rightarrow \emptyset \ / \ \# \ \underline{\quad} \ C$$
$$[\text{-low}]$$

Akan (Dolphyne 1988: 12)		
[Kumase] [ɔhene]	[Kumase hene]	"Ruler of Kumase"
[dɥia] [no] [ɛso]	[dɥiæ no so]	"the top of the tree"
[Kofi] [ɛdan]	[Kofi dan]	"Kofi's house"
[saa] [onipa] [yi]	[sææ nipæ yi]	"this person"
[to] [ɛdʑɥom]	[to dʑɥom]	"to sing"
[kum] [oguan] [no]	[kum guan no]	"slaughter the sheep"
[æsu] [ɛkɔn]	[æsʊkɔn]	"bank (of a river)"
[tu] [ɔkwan]	[tu kwan]	"travel"

.

xi. Consonant Deletion

Thus in many cases the **[r]** may or may not be deleted. Among the Akan, it is primarily Akuapem speakers who voice the **[r]** as an alveolar trill. In Asante and Fante it is a frictionless continuant (Dolphyne 1988: 42). This occurs primarily in the case of the progressive prefix:

Akuapem	Asante	Gloss
[ɔrɪkɔ]	**[ɔɔkɔ]**	's/he is going'
[ara]	**[a::]**	'just'
[biribi]	**[bi:bi]**	'something'
[merɪkõ]	**[meekõ]**	'I am fighting'

An optional deletion rule for Akan may be expressed as such:

[r]	**➔**	**Ø**	**/**	**V**		**V**	
				[-back]	**—**	**[-back]**	

In all, phonological rules, the patterns of sound interaction, are largely governed by such natural classes and help the linguist to examine such interaction.

E. Minimal Pairs in Akan

To conclude, the significant sounds of Akan may be expressed through the identification of minimal pairs as shown below:

Minimal Pairs in Akan (Dolphyne 1988)					
Phon.	Orth.	Gloss	Phon.	Orth.	Gloss
[pa]	pa	"good"	[ba]	ba	come
[ædɥia]	adua	"beans	[ætɥia]	atua	"has paid"
[gʊrɔ]	gorɔ	"to play"	[kʊrɔ]	korɔ	"to go"
[kwaŋ]	kwan	"way, road, place"	[guaŋ]	guan	"to flee"
[tɕe]	kye	"to arrest, capture"	[dʑe]	gye	"to receive"
[tɕɥiri]	twiri	"to rub"	[dʑɥiri]	dwiri	"to pull down"
[mu]	mu	"inside"	[bu]	bu	"to break"
[naŋ]	nan	"to melt"	[daŋ]	dan	"to change" (Kotey 1998: 54, 94)
[ɲɥin]	nwin	"shade"	[ɲin]	nyin	"to grow"
[sɛ]	sɛ	"that, to be alike"	[ɕɛ]	hyɛ	"to wear, to force"
[ɕɛ]	hyɛ	"to wear"	[ɕɥɛ]	hwɛ	"to look"
[wu:]	wuu	"died"	[yu:]	yuu	"movement of animals"

F. Consonantal Natural Class Chart

In Akan, these natural classes may be expressed as follows (Dolphyne 1988: 48).
Inter-dialectical free variation in Akan is exemplified in the pairing of sound phonemes
with the phonemes in parenthesis:

Akan	Labial	Alveolar	non-labialised	labialised
Plosive/Stop	p	t (ts)	k (tɕ)	kw (tɕɥ)
	b	d (dz, r, l)	g (dʑ)	gu (dʑɥ)
Nasal	m	n	ŋ (ɲ)	ŋw (ɲɥ)
Fricative	f	s	h (ɕ)	hu (ɕɥ)
Semivowel			y	w (ɥ)

VIII. Morphology

A. Introduction

Akan is endowed with a variety of very complex morphological processes. Indeed, they share many similar features as will be illustrated below. Initially we will discuss affixation in each language, how nouns and verbs are formed, and how vowel harmony interacts with this process of word formation. Next we will discuss the other morphological processes in each language such as compounding, reduplication, etc.

B. THE NOUN

i. Nominal Formation in Akan (Akrofi 1965: 18-22)

Akan uses affixation heavily in the process of noun formation. Akan also features inflectional affixation in which different grammatical forms are created through the addition of affixes to the stem. From a syllabic standpoint, the nominal prefix in Akan may be **V**, **C** or ∅. Similarly, syllabic suffixes of Akan may take the form of **V**, **C**, **CV** or ∅. Initially, we will discuss affixation in Akan in general, subsequently discussing how affixes are used in nominal inflection and derivation.

Nominal Prefixing in Akan			
Function	Affix	Attaches to	Examples

singular	∅	nouns	**gyata [ʤata]** 'lion,' **kurow [kurow]** 'town'
singular	**ɔ, o**	nouns (usu. human)	**o-hu [o-hu]** 'fear,' **ɔpanyin [ɔ-paɲin]** 'elder'
singular/plural	**a, æ**	nouns	**a-gya [æ-ʤa]** 'father,' **a-bofra [a-bʊfra]** 'child,' **a-gyata [æ-ʤata]** 'lions'
singular	**ɛ, e**	nouns	**e-kuw [e-kuw]** 'group,' **ɛ-na [ɛ-na]** 'mother'
plural	**m, n**	nouns (usu. liquids)	**m-bogya [m-boʤa]** 'blood,' **n-su [n-su]** 'water,' **m-panyim-fo [m-paɲim-fo]** 'elders,' **n-kurow [n-kurow]** 'towns'
singular/plural	**am, an**	nouns	**am-pan [am-pan]** 'bat,' **an-kaa [an-kaa]** 'orange'

Nominal Suffixing in Akan			
Function	Affix	Attaches to	Examples
singular	∅	nouns	**ɛ-kɔm [ɛ-kɔm]** 'hunger,' **sika [sɪka]** 'money'
singular	**-ni**	human nouns	**o-sua-ni [o-sɥiæ-ni]** 'student,' **o-sika-ni [o-sikæ-ni]** 'rich person'
singular/plural	**-fo(ɔ)**	human nouns	**ɔ-nokwa-fo [ɔ-nokwa-fo]** 'truthful person,' **A-bibi-fo [æ-bibi-fo]** 'Africans'
plural	**-nom**	nouns	**nananom [nanæ-nom]** 'ancestors,' **nua-nom [ɲɥiæ-nom]** 'cousins'
diminuitive	**-wa**	nouns	**Asante-wa [asante-wa]** 'female Asante,' **a-barima-wa [a-barɪma-wa]** 'young male'
noun formation	**-e**	verbs, nouns	**m-frafra-e [m-frafra-e]** 'mixture,' **owigyina-e [oɥiʤina-e]** 'noon'
noun formation	**-i**	verbs, nouns	**mmubu-i [mmubu-i]** 'paralysis,' **apue-i [æpɥie-i]** 'east'

As is evident from the data at hand, Akan features both prefixing and suffixing in noun formation. Now, we will address how prefixing and suffixing are used in nominal inflection and nominal derivation.

a. Nominal Inflection

As shown by available data, both affixes and suffixes may be used for inflection as well as in derivation. In our examples we have as case in point, the suffix '**ni**' attaching to indicate individual humans and '**-foɔ**' attaching to indicate plurality.

