

The Semantic Values of *AÐE* and *LA* in Ewe

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Abstract

AÐe and *la* have multiple functions which are often realized by the position they occupy in various syntactic environments in Ewe, a Kwa language. *AÐe* can function as an indefinite marker, a partitive marker or an indefinite pronoun. *La* can function as a definite marker, an agentive suffix, or a terminal particle. As a terminal particle, *la* occurs at the end of preposed adverbial phrases and nominal phrases, embedded relative clauses which are postposed to the nominal heads, and other dependent clauses in Ewe constructions. Using the Givenness Hierarchy, this study argues that regardless of the different syntactic environments in which these particles occur, each of them has a univocal value semantically: the use of *aÐe* and *la* encode the cognitive statuses ‘referential’ and ‘uniquely identifiable’ respectively in Ewe.

Keywords: Particles, Indefiniteness, Definiteness, Referential, Uniquely Identifiable

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Résumé

En ewe, les marqueurs *aÐe* et *la* ont plusieurs fonctions qui sont souvent réalisées par la position qu'ils occupent dans divers contextes syntaxiques. *AÐe* joue le rôle d'un marqueur indéterminé, d'un marqueur partitif ou d'un pronom indéfini. *La*

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fonctionne comme un marqueur défini, un suffixe agentif, ou une particule de terminaison. Comme particule de terminaison, la apparaît à la fin de groupes adverbiaux et nominaux placés en tête de phrase, de subordinées relatives qui précèdent la tête du groupe nominal et d'autres propositions dépendantes. En s'appuyant sur la hiérarchie d'activation (Givenness Hierarchy), cette étude fait valoir que, indépendamment des différents contextes syntaxiques dans lesquels ces particules se produisent, chacune d'elles a une valeur sémantique univoque: en ewe, l'utilisation de *ade* et *la* correspond respectivement au degré «référentielle» et à celui d' «identifiant unique».

Introduction

In many languages across the world, morphological and grammatical items which function as determiners usually perform other roles. The multifunctional nature of these determiners often correlates with the different positions they occupy in various syntactic environments.

The English articles *the* and *a*, for instance, and their semantic equivalents or near equivalents in other languages as used in noun phrases, can be thought of as the basic instantiation of definite and indefinite noun phrases. However, these articles can encode more than definiteness and indefiniteness and have been argued to have other functions in some languages (Lyons, 1999).

In Diessel's (1999) view, the multiple functions of determiners may be peculiar to a particular language, but there are some other instances where there may be some similarities in their functions cross linguistically. There is therefore the need to examine the multiple functions of a determiner in a specific language to advance the cross linguistic application of this observation.

This study therefore concentrates on Ewe, a member of the Kwa languages spoken in Ghana, Togo and Benin, and investigates the semantics of *ade* and *la* through the multiple functions they perform in the language. It specifically shows that apart from being a definite and an indefinite marker, *ade* and *la* performs other syntactic functions in Ewe constructions. The study also presents the various nuances of *ade* and *la* precisely captured through the notions of the cognitive statuses ‘referential’ and ‘uniquely identifiable’ respectively.

The data gathered for this work were elicited from native speakers of the Ewe language. Spontaneous speeches were recorded with the permission of the interactants and sentences that involved *ade* and *la* were transcribed and analyzed using Gundel *et al*'s (1993) Givenness Hierarchy.

Related literature

Diessel (1999) examines the morphosyntactic properties of demonstratives from a diachronic perspective in eighty-five (85) languages across the world and highlighted their multifunctional nature. These languages include Mandarin Chinese, Finnish, French, German Japanese, Modern Hebrew, Korean, Turkish, Tok Pisin and Swedish. He claims that cross linguistically, demonstratives occur in four different syntactic contexts: (i) they are used as independent pronouns in argument position of verbs and adpositions, (ii) they occur together with a noun in a noun phrase, (iii) they may function as locational adverbs modifying a co-occurring verb, and (iv) they are used in identificational sentences.

