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Author(s): Felix K. Ameka

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The Typology and Semantics of Complex Nominal Duplication in Ewe

FELIX K. AMEKA

*Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen,
and Leiden University*

Abstract. Different kinds of repetition occur in grammar and discourse cross-linguistically. Yet, many descriptions present the different processes of repetition as if they were the same. This article demonstrates the inadequacy of such an approach using data from Ewe and other West African languages. It argues that formally and functionally, Ewe makes a distinction between reduplication, triplication, syntactic iteration, clausal repetition, and complex nominal duplication. The article focuses mainly on the hitherto unsystematically described complex nominal duplicative constructions, their structural types (the juxtaposed and the morphologically linked), and their semantic types (the temporal, the distributive, the additive, the possessive superlative, the iterative numeral, and the deprecatory). The semantics of the deprecatory construction type and the manner in which repetitive structure, connectives, and other morphological marking all combine to produce the deprecatory interpretation are described from a crosslinguistic perspective.

1. Introduction. The primary goal of this article is to describe the meaning and grammar of a nominal construction that is used in some dialects of Ewe, a Kwa language of West Africa. The portion of (1) in boldface illustrates the construction in question.

(1) *É-nyé* ***ɲútsu gbó*** *ɲútsũ.*
3SG-be **man vicinity man:HTS**

'He is an effeminate/emasculated man.' or 'He is not a real man.' (lit., 'He is a man near man.')

From a structural point of view, the construction consists of two identical nominals that are linked by the postpositional element *gbó* 'near, vicinity'. There is a high tone suffix attached to the construction as a whole. The construction is used to express a contemptuous attitude towards someone or something (a nominal *X*) by indicating that it is "not a real *X*," it is an "approximate *X*." Because the construction involves nominal doubling and signals a derogatory attitude, I propose to call it a "deprecatory duplicated nominal construction."

This deprecatory construction has a number of peculiarities, which will be explored in section 8. As far as I can ascertain, it is used only in varieties of colloquial Ewe that are indigenously referred to as *Evedomegbe* or otherwise known as the "Inland" or "western interior" dialects of Ewe (Westermann

1930:190; Ansre 1961; Capo 1991; see also Afeli 1978) or “northern” Ewe (Agawu 1995). It thus occurs in the dialects spoken in places such as Ho, Kpando, Peki, Botoku, Anfoe (*Aɲfóɛ*), and Hohoe. It does not seem to occur in the Anlo (*Aɲlɔ*) dialect and in the coastal dialects. Consequently, it has not found its way into the literary standard, which has a major Anlo component. The restricted dialect distribution of the construction, coupled with the kind of structure that it entails, has led to its neglect in descriptions of Ewe. This article seeks to correct this situation and to draw attention to the deprecatory construction, and its kin, as a significant component of the semantic style of Ewe.

The deprecatory duplicated nominal construction is a variety of a more general, rather ubiquitous, yet neglected nominal construction in Ewe grammar, namely, the “complex nominal duplicative construction.” Simply put, a *complex nominal duplicative construction* in Ewe is a nominal structure consisting of two NPs in which the head of the first NP or, in some cases, the whole NP is recapitulated as the head of the second NP or as the second NP. There are two structural types of the complex nominal duplicative construction: the morphologically linked and the juxtaposed. In the morphologically linked type, the NPs are joined together by a connective, and the head modifiers, if any, may or may not be identical. This type can be schematically represented as follows (where N_i is the duplicated nominal, X and Z are modifiers of the nominal head, and Y is a connective):

$$[N_i + (X_{MOD})]_{NP} + Y_{CONN} + [N_i + (Z_{MOD})]_{NP}$$

This is the structure of the deprecatory duplicated nominal construction in (1) above. Other types are illustrated in (2)–(4).

- (2) *ɲútsu síáa ɲútsu yi fīa 'fé me*
 man INT man go chief house containing region of
 ‘Every man/all the men went to the chief’s palace.’ (Obianim 1990:50)
- (3) *É-wɔ-e afā kplé afā.*
 3SG-do-3SG half and half
 ‘He did it half and half.’
- (4) *Éya hâ zu dadá-gǎ aféno-wó féa féno.*
 3SG too become mother-big mistress-PL POSS mistress
 ‘She, too, became a madam, a mistress of mistresses.’ (Dogoe 1964:9)

The second structural type involves the juxtaposition of the two NPs. That is, there is no intervening connective. Typically, the head of the second NP is not modified in this subtype. However, the head of the first NP is modified, and this morphological material occurs between the two instances of the head. Its structure may be represented as follows (where N_i is the duplicated nominal and X is a modifier):

$[N_i + X_{\text{MOD}}] + [N_i]_{\text{NP}}$

This is the structure of (5) and corresponds to the structure of the “duplicated temporal nominal construction” (see section 3).

- (5) *Fia kplé éhúmewó fɔ́ kábá nùtɔ́ gbe má gbe.*
 chief and entourage rise early very **day that day**

‘The chief and his entourage got up very early that day.’ (Bureau of Ghana Languages 1976:6)

Although constructions of this kind are rather frequent in Ewe discourse, they have not been systematically investigated. Consequently, I will first present a typology of the different types of complex nominal duplicative constructions found in Ewe (section 2), and then I will describe each one (sections 3–8). Finally, I will investigate the formal properties and the semantics of the deprecatory duplicated nominal construction, as illustrated in (1).

One of the theoretical issues addressed in this article concerns the relation between nominal duplication involving additional morphological material and simple reduplication. In some typological surveys of reduplication, such duplicative constructions are simply considered as reduplication. I would like to argue that the two processes should be distinguished. In fact, I will show that, for Ewe and, I believe, for many other languages, not only should these two processes be differentiated, they should also be set apart from other types of repetitive constructions, such as triplication and intraclausal and clausal repetition or iteration. The details of these differences and a typology of repetitive constructions in Ewe are presented in section 2.

The complex nominal duplicated constructions are of interest for other theoretical reasons as well, some of which will be highlighted in this article. First, there is the question of the relation between the form or structure of the constructions and their semantic interpretation. The meanings expressed by the various duplicative constructions are highly motivated. The constructions could be said to make use of two formal devices: repetition of the nominal and the added morphological material. Each of these devices makes significant contributions to the overall meaning of the construction. For instance, the lexical semantics of the postpositional element *gbɔ́* ‘near, next to, in the vicinity of’, used as a connective in the deprecatory construction, contributes directly to the signaling of the meaning ‘approximate N’ of the construction. Furthermore, the duplication of the nominals in these constructions would appear to be functional. The various meanings expressed by the constructions are iconic with repetition. As we shall see, apart from the deprecatory construction, other subtypes encode meanings such as distribution, augmentation, and attenuation—all of which are said to be iconic with repetition in language (cf. Moravcsik 1978; Okamoto 1994; Reynolds 1995; Carpenter 1996; Fabricius 1998).

Second, there is a theoretical question that concerns the morphosyntactic status of the duplicative constructions. Syntactically, they function as a unit and constitute an integrated whole. Moreover, the various subtypes are relatively fixed structures that allow lexical substitution to a specifiable variable, the nominal, but they are not idiomatic in the sense that their semantics are compositionally derived. I suggested above that they are complex nominal structures. The question is, what kind of structure are they: complex syntactic phrases or lexical units? This is also a problem in other languages with morphologically linked reduplication. For instance, Wilkins (1984), who describes such structures in Mparntwe Arrernte, notes that, even though the reduplicated forms take single-word stress, the word status of one of the subconstructions is in question. Some of the Ewe constructions, such as the possessive superlative illustrated in (4), can be straightforwardly analyzed as complex phrases (see Ameka 1991:168). The deprecatory construction, however, could be analyzed as a lexeme or a phrase. We will explore both alternatives in section 8.