Similarly in the prefixes, we have the prefix **[æ-]** attaching to **[ʤata]** making it plural whereas the singular form would be **[ʤata]**.

One interesting feature of Akan is the usage of reduplication to indicate plurality in which the plural noun is reduplicated. Reduplication as a process will be discussed later in this section. Examples of inflectional reduplication are shown below (Dolphyne 136):

ii. Nominal Reduplication (136)

Nominal Reduplication in Akan serves to emphasize plurality as in the following:

Singular Form	Gloss	Plural Form	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
dùá	'tree'	**ǹnúá**	**ǹnùéńnú!á**	'trees'
àbòfŕá	'child'	**m̀mòfŕá**	**m̀mòfŕáḿmòfŕá**	'children'

a. Nominal derivation

The primary form of nominal derivation in Akan is through the use of affixes as conveyed by the data above. One such example is the case of **[m-fra-fra-e]** wherein the prefix **[m]** and the suffix **[e]** are added to the verb **[frafra]** translating to 'mix.' This results in the noun **[m-frafra-e]**. As shown in the above data, the nominal derivation suffixes of Akan are **[e]** and **[i]**.[8] Tone is also an important factor in nominal derivation as shown in the following examples (Dolphyne 1988: 75)

Verb	Gloss	Noun	Gloss
pèné	'to agree'	**pé!né**	'agreement'
kàsá	'to speak'	**ká!sá**	'speech/language'
bìsá	'to ask'	**àbí!sá**	'consultation'
pàtá	'to pacify'	**m̀pá!tá**	'pacification'

iii. Compounding

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[8] In Asante, the derivational suffix is **[ɪɛ]** occuring in such words as **[nsonsonʊɪɛ]** 'difference'

It would be difficult to discuss nominal compounding without the mention of tone. In a sense, compounding is a form of nominal derivation in that it results, of course, in the creation of a new noun. One important point to remember in our discussion of nominal compounding in Akan is that in noun plus noun compounds, the first noun qualifies the second. Let us examine a few examples of noun plus noun compounding in Akan. Other forms of compounding, however, will be discussed later in this section.

Noun 1	Gloss	Noun 2	Gloss	Compounded Form	Gloss
ɔhéné	'ruler'	**èfíé**	'home'	**àhìm̀fíé**	'palace'
òdwáń	'sheep'	**níní**	'male'	**dwèníní**	'ram'
nàǹtwíé	'cow'	**ɛ́náḿ**	'meat'	**nàǹtwìnáḿ**	'beef'
àní	'eye'	**ǹsúó**	'water'	**nìsúó**	'tears'
ɔ̀sá!máń	'spirit'	**pɔ́ẁ**	'thicket'	**àsàmàm̀pɔ́ẁ**	'burial-grove'

We have seen to some extent that tone is important in our discussion of the noun in Akan. These nouns of Akan, usually monosyllabic or disyllabic, may take an optional prefix or suffix. They usually retain their tone patterns except in certain instances, such as that of compound formation. We will now examine the significance of tone in reference to the Akan noun. Beginning with a discussion of monosyllabic and disyllabic noun stems (76-78):

By far, most monosyllabic noun stems are said on a High tone (except in very few cases such as that of **[æ̀gò]** 'velvet':

Akan	Gloss
àdé(ɛ́)	'thing'
ɛ̀wó(ɔ́)	'honey'
m̀pá	'bed'
àwó(ɔ́)	'child bearing'

Disyllabic nominal stems may appear with a high tone on each syllable as in the following examples:

Akan	Gloss
ɔhéné	'ruler'
òkúnú	'husband'
ɔsómí	'service'
béré (Akuapem)	'time'

However, most disyllabic noun stems occur with a Low-High tone pattern:

Akan	Gloss
ǹtòmá	'cloth'
ònùá	'sibling'
sìká	'money'
òhíá	'poverty'

Although the Low-High tone pattern is by far the most prevalent in disyllabic nominal stems, many of these stems have a High-Downstepped High tone pattern:

Akan	Gloss
àdá!ká	'box'
ɔkɔ́!tɔ́	'crab'
èwú!rá	'garbage'
ɔhɔ́!hó(ɔ́)	'guest/stranger'

There are comparatively few disyllabic noun stems that occur with a Low-Low tone pattern:

Akan	Gloss
ádàsà	'mankind'
wɔ̀fà	'uncle'
kètè	'a traditional dance'
pàpà	'fan'

It is worthy to note that in Asante, where the nominal suffix occurs such as in

ɔhɔ́!hóɔ́, 'guest/stranger,' in possessive noun phrases, that this does not occur when the

noun is inalienable:

Noun	Possessive NP	Gloss
ɔhɔ́!hó(ɔ́)	mè hɔhòɔ́	'my guest'
ènú!fú(ɔ́)	nè núfù	'her breasts'

In Asante, whatever the tone pattern of the inalienable noun, or kinship noun, they

lose their suffix when appearing as the second element of the possessive noun phrase

(85). Now that we have closely examined the morphological nature of the noun in Akan,

the next topic of discussion shall be the Verb in Akan.

C. THE VERB

i. Verbal Formation (Dolphyne 1988: 94)

Akan uses affixation to mark inflection in tense grammatical forms. The Akan

verb is interesting and unique in that the pronoun is part of the Verb Phrase in Akan an

cannot be separated. These are known as subject-concord prefixes, which correspond to

the seven personal pronouns in Akuapem and Asante. Review the following chart:

Function	Pronoun	Prefix
1st person singular	me	me-
2nd person sing.	wo	wo-
3rd person sing.	ɔno	ɔ-
Impersonal	ɛno	ɛ-
1st person plural	yɛn	yɛ-
2nd person pl.	mo	mo-
3rd person pl.	wɔn/wɔɔnom	wɔ-, yɛ- (Asante)

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These prefixes only occur in the context of the verb while the regular pronoun form appears in other environments. In the following chart is given a list of both the prefixes and suffixes of Akan used in verbal inflection.

Inflectional Tense Affixes			
Function	Affix	Attaches to	Examples
past	**-e, -i, -yɛ,** lengthening of final vowel	verbs	**bá-è** 'came,' **hú-ì** 'saw,' **òwìɛ̀yɛ̀** 'he finished,' **ǹhúù nò** 's/he hasn't seen him/her'
progressive prefix	**-rɪ-,** lengthening of preceding vowel	pronouns, verbs	**ɔ̀ríkɔ̀** (Akuapem) 's/he is going' **ɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ́** (Asante) 's/he is going'
future	**-bɛ-, -be-**	pronouns, verbs	**ò-bé-di** 's/he will eat,' **ɔ̀bɛ́kɔ́** 's/he will go'
perfect past	**-a-**	pronouns, verbs	**màbá** 'I have come,' **wá!tú** 's/he's dug it up'
ingressive	**-bɛ-, -kɔ–**	pronouns, verbs	**ɔ̀kɔ̀fá** 's/he went and took it,' **wàbɛ̀fá** 's/he came and took it'
Optative	**-n-**	pronouns, verbs	**ɔ́ńkɔ́** 'let him/her go,' **móḿfá** 'you (pl.) take it'
Negative	**-n-**	pronouns, verbs	**ɔ̀ǹkɔ́** 'don't let him/her go, s/he doesn't go,' **ɔ́ m̀fá** 's/he won't take it'

