

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The African e-Journals Project has digitized full text of articles of eleven social science and humanities journals. This item is from the digital archive maintained by Michigan State University Library. Find more at:

<http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/africanjournals/>

Available through a partnership with



*Scroll down to read the article.*

**SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EWE  
RELATIVE CLAUSE CONSTRUCTIONS**

Alex K. Dzameshie

**ABSTRACT**

*In their studies on relative clauses (RCs), Keenan and Comrie (1977) and Downing (1977, 1978) identify certain syntactic features which they consider to be universal features of relative clause structures. However, Downing (1978:375) cautions that his implicational universal "may be considered hypotheses to be tested against additional data of relative clause structure." This paper primarily examines the syntactic features of RCs in Ewe, but in doing so provides additional data against which some of the universal features claimed for RCs are tested. Overall, the universals tested in this study have been supported by the data from Ewe.*

**Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to attempt a systematic analysis of relative clauses (RCs) in Ewe.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, the key syntactic features of RCs in Ewe are discussed. Furthermore, different types of RCs found in Ewe are examined, highlighting the important features associated with these constructions. In addition, the paper tests some of the claims that have been made about the universal features of RCs.

**Theoretical Framework**

In this section, our aim is to consider some theoretical parameters within which relative clause constructions have been discussed. These considerations will provide the necessary framework within which we can meaningfully examine the syntax of RCs in Ewe. For our immediate purposes, we will focus attention on the works of Downing (1977, 1978), Keenan and Comrie (1977) and Comrie (1981); all of these studies examine relativization within the general theory of transformational generative grammar (Baker 1978; Soames and Perlmutter 1979; McCloskey 1979)

**On Defining the Notion Relative Clause**

Studies such as Downing (1978) have revealed that the notion relative clause is a universal syntactic phenomenon in natural languages. It would seem reasonable, therefore, to establish a universal syntactic characterization of this notion. But attempts in this direction have not been very successful, principally because of sig-

nificant cross-linguistic variations in the relationship between the deep structures and surface structures on relative clauses. Differences occur in areas such as the ordering of elements and the positioning of RCs in more complex syntactic structures.

However, attempts in the direction of a universal semantic definition have proved more helpful (Downing 1978). This has been done in terms of universal semantic or functional properties of RCs.

The first semantic property is that of coreference (Downing (1978)). There is always a semantic connection between an RC and the matrix clause. This is the connection; in the underlying structure of an RC, there is always a nominal that is coreferential with another nominal in the main clause (Downing (1978)). The nominal outside the clause is called the antecedent nominal phrase (ANP), if it precedes the RC. The coreferential NP within the RC is referred to as the relativized nominal phrase (RNP). If the coreferential NP within the RC is referred to as the relativized nominal phrase (RNP). If the coreferential NP within the matrix clause occurs after the RNP, it may be called postcedent NP (PNP). In short, the ANP or the PNP may be referred to as the headnoun in RC constructions. In (2), it can be seen that the ANP the man and the RNP (which have been underlined) are coreferential. (Note that (2) is the underlying structure of (1). The underlined clause in (1) is an example of an RC in English.

(1) The man Who greeted you is Kofi's uncle

(2) [The man [The man greeted you] be Kofi's uncle]

Secondly, RCs are characterized by their cognitive function of modification (Downing 1978). The statement contained in the RC serves to modify or restrict the reference of the ANP.<sup>2</sup> For example, in (1) above, the RC who greeted you restricts the reference of the ANP the man.

In addition, an RC is understood as a statement or comment about the RNP as well as its ANP (DOWNING 1978). For example, in (1) The RC who greeted you is a comment about both the ANP and RNP in (2).

### Types of Relative Clauses

Generally, different types of RCs may be identified on the basis of two broad criteria: (1) the function of the RC and (2) the position of the RC. Functionally, a distinction is made between restrictive (also called adjectival or defining) and nonrestrictive (or nondefining, parenthetical or appositive) RCs. Basically, a restrictive RC, as the name suggests, serves to restrict the potential referent(s) of the headnoun to only those referents of which the assertion in the RC may be deemed to be factually or logically true. According to Downing (1978:381), "All languages make use of restrictive relative clauses." The underlined clause in (3) is an example of a restrictive RC in Ewe<sup>3</sup>.