This article is organized as follows: I will first outline, characterize, and distinguish different types of Ewe repetitive structures on the basis of their formal properties (section 2). Next, a general overview and typology of the duplicated nominal constructions will be presented and exemplified (sections 3–7). This will serve as background for the explication of the deprecatory constructions in section 8. The article concludes with some remarks on the implications of the present study for the motivation of form and meaning relations in grammar and for the typology of repetitive constructions and their functional motivations.

2. Repetitive constructions in Ewe: an overview. The pervasive use of repetitive constructions in Ewe has long been recognized by linguists (e.g., Westermann 1930:181). Ansre reports a random word count of reduplicated forms in different types of text that shows that “on the average, eight out of every 100 words in Ewe are reduplicated forms” (1963:128). He adds that “This seems to be quite a significant proportion” (Ansre 1963:128). This count did not include all of the complex nominal duplicated constructions discussed in this article. If they had been included, the proportion would have been higher.

From a comparative perspective, the high frequency of reduplicated or repetitive structures in Ewe is noteworthy. Examples of reduplication in Ewe are discussed in many linguistic works on this topic. For instance, Sapir observes that reduplication has “a more abstract function” in Ewe where “both infinitives and verbal adjectives are formed from verbs by duplication; e.g., *yi* ‘to go’, *yi yi* ‘to go, act of going’” (1921:77). By this he implied that such derivational uses of reduplication depart from what he calls “the natural and fundamental range of significance of the process” (1921:77), which has “self-evident symbolism” (1921:76; see also Hinton, Nichols, and Ohala 1994). Similarly, Moravcsik (1978) cites Ewe examples in her crosslinguistic description of reduplicative

constructions. However, these descriptions have either focused only on the category-changing use of the process of reduplication, or they have not identified the differences between various forms of repetition that are so prevalent in the language. Thus, there is usually no clear distinction made between reduplication proper and triplication and other repetitive structures. Nor is there any clear statement about the nature of the element that is copied: is it based on a morpheme or a word? The different functions of reduplication and repetition in the language have also not been systematically documented. Furthermore, it is not the entire range of complex nominal duplicated constructions, as is the focus of this article, that have normally been considered as reduplicative or repetitive constructions. As we note in section 6, it is only the distributive type has been explicitly described as involving repetition.

In this article, I argue that the duplicated nominal constructions are a type of repetitive construction in which the head of a syntactic unit—a noun phrase—is repeated, but the copy is separated from the original by additional morphological material. In addition, I demonstrate that for Ewe one should distinguish “reduplication proper,” that is, morphophonological or derivational reduplication, from “triplication” and from what one might call “syntactic iteration,” which can be open-ended. These should also be distinguished from complex nominal duplicated constructions, as well as from clausal repetition—the reiteration of an element that is an utterance in itself—and also from discourse repetition (Rudorf 1996).

2.1. Derivational reduplication. In the true reduplicative constructions, i.e., the morphophonological or derivational reduplication alluded to by Sapir (1921:77), a morpheme is reduplicated to form a new word or part of a new word. Thus, verbs can be reduplicated to form an adjective or a verbal noun. If the original begins with a consonant cluster, the cluster is simplified, and the first consonant is retained in the copy. If the stem vowel is nasalized, it is replaced by its oral counterpart in the reduplicative. However, if the stem consonant is a nasalized approximant and the vowel is also nasalized, then the whole form is copied without any change in nasalization. As far as tones are concerned, the copy retains the tone of the original when an adjective is being formed. As with most adjectivalizations based on predicates, an extra high tone is suffixed to the reduplicated output. The effect of this grammatical tone is discernible in the lengthening of a high tone stem vowel or in the production of a rising tone on a low tone stem vowel (see Ameka 1991:79–84). If a noun is being formed, then a high tone in the original is changed to a low tone in the reduplicative form. These processes are illustrated with monosyllabic and disyllabic verbs in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Formation of Nominals in Ewe through Reduplication

VERB		NOMINAL	
<i>sí</i>	'to escape'	<i>sì-sí</i>	'escaping, escape'
<i>dà</i>	'to be proud'	<i>dà-dà</i>	'pride'
<i>trɔ</i>	'to turn, change'	<i>tɔ-trɔ</i>	'turning, change'
<i>gblà</i>	'to strive'	<i>gbà-gblà</i>	'striving'
<i>súbɔ</i>	'to worship'	<i>sùbɔ-súbɔ</i>	'worshipping'
<i>qòli</i>	'to change'	<i>qòli-qòli</i>	'changing'

Table 2. Formation of Nominals and Adjectivals in Ewe through Reduplication

VERB		NOMINAL		ADJECTIVAL	
<i>sé</i>	'be strong'	<i>sè-sé</i>	'strength'	<i>sé-sé</i>	'strong'
<i>lɔ</i>	'to love'	<i>lɔ-lɔ</i>	'love'	<i>lɔ-lɔ</i>	'beloved'
<i>blá</i>	'to tie'	<i>bà-blá</i>	'tying, tied'	<i>bá-blá</i>	'tied'
<i>nyrɔ</i>	'to sink'	<i>nyɔ-nyrɔ</i>	'sinking'	<i>nyɔ-nyrɔ</i>	'sinking'

However, if the formation of a verbal noun involves the verb and a complement, then the tone and nasality of the stem vowel of the original is maintained in the reduplicative form—thus, *sí du* 'run' becomes *du-sí-sí* 'running', and *lɔ Mawú* 'love God' becomes *Mawú-lɔ-lɔ* 'loving God'.¹

There is a nonproductive use of verb reduplication to form an intensive form of the verb. The process is the same as that of forming an adjective from a verb without the extra high tone suffix. Thus, there are pairs of verbs such as those shown in table 3.

Table 3. Formation of Intensive Verb Forms In Ewe

VERB		INTENSIVE FORM	
<i>sé</i>	'be strong'	<i>sé-sé</i>	'be rather strong'
<i>kɔ</i>	'be tall'	<i>kɔ-kɔ</i>	'be rather tall'
<i>si</i>	'paint, smear'	<i>si-si</i>	'paint, smear intensively'
<i>tu</i>	'push, stamp'	<i>tu-tu</i>	'to push'

Since this process is used for derivation with possible changes to the shape of the syllables that are copied, I label it "morphophonological" or "derivational" reduplication. In this reduplication process, the reduplicative form is attached to the left of the stem. In some conceptions of reduplication, this may be said to be a prefixing of a reduplicative formative to a stem (Mathews 1991; Marantz 1982; see also Wilbur 1973; Steriade 1988). This is consistent with the fact that Ewe is head final or right headed in derivational word formation processes. Stemberger and Lewis (1986) have experimentally tested and demonstrated the psycholo-

gical reality of the phonologically dependent nature of this reduplicative process in Ewe.

2.2. Triplication. A second type of repetitive construction is “triplication.” Two types of this process may be distinguished: a bare or plain triplication and a triplication with internal modification. In a triplicative construction involving internal modification, the vowel of the second syllable is lengthened, as in (6a) and (6b), and in (7a) and (7b). In some dialects, there is a further modification of the second syllable in the construction through the insertion of the vowel *i*, as in (7c). This modification adds extra emphasis. This kind of triplication is also to the left—that is to say, the base is the rightmost syllable. There are no tonal changes. Sometimes the feature of nasalization in the stem is left out in the first syllable, but there is a lot of variation here.