As is evident, Akan makes use of both prefixes and suffixes in verbal inflectional tenses.

ii. Tone and the Akan Verb

According to Dolphyne, the main factors in the determination of tone in reference to Akan verbs are (Dolphyne 76):

1. The tense or Aspect in which it occurs

2. The syllable structure of the verb stem (i.e. monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic, etc.)

3. Whether or not it is followed by an object or a compliment

4. The type of clause in which it occurs (i.e. subordinate, main)

Dolphyne gives the following examples as illustrations of these factors:

Monosyllabic: kɔ́		Disyllabic: bìsá	
Akan	Gloss	Akan	Gloss
kɔ́	'go!'	bìsà	'ask!'
kɔ̀ hɔ́	'go there'	bìsà nò	'ask him/her'
ɔ́kɔ̀ (Akuapem) ɔ̀kɔ́ (Asante)	's/he goes'	òbìsá	's/he asks'
ɔ̀bɛ́kɔ́	's/he will go'	òbébí!sá	's/he will ask'
ɔ̀bɛ́kɔ́ hɔ́	's/he will go there'	obébísà nò	's/he will ask him/her'

Disyllabic kyèrɛ́	
Akan	Gloss
kyèrɛ̀	'point out!'
kyèrɛ̀ nò	'teach him/her'
ɔ̀kyèrɛ́	's/he points out'
ɔ̀bɛ́!kyérɛ́	's/he will teach'
ɔ̀bɛ́!kyérɛ́ nó	s/he will teach him

Now that we have dealt with the basic structure of the noun and verb in relation to affixation and tone, the chart below provides a general review of how affixation is used in both nouns and verbs.

D. Affixation Chart (Dolphyne 1988: 79)

Orth.	Prefix	Stem	Suffix	Gloss
ofi/efie	**o/e**	**fi**	**e**	'home'
nsu/ensuo	**n/en**	**su**	**o**	'water'
sika	**-**	**sika**	**-**	'money'
æɲɥiænom	**a**	**ɲɥia**	**nom**	'siblings'
fa	**-**	**fa**	**-**	'take it'
ɔfa	**ɔ**	**fa**	**-**	'part'
ɔrebɛfa	**ɔ, re, bɛ**	**fa**	**-**	'he's about to take it'
ɔkɔfae	**ɔ, kɔ**	**fa**	**e**	'he went and took it'
odidi	**o**	**di, di**	**-**	'he eats (a lot)'
ædidie	**æ**	**di, di**	**e**	'eating (habits)'
tenten	**-**	**ten, ten**	**-**	'tall/long'
æniɛden	**æ**	**æni, yɛ, den**	**-**	'haughtiness'

E. Other Morphological Processes

i. Reduplication (Dolphyne 1988: 105, 106)

A process common to Akan is reduplication. Akan features both partial and full

reduplication as shown below in the case of reduplicated verbs:

Verbal Reduplication			
Orth.	Phonetic	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
kyɛ́ré	**tɕɛ́ré**	**tɕì tɕɛ́ré**	'to delay'
fɛrè	**fɛrè**	**fɛréfɛré**	'to be shy'
hwɛ́	**hwɛ́**	**hwì hwɛ́**	'to look (for)'
gyìnà	**dʑìnà**	**dʑìnédʑìnà**	'to stand'
dɔ̀w	**dɔ̀w**	**dùdɔ́w**	'to weed'
kán	**kán**	**kènkán**	'to read'

The reduplicated verb functions to indicate

1. Repetition of actions

Simple verb root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
bɔ	'to break'	**bobɔ**	'break up/hit repeatedly'
tu	'to dig'	**tutu**	'keep on digging'

2. Plurality of subject

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Simple verb root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
wu	'to die'	**wuwu**	'die-of several persons'

3. Plurality of Object

Simple verb root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
frɛ	'call'	**frɛfrɛ**	'call many people'

4. Change from transitive to intransitive

Simple verb root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
di	'eat'	**didi**	'eat-without object'

5. Change from intransitive to transitive

Simple verb root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
da	'sleep'	**deda**	'put to sleep'

6. Semantic change

Simple verb root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Gloss
hwɛ	'look at'	**hwehwɛ**	'search'
hʊrʊ	'wash clothes'	**hohoro**	'wash up'

7. Used only in reduplicated form. This is to say that there is no (longer any) simple verb stem with related meaning in the language.

Reduplicated form	Gloss
daadaa	'deceive'
sesã	'change'

8. Use in nominalized forms. Reduplicated verb forms are used more often in noun formation that their simple stem counterparts.

Nominalized form	Gloss
adidi(e)	'eating (habits)'
ɔkyerɛkyerɛfo	'teacher'

Adjectives of Akan also undergo reduplication as in the following examples (135):

Adjectival Reduplication			
Orth.	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Re-reduplicated Form
pá	'good'	**pápá**	**pápáápá**
dɛ̀	'sweet'	**dɛ̀dɛ́ (Akuapem)**	**dɛ̀dɛ́ɛ́dɛ́ (Akuapem)**
		dɛ̀ɛ̀dɛ́ (Asante)	**dɛ̀ɛ̀dɛ́ɛ́dɛ́ (Asante)**
téń	'tall/long'	**téńtéń**	**téńtééńtéń**
kítí(wá)	'small'	**kétékété(wá)**	**'kétékétékété(wá)**

Similar to verbal reduplication, reduplicated adjectives add intensity. Therefore the translations of the reduplicated forms would be "very good," "very, very good," etc. Thus the degree of intensity is directly related to the number of times that the adjective is reduplicated. The tripled form of adjectives may serve as an adverb, as in **ɔayɛ no fɛfɛɛfɛ**, 's/he did it beautifully' or **ɔayɛ no pɛpɛɛpɛ** 's/he did it with precision.'

The reduplication of nouns, dealt with in the above section on the nouns of Akan, serve only to emphasize the plurality of the noun. Let us now move on to the process of suppletion in Akan.

ii. Suppletion (112-114)

An interesting morphological process in Akan is that of suppletion. For a few verbs in Akan, the stative tense changes entirely in other tense aspects of the verb. This phenomenon is evinced in the data below.