Across these languages, demonstratives are frequently reanalyzed as definite articles, relative and third person pronouns, complementizers, sentence connectives, copulas, directional preverbs, focus markers, and many other grammatical items (Diessel, 1999:2). He further proves that the grammaticalization of pronominal, adnominal, adverbial, and identificational demonstratives gives rise to four different sets of grammatical markers, which usually

retain some of the syntactic properties that the demonstrative had in the source construction.

Diessel's (1999) study is cross linguistic and it mainly deals with demonstratives. The current study focuses on one language, Ewe, and explores some other functions determiners that encode definiteness and indefiniteness have in the language.

Butler (2003) considers the class of definite determiners in Terena, an Arawakan language of south-western Brazil spoken mainly by some people in an area between the cities of Campo Grande and Miranda in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul (p. 3). She expounds the class of definite determiners made up of the definite article (*ne* 'the') and demonstratives (*ra* 'this' and *neko* 'that'), and its distinctive functions as definite or indefinite marker. She identifies this class of definite determiners as a subject or an object indicator in transitive clauses, as an indirect object or a direct object indicator in ditransitive clauses, and as an obligatory element in equative constructions. For the purposes of the present study, we will dwell on some functions of the definite article *ne* that she highlights. Butler (2003) shows that the function of *ne* as a definite or an indefinite marker is restricted to the object argument only. In terms of the grammatical use of *ne* at the clause level, it can be used to identify post verbal nouns as (1) a subject or an object in a transitive clause, and as (2) an indirect object or a direct object in a ditransitive clause. She avers that, generally, the presence of a determiner signals definiteness and its absence signals indefiniteness, however, its occurrence with an argument is often determined by the type of clause, by the syntactic restraints associated with the type of clause or by discourse pragmatics.

In her conclusion, Butler (2003) asserts that the distinctive feature of the definite article is that its range of functions is far greater than just its use in the definite or indefinite contrast marker. She puts it this way "the definite article, *ne*, has an extensive, crucial and impressive role in Terena discourse that is totally disproportionate to its two letter size" (p. 15). Just as *ne* in Terena, *la*, the definite article in Ewe, obviously has only two letters. Apart from showing

definiteness, *la* has other functions that make its role in Ewe greater than its size. These roles will be discussed in this study.

Amfo (2006) and (2010) respectively discusses the functions of *no* and *bi* in Akan. Amfo (2006) considers *no* as a multifunctional marker that has different syntactic positions but has only one semantic value. She identifies *no* as a determiner with two main functions: a definite marker and a dependent clause marker. She states that whether the scope of *no* is over a phrase or a clause, the encoded cognitive status of its referents is 'uniquely identifiable'. Amfo (2006) uses the equivalents of *no* in Ewe and Ga as evidence to show that in other Kwa languages, determiners are multifunctional. This study will investigate the Ewe form in detail to verify her assertions and also examine the close equivalent of *bi* in Ewe.

Amfo (2010) investigates *bi* as an existential quantifier which functions both as a determiner and a pronominal, and avers that *bi* provides information about the cognitive status of the relevant nominal referring expression and thus helps an addressee to identify the intended referent. She explains that because the information provided in the form of the cognitive status of the referent of a *bi*-noun phrase does not contribute directly to the conceptual representations which become inputs into the inferential process of utterance interpretation; the cognitive status of the referent of a *bi*-noun phrase is procedural rather than conceptual.

Amfo (2010:1787) then argues that the semantic information encoded by *bi* provides crucial information which leads to the resolution of the intended referents of a *bi*-modified noun phrase and a pronominal *bi*.