- (6a) *pé*
‘exactly’
- (6b) *pépépé*
‘exactly, exactly, exactly’
- (7a) *gbǎ́*
‘first’
- (7b) *gbǎ́gbǎ́ǎ́gbǎ́*
‘the very first’
- (7c) *gbǎ́gbǎ́ǎ́ǎ́gbǎ́*
‘the very first of the first’

The nuclear lengthening in the second syllable of a triplicated form seems to be a metric or rhythmic requirement of the language (cf. Agawu 1995:35). In fact, in the northern or Inland dialects, the reduplication of inherently reduplicated disyllabic verbs yields similar structure—i.e., the vowel in the second syllable is lengthened (cf. Westermann 1930:196). Thus, the reduplicated form of the verb *lolo* ‘be big’ in imperfective constructions, for example, is *lololo* ‘big’, as in (8a).

- (8a) *É-le lololo gbé.*
3SG-be.at:PRES RED:big INGR
‘It will become big.’

Compare the Anlo variant, as shown in (8b).

- (8b) *É-(le) lolo gé.* (Anlo dialect)
3SG-be.at:PRES big INGR
‘It will become big.’

One constraint on the triplication process in Ewe is that its input, unlike that of reduplication, can only be a CV form. Monosyllabic CVN or CVV and disyllabic forms may undergo only bare triplication. They can be repeated three times without any formal modification, as in (9).

(9) [immediately preceding clause: 'It didn't rain a lot.']

dɛko wò-nyǒ kpata kpata kpata víé ko.
only 3SG-spurt drop drop drop little only

'It only drizzled just a little bit in scattered drops—ta ta ta.'

In (9) the disyllabic ideophone used to depict the sound of the scattered drops of rain is repeated three times, but there is no change in form of any of the copies of the input. Similarly, a CVN form such as *kéŋ* (see example 13 below) does not undergo any modification when triplicated.

In contrast to Ewe, Akan CVN forms partake in triplication with internal modification. For instance, the form *tɪn* 'tall, straight, upright' can be triplicated as *tɪntɪntɪn* 'very, very tall'. Such differences deserve to be investigated further. From a formal point of view, however, bare triplication in Ewe is a type of syntactic iteration, such as is described in section 2.3.

2.3. Syntactic iteration. The processes of derivational reduplication and triplication described so far should be distinguished from what I would like to call "syntactic iteration," which involves the repetition of words or phrases for different purposes.² A number of subtypes of this process can be distinguished.

One subtype is a lexical formation where a word may be iterated two or more times and affixed with another element to form a new word. Thus, the repetition of the word is the process of forming a stem to host a derivational affix, as shown in (10a) and (10b), and in (11a) and (11b).

(10a) *mamá*
grandmother
'grandmother'

(10b) *mamá-mamá-mámɛ*
grandmother-grandmother-grandmother:DIM
'great-great-great-grandmother'

(11a) *así*
hand
'hand'

(11b) *así-así-í*
hand-hand-DIM
'red handed'

Another type is the intraclausal iteration or repetition of a word. The repetition is, in principle, open-ended. This is the kind of repetition in which ideophonic or sound-symbolic words partake. Its main function is to provide expressive modification to the item being iterated. In (12)–(14), one can say that the repetition is done to add intensity or emphasis to the idea being expressed.

- (12) *aɖu sue sue sue-wó le nu me ne.*
tooth small small small-PL be:PRES mouth containing region to:3SG
'There are very small small teeth in her mouth.'
- (13) *É-vo kéń kéń kéń.*
3SG-finish completely completely completely
'It is *completely* finished.'
- (14) *Yíyí tsí afi-ma váséde égbé-égbé.*
Spider remain place-that until today-today
'The Spider (trickster) remained there up till this very day.' (This is the last sentence of a folk tale that explains why the spider stays in the corners of rooms.)

The repetition of kinship or relationship terms is used to express endearment or affection. The utterance in (15) contains two instances of such iteration. It is commonly used in public announcements presented in the media.

- (15) *Wó-le xóló xóló-wó kplé nɔví nɔví-wó kpé-ń!*
3PL-be:PRES friend friend-PL and sibling sibling-PL invite-PROG
'Very dear friends and dear relatives are invited.' (Radio Ghana announcement)

This type of syntactic iteration is also used to express a distributive meaning of the type described as "serial ordering" (Reynolds 1995:53; Botha 1988:107). The essence of this can be paraphrased as "units of X at a time, one after another."³ Another distributive meaning expressed by this kind of repetition is that which may be glossed as "X units apiece," i.e., a specified amount per unit (see Ameka forthcoming). The two types are illustrated in (16) and (17), respectively.

- (16) *Fɔ-e deka deka deka.*
pick-3SG one one one
'Pick it up one by one.'
- (17) *Wó-dó agbeli-a sídì alafá eve alafá eve.*
1PL-set cassava-DEF cedi hundred two hundred two
'The cassavas are laid out for two hundred cedis per set.'

Syntactic iteration is also used to express the idea of multiplicity of objects, i.e., the notion of 'very many items'. This meaning is usually derived from the repetition in combination with the plural marking in the noun phrase, as in (18).

- (18) *Ame-gá 'me-gá-wó vá qi anyí.*
 person-big person-big-PL come descend down
 'Very many dignitaries assembled.'

Finally, syntactic iteration may take the form of the intraclausal repetition of a phrase. Verb phrases are often repeated in this way in Ewe discourse to iconically represent the repetition or durativity of the event they describe, as in (19).

- (19) *É-lé dé ɲotí-á me kóɖii le é-ɖu-m, le*
 3SG-hold ALL nose-DEF inside stickily be:PRES 3SG-eat-PROG be:PRES
é-ɖu-m le é-ɖu-m!
 3SG-eat-PROG be:PRES 3SG-eat-PROG

'He held firmly onto the nose and was eating into it and eating into it and eating into it.' (Bureau of Ghana Languages 1976:53)

What I call "syntactic iteration" is similar to the process that has been described as "intraclausal (word) repetition" (cf. Wierzbicka 1991:268–70; Fraser 1997) or as "lexemic iteration" (Knowles 1979). Anagbogu (1995) refers to a similar process in Igbo and other Nigerian languages as "word reduplication." However, as the examples above show, *syntactic iteration* encompasses word reduplication as well as intraclausal phrasal repetition. This process should be distinguished from *clausal repetition*, which involves the repetition of clauses that can function as speech acts or utterances, as in (20) and (21).

- (20) *Amewó kplɔ-e dɔ́ hoo kplé ɣí bé, Mi-lé-e,*
 person-PL follow-3SG VS noisily with shout that 2PL-catch-3SG
Mi-lé-e, Mi-lé-e . . .
 2PL-catch-3SG 2PL-catch-3SG

'People followed him shouting noisily: "Catch him! Catch him! Catch him! . . ."' (Bureau of Ghana Languages 1976:58)

- (21) *Yiyi dze du dzi dɔ́ ta afé, né-tso, né-tso, né-tso.*
 Spider land race top set head home 3IMP-fast 3IMP-fast 3IMP-fast

'Spider (the trickster) started running home—Let it be fast! Let it be fast! Let it be fast!' (Bureau of Ghana Languages 1976:55)

In operating intraclausally, syntactic iteration is thus different from clausal repetition. They are similar in being open-ended, and, in this way, they are both different from derivational reduplication and triplication, described in sections 2.1 and 2.2, respectively. Furthermore, both syntactic iteration and clausal repetition, on the one hand, and reduplication and triplication, on the other, are different from one another in the direction of the copying process. In the latter, the copied element is attached to the left of the stem, while, in the former, the copying is to the right.