Suppletion in Akan			
Stative	Gloss		Suppleted Form	Gloss

ɔtè hɔ́	's/he lives/is seated there'	ɔ̀bɛ́!téná hɔ́	's/he will live/sit there'
ɔsò àdéɛ́	's/he has a load on his/her head'	ɔ̀sòá ádéɛ́	's/he carries something'
mèwɔ̀ bì	'I have some'	màɲá bì	'I have obtained some'
ɔnàm̀	's/he is walking'	ɔ̀nàǹté	's/he walks'
ònìm̀	's/he knows'	òbéhú(nú)	's/he will know/see'
ɔɲèm̀	'she's pregnant'	òɲìnsɛ́nèè	'she became pregnant'

iii. Compounding (116-118)

Akan also makes use of compounding in similar ways as well. This is usually done by linking verbs with nouns, or nouns with nouns, etc. See the following examples:

Compounding Akan			
stem1	stem2	compounded form	gloss
àdé(ɛ́) 'thing'	tɕèrɛ́ 'show'	àdètɕèrɛ́	'teaching'
ɔ-héné 'ruler'	è-fí-é 'home'	àhìm̀fíé	'palace'
di 'eat'	di 'eat'	didi	'eat'
àsɛ́m 'news'	húnú 'empty'	àsɛ̀nhúnú	'nonsense'
òdʑɥán 'sheep'	níní 'male'	dʑɥeníní	'ram'
àsɛ́m 'case'	dí 'settle'	àsɛ̀nní	'judgement'

As is shown by the examples, compounding can occur between a noun and a verb, a noun and a noun, a verb and a verb, a noun and an adjective etc. Akan also features alternation, our next topic in Akan morphology.

iv. Alternation (Dolphyne 1988: 160)

A less common process to the Akan language is that of alternation. In this process, variations in grammatical function bring about changes in the form of the word. See the following examples:

Singular	Gloss	Alternated form	Gloss
adeɛ	'thing'	**ɲnɔɔma (Asante)**	'things'

Akan	Gloss	Alternated form	Gloss
ɔabeduru ha	'S/he has arrived here.'	**ɛha na ɔabeduro**	'It is here that s/he has arrived.'
ɔreforo dua	'S/he is climbing a tree.'	**dua a ɔreforɔ**	'The tree that s/he is climbing.'

Now that we have a thorough understanding of the morphology of the Akan language, let us now move on the syntax of Akan in order to see how these morphological elements are related to each other.

IX. Syntax of Akan (Akrofi 1965: 57-90)

A. Syntactic Categories

For the most part, Akan follows a Subject – Verb – Object – Adjective sentence order. This is subject depending on contextual necessities such as emphasis, stylistic concerns, etc. The open lexical syntactic category includes the noun (**N**), verb (**V**), adjective (**ADJ**) and adverb (**ADV**). The closed lexical category, comprised of function words determine the relationship between words include determiners (**DET**), auxiliary verbs (**AUX**), postpositions (**P**), conjunctions (**CONJ**) and pronouns (**PRO**). We will first discuss the open lexical categories.

i. Open Lexical Categories.

a. Nouns

Nouns of Akan appear within the context of a particular syntactic frame. They function as either the subject or object of the phrase or sentence of Akan.

| *Nnipa* no redɔw *afuw* no. | 'The people are weeding the farm' |

ɔbaa bi baa me *fie.*	'A certain woman came to my house.'
Mempɛ *asɛm* yi.	'I don't like this business.'
Na *mekɔɔ* **Kumase.**	'I went to Kumase.'

b. Verbs

Verbs function within the sentence to show what the subject does or it's state of being:

Abofra nyin a, *ɔnantew.*	'When a child growns, s/he walks.'
Obi *kasa.*	'Someone speaks.'
Mmofra no *goru.*	'The children play.'
Oguan bi da dua no ase.	'The sheep lies under the tree.'

At this juncture, it is appropriate to consider the fact that the tone of the verb in Akan primarily serves a syntactical function. Tone is key in differentiating (66-69):

1. Habitual and Stative forms of the verb as exemplified with Asante examples below:

Habitual	Gloss	Stative	Gloss
ɔ́hyɛ́ àtàdéɛ́	's/he wears clothes'	**ɔ́hyɛ̀ àtàdéɛ́**	's/he has clothes on'
Kòfí gyìná hɔ́	'Kofi stops/stands there'	**Kòfí gyìnà hɔ́**	'Kofi is standing there'

2. Habitual Ingressive and Future forms of the verb

Habitual Ing.	Gloss	Future	Gloss
Kòfí bɛ̀fá	'Kofi comes and takes it'	**Kòfí bɛ́fá**	'Kofi will take it'

3. Habitual Negative and Optative forms of the verb

Habitual Negative	Gloss	Optative	Gloss
Kòfí ǹkɔ́	'Kofi does not go'	**Kòfí ńkɔ́**	'Let Kofi go'

4. Habitual and Past Tense forms of the verb.

Habitual	Gloss	Past	Gloss
ɔ́pám̀ àtàdéɛ́	's/he sews clothes'	**ɔ́pàm̀ àtàdéɛ́**	's/he sewed a dress'

5. Relationship between the verb and object (Asante only). In Asante, a verb that is followed by an object/compliment in the Habitual, Progressive, Perfect or Ingressive forms, the final vowel is said on a falling pitch (63) indicated by (ˆ):

Verb + Object/Compliment	Gloss	V - Object	Gloss
ɔrèhyɛ̂ kyɛ́	's/he is putting on a hat'	ɔrèhyɛ́	's/he is putting it on'
ɔbâ Tá!kórádé	's/he came to Takorade'	ɔbá	's/he comes'

6. The Subordinated and non-Subordinated verb

Subordinated Verb	Gloss	non-SV	Gloss
Kòfí rèbìsá nó	'Kofi is asking him/her'	Kòfí rébísá nó	'While Kofi was asking'

7. Interrogative and non-Interrogative sentences

Interrogative	Gloss	non-Interrogative	Gloss
Kòfí kɔ̂	'Did Kofi go?'	Kòfí kɔ́	'Kofi has gone'

c. Adjectives

The adjectives of Akan serve to show characteristics or manner of a noun. These always occur after the noun that is being qualified:

Akan	Gloss
Adesoa no yɛ *duru*.	'The load is heavy.'
Adaka *ketewa* bi si mpa no ase	'A small box is under the bed.'
Yɛn asase yi yɛ asase *pa*.	'Our land here is good land.'
Okura sekan nnamnam bi.	'S/he carries a sharp, sharp, knife.'

d. Adverbs (45)

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Adverbs of Akan serve to modify the verb or verb phrase of the sentence. There are six distinct types of adverbs in Akan used to show place, time, manner, degree, number, and state of belief, respectively.

Place

odii nea obetumi gyaw nkae no *hɔ* **kɔe.**	'S/he ate what s/he was able to, leaving the remainder there and left.'
n'agya asoma no *akuraa.*	'His/her father sent him to a village.'

Time

nnipa bi baa ɔhene nkyɛn *nnɛra.*	'Some people came to the ruler's side yesterday.'
yɛbɛtena ha *daa.*	'They come and sit here everyday'

Manner

ɔkasa *brɛoo.*	'S/he speaks softly/slowly.'
nyɛ no s*aa.*	'Don't do it like this.'

Degree

saa ade no ho hia *papaapa.*	'Such a thing is needed very much.'
odi hia *buroburo.*	'S/he is tremendously poor.'

Number

yɛn mu biara nhuu gyata *da.*	'none among us have seen a lion before.'
waba ha *mprɛnsa* **nnɛ.**	'S/he came here three times today.'