Ameka (1991) describes *la* as a particle in Ewe that has a set of related meanings which are dependent on the various syntactic environments in which it occurs. As a result, the functions of *la* must be described in relation to a particular context in which it is used. Ameka (1991:265) maintains that *la* has three 'heterosemic' forms. It can be a definite article, a nominaliser, and a 'terminal' particle used to mark background information. He demonstrates that the terminal particle *la* has a wide distribution in Ewe. It occurs at the end of

initial dependent clauses, nominal and adverbial phrases which are preposed to main clauses. It is also tagged on to embedded relative clauses which are postposed to the nominal heads as well as marking off some discourse connectives. The study well establishes that when *la* occurs at the end of relative clauses and discourse connectives, it carries the same background-information marking function that it has with initial constituents. However, in both cases, there are some slightly different illocutionary meanings. Ameka (1991) is silent on *ade*.

Dzameshie (2002) focuses on the distributional properties of *ade* and *la* in terms of their functions in Ewe. He claims that the determiner *ade* is used in various contexts to make an indefinite specific reference or an indefinite non-specific reference. *La*, on the other hand, is used in different contexts to make a definite specific reference. He concludes that in a discourse, a new entity which is not known to the hearer or addressee is usually introduced with *ade* as a classifying determiner. The subsequent references to the same entity are then made using the definite article *la* to show that it has already been identified. Considering the fact that Dzameshie (2002) does not consider the semantics of *ade* and *la* in Ewe, the present study will examine some of the functions he has discussed in addition to others. These determiners will also be analysed semantically as an attempt to contribute to filling the gap in the existing literature.

Theoretical Framework: Givenness Hierarchy

The basis of the Givenness hierarchy proposed by Gundel *et al* (1993) is that different determiners and pronominal forms conventionally signal different cognitive statuses that deal with the intended referent's assumed location in the hearer's memory or hearer's attention state. Each status is a necessary and sufficient condition for the appropriate use of forms under it. Also, each status entails all lower statuses. This suggests that if a referent has a particular status, then the form under it or any other lower form can be used.

i. Givenness Hierarchy (The Six Cognitive Statuses and their English Forms)

				identifiable		identifiable
				the N	indefinite	a N
it	that	that N			this N	
	this					
	this N					

It is important to note that the presentation above is supposed to be an implicational hierarchy, meaning that if a referring expression has the status, ‘familiar’, for example, it also necessarily has the statuses ‘uniquely identifiable’, ‘referential’, and ‘type identifiable’.

A form considered ‘type identifiable’ signals that the addressee should be able to access a representation of the type of object described by the expression. This cognitive status is necessary for the use of all nominal expressions and it is sufficient for the use of the indefinite article in English.

Use of an expression associated with the cognitive status ‘referential’ signals to the addressee that, the speaker intends to refer to a particular object or objects. The addressee should thus be able to identify the speaker’s intended referent by the time the sentence has been processed by retrieving an existing representation or constructing a new representation of the intended referent. Gundel et al (1993) makes it clear that this cognitive status is necessary for the appropriate use of all definite expressions and it is sufficient for the use of indefinite *this* in colloquial English.

An entity is ‘uniquely identifiable’ if the addressee can identify the speaker’s intended referent on the basis of the noun phrase alone and the addressee is able to construct a representation of the referent if he does not already have one in memory. The cognitive status is necessary for the use of all definite expressions and it is sufficient for the appropriate use of the definite article in English.

An entity is considered ‘familiar’ if the addressee is able to uniquely identify the intended referent because he already has a representation of it in

memory; that is, he/she has a representation of the referent in long-term memory if it has not been recently mentioned or perceived, or in short-term memory if it has. Familiarity is a necessary condition for the use of all personal pronouns and demonstratives and it is sufficient for the appropriate use of the demonstrative determiner *that*.

When a referent is ‘activated’, the referent is represented in current short-term memory and includes the speech participants as well as other entities in the immediate discourse context. The cognitive status is a necessary condition on the referent for the appropriate use of all pronominal forms. It is also a sufficient condition on the referent for the use of the demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that*, all stressed pronouns, and the demonstrative determiner *this*.

A referent is ‘in focus’ if the referent is not only in short-term memory, but is also at the current center of attention. The entities in focus at a given point in the discourse will be that partially-ordered subset of activated entities which are likely to be continued as topics of subsequent utterances. The cognitive status ‘in focus’ is a necessary and a sufficient condition for the use of unstressed pronouns. (Gundel et al, 2003 adapted from Amfo, 2010:1789-1790).