(3) *Ati si le abo me la yro*

Tree which is garden inside CFM<sup>4</sup> wither  
'The tree in the garden has withered'

On the other hand, appositive RCs do not function as restricting modifiers of the headnoun. They are mere additional or parenthetical comments about a previously identified class or part of a class (Downing 1978). Unlike the case of restrictive RCs, not all languages make use of nonrestrictive RCs.<sup>4</sup> This type of RC occurs in English and is illustrated by the underlined RC in (4).

(4) Kofi Ata, who scored the first goal, is the captain of his team.

A second criterion for classifying RCs is the position of the RC relative to the headnoun. If the RC precedes the headnoun, it is referred to as a prenominal RC. Japanese, for example, has prenominal RCs. Conversely, if the RC comes after the headnoun then it is a postnominal RC (Downing 1977). If the head NP occurs within the RC, then it is an internal RC construction (Keenan and Comrie 1977). The distinct ways in which these various types of RCs are formed are termed RC-strategies. The RC-strategies responsible for producing prenominal, postnominal and internal RCs are referred to as prenominal, postnominal and internal RC-strategies respectively (Keenan and Comrie 1977).

RC-strategies may be classified in terms of how the position of the relativized NP is indicated. One type of RC-strategy produces RCs in which the relative pronoun (in the restricting clause) takes a form that clearly indicates the role (e.g., subject, direct object) of the relativized NP. This RC-strategy is case-coding; Russian, for example, has this strategy. The following are examples cited by Keenan and Comrie (1977:65). In these examples, the forms of the Russian relative pronouns unambiguously indicate the role of the relativized NPs.

(5) *devuska kotoruju*                      *Dzon ljubit*  
girl who (ACCUSATIVE)                  John likes  
'The girl who John likes'

(6) *devuska kotoraja*                      *ljubit Dzon*  
girl who (NOMINATIVE)                 likes John  
'The Girl who likes John'

On the other hand, there are languages in which the role of the relativized NPs cannot be retrieved from the form of the relative pronouns since they are not coded for case.<sup>6</sup> These languages are said to have [-case] RC-strategies. Ewe is an example of languages with this type of RC-strategy because the relative pronoun *si* takes the same form no matter what the role of the RNP is.

### Accessibility of NP Constituents to Relativization

An important theoretical consideration in studies on RCs is the concept of accessibility of NP constituents to relativization. NP constituents performing

various functions (e.g., subject, direct object, etc.) may be relativized in a given language. When a given NP position can be relativized by a particular RC-strategy, that NP position is described as relativizable.

Based on data from fifty languages, Keenan and Comrie (1977) claim that there is a universal hierarchy of accessibility of NP positions. That is, in all languages, the accessibility of certain NP positions to relativization depends on whether certain other positions are accessible. Keenan and Comrie (1977:66) have formalized this relative accessibility of NP positions into what they call the Accessibility Hierarchy (AH). The AH is stated as follows:

#### Accessibility Hierarchy

SU > DO > IO > OBL > GEN > OCOMP

where:

">" means "is more accessible than"

SU stands for Subject NP

DO stands for Direct Object NP

IO stands for Indirect Object NP

OBL stands for Major Oblique case NP (i.e. (NPs that express arguments of the main predicate, e.g. the shelf in "Tom left the magazine on the shelf").

GEN stands for Genetive (i.e., the possessor in a possessive construction. For example, the girl in "Adzo saw the girl's mother yesterday).

OCOMP stands for Object of Comparison (e.g., his brother "Kwesi is taller than his brother).

Keenan and Comrie (1977:67) claim that the AH "determines, universally, the degree of accessibility to RC formation". It must be noted that not all languages distinguish all the NP positions on the AH; they form a set of possibilities for any language. The highest point on the AH is SU, while the lowest is OCOMP.