State of belief

ebia **ɔsram yi awiei na obedu ha.**	'Perhaps at the end of this moon/month s/he will arrive here.'
yiw, mihuu no *ampa.*	'Yes, I have seen him/her truly.'

e. Ideophones

Ideophones of Akan are sounds that are connected with an idea, which may or may not be onomatopoeic (Massimiliano 49). These are usually connected with a verb and may in certain cases by reduplicated or lexicalized. Let us consider the following examples (Ampem 1998: 115):

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Obi nse *twurodoo* mma toa	'One does not make the sound 'twurodoo' for the bottle pouring the liquid'
Tɔn-tɔn-te ne *Tɔn-te*: 'Yɛrenom nsa no na yɛrefa adwene.'	Tɔn-tɔn-te and Tɔn-te (nicknames and the sound of liquor pouring into a bottle): 'While we are drinking we are considering our strategy.'

Now that we have discussed the open lexical categories in full, let us proceed in our study of the Akan language with closed lexical categories.

ii. Closed Lexical Categories

The closed lexical categories are those that perform the function of elucidating grammatical relationships in relating phrases of various types to other phrases (Stewart 2001: 161). These are called closed because it is much more rare for a new member of this class to be added than with the open categories. The categories of Akan are determiners, auxiliary verbs, postpositions, numerals, conjunctions, and pronouns.

a. Determiners

In Akan, determiners (**DET**) usually appear after the noun that they specify. These occur as interrogatives, demonstratives, possessives, numerals, conjunctions and postpositions.

1. Interrogative Determiners

Interrogative Determiners in Akan usually follow the noun that they specify unless they take the place of nouns in the sentence.

abofra *bɛn* na ɔbaa ha no?	'Which child was it who came here?'
hwan na wohyiaa nie?	'Who did you meet here?'

2. Demonstrative Determiners

Demonstrative determiners appear after nouns in Akan. This is exemplified in the following examples.

| ofi *yi* wɔ me. | 'This house belongs to me.' |
| mihyiaa mmofra *bi* wɔ kurotia hɔ | 'I met some children at the outskirts of the town.' |

3. Possessive Determiners

In Akan, possessive determiners are nouns and pronouns:

| *me* fie no nie. | 'This is my house.' |
| *w*'agya bisaa *w*'ase | 'Your father asked about you.' |

b. Numerals

Numerals of Akan also appear after the nouns that they describe:

| nnipa *mpemnum* | 'Five thousand people.' |
| mmaa *baanan* | 'Four women.' |

Also included in this category are nouns that cannot be counted to the number:

| ahemfo *nyinaa* | 'All rulers' |
| nhoma *bebree* | 'Plenty of books.' |

c. Conjunctions (Akrofi, 1965: 48-54)

Just as in many languages, Akan features elements, which allow one to combine words, phrases, clauses or sentences together. Examples of these are as follows:

| ɔsoro *ne* asase ntam kwan ware. | 'It is a long distance between the sky and the earth.' |
| mihuu no, *nanso* me ne no ankasa | 'I saw him/her, but she and I didn't speak.' |

These may be grouped as follows (Massimiliano 2001: 51)

Connectives: (**ne**, and; **nso,** also; **ɛnna**, then etc.)

Adversatives: (**nanso**, but; **na mmom,** on the contrary/rather; **gye sɛ**, except for, etc.)

Distributives: (**anaa**, or; **anaasɛ,** or that; **sɛ...o, sɛ...o**, whether or not, etc.)

Conditionals: (**sɛ...a**, if; **...a,** if; **mpo**, even, etc.)

Concessive: (...*de*, *nanso*, although, etc.)

Relative: (*a*, which, etc.)

Subordinate explanatory: (*a*, that, who, where, etc.)

Subordinate destinative: (*sɛ*, in order, that; *ama,* so that; *gye sɛ*, except for etc.)

Subordinative causal: (*ɛnam sɛ*, because; *ɛfisɛ/ɛfiri sɛ,* because; *firi bere a*, since; *ɛnti,* therefore, etc.)

d. Emphatic Particles

Emphatic Particles in Akan often take the form of conjunctions, but this is not always the case:

saa onipa yi *de*, minnim no.	'As for this person, I don't know him/her.'
ɔhene *mpo*, wonsuro no.	'The ruler even, you don't fear him.'
ɔbo no da nsu ase *fee*.	'The stone lays underwater (Emphatic)'
asa wo nua ni?	'(Emphatic) Is this your sibling?'

e. Postpositions

The postpositions of Akan are so called because, unlike English, they modify relative spatial relationships by occurring after that which is modified. These are grouped as follows (51):

i.   Simple postpositions: (*ne,* with; *kɔ si*, up to; ...*nka ho*, without; ...*bom*, together with, etc.)

ii.   Nominal derived postpositions: (*nkyɛn,* side; *emu*, inside; ...*nka ho*, without; ...*bom*, together with, etc.)

iii.   Verbal derived postpositions (*firi*, from; *kɔ pem,* up to with a connotation of limit from the verb *kɔ*, to go, and *pem*, to run into/collide with, etc.)

iv.   Locative derived postpositions (*hɔ*, there; *ha*, here; *ho*, around, etc.)

v.   Composite postpositions: These are made up of a verb and a noun, an adverb plus a preposition (*twa*...*ho*, from the verb *twa*, cut, and *ho*, body)

ɛda kwan no *nkyɛn*.	'It lays beside the road.'
ɔkaa n'asɛm abufuw *so*.	'S/he spoke his/her words on anger.'

f.   Interjections (Akrofi 54-56)

Interjections of Akan are used to show how the speaker feels about a situation as in the following examples:

Akan	Gloss
O! amanehunu bɛn ni?	'Oh! What type of disaster is this?'
Haa! dɛn na merebehu yi?	'Ah! What is this I am coming to see?'
Yee! mommɛhwɛ anwonwasɛm bi!	'Hey! You all come see a miracle!'

Other interjections are used to add emphasis to what is said, to agree, to disagree, etc. as in:

Akan	Gloss
mommra ɛ!/mommr'ɛ!	'You all come!'
wiɛ, ɔsɛmpa!	'Right, good words/truth!'
buee! gye me oo!	'Oh! Save me!!!'

B. Phrase Structure

i. Noun Phrase

The noun phrase (**NP**) in Akan may be a word, phrase or a clause that is used to show that which is being spoken about within the context of the sentence. This is often a noun or pronoun that always precedes the predicate. This appears in the following examples:

nnipa **no dɔw**	'the people weed'
mmea **no saw**	'the women dance'
obi **kasa**	'someone speaks'
m'akuraa **no ase hɔ nyinaa afuw**	'all of my village has grown'

The **NP** can also be a pronoun: **me-, wo-, ɔ-, ɛ-, yɛ-, mo-, wɔ-,** which connects to the verb as shown below. In all actuality, this is not the NP proper, but is a trace of it as manifested in the Verb Phrase as the subject has been deleted. There will be more on this topic below in the section on the Verb Phrase of Akan:

ɔkasa **sɛ n'agya**	'he speaks like his father'
wɔredɔw **afuw no so**	'they are weeding on the farm'

The only time wherein the pronoun and the verb will appear separately is when an additional word must appear in between for grammatical purposes. This is accompanied by a change in form of the pronoun. This is the **NP** proper:

ɔno **nso** *kasa* **sɛ n'agya**	'he also speaks like his father'
wɔn **nyinaa** *redɔw*	'all of them are weeding'