The different cognitive statuses may be aligned with different referring expressions in different languages; hence, cross linguistically, all the six cognitive statuses need not correlate with a specific type of referring expression in a given language. The proposed Givenness Hierarchy alignments for Ewe is as follows:

ii. Givenness Hierarchy Alignments for Ewe.

	in focus	>	activated	>	familiar	>	uniquely identifiable	>	referential	>	type identifiable
ε	ema (that)		N ma		N la		N aɖe		N Ø		
(it)	esia (this)		(that N)		(the N)		(a certain N)				
	N sia (this N)										

The Functions and Semantics of *ade*

The multiple functions of *ade* are best realized when it is in a noun phrase structure in an utterance and not when it is in isolation. The meaning of *ade* is closer to *a certain* or *some* than to the indefinite article *a* or *an* in English; this is because unlike the English *a* and *an*, the Ewe *ade* is not conceptually related to the number one nor does it necessarily encode singularity. *Ade* can be used with plural and singular count nouns and also with non count or mass nouns. It thus plays the role of both *a/an*, and *some* (Dzameshie, 2002:162).

Ade may occur within a noun phrase to mean ‘a certain’ but unspecified person, place or thing. Consider the sentence:

1. Me atike *ade* dzi-m ne nye klo
1SG medicine a.certain search-PROG for 1SGPOSS thigh
‘I want some medicine for my thigh’.

It is realized that the speaker makes mention of a certain medicine (for his thigh) but does not mention a specific type. This suggests that the speaker will appreciate any type of medicine that can soothe pain in the thigh. *Ade* in some instances can occur independently in a sentence if it is anaphorically linked to the noun phrase in a preceding sentence: otherwise, a deictic gesture must be made at the time of the utterance in the direction of the referent. In such instances, the form *ade* is represented as *de*. For instance,

- 2a. Atsu detsi no-m
Atsu soup drink-PROG
‘Atsu is drinking soup’.

- b. Etse ha no *de*
 Etse too drink.COMPL¹ some
 ‘Etse too drunk some’

In example 2b, *de* is referring to *detsi* ‘soup’ in 2a, hence, its independent occurrence. In a case where there was no previous mention of soup in 2a, the speaker must point at the soup at the time he is making the utterance 2b, otherwise, the use of (*a*)*de* will be considered inappropriate. This is what Enç’s (1991:23) regards as specificity (using the indefinite to encode specificity). The foregoing thus supports Dzameshie’s (2002) assertion that *ade* makes either indefinite nonspecific reference (as in example 1) or indefinite specific reference in various contexts (as in example 2) (p.165).

In the subsequent sections, it will be demonstrated that in different syntactic environments, *ade* functions as an indefinite marker, a partitive marker and an indefinite pronoun yet it has a corresponding semantic function.

An Indefinite Marker

In Ewe, bare nouns can encode indefiniteness and they are shown in this study to have the cognitive status of ‘type identifiability’ on the Givenness Hierarchy. For instance,

3. Akpa le detsi la me
 Fish PREP soup DEF POST
 ‘There is fish in the soup’.

The use of the bare noun *akpa* ‘fish’ does not necessarily point to a specific fish but the addressee is expected to identify the type of object by the use of the nominal only.

¹ The completive aspect as used in this paper (see Osam, 2004) is usually analysed as past tense by other scholars like Boadi (1974) and Saah (1997).