I maintain that the processes described so far—reduplication, triplication, syntactic iteration, and clausal repetition—are different in a number of respects from the complex nominal duplicative constructions described in the following sections. First, the nominal duplicative constructions involve only nominal words or phrases. The other processes can operate on other word classes and syntactic phrases, including verbs or verb phrases, adjectives, intensifiers, and adverbs. Second, the repetition in the nominal constructions is noncontiguous, i.e., there is always some morphological material separating the repeated elements, whereas the repetition in the other processes is contiguous, i.e., there is nothing between the base and the copy.

2.4. Complex nominal duplicative constructions. The last type of repetitive construction is the “complex nominal duplicative construction.” As noted above, it involves a recapitulation of the nominal head of a NP as the head of an immediately following NP or of an entire NP with some intervening morphological material between the two NPs. One can identify six types of these constructions. For our present purposes, they will be labeled as follows:

- The temporal nominal duplicative construction
- The superlative possessive nominal duplicative construction
- The additive nominal duplicative construction
- The distributive nominal duplicative construction
- The iterative numeral construction
- The deprecatory nominal duplicative construction

The labels focus on different aspects of each construction. The last five are named roughly by the meanings they express, while the label for the first is based on the semantic feature of temporality common to the nouns that can be heads in these constructions. Each of the construction types will be exemplified in subsequent sections with a view to providing an overview of the formal properties and the general meanings that they express. Previous descriptions of the forms are also noted where appropriate. The different repetitive constructions found in Ewe are summarized in table 4.

3. The temporal nominal duplicative constructions. These are constructions in which the first NP contains a generic temporal noun as head and some other modifiers. In such constructions, Ewe grammar requires that the temporal noun be repeated. Thus, unlike the other nominal duplicative constructions, the two NPs are not linked by any overt connective, but are separated by morphological material that constitutes the modifiers of the first head noun. The two nouns that behave this way, as shown in (22a)–(22d), are *gbe* ‘day, twenty-four-hour period’ (as opposed to *ɲekeke* ‘day’, used as a unit of time without an inherent extent or dimension) and *ɣe* ‘time’. (The primary sense of the word *ɣe* is ‘sun’.)

Table 4. Summary of Repetitive Constructions in Ewe

CONSTRUCTION TYPE	BASE	FUNCTION	DIRECTION	TYPE	EXAMPLES
(morphophonological) reduplication	morpheme (mono- or bisyllabic)	derivation of verbal nouns, adjectives, verbs	regressive (prefixing)	total or partial	<i>fá</i> 'be cold' > <i>fafá</i> 'coldness' n. <i>fáfa</i> 'cold' adj.
triplication	morpheme	expressive; lexical	regressive (prefixing)	total, with or without internal modification	<i>tsá</i> 'formerly' > <i>tsátsátsá</i> 'ancient times'
syntactic iteration	word	expressive modification of meaning; distributive	progressive	total	<i>kábá</i> 'quickly' > <i>kábá kábá kábá</i> 'very, very quickly'
complex nominal duplication	nominal word or phrase	specific syntactic semantic functions, e.g., distributive, deprecatory, superlative, etc.	progressive	duplication of the nominal head or repetition of the entire nominal phrase with intervening morphological material between the two instances of the nominal base	<i>ame síáa ame</i> person INT person 'everybody' <i>ame gbj mē</i> person near person 'a nonreal person' <i>gbe ka gbe</i> day CQ day 'which day'
clausal repetition	an utterance that could be made up of any syntactic unit	expressive modification of meaning	progressive	utterances repeated with pauses in between	<i>né-sé né-sé</i> 3IMP-hard 3IMP-hard 'Let it be hard and hard.'

- (22a) *gbe-a-wó kátã gbe*
 day-DEF-PL all day
 'all the days'
- (22b) *ye-a-wó kátã yi*
 time-DEF-PL all time
 'all the time'
- (22c) *gbe si gbe*
 day REL day
 'the day which'
- (22d) *ye yi yi*
 time REL time
 'time'
- (22e) *gbe bú(bu) gbe*
 day another day
 'another day'
- (22f) *ye bú(bu) yi*
 time another time
 'another time'
- (22g) *gbe ka gbe*
 day CQ day
 'which day, when'
- (22h) *ye ka yi*
 time CQ time
 'what time, when'

Without the repetition of the nouns in these expressions, they would be ungrammatical. There seems to be one exception to this constraint: when the numeral *deká* 'one' modifies *gbe* 'day', the repetition is optional, as shown in (23).

- (23) *Ma-vá gbe deká (gbe).*
 1SG:IRR-come day one day
 'I will come one day.'

These temporal duplicative constructions have posed a challenge to the writing system of Ewe. The basic issue has been whether to write them as one word or as separate words. The recently revised orthography prescribes that all of the phrases given in (22a)–(22h), and similar constructions, be written as single words (Bureau of Ghana Languages 1997:6). However, some researchers are of the opinion that structures based on *gbe* 'day' should be written as separate words (Gilbert Ansre p.c. 1997).

The vacillation in the mode of writing reflects the problem of the status of these forms. Are they single word units, as implied by their being written as single orthographic words, or are they phrases, as implied by the suggestion that the individual members be written as separate words? The answer does not lie here or there. There are arguments in favor of both positions.

Taking the *gbe* forms first, one argument for word status comes from the fact that the repeated *gbe* element could be seen as a derivational formative as it functions in words like *asigbe* 'market day', *dzigbe* 'birthday', and *dzóqágbe* 'Monday'. (Note that *dzóqá*, by itself, can be used for 'Monday'.) On the other hand, there are arguments in support of treating the repeated *gbe* as a phrase on its own, similar to the treatment given to spatial postpositions (see Ameka 1995, 1996a). There is synonymy between expressions involving *gbe* and those involving postpositions. Besides, it patterns structurally like postpositions. Compare the largely synonymous sentences given in (24a) and (24b).

(24a) *ŋkeke ka dzi wó-dzi wò?*
 day CQ top 3PL-bear 2SG
 'On which day were you born?'

(24b) *Gbe ka gbe wó-dzi wò?*
 day CQ day 3PL-bear 2SG
 'Which day were you born?'

In (24a) and (24b), *gbe* occurs in the same structural position as the postposition *dzi* 'upper surface, top'. Furthermore, as with postpositions, *gbe* also forms its anaphoric form by the prefixing of the third-person singular subject clitic *é*, as illustrated by (25a) and (25b).

(25a) *é-gbe*
 3SG-day
 'today'

(25b) *é-dzi*
 3SG-upper.surface
 'its top'

Thus, from a syntactic point of view and in comparison with postpositions, it seems reasonable to claim that the *gbe* forms are phrasal. From a morpholexical point of view, it is possible to regard *gbe* as a derivational formative.

The situation is not any different for the *ɣi* forms, whose analysis is less straightforward. First, unlike the *gbe* forms, the two occurrences of the duplicated noun in the *ɣi* expressions differ morphophonologically—*ɣe* versus *ɣi*. It appears that the recapitulated form *ɣi* is derived historically from *ɣe* through the suffixation of an *-i* formative that assimilates the *e* vowel to itself: *ɣe* + *-i* > *ɣi*.

This assimilation pattern is consistent with other forms of assimilation involving an *-i* morpheme (see Capo 1985).

Like *gbe* 'day', *ɣi* 'time' is used as a derivative in the formation of nominals meaning 'time to do *X*' where *X* refers to the event represented in the stem, as shown in (26) and (27).

(26) *nú-du-ɣi*
 thing-eat-time
 'dining time'

(27) *dɔ-wɔ-ɣi*
 work-do-time
 'working time'

Given that there is a lexical formative attached to the copy of the *ɣe* form, it seems reasonable to consider the *ɣi* expressions as lexical items.