In Akan, it is also possible for the noun phrase not to appear at all (an example of subject deletion). This occurs in **Vi** commands such as:

kɔ	'go'
bra	'come'
gyina ha	'stand here'
tena ase	'sit down'
yɛ komm	'be quiet'

This also occurs when the pronoun, *ɛ* occurs in the past perfect tense.

afei de adɔɔso (=ɛ-adɔɔso)	'as for now, it has become plentiful'
ɛka abiɛsa ansa na adu (=ɛ-adu)	'there remain three before it will have arrived'

We will now examine closely examples of the phrase structure of the Noun phrase in

Akan:

Noun Phrase Structures in Akan		
Akan	Gloss	Phrase Structure
wo	'you'	NP→PRO
asase pa	'good land'	NP→NP ADJ
ɔhene Mensa	'Ruler Mensa'	NP→NP NP
Kofi nuanom baanu	'Kofi's two siblings'	NP→NP NP ADJP
Kofi nuanom baanu no	'Kofi's two (specified) siblings'	NP→NP NP ADJ DET
akɔdaa no	'the child'	NP→NP DET
m'agya	'my father'	NP→DET NP
m'akuraa no ase hɔ nyinaa	'all of my village'	NP→DET NP DET
Kumase	'Kumasi'	NP→Npr
nnipa bɔne no	'the bad people'	NP→Npl (ADJP) (DET)
me wɔ kwan nkyɛn	'I am at the side of the road'	NP→NP PP
nsuo pa bi (Obeng 1999: 82)	'some good water'	NP→Nm (ADJP) (DET)
me ne wo	'me and you'	NP→NP CONJ NP
na anka wɔn	'but (emphatic) they'	NP→DET CONJ NP

ii. Verb Phrase (61)

The verbs of Akan are those words that denote a tense of an action or state of being. The verb phrase is the part of the sentence that elaborates upon what is spoken about in the subject. The words that function in this manner are for the most part verbs, however it occurs that other words can help in this function. Below is a list of examples that possess single verbs wherein it is not necessary to use other words in conjunction.

Akan	Gloss
nnipa no *kɔ.*	'The people go.'
ɔhene abɔfo no *aba*.	'The ruler's messenger has arrived.'
obi *awu*.	'Someone has died'

However, the verb phrase in Akan may take several forms as the examples below illustrate:

Akan	Gloss	Phrase Structure
kɔ	'go'	VP→Vi
kɔ fie	'go home'	VP→Vt NP
kɔ agya fie	'go to father's home'	VP→Vdt NP NP
bra me nkyɛn	'come to my side'	VP→VP PP

mɛkɔfa	'I will go and take (it)'	VP→VP+VP[9]
bra ntɛm	'come quickly'	VP→VP ADVP
womma	'you don't come'	VP→PRO+AUX+VP (Akrofi 61)
woresere me	'you are laughing at me'	VP→VP NP
mekɔe	'I went'	VP→VP+AUX (Past)
woakɔ hɔ	'you have gone there.'	VP→AUX VP
kae sɛ ɛyɛ nokware	'remember that it is true.'	VP→ VP (V) CP (Comp S)

iii. Prepositional Phrase (66, 67)

Prepositional phrases of Akan consist of a noun phrase (**NP**) and a preposition (**P**) as exemplified below:

Akan	Gloss	Phrase Structure
fie no anim	'the front of the house'	PP→NP (N DET) P
dua no so	'the top of the tree'	PP→NP (N DET) P
ɔbarima bi nkyɛn	'a man's side'	PP→NP (N DET) P
ɛdan no ho	'around the building'	PP→NP (N DET) P

iv. Adjectival Phrase

The adjectival phrase in Akan is composed of the adjective alone or the adjective followed by the adverb. This construction is relatively common in the language as a whole.

Akan	Gloss	Phrase Structure
sua	'small'	ADJP → ADJ
bɔne dodo	'too bad/bad too much'	ADJP → ADJ ADV

---

[9] This is the serial verb construction, which, depending on context, could take an infinite amount of successive verb phrases.

v. Complementizer Phrase

The complementizer phrase of Akan is made up of the complementizer *sɛ*, and a following sentence.

Akan	Gloss	Phrase Structure
sɛ ɛyɛ nokorɛ	'...that it is true'	CP → Comp S
sɛ bɔne biara nka yɛn	'...that no badness should touch us'	CP → Comp S

C. Sentence Structure and Transformational Rules of Akan

i. Introduction

Sentences of Akan are made up of two major parts: the subject and the predicate. It is possible to take a subject and a single verb to make up a sentence in Akan as in the following examples:

mmarima ko	'men fight'
mmaa noa aduane	'women cook food'
mmofra gorɔ	'children play'
obi kasa	'someone speaks'
Kwasi aba	'Kwasi has come'
mframa bɔ	'(the) wind blows'

It is possible to modify the noun phrase (**NP**) with an adjective (**ADJ**) and the verb (**V**) with an adverb (**ADV**) to lengthen this construction as in the following examples:

mmarima akokodurufo yi koo nkoden bi da no	'the brave men fought a hard fight before'
otu mmirika denneenen anɔpa biara	'he sprints every morning'

It is also possible to use two subjects or more in each sentence:

Kofi ne ne nuanom no aba	'Kofi and his cousins have come'
ɔne ne yere ne ne mma ne n'abusuafo bi te Asante	'he and his wife and his children and his family

	live (in) Asante(land)'

Another sentence lengthening device is the addition of several verbs to the

sentence construction. This phenomenon appears in the following examples:

ɔsore kogyinaa abobow ano hwɛɛ abɔnten.	'he got up, went to stand at the gate and looked outside'
ɔhene no ne ne dɔm tu kohyiaa atamfo no ko pam wɔn.	'the ruler and his army left (to) go meet the enemy, fought (and) chased them away'

Similarly, it is also possible to combine two sentences into one as shown below:

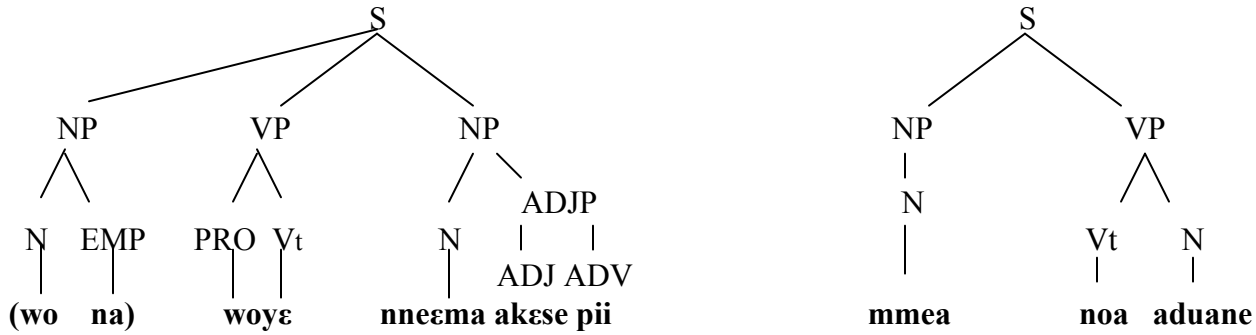| okodii afe wɔ Asante *na* otutu kɔɔ Sarem.	's/he went and spend a year in Asante and he left and went north.'
mate *sɛ* kurom hɔfo atu wɔn hene.	'I heard that the people of the town have destooled their ruler.'