Ade is a determiner used in a noun phrase to encode indefiniteness. The choice of *ade* plus a noun over the bare noun shows that a speaker has a specific referent in mind which is not already known to the addressee. This implies that the speaker has a specific noun phrase in mind and the addressee is expected to be able to form a representation of that noun phrase by the end of the utterance. Consider the sentence below:

4. Nyɔnu *ade* va sra Vida
 Woman a.certain come.COMPL visit Vida
 ‘A certain woman came to visit Vida’.

The use of *ade* above indicates that, the speaker saw the woman who came to visit Vida and has a clear picture of her. The addressee, on the contrary, has not seen the woman but is expected to form a mental picture of her or create a memory slot for her for the conversation to thrive on. Again, *ade*, as used in this sentence, indicates the introduction of the woman in the conversation. Subsequent utterances about the woman will therefore require the use of the definite article *la* to show that the addressee has a mental picture of the woman and thus can identify her because a memory slot for her has already been created (this will be discussed in section 5).

As an indefinite marker, *ade* is usually used at the end of the noun phrase. The noun phrase may be made up of a single noun as in examples 1 and 4 above or a noun with a modifier as in example 5 below. In instances where *ade* is attached to a plural count noun, the plural suffix, *wo*, is attached to the indefinite marker instead of the noun. This is exemplified in 6.

5. Kofi dzi xa vivi *ade* le tsɔtsi egbea
 Kofi sing.COMPL song sweet INDEF PREP church today
 ‘Kofi sung a nice song in church today’.

6. Ɖevi *ade-wo* bu le mia-fe kɔfe-a-me
 child a.certain-PL lose.COMPL PREP 1PL-POSS village-DET-inside
 ‘Some children are missing in our village’.

A Partitive Marker

In addition to being an indefinite determiner, *ade* functions as a partitive marker in Ewe. It is used to denote part of a whole entity. Example:

7. Me-de-kuku na-m wo-abolo *ade*
 1SG-remove-cap give-1SGOBJ 2SG.POSS-bread some
 ‘Please give me some of your bread’.

The use of *ade* in example 7 shows that the speaker is asking the addressee to give him part, perhaps, half of the bread. Context is very important to prevent ambiguity when using *ade* as a partitive marker because the same structure may mean the speaker is referring to a similar or same type of the entity in question. Consider example 8 below:

8. Tso avo *ade* na Kofi
 Cut cloth some PREP Kofi
 ‘Cut some of the cloth for Kofi’.

Example 8 can be used in a situation where a speaker is asking his addressee to cut about two yards out of six yards of cloth (part of the cloth) the addressee owns for Kofi. Another instance may be the speaker has just bought a linen fabric, for example, and his friend, Kofi, comes to meet him at the shop, so he is actually asking the addressee (the seller) to give Kofi the same type (same type of the cloth). It is in this regard that Amfo (2010:1788) in discussing the functions of *bi*, the close equivalent of *ade* in Akan asserts that “*bi* causes the addressee to direct his attention to either a part of the referent of its antecedent or an entity of the kind signified by its antecedent”.

An Indefinite Pronoun

Aɖe functions like the indefinite pronouns *one* and *some* in English. In English, *one* is exclusively used for count nouns and *some* is used for both count and mass or non-count nouns, however, in Ewe, *aɖe* is used as both *one* and *some*. The plural suffix, *wo* is attached to *aɖe* when the count noun is plural. When *aɖe* is used with count nouns, as in 9a and b, it means *a certain number of* and when used with non-count or mass nouns, as in 10, it means *a certain quantity*.

9a. Kojo fi avu yibo *aɖe*
 Kojo steal.COMPL dog black one
 ‘Kojo stole a black dog’.

b. Kojo fi avu yibo *aɖe-wo*
 Kojo steal.COMPL dog black some-PL
 ‘Kojo stole some black dogs’.

10. Abla du mɔlu *aɖe* ŋdi sia
 Abla eat.COMPL rice some morning this
 ‘Abla ate some rice this morning’.

In Ewe, the morpheme *aɖe* also forms part of other indefinite pronouns. These include *ameaɖe* ‘somebody/someone’, *nuɔɖe* ‘something’, *reyiyiaɖewo* ‘sometimes’, and *tefeɔɖe* ‘somewhere’, as used in examples 11 to 14 below.

11. *Ameaɖe* fufu to-m
 Someone fufu pound-PROG
 ‘Someone is pounding fufu’.