Be that as it may, the constructions involve a duplication of a temporal nominal. It appears that temporal nominals tend to be involved in such structures across languages. Childs (1995:198) gives examples of similar structures involving temporal nouns in Kisi, an Atlantic language of West Africa. What is more striking about the Ewe forms is that the pattern is restricted to only two generic temporal nouns. The explanation for this may lie in the semantics of the two forms. They are both similar in designating a period or extent of time that sets them apart from other temporal nouns. Moreover, it is not clear why the structure of the temporal duplicative construction is different from that of the other duplicative constructions. This is perhaps another example of the peculiar behavior of temporal nouns, which are not prototypical nominals, within the nominal system of a language. For instance, it has been observed that in classifier languages, temporal nouns are one semantic class of nouns that do not take a classifier (see Ikoro [1996] on Kana, a classifier language of Nigeria).

4. The superlative possessive nominal duplicative construction. In this construction, the two NPs are linked by the possessive connective *fé*. Thus, it is, in effect, a possessive construction. The essential thing about this construction is that the head of the first NP, i.e., the structural possessor, is identical with the head of the second NP, the possessed nominal. Either NP may be formally marked for plurality, or they may be bare nominals, as in (28), where the possessive construction appears in boldface.

(28) *Wó-be-na* *dé* *wó-fé* *xɔ-wó* *me* *le* ***gogloefé fé***
 3PL-hide-HAB ALL 3PL-POSS room-PL containing.region.of at **deep.part** POSS
gogloefé-wó.
deep.part-PL

'They hide in their rooms in the most hidden part of all places.' (Obianim 1990:2)

In (28), the second NP, the possessed, is marked for the plural. By contrast, in (29), the possessor NP is marked for plurality. Example (29) was said as an insult to a man who had been boasting that he could predict whether a pregnant woman would have a boy or a girl. The speaker asks whether he and his wife have been able to produce any children, and then utters the insult. Notice that the possessive construction (in boldface) is preceded by *tsiã*, an interjection of contempt (see Ameka [1991:659–60] for a discussion of this interjection).

- (29) *Tsiã, **konɔ-wó fé konɔ.***
 INTERJ **barren.person-PL POSS barren.person**
 'I feel disgust, you being the most barren person among barren people.' (Obianim 1990:16)

Both NPs can be bare, as in (30). The context is that a suspect in a murder case was pounced upon and beaten by a mob. The beating and its effect on some of the people is described by the author in these words.

- (30) *Núblánúí fé **núblánúí fo-fo sia wɔ dɔ dɛ ame***
pity POSS pity RED-beat DEM do work ALL person
ádé-wó dzí.
 INDEF-PL upper surface
 'Some people were greatly disturbed by this most pitiful of pitiful beatings.'
 (Obianim 1990:45)

This possessive construction is used in Ewe as an effective rhetorical strategy. For instance, Nutsukpo (1985:270), in his discussion of the techniques and meanings of humor and wit in the Kpando dialect of Ewe, refers to its use to indicate disapproval and condemnation. In the Kpando dialect, as in many other Inland dialects of Ewe, one of the variants of the possessive marker is identical with the plural marker *wó* (cf. Westermann 1930:191). Thus, "the possessive morpheme *wó* (of) . . . may occur with words like *avú* (dog), *aso* (fool) . . . to imply degrees of silliness or stupidity and consequent spite and condemnation" (Nutsukpo 1985: 270), as shown in (31) and (32).

- (31) *aso wó aso* (Kpando dialect)
 fool POSS fool
 'fool of a fool' (Nutsukpo 1985:270)
- (32) *avu wó avú me-ɔ-á náa* (Kpando dialect)
 dog POSS dog 1SG-call-HAB to:2SG
 'I call you dog of a dog' (Nutsukpo 1985:270)

As (31) and (32) indicate, such utterances occur in the context of name-calling. This construction type is thus creatively deployed in Ewe interactive discourse to achieve various communicative ends.

Even though this Ewe construction can be seen as analogous to English archaic structures, such as *king of kings* and *lord of lords*, the Ewe constructions are more productive than the English ones. In describing the semantics of this subtype of the nominal duplicative construction and its relation to the prototype semantics of the “alienable” possessive construction, I noted that “in essence, this construction conveys the idea that the referent is an exceptional N, the best of Ns, a super N, or the first among the Ns; the greatest N” (Ameka 1991:168). In the context of its description as a possessive construction, I suggested the label “possessive superlative” for it. I now think that both the possessive nature and the duplication of the nominal head should be reflected in the label that characterizes the construction. It may thus be more appropriate to label it as a “superlative possessive nominal duplicative construction.”

5. The additive nominal duplicative construction. The examples of this construction encountered so far involve a bare nominal that is linked to its repeated form by the NP linker *kplé* ‘and’, as shown in (33)–(36).

- (33) *Ē-wɔ-e de kplé de.*
 3SG-do-3SG some and some
 ‘He did it half and half.’ (i.e., ‘He did it half-heartedly.’)
- (34) *Sěě kplé sěě ma-ga-wɔ.*
 short.time and short.time 1SG:IRR-REP-do
 ‘At very short intervals (he says), “I will do it again.”’
- (35) *Wó-kpa devi-dáka zã kplé zã.*
 3PL-carve child-coffin night and night
 ‘They made a child’s coffin that very night.’ (Adiku 1955:31)
- (36) *Na miá-kpé ηkúme kplé ηkúme.*
 let 1PL-meet face and face
 ‘Let us meet face to face.’

Consistent with the general semantics of *kplé*-linked constructions, the interpretations of the additive nominal duplicative construction range from the comitative, as in (36), to a manner interpretation, as in (33), to an intensifying meaning, as in (34) and (35).

6. The distributive nominal duplicative construction. The distributive nominal duplicative construction is used to express the concept ‘every’. Its constituents are two identical nominal phrases that are linked by the intensifier *síáa*, which may be glossed as ‘both, all together’, as illustrated in (37) and (38).

(37) *Kú síáa kú hã kú-é...*

death all death too death-AFOC

'Every death, too, is a death [whether the death of a rich or of a poor person]. . .'
(Obianim 1990:50)

(38) *Asi ñi-na le tefé geđe-wó le ñkeke ene síáa ñkeke*
market shine-HAB at place several-PL at day four all day

ene megbé.

four after

'In several places, there is a market after every four days.'

In contrast with other nominal duplicative constructions, this distributive construction has been noted in previous descriptions, even though the accounts are not comprehensive and are based, in some cases, on translations and not on the Ewe internal logic of the construction. For instance, Westermann (1930:72) glosses *síáa* as 'both, both together, altogether, every'. He further observes that *síáa* "often stands between a substantive and a repetition of that substantive and then it means (a) 'every, every single one, all': *lã síáa lã* 'every animal'; (b) 'any one', e.g., *maxɔ agbalē síáa agbalē ko* 'I take every', i.e., 'any, book I get'" (Westermann 1930:72).

The main problem with Westermann's (1930) account is that it does not distinguish between the meaning of a construction and the meaning of the individual items in that construction, nor does it explain what contribution these elements make to the interpretation of the construction as a whole. Thus, *síáa* by itself does *not* mean 'every'; it is the repetitive construction as a whole, in combination with the intensifier *síáa*, that carries this meaning. Furthermore, the claim that the *síáa* construction can also express the meaning 'anyone' is based only on the translation of the specific structure. In fact, such a meaning depends crucially on the contextual elements and, in this particular example, comes from the presence of the intensifier *ko* 'only'. For a proper understanding of the function of *síáa*, constructional meaning and lexical meaning must be differentiated.