Therefore, sentences in Akan may or may not contain various clauses. For Akan,

a general sentence (**S**) structure can be expressed as such: **S → NP+ VP**

Similarly sentences combined by conjunctions are expressed as **S→ S+ CONJ S**

This is the Subject-Verb-Object (**SVO**) word order, which is by far the most

prevalent in the language; however, alterations of the dominant word order are used for

the purpose of expressiveness, emphasis, etc. Examples of Akan sentence structure can

be expressed as follows:

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
mmea noa aduan	'(The) women cook food'	S → NP (N) + VP (Vt N)
mɛkɔ Mampɔn	'I will go to Mampong'	S →(NP+EMP)+VP (PRO Vt) + NP (N)
ɔbosom anim wɔkɔ no mprɛnsa	'Before the divinity, they {one should} go three times'	S → PP (NP P) + VP (PRO+Vt ADV)
mmea no kɔɔ ɛdan no akyi	'the women went behind the building'	S → NP (N DET) + VP (Vt+AUX) + PP (N DET P)
woyɛ nneɛma akɛse pii	'you do many big things'	S →(NP+EMP)+VP(PRO Vt) NP (N ADJP)

As a tree diagram, a sentence may be expressed thus:

```
                    S                                              S
        ┌───────────┼───────────┐                        ┌────────┴────────┐
       NP          VP          NP                        NP               VP
      ╱  ╲        ╱  ╲        ╱   ╲                       │              ╱    ╲
     N   EMP   PRO   Vt      N    ADJP                    N            Vt      N
     │    │     │    │       │    │                       │            │       │
                            ADJ  ADV
   (wo   na)   woyɛ      nneɛma akɛse pii               mmea         noa   aduane
```

In the interest of time and space, I will not list all possible sentence structures here, however, the reader should take into account that all of the phrase structures mentioned heretofore may be interchanged in the **VP, NP,** etc. Also it should be noted that the serial verb construction may also come into play here wherever the **VP** appears.
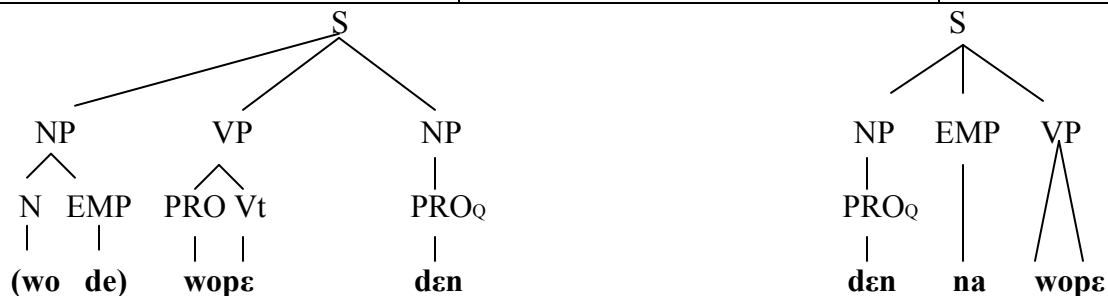
ii. Sentence Transformation

There are several types of sentence transformation occurrences in Akan. These are question transformation, clause movement, emphatic particle insertion transformation, emphatic particle movement, and auxiliary verb insertion:

1. Question transformation

Question transformation in Akan is marked by the insertion of an emphatic particle and movement of the interrogative determiner:

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
Wopɛ dɛn?	'You want what?'	(Deep Structure)
Dɛn na wopɛ?	'What is it that you want?'	(Surface Structure)

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
Hwan na ɔbae(ɛ)?	'Who was it who came?'	(Deep Structure)
Deɛ ɔbae ne hwan?	'The one who came was who?'	(Surface Structure)

```
              S                                            S
      _____|_____                              _____|_____
     |        |        |                            |      |      |
    NP       VP        NP                           NP    EMP     VP
    /\       /\        |                            |      |      /\
   N  EMP  PRO Vt     PROQ                         PROQ    |     /  \
   |   |    |  |       |                            |      |    /    \
 (wo  de)  wopɛ       dɛn                          dɛn    na   wopɛ
```

2. Clause movement (Akrofi: 50)

Clause movement in Akan is marked by the main and subordinate clauses exchanging places:

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
onyaa nea ɔhwehwɛ nyinaa, nso ne ho antɔ no ara.	's/he obtained all that s/he wanted, yet s/he wasn't satisfied.	(Deep Structure)
ne ho antɔ no ara, nso onyaa nea ɔhwɛhwɛ nyinaa.	's/he wasn't satisfied, yet s/he obtained all that s/he wanted'	(Surface Structure)

3. Emphatic particle insertion transformation (Akrofi 53) (Dolphyne 160)

Emphatic particle transformation is marked by the insertion of the emphatic particle:

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
ɛhɔ na eye.	'There is good.'	(Deep Structure)
ɛhɔ *mmom* na eye	'There, rather, is good.'	(Surface Structure)

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
ɔabeduru ha	'S/he has arrived here.'	(Deep Structure)

ɛha na ɔabeduro	'It is here that s/he has arrived.'	(Surface Structure)

4. Emphatic particle movement (50)

The emphatic particle in Akan may take several positions within the clause or sentence:

Akan	Gloss
nnɛra *de*, mankɔ hɔ, nnɛ *mmom* na mɛkɔ.	'As for yesterday, I didn't go there. Today, rather, I will go.'
mankɔ hɔ nnɛra *de*, *na mmom* mɛkɔ nnɛ.	'I didn't go there yesterday, rather, I will go today.'
mankɔ hɔ nnɛra *de*; mɛkɔ nnɛ, *mmom*.	'I didn't go there yesterday; I will go today instead.

It would be difficult to say which of these would be viewed as the deep sentence structure as the combinatory specification very open insofar as the structure of this type of movement is concerned. However, the second construction would be the most likely as the deep structure of this sentence.

5. Auxiliary verb insertion

Also worthy of note is the insertion of auxiliary verbs, such as the negative marker, *N*, a nasal without place of articulation.

Akan	Gloss	Sentence Structure
kɔ hɔ.	'Go there.'	(Deep Structure)
***n*kɔ hɔ.**	'Don't go there.'	(Surface Structure)
mefrɛɛ no.	'I called him/her.'	(Deep Structure)
me*m*frɛɛ no.	'I didn't call him/her.'	(Surface Structure)

iii. Subordinate Clauses (Massimiliano 2001: 56-58)

1. Relative Clauses

The relative clause is a grammatical grouping of words containing subject and verb, which is headed by a relative pronoun or noun. This construction is made by the conjunction *a* between the **NP** and **VP** of the sentence or by *deɛ* in Asante and *nea* in Akuapem replacing the **NP** and the conjunction *a*:

Akan	Gloss
ɔbarima *a* ɔbae no yɛ me nua	'The man who came is my sibling.'
deɛ **ɔbae no yɛ me nua**	'The one who came is my sibling.'
ɔkwan *a* mihuu no yɛ fɛ	'The road that I saw is beautiful.'
nea **mihuu no yɛ fɛ**	'The one that I saw is beautiful.'