12. Kofi *nuɔɖe* dzi-m le xo-a-me
 Kofi something seach-PROG be.located room-DET-POST
 ‘Kofi is looking for something in the room’.

13. Adzo yi-a agble *reyiyia~~de~~wo*
Adzo go-HAB farm sometimes
'Adzo goes to the farm sometimes'.

14. Me yi-na *tefe~~de~~*
1SG go-PROG somewhere
'I am going somewhere'.

The Semantics of Ade

Considering the various functions of *ade* in this study, it has been shown that the speaker in all these utterances does not merely expect the addressee to form a representation (a type-representation) of the entity in his mind in conformity to the descriptive content of the noun phrase. Rather, just as it is reflected in the speaker's choice of referring expression that he has a particular referent in mind, the addressee must be able to identify the speaker's intended referent by the time the sentence has been processed. It is thus clear that the procedural information sent to the addressee when *ade* is used in utterances such as examples 4, 5, and 9a is that, he must look for or create a memory slot for a referent. This suggests that though *ade* functions as an indefinite marker, a partitive marker and an indefinite pronoun, the cognitive reference of a noun phrase with *ade*, is at least 'referential' on the Givenness Hierarchy.

The Functions and Semantics of La

La is also a multifunctional marker in Ewe that appears in different syntactic environments. Like *ade*, the multiple functions of *la* cannot be realized when it is in isolation, rather these functions are solely based on the syntactic environments. With the exception of proper nouns, *la* occurs with all other categories of nouns in the language. That is, it can occur with both non count

and count nouns (singular or plural). It must be clearly noted that the functions of *la* are in most cases similar to those of the definite marker, *no* in Akan (see Amfo 2006 for details) and the definite article *the* in English. Some differences between the functions of these articles include the following.

In Akan, the form *no* is also used as a distal demonstrative marker however, *la* does not perform this function; the distal demonstrative marker in Ewe is *ma*. Consider the following:

15. Ntuma *no* ye fe
 Cloth DDD COP nice
 ‘That cloth is nice / The cloth is nice’.
- b. Avɔ ma nya kpɔ / Avɔ la nya kpɔ
 Cloth DDD know nice / Cloth DEF know nice
 ‘That cloth is nice’. / ‘The cloth is nice’.

Example 15a above shows that in Akan, *no* does not only signify that the entity that co-occurs with it is definite but it may also signify that the entity is relatively far away in terms of distance at the time the statement is made. In Ewe, as shown by 15b, the morpheme *ma* rather signifies that the entity is far away whereas *la* signifies that the entity is definite.

Unlike English in which the article *the* can occur with proper nouns and used for generic purposes, Ewe makes use of the zero article in both instances. For instance:

- 16a. *Dzata *la* nye lã sese *ade*
 Lion DEF be animal strong some
 ‘The lion is a strong animal’.
- b. Dzata ɔ nye lã sese *ade*
 Lion be animal strong some
 ‘The lion is a strong animal’ (Dzameshie 2002:161 Ex. 32).

As shown in 16a, it is incorrect to use *la* (which is used to show that an entity is specific) after a noun phrase for generic purposes, hence the use of the zero article in 16b.

In Ewe, *la* functions as a definite marker, an agentive suffix, and a terminal particle for some preposed phrases and subordinate clauses in Ewe constructions.

A Definite Marker

According to Givon (2001:157), “a referent is definite when the speaker assumes that it is identifiable to the hearer; that is, its identity is accessible in the hearer’s mind”. This suggests that a noun is considered definite if it refers to something specific that is known to both the speaker and the addressee. *La* like other definite markers has no content on its own but its primary purpose is to point out an entity that is specific and identifiable-:

17. Awu *la* le sue
 Dress DEF COP small
 ‘The dress is small’.

18. Agbã *la* gba
 plate DEF broken
 ‘The plate is broken’.

The definite marker *la* as used with *awu* ‘dress’ in 17 and *agbã* ‘plate’ in 18 makes reference to a specific, identifiable *dress* and *plate* respectively which is known to both the speaker and the addressee.