Duthie (1996:63) also writes about this distributive construction as a "special construction" involving the repetition of the head of the NP with "-sia-" (*sic*). As we have seen above, it is not just the head of the NP that is repeated, rather it is a complete repetition of the entire NP (see (38)). Duthie's (1996) description introduces a further issue related to the status or category of the *síáa* element. He presents -*sia*- as a "demonstrative" because the distributive construction is a variant of a phrase involving the lexical distributive determiner *desiaɖe* 'each, every', which he classifies syntactically, and I think appropriately, as a demonstrative (1996:56). Semantically, Duthie (1996:83) identifies *desiaɖe* as a quantifier.

It is true that the distributive nominal duplicative construction involving *síáa* is a syntactic variant of the lexical distributive marker *desiaɖe* 'each,

every', because one can be substituted for the other. The sentences in (39a) and (39b) are synonymous.

(39a) *De fé akpá síáa kpá nyó ná náné wɔ-wɔ*
oil.palm POSS part all part good for something RED-do
'Every part of the oil palm is good for doing something.'

(39b) *De fé akpá dɛsíadɛ nyó ná náné wɔ-wɔ*
oil.palm POSS part every good for something RED-do
'Every part of the oil palm is good for doing something.'

However, I do not think that, because of this, *síáa* is a determiner or a demonstrative, as Duthie (1996) claims. It is more consistent, I think, to maintain that it is an intensifier—a quantifying intensifier at that—which gets exploited in the duplicative construction. This is all the more plausible when one observes that the Ewe pattern occurs in other languages. That is to say, an item that is used for expressing basic universal quantification, 'all', is used in a repetitive construction to derive the distributive universal quantifier 'every'. Thus, in Ga, another Kwa language of Ghana, the intensifier *fě́ě́*, glossed as 'all, every, both' (Dakubu 1998), is used with the repetition of a noun phrase to express the distributive as shown in (40).

(40) *mɔ fě́ě́ mɔ* (Ga)
person INT person
'everybody'

In fact, it has been argued that there is a universal tendency for 'every'-type universal quantifiers to be more marked than and to be based on 'all'-type constructions (see Gil 1995, 1996; Haspelmath 1995; Ameka 1996b, forthcoming). Furthermore, some languages also employ a repetition of the NP with a linker different from the 'all' word. For instance, in Hebrew, the linker is the word for 'and', as shown in (41). In Kisi, an Atlantic language, the linker seems to be identical in form with a noun class prefix, as illustrated in (42a) and (42b), and in (43a) and (43b).

(41) *kol iš ve-iš sahav šaloš mizvadot* (Hebrew)
A man and-man carry:PAST-3SG:M three:F suitcase:PL:F
'Every man carried three suitcases' (Gil 1995:355 n. 22)

(42a) *hě́l-lé* (Kisi)
stem-suffix
'salt' (Childs 1995:97)

(42b) *i-hě́l ó i-hě́l* (Kisi)
PRO-salt DIST PRO-salt
'every grain of salt; all the salt' (Child 1995:97)

(43a) *sɔ́-ó* (Kisi)
 stem-suffix
 'fowl' (Childs 1995:98)

(43b) *sɔ́ ó sɔ́* (Kisi)
 fowl DIST fowl
 'every fowl' (Childs: 1995:98)

In sum, the Ewe distributive duplicative construction is not a typological rarity. Its form and structural content is recurrent across the world's languages.

7. Iterative numeral constructions. The label for this construction is taken from Westermann, who notes that "iterative numerals are expressed by means of *zi* or *zi gbɔ zi*; *éwɔe zi etɔ́* or *éwɔe zi gbɔ zi etɔ́* 'he did it three times'; *zi evelíá* 'the second time'" (1930:100).

From Westermann's (1930:100) description we can draw the following conclusions. First, that iterative numerals, that is 'number of times' or 'frequency time', can be expressed by a simple noun phrase headed by the word *zi* ('frequency) time', with the frequency expressed by a quantifier.⁴ Second, we can observe that the quantifier can be a cardinal or an ordinal number. One might add that other quantifiers like *geqee* 'lots, several' can also occur in this structure. Third, it can be inferred that the simple phrase construction has a synonymous counterpart that is made up of a duplication of the word *zi* linked by an item *gbɔ*, which is presumably the verb *gbɔ* 'go and come, return, come back'. What is of interest to us is the duplicative construction and how it differs from the simple one in the expression of iterative numerals.

I suggest that the two constructions have slightly different semantics. The difference is brought about by the repetition of *zi* and the semantics of the connective element in the duplicative construction. The simple *zi* + quantifier construction expresses only the idea of 'X quantity of times', the quantity being expressed by the quantifier. The duplicative structure, however, signals a multiplicity of times specified by the quantifier. Because the repetition indexes multiplicity while the connective signals, roughly speaking, 'do again', the duplicative co-occurs only with plural quantifiers, as shown in (45a)–(45e), whereas the simple structure can occur with nonplural quantifiers as well, as shown in (44a)–(44e).

(44a) *É-fɔ-e zi deká.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time one
 'She hit him once.'

(44b) *É-fɔ-e zi eve.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time two
 'She hit him twice.'

- (44c) *É-fo-e* *zi* *alafá* *deká.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time hundred one
 'She hit him a hundred times.'
- (44d) *É-fo-e* *zi* *atǎ-líá.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time five-ORD
 'She hit him for the fifth time.'
- (44e) *É-fo-e* *zi* *gedee.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time several
 'She hit him several times.'
- (45a) **É-fo-e* *zi* *gbɔ* *zi* *deká.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time CONN time one
 'She hit him once.'
- (45b) *É-fo-e* *zi* *gbɔ* *zi* *eve.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time CONN time two
 'She hit him twice.'
- (45c) *É-fo-e* *zi* *gbɔ* *zi* *alafá* *deká.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time CONN time hundred one
 'She hit him a hundred times.'
- (45d) *É-fo-e* *zi* *gbɔ* *zi* *atǎ-líá.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time CONN time five-ORD
 'She hit him for the fifth time.'
- (45e) ?*É-fo-e* *zi* *gbɔ* *zi* *gedee.*
 3SG-hit-3SG time CONN time several
 'She hit him several times.'⁵

It is rather hard to capture in translation the difference between the two sets of constructions. As the examples illustrate, the duplicative structure (45a)–(45e) occurs felicitously with plural numerals, while the simple structure (44a)–(44e) can be modified by any numeral and any quantifier. Another difference between the two structures is that the duplicative one adds an emphasis to the repetition of times. Thus, the contrast between *zi eve* 'two times' and *zi gbɔ zi eve* 'two times!' is one of emphasis. Thus, although Westermann (1930:100) presents these two forms as synonyms, there are differences between them. In section 8, we turn to the deprecatory construction, which is used as a case study to highlight the semantics of the complex nominal duplicative constructions.

8. The deprecatory constructions. The purpose of this section is to use the deprecatory constructions as a case study to draw together the significant issues obtained in the analysis of the complex nominal duplicative constructions. First,

I discuss the formal status of the constructions and, then, I describe their semantics. Drawing on the fact that the deprecatory nominal duplicative construction has only limited dialect distribution, I point out the ways in which meanings similar to the one embodied in this construction are expressed in other dialects. I propose a semantic explication following the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, in which meanings of linguistic elements are decomposed in reductive paraphrases and are couched in relatively simple, self-explanatory terms, while the meaning components are stated as propositions.⁶ An attempt will be made to justify the individual components, linking them to the formal structure of the construction. The way in which the individual members of the construction contribute in a compositional sense to the overall semantics will also be demonstrated.