### **The Syntax of Ewe Relative Clauses**

We may now turn our attention to specific syntactic features of Ewe RCs. One aspect of the syntax of RCs in Ewe concerns the relationship between word order and RC-strategy. As mentioned earlier, Ewe has postnominal RCs. Downing (1978:383) claims that there is a "strong correlation between verb-object word order and the use of postnominal RCs [i.e., restrictive relative clauses]." Downing (1978:383) formulates this correlation in the form of an implicational tendency concerning the formation of RCs as follows:

With few exceptions, a language has postnominal restrictive clauses if and only if in the basic word order of the language verbs precede their objects.

Ewe has postnominal RCs and a subject-verb-object word order. Thus, verbs precede their objects as can be seen in example (7).

- (7) Ama xle agbale -a.  
Ama read book the  
'Ama read the book'

Another salient feature of RCs in Ewe is the manifestation of a relative particle. This particle, which follows the antecedent NP (head NP), is a special pronominal form of the relativized NP. In full RCs, this relative pronoun si marks the beginning of the restricting clause (see the underlined RCs in (8) and (9)). This form of the relative pronoun is used for all singular relativized NPs<sup>7</sup>

(8) Awu si Ama nya la  
 Shirt which Ama wash CFM  
 "The shirt which Ama washed"

(9) Nyɔnu si fo detsia  
 Woman who prepare soup  
 "The woman who prepared the soup"

But when the relativized NP is plural, the plural marker wo is added to the si as can be seen in (10b). It can be observed that in the underlying structure, the relativizable NP is plural: amewo 'persons'<sup>8</sup>

(10)a. [Amewo [Amewo wo do] xo fetu]

[Persons [Persons do work receive reward]  
 "The people who worked received rewards"

b. Ame siwo wo do la xo fetu  
 Persons who (Pl.) do work CFM received rewards  
 "The people who worked received rewards"

One other feature of RC constructions in Ewe is that they may be marked in an additional way (besides the initial relative particle). When a relative clause is embedded into a matrix clause in Ewe, the end of this RC is marked with la. Consider the occurrence of this la in (10b) above. Note that in the underlying structure in (10a), la is not present. But once the restricting clause becomes a relative clause in (10b), this clause is marked with la. The use of la this way supports Downing's (1978:385) claim that "postnominal RRCs [in some SVO languages] are also marked in some additional way... these markers are in most cases applicable to their subordinate clauses as well." True to this observation, this same la is used in marking other non-final subordinate clauses in Ewe. For instance, in (11), la marks the end of the subordinate conditional clause.<sup>9</sup>

(11) Ne e- wo do -a la, Kofi a- xe fe na wo

If you do work the CFM Kofi FUTURE pay fee to you  
 "If you do the work, Kofi will pay you a fee"

Another important aspect of RCs in Ewe is the transformational process. In order to see clearly what process is involved in relativization in Ewe, it will be helpful to compare the constituent structure of the pre-relativized forms of the restrictive clauses with their relativized counterparts. In (12) and (13), the pre-

relativized restrictive clauses are underlined.

(12) [Nuflɛla ma [Ama ba nuflɛla ma] kpɔ dziku]

Buyer that [Ama cheat buyer that] see anger  
'The customer who was cheated by Ama got annoyed'

(13) [Ati la [Ati la le abɔ me] mu  
[Tree the [Tree the be garden inside] fall]  
'The tree in the garden has fallen'

These clauses are the underlying forms of the relativized counterparts underlined in (14) and (15) respectively.

(14) Nuflɛla si Ama ba la kpɔ dziku  
Buyer that Ama cheat CFM] see anger  
'The buyer who was cheated by Ama got annoyed'

(15) Ati si le abɔ me la mu  
Tree that be garden inside CFM fall

It can be seen that each RC (underlined in (14) and (15) starts with the relative pronoun si. If the RCs are isolated from si, the following ungrammatical structures will be produced:

(14a) \*Ama ba ----- la  
Ama cheat CFM

(15a) \*----- le abɔ me la  
be garden inside CFM

The ungrammaticality of these structures is explained by a common defect: each sequence lacks a crucial NP. What is missing in (14a) is the direct object of the verb ba 'to cheat'. In (15a) it is the subject NP that is missing. Within the framework of transformational generative grammar, we can describe this feature of missing NPs by making the following assumption: each of these structures has a full NP in the position marked by gaps. We can set up an underlying structure (US) for each RC that will contain the appropriate NP representing the missing NP. The USs are underlined in (12) and (13), repeated here for convenience as follows:

(12) [Nuflɛla ma [Ama ba nuflɛla] kpɔ dziku]  
[Buyer that [Ama cheat buyer that] see anger]  
'The customer who was cheated by Ama got annoyed'

(13) [Ati la [Ati la le abɔ me] mu  
[Tree the [Tree the be garden inside] fall]  
'The tree in the garden has fallen'

These NPs posited in the USs are in consonance with an Ewe native speaker's intuition about the missing NPs in (14a) and (15a).

Native speakers of the language understand the relative pronoun si in (14) as representing the object of the verb; the understood role of the NP represented by si in (15) is subject.

In the preceding paragraphs, we have sought to establish that the relative pronoun si is produced through the transformation process of relativization. This process may be called the Relative Clause Formation Rule. It substitutes the relative pronoun si for the underlying full NP and inserts this relative particle in clause-initial position.

### Relativizable NP Constitution in Ewe

As mentioned earlier, there is a hierarchy of relativizable NP positions which is captured by Keenan and Comrie's Accessibility Hierarchy (repeated here for convenience).

Accessibility Hierarchy (AH)  
SU > DO > IO > OBL > GEN OCOMP

All the NP positions on the Accessibility Hierarchy are accessible to relativization in Ewe. For example, SUs (subject NPs) and DOs (direct objects) may be relativized. In (16a), dufula la 'the runner' is the subject NP. This NP is relativized in (16b).

- (16) a. Dufula la dze anyi  
Runner the hit ground  
'The runner fell down'
- b. Dufula si dze anyi la xo abi  
Runner who hit ground CFM get wound  
'The runner who fell down got injured'

In (17a), agbale yeye 'new book' is the DO of the verb fle 'to buy'. This direct object is relativized and represented by the relative pronoun si in (17b).

- (17) a. Yao fle agbale yeye  
Yao buy book new  
'Yao bought a new book'
- b. Agbale yeye si Yao fle la bu  
Book new which Yao buy CFM lost  
'The new book Yao bought got lost'

It is not only these higher NP positions on the Accessibility Hierarchy that are relativized in Ewe; the lower positions are also accessible to relativization. For instance, the indirect object (IO) sukuvi la 'the student' in (18a) is relativized in (18b).



(18) a. Dudowola la ɲlɔ agbale na sukuvi la  
 Minister the write letter to student the  
 'The minister wrote a letter to the student'

b. Sukuvi si dudowola ɲlɔ agbale na  
 Student who minister write letter to

la kpo dzidzo ɲuto  
 CFM see happiness very

'The student to whom the minister wrote a letter was very delighted'

It is also possible to relativize oblique case NPs or locatives. For instance, the oblique NP kplɔ in (19a) is relativized in (19b).

(19) a. Kofi da nuɖuɖu -a de kplɔ dzi  
 Kofi put food the on table top

b. Kplɔ si dzi Kofi da nuɖuɖu  
 Table which top Kofi put food

do la fo di  
 on CFM catch dirt

'The table on which Kofi set the food is dirty'

Another lower NP position on the Accessibility Hierarchy that is relativizable is a genitive or the possessor of a possessive phrase.<sup>10</sup> For example nutsua 'the man' in (20) is relativized in (20b).

(20) a. Dowolawo gba ɲutsu -a fe dowɔfe -a  
 Workers destroy man the POSS workshop the  
 'The workers destroyed the man's workshop'

b. ɲutsu si fe dowɔfe dowolawo gba la  
 Man who POSS workshop workers CFM

do dziku  
 plant anger

'The man whose workshop was destroyed by the workers  
 got infuriated'

Finally, an object of comparison (OCOMP), which is the lowest position on the Accessibility Hierarchy, may be relativized in Ewe. For instance, in (21a), nyɔnyɔvi

la, which is an OCOMP, is relativized and represented by the relative pronoun si 'whom' in (21b).