Even though as shown in examples 17 and 18, the use of *la* suggests that an entity is familiar both to the speaker and the addressee, this is not always the case. The use of *la* can also suggest that the entity being referred to is merely specific because it has already been identified. That is, in a given situation, *la* is used to subsequently refer to an entity that has been earlier mentioned. Consider example 19:

- 19a. Nyɔnu *aɖe* va sra Vida
 Woman a.certain come.COMPL visit Vida
 ‘A certain woman came to visit Vida’.
- b. Nyɔnu la kɔkɔ ɲuto
 Woman DEF tall very
 ‘The woman is very tall’.

The use of *aɖe* in 19a shows that the woman is unknown (indefinite) and is being introduced. After this introduction, *la* is now used in 19b to show that the woman has already been identified. That is, *la* is used anaphorically to refer back to the earlier information given (Vida’s visitor) in 19a.

La can also be used to indicate entities that are physically present as well as entities that are “recognized as part of an assumed shared life expression to show that such entities are already identified” (Yule 1998:33 cited in Dzameshie 2002:158).

20. Wo va le akpa le atsafu la me
 2SG come catch fish PREP sea DEF containing.region
 ‘They caught a fish in the sea’.

La as used with *atsafu* ‘sea’ shows that any addressee can sufficiently identify *atsafu* ‘sea’ as a place where fishes are caught, without being familiar with the specific *atsafu* ‘sea’. Examples 19b and 20 thus affirm Amfo’s (2006) assertion that it is more appropriate to consider *la* on the Givenness Hierarchy as ‘uniquely identifiable’.

An Agentive Suffix

In Ewe, *la* can function as an agentive suffix. Its role in constructions like 21 and 22 below is to signal the doer of something. *La* is suffixed as follows:

21. agbale-ɲlɔ-la
 book-write-AG
 ‘Writer of a book (author)’

22. ga-dzi-kpɔ-la
money-top-see-AG
'Keeper of money (treasurer)'

The use of *la* as a suffix in examples 21 and 22 creates the nominals, 'author' and 'treasurer' respectively.

A terminal particle

Apart from being a definite marker and an agentive suffix, *la* can be a terminal particle which occurs at the end of adverbial and nominal phrases that are preposed in a construction. For instance:

23. Dzidzɔtɔe la, mie dzi ha kafu Mawu
Joyfully TP 1PL sing song praise God
'Joyfully, we sang and praised God.'

24. Awu-yibɔ-a-wo la, nyɔvi ma fi wo
Dress-black-DEF-PL TP girl DEM stole 3PL
'The black dresses, that girl stole them'.

La in example 23 occurs at the end of the preposed adverbial, *dzidzɔtɔe* 'joyfully'. In 24 too, it is seen at the end of the preposed nominal phrase, *awu yibɔ a wo* 'the black dresses'. In instances such as examples 23 and 24, the terminal particle *la* takes scope over the entire preposed phrase.

In addition, *la* can take scope over a clause. It marks the end of different kinds of non-final dependent or subordinate clauses in Ewe sentences. *La* is often used at the end of relative clauses, conditional clauses, temporal clauses and substitutive clauses at sentence initial position. Examples 25 to 28 will respectively illustrate the foregoing.

25. Avɔ si Aku kɔ na-m la fodi
 Cloth which Aku take give-1SG.OBJ TP dirty
 ‘The cloth *which Aku gave to me* is dirty’.

In the example above, it is obvious that *si* ‘which’, the relative pronoun, comes after the antecedent noun phrase, *avɔ* ‘cloth’. The relative clause, which is embedded into the matrix clause, begins with *si* ‘which’ and the terminal particle *la* marks its end.

26. Ne nye be ne va kaba la, da nu na devia-wo
 If be that 2SG come early TP cook thing for child-PL
 ‘*If you arrive early*, cook for the children’.