8.1. The formal status of the constructions. A careful look at (1), repeated here as (46), reveals that there is additional morphotonological material associated with the copy of the nominal.

(46) *É-nyé ɲútsu gbó ɲútsũ*
 3SG-be man vicinity man:HTS

'He is an effeminate/emasculated man,' or 'He is not a real man.' (lit., 'He is a man near man.')

In this particular example, the added material is a high tone suffix that combines with the low tone on the last syllable of the noun to yield a rising tone. One of the functions of such a high tone suffix in Ewe, and in the northern dialects in particular, is the marking of syntactic nominal compounds (see Ansre 1966; Clements 1977; Ofori 1989; Ameka 1996a).

Apart from the high tone suffix, the deprecatory construction can also be suffixed with the diminutive marker *-i*. Thus, a man construed as effeminate can be referred to with (47), which contains a diminutive suffix *-i*.

(47) *ɲútsu gbó ɲútsu-í*
 man vicinity man-DIM

'an effeminate/nonreal man'

I suggest that the difference between (46) and (47), that is, between the construction with the high tone suffix and that with the diminutive marker, is that the diminutive marker adds a further attenuative sense to the construction. Roughly speaking, (46) expresses the idea of 'person X (the referent of the construction) is not a real man', while (47) conveys the idea that 'person X is not really a real man'.

While in (46) and (47) the two suffixes are clearly distinguished, in some environments it is not easy to tell whether we are dealing with the high tone

suffix or the diminutive suffix. In general, the different effects of the two forms can be clearly seen in a form that ends in a back vowel and in a low tone. In (48) there is a clear diminutive marker added.

- (48) *tɔ gbɔ tɔ-é ke kúme*
 father vicinity father-DIM this kind
 ‘this kind of pseudofather’

In other instances, however—especially those in which the noun ends in a high nonback vowel with low tone—the two morphemes are not so clearly distinguished. This is because the diminutive marker is completely assimilated to these forms leading to a rising tone on the final syllable. Thus, as in (49), it is not possible to say whether the added morphological material is the high tone suffix or the diminutive marker, as in (49).

- (49) *ame gbɔ mǎ*
 person vicinity person:HTS/DIM
 ‘a nonreal person’

Be that as it may, the presence of the additional morphological material can tell us something about the status of the deprecatory constructions. It seems reasonable to claim that the presence of morpholexical formatives suggests that these constructions are lexical structures. Their use as reference terms also supports such a view.

8.2. The semantics of the deprecatory construction. As noted in section 1, the deprecatory construction is a northern Ewe form absent in the southern Ewe dialects. A meaning similar to the significance of the deprecatory construction is expressed in these other dialects, and, indeed, in the northern dialects as well, by use of the diminutive. One Anlo speaker, residing in the Netherlands, used the diminutive to describe a kind of traditional Ewe food she had made with substituted ingredients, as shown in (50).

- (50) *Éyi ya mé-nyé abólo yé o, abólo-e yé.*
 this as.for 3SG:NEG-be *abolo* AFOC NEG *abolo-DIM* AFOC
 ‘As for this one, it is not an *abolo*, it is an approximate *abolo*.’⁷

The speaker conveys the meaning that the food she had made is not a true or prototypical *abolo*, but rather something that resembles *abolo*. In other words, it has a family resemblance to *abolo*, but it is not a central member of the category. I suggest that the diminutive marker is the form that signals this meaning. Thus, in this context, it carries an attenuative meaning. All speakers of Ewe can use the diminutive marker to express this kind of meaning. However, the northern Ewes have another specialized construction to express a similar kind of

meaning. Thus, the *abolo* mentioned in (50) can be described with the deprecatory duplicative constructions of (51a) and (51b).

(51a) *abólo gbɔ́ (a)bólõ*
abolo vicinity *abolo*:HTS
 'a nonreal *abolo*'

(51b) *abólo gbɔ́ 'bólo-e*
abolo vicinity *abolo*:DIM
 'a really nonreal *abolo*'

As explained above, the difference between (51a) and (51b) comes from the presence of a high tone suffix in the former and the diminutive marker in the latter. In addition to the 'not a real *abolo*' component that these duplicative constructions share with the diminutive constructions of the southern dialects, there is a further attitudinal meaning of contempt being expressed by the duplicative constructions, which can be roughly formulated as "I feel something bad towards it (the *abolo*)."

Partial support for the attitudinal component comes from the fact that the N slot in these constructions is commonly filled by kin terms. Such structures are typically used to express a derogatory attitude towards a kinsman or kinswoman who does not live up to the social expectations of his or her kinship status and does not fulfill the obligations of the role he or she occupies in relation to the speaker. We have already seen, in (48), the case of someone who is contemptuously thought of as not being a real father. Example (52) was used by a man to refer to someone who claims to be his paternal uncle, but who does not take up the responsibility expected of him as a guardian of the speaker.

(52) *tɔ́de gbɔ́ tɔ́dẽ*
 uncle vicinity uncle:HTS/DIM
 'a nonreal uncle'

Terms for categorizing humans can also fill the N slot, as already illustrated in (46) and (49). Indeed, all nouns that refer to natural or cultural categories can fill the N slot in this construction. In short, any noun expression that denotes a category can fill this slot.

The semantics of categories and categorization are constrained by prototype effects of various kinds (cf. Geeraerts 1994; Wierzbicka 1996:148–69; Tsohatzidis 1990; Taylor 1995:59–80). I suggest that the Ewe deprecatory construction is used to signal pejoratively that something or someone is not a prototypical member of its category. This marginal membership derives from the fact that, in the estimation of the speaker, the referent does not have the attributes or characteristics of the central members of the category. Consequently, the speaker has a pejorative attitude towards the specific member of the category that is being talked about.

With these considerations in mind, I propose the following explication for the semantics of the high-tone-suffixed (N + *gbó* + N-HTS) deprecatory duplicative nominal construction:

- a. Person/thing *X* is a *Z*, where *Z* is the category represented by N
- b. One can say many things about *Zs*
- c. One cannot say all of the things that one could say about *Zs* about *X*
- d. One can say some of these things about person/thing *X*
- e. Because of this, one can say that person/thing *X* is not a true *Z*
- f. I do not (want to) think of person/thing *X* as a *Z*
- g. I feel something bad towards person/thing *X* because of this

I propose a similar series for the semantics of the diminutive-marked (N + *gbó* + N-DIM) depreciatory duplicative nominal construction:

- a. Person/thing *X* is a *Z*, where *Z* is the category represented by N
- b. One can say many things about *Zs*
- c. One cannot say very many of these things one could say about *Zs* about *X*
- d. One can say a small number of these things about person/thing *X*
- e. Because of this, one can say that person/thing *X* is not a true *Z*
- f. I do not (want to) think of person/thing *X* as a *Z*
- g. I feel something bad towards person/thing *X* because of this

In both series, component (a) presents the denotatum of the construction as belonging to a category represented by the nominal. Component (b) captures the idea that the noun has several characteristics. This component is based on the insight of Wierzbicka that “nouns tend to designate ‘kinds of things’ endowed with certain properties” (1988:472), and that these properties are numerous. Thus, components (c) and (d), in both series, indicate that the referent has only a semblance of the noun because one cannot attribute to him, her, or it all of the characteristics that one expects of that kind of noun. The high-tone-suffix construction signals that the referent of the construction is not a prototypical member of the category. Similarly, the diminutive construction indicates that the entity is even further removed from the prototype. This subtle difference is reflected in the way components (c) and (d) are phrased in the semantic formulae. Hence, one can conclude that the referent is not a true member of the category. Components (f) and (g) capture the attitude of the speaker towards the referent, deriving from the recognition that it is less than a real member of the category.