- (21) a. Esi      kɔkɔ    wu      nyɔnuvi      la  
           Esi      be tall than    girl            the  
           'Esi is taller than the girl'
- b. Nyɔnuvi            si      Esi      kɔkɔ    wu  
           Girl                whom Esi      be tall than
- la      ŋkɔ    -e      nye      Adzo  
           CFM    name- FOCUS be      Adzo  
           'The name of the girl whom Esi is taller than is Adzo'

### Extraposited Relative Clauses

So far, we have looked at regular types of RCs in Ewe. The structural frame below represents a complex sentence containing an RC. (W and X represent optional elements).

[ W            [ANP    [si... ] la] X ]  
                   NP                    NP

This type of regular RC has a head noun referred to as the antecedent NP (ANP) followed by the restrictive RC which has the clause-initial relative pronoun si; the RC with its ANP terminates in the clause final marker la. In this section, attention will be focused on one variation of RC construction in Ewe: the extraposited RC. An RC is extraposited when it is moved away from its ANP. An RC that occurs to the right of the matrix clause is called a right-extraposited RC (Downing 1978). When the converse of this occurs, we have a left-extraposited RC. Some languages have left-extraposited RCs. Both right -extraposited and left-extraposited RCs are termed adjoined RCs. Regular RCs occurring within the matrix clause and immediately before or after the ANP are called embedded RCs (Hale 1974).<sup>11</sup> We have already seen several examples of postnominal embedded RCs. (There are no left-extraposited RCs in Ewe). In (22c), we have an example of extraposited RC.

- (22) a. Ame    aɖe    li  
           Person some    exist  
           'Someone is available'
- b. Ame    aɖe    a-    kpe    ɖe    ŋu    wo  
           Person some    will    add    to    body    you  
           'Someone will help you'
- c. Ame    aɖe    li    si  
           Person some    exist    who

a- kpe de ɲu wo  
 will add to body you  
 'There is someone who will help you'

It may be assumed that the RC si akpe de ɲu wo 'who will help you' is extraposed from its embedded position as shown in (23) below.

(23) Ame aɖe [si a- kpe  
 Person some [who will add  
  
 de ɲu wo la] li  
 to body you CFM] exist  
 'There is someone who will help you'

In this instance where the RC is embedded, it appears immediately after the ANP ame aɖe 'someone/some person.' But in (22c) where this clause is extraposed, it occurs at the end of the matrix clause (specifically, after the verb) li 'exist'. From (22c) and (23), it is clear that extraposition of the RC is optional in this case.

But the question is, "Why does extraposition occur at all?" As Downing (1978:409) puts it, extraposition occurs "when embedding would cause serious interruption" between the matrix web (e.g. li 'exist') and its subject (e.g., ame aɖe 'someone'). Thus, "extraposition serves the function of preventing a long interruption between main sentence elements... by a modifier," for example an RC (Downing 1978:405). Thus, extraposition helps to avoid having focus on very weak lexical items such as li 'exist', bu 'be lost', etc., in sentence-final positions.

There is even a more important reason why extraposition sometimes occurs: to avoid the production of semantically awkward sentences. Consider this sentence:

(24) ɪutsu aɖe ku si mie ɖi  
 Man some die who we bury  
 'Some man died, whom we buried'

In this sentence, extraposition of the RC is obligatory after the verb ku 'to die.' The obligatory nature of extraposition in cases such as this bears on the chronological order of the events that are predications of the ANP. In this particular instance, the predications concern burial and death. The main clause verb talks about burial. If the RC is embedded in the matrix clause, then the event of burial will precede death. This will result in a semantically awkward construction such as (25).

(25) \*ɪutsu aɖe si mie ɖi la ku  
 Man some who we bury CFM die  
 \*Some man who we buried died'

In order to avoid this semantically awkward sentence, the RC (with its predication about burial) is extraposed so that death precedes burial.