Example 26 shows that the conditional clause *ne nye be ne va kaba* ‘if you arrive early’ is marked with *la* to indicate the end of the condition.

In Ewe, *la* is also used in marking the end of other subordinate clauses preposed to the main clause such as temporal clauses and substitutive clauses. For instance:

27. Esi sukuvi-a-wo ɲlɔ dodokpɔ vɔ la, wo yi afeme.
 when student-DET-PL write examination finish TP 2PL go.COMPL home
 ‘*When the students finished their exams*, they went home’.

As shown in example 27, the temporal clause *esi sukuviawo ɲlɔ dodokpɔ vɔ la* ‘when the students finished their exams’, which is the subordinate clause of the construction, ends with *la*.

28. Be Kofi a-srɔ nu la, a-fo bɔl boɲ.
 COMP Kofi FUT-learn thing TP, FUT-play ball rather
 ‘*Instead of learning*, Kofi will play football’.

In 28 too, *la* signals the end of the substitutive clause, *be Kofi asrɔ nula* ‘instead of Kofi learning’ as seen in the sentence above.

Some of the subordinate clauses discussed above, like the conditional clause in example 27, can follow the independent clause. However, in such instance, it must be noted that the terminal particle does not signal the end. Thus, in Ewe, it would be ungrammatical if this kind of subordinate clause ends with *la* at sentence final position. For example:

29. *Da nu na devia-wo, ne nye be ne va kaba *la*
cook thing for child-PL if be that 2SG come early TP
'Cook for the children *if you arrive early*'.

Ameka (1991) relates this ungrammaticality to the notion of markedness. He claims that, in complex sentences in Ewe, the unmarked order of clauses is the main clause followed by the subordinate clause. Therefore, the unmarked order has zero linguistic marking while the marked order has a linguistic mark, in this case, the terminal particle *la* (p. 285).

The Semantics of La

La functions as a definite marker and an agentive suffix or a terminal particle (at the end of some initial dependent clauses); I would like to argue that on the Givenness Hierarchy, its encoded cognitive status is 'uniquely identifiable'. This is because structurally, the use of *la* in a noun phrase does not necessarily suggest that the referent is familiar to both the speaker and the addressee. The referent may be familiar only to the speaker. In such cases, the addressee must actually identify the referent based on his mental picture created on the basis that the referent was introduced in an earlier utterance or on the basis of the meaning of the noun.

Considering examples 19b and 20; it can be said that the speaker in each case expects the addressee to associate a unique representation by the time the noun phrase that co-occurs with *la* is processed. Hence, it can be deduced that, the cognitive reference of a noun phrase that occurs with *la* in Ewe is at least 'uniquely identifiable' on the Givenness Hierarchy.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is clear that Ewe is one of the languages in which determiners that encode definiteness and indefiniteness have other functions. It has been established that *ade* and *la*, as multifunctional markers, respectively have a univocal semantic value in the Ewe language; *ade* encodes the cognitive status ‘referential’, and *la* encodes the cognitive status ‘uniquely identifiable’ in light of the Givenness Hierarchy. *Ade* functions as an indefinite marker, a partitive marker and an indefinite pronoun whereas *la* functions as a definite marker and an agentive suffix and a terminal particle. In cases where *ade* is used to indicate an indefinite referent, the speaker is instructing the addressee to create a slot for the referent. *La*, on the other hand, is used to indicate a definite referent, in situations where the speaker assumes that the hearer will be able to identify the referent.

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ABBREVIATIONS

COMP	Complementizer
COMPL	Completive aspect
DEF	Definite article
FUT	Future tense
AG	Agentive suffix
NEG	Negative morpheme
N	Noun
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive marker
PROG	Progressive aspect
1SG	First Person Singular
PREP	Preposition
INDEF	Indefinite article
DET	Determiner
PL	Plural marker
TP	Terminal particle
POST	Postposition
COP	Copula
HAB	Habitual
DDD	Distal Demonstrative Marker
Ex	Example