In the construction, there are a number of formal clues regarding these components. First, the fact that the construction is a nominal structure indicates that it refers to an entity—someone or something. The repetitive nature of the construction is an index of the fact that the referent is not a prototypical

member of its category (cf. Levinson 1999, chap. 2). This is further reinforced by the use of the lexical item *gbó* 'vicinity, next to, near' in the construction. Literally the form of 'an N in the vicinity of N' is interpreted as an approximate N. In addition, there is the possible use of the diminutive marker in one subtype of the construction, which, as we have indicated, can have and does have an attenuative meaning in the language. The contemptuous attitude is an inference that derives from the nontrue category membership of the referent. However, the repetitive structure can also be seen as indexing such an attitude.

To sum up, the meaning of the construction is intricately related to its form. In a sense, the formal complexity of the construction is iconic with its meaning. It is also highly motivated. The repetition of the nominal and of the connecting element makes significant contributions to the constructional meaning of the structure.

9. Conclusion. In this article, I have presented a survey of repetitive structures in Ewe, paying particular attention to the nominal duplicative construction—a repetitive construction type that has hitherto not been described in any detail. One of the themes of the article has been to call for a closer examination of the different kinds of repetition that are employed in a language and the specific functions and meanings associated with the different kinds, in order to gain a better understanding of the relations between repetition and its meanings in a crosslinguistic or typological framework. It appears that if this is done at a fine-grained level, some of the typological generalizations will need to be reexamined. For instance, it is usually claimed that there is a natural self-evident symbolic relationship between repetition and distributivity. There is no elaboration provided as to the type of repetition or kind of distributivity that is involved (see Ameka 1996b, forthcoming). From the findings in this article, it is clear that different kinds of repetition are used for different kinds of distributivity. Syntactic iteration is employed for the serial ordering and the 'apiece' kind of distributivity. However, for the 'every' kind of distribution, the nominal duplicative structure is used. As indicated in section 6, this is not just an Ewe phenomenon. It is a strategy used in other languages as well (see Ameka forthcoming). The implication is that the typological generalization should be made more precise, since there are differences between the different types of repetition.

On a language-specific level, I have presented a typology of the different repetitive structures, making fine distinctions between morphophonological reduplication, triplication, and syntactic iteration involving intraclausal and clausal repetition. One significant generalization that has emerged is that triplication with internal modification operates only on CV structures in Ewe, while in closely related Akan, for example, it is applicable to CVN forms as well. In Ewe, CVN forms undergo syntactic iteration.

The bulk of the article was concerned with the nominal duplicative struc-

tures. It was demonstrated that this construction has two structural types, based on the presence or absence of an overt connective between the nominal and its copy. This feature distinguishes the temporal type from the rest. It was also shown that the different semantic types of the construction differ with respect to the morphosyntactic status of the construction. Thus, it has been argued that the temporal and depreciatory types are composite forms, while the other types are phrasal.

Parallels of the duplicative constructions occur in Akan and Ga—the genetic, areal, and typological relatives of Ewe. Mention has already been made of the ‘every’ distributive construction in Ga (see section 6), in which the repeated nominals are linked by an intensifier, as in Ewe. There are other instances, in Akan and Ga, where the connective is a postposition and, in some cases, a cognate. Consider (53) and (54), paying attention to the connective elements and to the meanings they convey.

(53) *nuu mli nuu* (Ga)
 man inside man
 ‘a brave man’

(54) *kwasia mu kwasia* (Akan)
 fool inside fool
 ‘a fool of a fool’

Curiously, the Ewe cognate form *me* ‘containing region of, inside’ does not participate in these constructions. Moreover, the meanings carried by the construction linked by the ‘inside’ form in Akan and Ga are different. There is an urgent need for a systematic documentation of the structures and meanings of such constructions across the languages of West Africa (cf. Awoyale [1989] and Owolabi [1993] for similar forms in Yoruba).

Repetition as a linguistic device is very pervasive in Ewe, as in many other languages. From a semantic point of view, and from a Gricean point of view, such repetition may appear to be redundant (cf. Okamoto 1994; Levinson 1999; but see also Israeli [1997] on the use of syntactic reduplication or word repetition as a cooperative device in Russian dialogues). I hope this article has shown that, notwithstanding this, repetition manifests itself in various forms and has distinct functions and meanings that can and need to be discovered and described in a rigorous fashion.

Notes

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Abbreviations. The following abbreviations are used: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; A = simple nondistributive universal quantifier; AFOC = argument focus marker; ALL = allative; CONN = connective; CQ = content question marker; DEF = definite article; DEM = demonstrative; DIM = diminutive; DIST = distributive marker; F = feminine; HAB = habitual; HTS = high tone suffix; IMP = imperative; INDEF = indefinite; INGR = ingressive; INT = intensifier; INTERJ = interjection; IRR = irrealis marker; M = masculine; MOD = modifier; NEG = negative; ORD = ordinal; PAST = past tense; PL = plural marker; POSS = possessive linker; PRES = present; PRO = pronominal; PROG = progressive; RED = reduplicative; REL = relative marker; REP = repetitive; SG = singular; VS = verb satellite.

Transcription. High tones are marked throughout with an acute accent, in addition to the low tones that are customarily marked with a grave accent in the traditional orthography. The haček, or wedge, marks a rising tone. Ewe orthographic *f* and *v* are the voiceless and voiced bilabial fricatives, respectively.

1. The fact that the reduplicated part of such event nominalizations makes use of the same rules, is formally identical with reduplicated deverbal adjectives, and does not behave like deverbal nominals formed by reduplication suggests that the language treats the reduplicated verbal part as a modifier of the nominal, or at least as a nonsubstantive. The form of the reduplicated verb in these constructions contrasts with that of a reduplicated deverbal nominal. This makes one wonder whether structures such as *du-sí-sí* and *Máwú-l̃-l̃* should be analyzed as genitive constructions, as has been customary in the grammaticalization literature (cf., Heine 1994), or as noun phrase modifier (quality) constructions.

2. Israeli seems to use syntactic reduplication for a subtype of what I call “syntactic iteration.” She defines the process of syntactic reduplication in Russian as “a repetition of a word (or modified word) within the same prosodic unit, regardless of whether the two words are separated in print by a space, a hyphen, or a comma” (1997:588). All of the examples provided are indeed reduplications, and, from that point of view, the term may be justified. I use iteration instead of reduplication to capture the open-ended nature of the processes I am describing in this section.

3. Cf. Westermann’s succinct comment that “distributive numerals are formed by simple repetition: *eve eve* ‘two each’” (1930:100).

4. Tong, Yell, and Goddard (1997:260) suggest that the concept ‘frequency time’ might be a semantic primitive in the Natural Semantic Metalanguage framework. If this turns out to be established, then *zi* would probably be the best exponent for this conceptual primitive in Ewe.

5. It is more felicitous to say *zi gbɔ zi gedewó*, where the quantifier *gedɛ* is modified by the plural marker. This further supports the “multiplicity” feature of the duplicative construction.

6. For the use of the method in explicating grammatical constructions, see Ameke (1991, 1996a), Wierzbicka (1988, 1996), Goddard (1985), and Wilkins (1989); for its use in describing the semantics of reduplication, see Wilkins (1984) and Wierzbicka (1991:255–84).

7. *Abolo* is a steamed food made from fermented corn dough formed into flat pieces and served with a sauce.

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