There seem to be two types of constraint on extraposition in Ewe. First, not all verbs allow extraposition of an RC. Only few short one-word intransitive verbs permit extraposition, e.g. bu 'be lost', ku 'to die' and li 'to exist.' These are all verbs of existence or non-existence and so may be called existential verbs. When semantically permissible, these verbs allow extraposition from all NP positions on the Assembly Hierarchy (Dzameshie 1983). For example, in (24) above, the relativized NP is a direct object. And in (26) the relativized NP is a subject.

- (26) Ame    ade    li    si    a-            de  
 Person some    exist    who    FUTURE    uncover
- lododo            ma    gome  
 proverb            that    bottom
- 'There is someone who can interpret that proverb'

In addition, extraposition is possible when the NP involved is an indirect object as in (27).

- (27) Avo    ade    li    si    Aku    -a    fle    na    -e    fofo-    a  
 Cloth    some    exist    which    Aku    FUT    buy    for    her    father    the
- 'There is some cloth that Aku will buy for her father'

Second, as noted earlier, the chronological order of the events predicated of the ANP determines whether an RC can be extraposed. For example, in (24), where the main clause verb is ku 'to die,' there is obligatory extraposition because of the chronology of the events predicated in the main clause and in the RC. In (28), however the RC cannot be extraposed even though the same verb ku 'to die' is used in the matrix clause. This RC can only be embedded in the main clause (as seen in (28a)).

- (28) a. Afi    si    no    adi    la    ku  
 Mouse which drink    poison CFM die  
 'The mouse which drank poison died'
- b. \*Afi    la    ku    si    no    adi  
 Mouse the    die    which drink    poison  
 'The mouse died which drank poison'

Why is extraposition blocked in this case? Because the predication in the RC (i.e., the drinking of poison) cannot come after the main clause predication (i.e. the death of the mouse). The drinking of the poison precedes the death and this sequence of events must be maintained in the sentence. But this sequence is violated in (28b), hence the awkwardness of this sequence.

This same semantic constraint operates in English. This is illustrated by the grammaticality of (29a) and the semantic oddity of (29b).

- (29) a. The person may be re-elected who then becomes life-president.

- b. \*The person who then becomes life-president may be re-elected.

One interesting feature of extraposed relative clauses that is worthy of note here is that they have the same internal structure as their embedded counterparts. As one of his generalizations about the nature of RCs across languages, Downing (1978:409) states:

If a language has both postnominal and right-extraposed RCs [i.e., restrictive relative clauses], the internal structure of the RC is the same in both positions.

This implicational universal finds support in Ewe. Consider, for example, the similarity of structure of the RCs in (30) and (31) where the RCs are embedded and extraposed respectively.

- (30) Nya ade [si Ama a- gbo  
 Matter some [which Ama will say  
  
 na wo la] li  
 to you CFM] exist  
 'There is some news Ama will tell you'

- (31) Nya ade li [si Ama -a gbo na wo]  
 Matter some exist which Ama will say to you  
 'There is some news Ama will tell you'

The only difference between the embedded RC in (30) and the extraposed RC (ERC) in (31) is that while the embedded RC has the clause final marker la, the ERC does not have this marker. The reason is not hard to find. An embedded RC, like all other non-sentence final subordinate clauses in Ewe, ends in la. On the other hand, the ERC is sentence-final and therefore does not need this marker.

It must be noted, however, that there are certain sentence-final RC constructions in Ewe which may optionally take the CFM la. These RCs may be regarded as pseudo-extraposed RCs. They may be described as pseudo-ERCs because by definition, ERCs are moved away from their ANPs; but the RC constructions in view occur immediately after a repeated form of their ANPs.<sup>12</sup> (Note that if the ANPs are not repeated in these sentences, ungrammatical structures are produced as evidenced by (32b) and (33b). These RCs along with the repeated ANPs are moved away from the first occurrence of the ANP and placed after the main verb of the sentence. Consider these examples:

- (32) a. Amedzro -a tro gbo, amedzro si  
 Visitor -the turn back visitor who  
  
 na ga Esi (la)  
 give money Esi (CFM)  
 'The visitor came back, the visitor who gave Esi some money'
- b. \*Amedzro -a tro gbo, si  
 Visitor -the turn back who

na ga Esi (la)  
 give money Esi (CFM)  
 'The visitor came back, who gave Esi some money'

(33) a. Gli -a mu, gli si  
 Wall the collapse wall which  
  
 wo do kple anyi (la)  
 they erect with clay (CFM)  
 'The wall collapsed, the wall which was made with clay'

b. \*Gli -a mu, si  
 wall the collapse which  
  
 wo do kple anyi (la)  
 they erect with clay (CFM)  
 '\*The wall collapsed, which was made with clay'

As can be seen in (32a) and (33a), the RC may optionally take the clause final marker *la*. One possible explanation for the occurrence of the CFM at the end of these RC constructions is that these RC constructions are actually truncated forms of full complex sentences containing embedded RCs. For example, the full form of (33a) is (34):

(34) Gli -a mu, gli si  
 Wall the collapse wall which  
  
 wo do kple anyi la mu  
 they erect with clay CFM collapse  
 'The wall collapsed, the wall which was made with clay'

The underlying structure of (34) is as follows:

(35) [Gli -a mu] [Gli -a [Wo do  
 Wall the collapse [Wall the [They erect  
  
 gli -a kple anyi] mu]  
 wall the with clay collapse  
 'The wall collapsed, the wall which was erected with clay has collapsed'

Observe that in (35), there are three clauses. The pseudo-ERC in (33a) is represented by one of these clauses. When this clause is transformed into an embedded RC, it has the surface structure underlined in (36).

(36) Gli si wo do kple anyi la mu  
 Wall which they erect with clay CFM collapse  
 'The wall which was made with clay has collapsed'

In this context, (i.e., within an embedded RC) the CFM la is not optional. But in (33a), this marker is optional because it is no longer an embedded clause; it is a pseudo-ERC. This is partly due to the fact that the main verb of the matrix clause (i.e., mu 'collapse in (35)) disappears in the surface structure (i.e., (33a)) through the process of identical VP deletion.

To sum up, the internal structure of ERCs is similar to that of embedded RCs in Ewe with respect to the following features: (1) they all begin with the relative pronoun si and (2) they all have underlying structures that are full clauses. The main difference between these two types of RCs is seen with regard to their position in relation to their ANPs. In addition, while embedded RCs obligatorily take the CFM la, their ERC counterparts do not take this marker. However, pseudo-ERCs take this marker optionally.

### Conclusion

This paper has examined the syntactic features of relative clauses in Ewe and, among other things, has highlighted the following. First, Ewe has postnominal RCs corresponding to its basic SVO word order. Second, Ewe, like English, has a [-case] RC-strategy since the form of the relative pronoun is not case-coded to indicate the syntactic role of the relativized NP. Third, all NP positions on the Accessibility Hierarchy are accessible to relativization in Ewe. Fourth, the beginning of an RC in Ewe is marked by a relative clause particle si. Fifth, like other non-sentence final subordinate clauses in Ewe, the end of all embedded RCs is marked by the clause final marker la. Sixth, Ewe has embedded as well as extraposed RCs both of which exhibit the same internal structure. Some of these major findings about RCs in Ewe lend support to certain claims made about universal features of relative clause structure. For instance, the correspondence between verb-object word order and postnominal RCs and the similarity of the internal structure of embedded and extraposed RCs are evident in Ewe RC constructions.

### NOTES

1. Ewe is a dialect-cluster with a written standard, used in Ghana and Togo. It is part of a larger language-cluster which is variously called Gbe or Tadoïd; this cluster includes Gen, Aja, Ewe, Fon, Gun, etc., spoken also in parts of Benin and Nigeria.
2. This semantic property actually refers to the function of restrictive relative clauses. The nonrestrictive type of RCs, strictly speaking, do not restrict the reference of the ANP.
3. Ewe is a tone language. However, tones are not marked in the Ewe sentences in this paper because tone is not directly relevant to our discussion.
4. In Ewe, the end of a non-final RC is marked with the particle la which may be called a clause final marker (CFM). This particle is homophonous with the Ewe definite article la (the).
5. Westerman (1930) claims that Ewe does not have nonrestrictive RCs. While agreeing that this type of RC is not very common in Ewe, it must be pointed out that this type of RC does occur occasionally. For example, one can say:

Dadi,	si	nye	afemela	la,	me-	du	-a	gbe	o
Cat	which	is	house-animal	CFM	NEG-	eat	HABITUAL	grass	not

'The cat, which is a domestic animal, doesn't eat grass'

However, in this paper, attention is focused on restrictive RCs in Ewe.