2. Objective clauses (Obeng 1999: 60)

The objective clause in Akan follows the principal clause and is introduced by the connective *sɛ*:

Akan	Gloss
metumi hu *sɛ* biribi ha wo	'I can see that something troubles you'
wo na wonim *sɛ* ɛnte saa	'It is you who knows that it is not so.'
m'akora nim *sɛ* akokoraa to sa a, ɛkɔ mmeranteɛ de mu	'My father knows that when an old man's strength finishes, it appears in a young man's'
nea ɛbae ne *sɛ* yɛborɔɔ wɔn pasaa	'What happened was that we beat them utterly.'

3. Causal clauses

Similarly, the causal clause follows the primary clause and is introduced by *ɛnam sɛ*, *ɛfiri sɛ*, *efisɛ*, etc.

Akan	Gloss
na mekɔɔ hɔ *ɛfiri sɛ* mennim deɛ ɛbɛba akyire no	'I went there because I didn't know what would happen afterwards.'
mehuu no *ɛnam sɛ* ɔbaa ha dada	'I saw him/her because s/he came here

	before.'
wobεkɔ *efisε* w'agya ne me	'You will go because I am your father.'

4. Clauses of purpose (Dolphyne 1988: 176)

Clauses of purpose in Akan are introduced by the connective elements **na** and **ma**:

Akan	Gloss
mεkyerε aseε *ama* woate m'asεm aseε no pefee	'I will explain so that you will understand my words clearly.'
ɔyεε ade no *ma* εyεε me nwonwa	'S/he did the thing so that it would be amazing to me.'
dua no yiye na εantutu angu	'Plant them well so that they do not get uprooted.'

5. Clauses of place

Clauses of place are introduced by **baabi a**, **deε** (Asante) or **nea** (Akuapem):

Akan	Gloss
na saa bere no de, ɔkɔɔ *baabi a* εyεε no sε ne tamfo ntumi nkye no	'At that time, s/he went to the place that s/he felt that his/her enemy wouldn't be able to capture him/her.'
εsi *deε* εsi yε amammɔeε	'It ends up where it ends up leads to the ruin of the nation.'

6. Clauses of time (Akrofi 51)

Clauses of time are introduced by **bere a**...**no**, and **bere a**...**no, na** (Akuapem):

Akan	Gloss
(*bere a*) ɔhene yi wui *no*, ne ba aberantewa bi na obedii n'ade	'At the time that the ruler died, it was his adolescent son who came to inherit his estate.'
(*bere a*) wo bɔfo bae *no, na* menni hɔ	'When your messenger came, I wasn't there.'

7. Conditional clauses (51)

Akan, like many languages, can be analyzed as possessing real and unreal conditional markers. These are expressed with the *sɛ...a*, construction:

Akan	Gloss
sɛ **midu hɔ** *a*, **mɛma woate me nka**	'If I reach there, I will let you hear from me.'
sɛ **woaka nokware a, anka manyɛ wo hwee**	'If you would have spoken truth, I wouldn't have done anything to you.'

8. Concessive clauses (50)

The concessive clauses of Akan can take several forms, as the principal clause must concede that something is true and there are several ways of doing this. The central element in the concessive clause is ***nso*** or ***nanso***, translating to 'but' or 'however':

Akan	Gloss
ɛwɔ sɛ ɛha ye, *nanso* **m'ani gyina me kurom bɛsi nnɛ**	'It is true that here is nice, however I long for my hometown to this day.'
nea woayɛ yi ye, *nanso* **nea ɛsen eyi wɔ hɔ**	"What you have done is good, however that which is greater than this exists.'
ɛyɛ nokware sɛ onyaa nea ɔhwehwɛɛ nyinaa, nso ne ho antɔ no ara	'It is true that s/he obtained all that s/he was looking for, however s/he was still not satisfied.'

We have now concluded the syntax portion of this paper and likewise our linguistic overview of the Akan language. We shall now move on to our consideration of socio-linguistics and the Akan language.

XI. The Akan Language and Development

Historical Antecedents of the Concept of Development

In speaking of the Akan language and the concept of development whether generally or in the context of the nation, we must first define our concepts and know what they mean. In the course of this paper, the Akan language has been defined thoroughly, however there remains this question of development. Development as is manifested contemporarily has deep historical roots in a web of interweaving paradigms and concepts. Concepts such as "Man vs. Nature," "Chain of Being," "Social Darwinism," "Unilineal Evolution," "The white man's burden," etc. One cannot truly understand the relationship of language and national development in Africa in general, and Ghana in particular without understanding how the manifestation of contemporary development is informed by these inherently racist concepts; these very same racist concepts that make

the sciences, the social sciences, and the minds of those who accept them into their own political tools.

How do these concepts influence the Akan language and development in Ghana? One of the primary pillars of western thought is the "Man vs. Nature" paradigm. This paradigm holds that "The Earth should be recognized as a value only as insofar as it is continually reshaped by man to serve his needs." All other than man is considered inferior. In the European's political designs for conquest, people who they encountered were grouped in the category of other than man, i.e. nature: a tool to serve the "needs" or wants of the conquest driven European. In order to give this idea backing, the church was incorporated to develop the "Chain of Being" concept, which formed an extension of the "Man vs. Nature" paradigm. "Chain of Being" simply gave concrete organization wherein the primary deity of the Europeans, conceptualized as a white man comprised the top of the hierarchy, followed by "angels," white man, white woman, and finally by animals, trees, rocks, etc. Africans and others were categorized with or below animals for political purposes. With "Social Darwinism," this religious paradigm was adapted into a "scientific" one. In this paradigm, white man was now placed at the top with gradations of races down to the very bottom: The Black African. With the anthropological concept of "Unilineal Evolution," it was hypothesized that the highest form of evolution was the white man, and that to see his various stages of evolution, he had only to look at other races. Here again, the church had it's hand in the mixture as it was soon considered the "white man's burden" to civilize all those races who had not evolved into white men as of yet. Now it becomes clearer. The churches, schools, technology, etc. were all introduced

as tools to accomplish this task. Here we have our development: evolution from African to European.

Development and The Nation

At this point, the Continental African along with the Diasporan African have for the most part bought into this paradigm of development in that every manifestation of power has been used in corrupting our thinking to this point (force, coercion, influence and manipulation). In our acceptance of this paradigm, everything African becomes "primitive," "shameful" and "valueless." Including our African languages. It has been predicted that over ninety percent of the world's languages will disappear in the next century (OUP USA: Vanishing Voices) as the former native speakers undergo the evolution process into white males. As others decry this as development. Native speaker fluency of Akan may soon become a myth if it is not already considered so. Akan is following this terminal path as although it still spoken on a relatively large scale, there are many native speakers who don't know how to count in their own language, or that there is an Akan word for time and each successive generation gets worse. It is now the trend for parents, in the cities, prevent their children from learning the language. Although the population of Ghana is 44% Akan, English remains the official language. The future of Akan as with many other African languages appears bleak in the centuries to come as the nation of Ghana as other countries looks to develop into a mirror of those at the top of the invented hierarchal structure.

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