6. In Ewe, the relativized NP may be optionally retained in the RC in the pronominal form ɔ when the relativized NP is not the subject of the restricting clause. However, this pronoun retention is different from case coding since the same pronominal form ɔ is used irrespective of the syntactic function of the relativized NP.

7. Unlike some other languages (e.g. English), Ewe does not vary the form of the relative pronoun si/siwo to reflect inherent semantic features of nouns. These same forms are used for humans, nonhumans, animate as well as inanimate entities.

8. Note that in Ewe when a plural noun in the restricting clause is represented by the relative pronoun siwo, the plural marker wo on the ANP is deleted in order to avoid semantic redundancy.

9. Since la marks the end of embedded RCs as well as other non-final clauses, it is reasonable to assume that there is a general rule of la-insertion which inserts this particle at the end of this type of clauses in the language.

10. It is possible to relativize a whole possessive phrase (esp. those involving intrinsic relations) as a unit. For instance, the possessive phrase Yawo fe ata in (ia) is relativized and represented by si in (ib) below.

(i) a. Yawo fe ata ɔe  
Yawo POSS leg break  
'Yawo broke his leg''

b. Yawo fe ata si ɔe la te ɔuts  
Yawo POSS leg which break CFM swell very  
'Yawo's leg which fractured got badly swollen'

11. Hale's (1974) terms adjoined and embedded were quoted in a footnote by Downing (1978:382).

12. The repetition of ANPs in these pseudo-extraposed RCs is in contrast with what happens in the case of regular extraposed RCs. This repetition may be seen as lexical anaphora, which helps to clarify and after thought in a pseudo-extraposed RC.



## REFERENCES

- Baker, C.L. 1978. Introduction to Generative-Transformational Syntax. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Comrie, B. 1981. Language Universals and Linguistic Typology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Downing, B.T. 1977. Typological regularities in postnominal relative clauses. In Eckman, F.R. (ed.), Current Themes in Linguistics. New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corp. 1978. Some universals of relative clause structure. In Greenberg, J.H. (ed.), Universals of Language. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press. pp 375-418.
- Dzameshie, Alex K. 1983. Relativization in Ewe. Indiana University unpublished M.A. thesis. 1994. Constraints on the relativizability of NP constituents in Ewe. To appear in Legon Journal of Humanities, Vol. 8.
- Greenberg, Joseph H. 1966. Some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements. In Greenberg, J.H. (ed.), Universal of language, 2nd edition. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. pp 73-113.
- Gundel, J.K. 1974. Role of topic and comment in linguistic theory. University of Hawaii Ph.D dissertation. Available from Indiana University Linguistics Club.
- Keenan, E.L., and B. Comrie. 1977. Noun phrase accessibility and universal grammar. In Linguistic Inquiry 8: 63-99.
- McCloskey, J. 1979. Transformation Syntax and Model Theoretic Semantics. Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Ross, J.R. 1967. Constraints on variable in syntax. M.I.T. Ph. D. dissertation. Available from Indiana University Linguistics Club.
- Smith, C.S. 1964. Determiners and relative clauses in a generative grammar of English. In Reibel, D.A. and S.Schane (eds), Modern Studies in English. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. pp 247-263.
- Soames, S., and D.M. Perlmutter. 1979. Syntactic Argumentation and the Structure of English. Los Angeles: University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Stockwell, R.P. 1977. Foundations of Syntactic Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Westermann, D. 1930. A study of the Ewe language. New York: Oxford University Press.