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SPEECH-TONE AND OTHER FORCES IN TSONGA MUSIC

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The Tsonga, a Bantu-speaking people of Mozambique and the Northern Transvaal, represent an anomaly among southeastern African groups in that, while showing certain affinities with the Nguni, they possess no extensive heritage of pastoral folklore and did not participate in that period of Nguni history when clicks were absorbed into the language (Tsonga is clickless).

Tsonga speech-tone patterns have both syntactical and semantic significance--the meaning of similar Tsonga words may vary according to the rise or fall of individual syllables, examples of which are given below.

( ' = high, ` = low, ^ = falling)

báva 'to be bitter'

bává 'father'

bòfù 'blind person'

bòfú 'pus'

bvímbá 'an aromatic shrub'

bvímbá 'to seal with a lid'

In the following different versions of five songs (tape-recorded by the writer during field work in 1968-70 under grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the University of Witwatersrand), speech-tone markings were supplied by linguist C. T. D. Marivate of the University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Song 1. Ximanjemanjè xalé ntsungèni mārā hayi ahi kú sáséká

Song 1, Version A (sung by a chorus of men at Samarie)

call

response

ngeni

20

xalé ntsu

Ximanjema-a-nje

8ve

mārā hayi

ahi kú sáséká

bow

20

Song 1, Version B (sung by Wilson Zulu)

24

xi-ma-nje ma-nje xalé ntsu- nge- ni mārā ha- yi ahi kú sá- se- ká

Song 1, Version C (sung by a chorus of women at Ribola)

call

response

Yo- o

xi- mā- nje- mā- nje- e

response

yo- o

ma-ra ha- yi ahi kú sá- sek xi- mā- nje- mā- nje yo- n

ma- ra ha- yi ahi kú sá- sek

Song 1, Version D (sung by Joel Mashava)

voice

Xi-ma-nje-ma-nje-e ma-ra ha-yi ha ku sas

xi-ma-nje-ma-nje xa-le ntsungeni mara ha-yi ha ku sasék

clap

Song 1, Translation

Ximanjemanje	xale ntsungeni	marahayi ahi ku
These modern things (times)	over there	they are so

saseka

beautiful

(Refers to social change and the white man's possessions...cars, etc.)

Of the above four versions of Song 1, all melodically observe the various speech-tones of the word *ximánjèmánjè*, two observe the "high-low" at *ngéni*, and all observe the "falling" at *hayi*. Two of the versions exhibit a melodic "high-low" at *sáséká* that is not indicated by the speech-tone markings, but *sáséká* is the song's concluding word, and a cadential drop in pitch is considered (by the Tsonga) musically desirable.

Song 2. Xihlambyetwana xá manána wélélé xité

ngéléngélégélé wélélé

Song 2, Version A (sung by a chorus of women at Mahonisi)

call

response

Nge- lengéle we- lé-le ho xi- hla-mbye- tva-na xa aa-

drum (two hands)

(In most songs drumming, flat fingers are used near center of drum; heel of palm used fo. accents near edge.)

na- na we- lé-le xi-te ngéléngé- lengéle-ngéle

drum

Song 2, Version B (sung by Johannes Mathye)

hlabyetwana xa ma-na-na hi- yo ha xi- lo

ngéléngélégélé ngéléngélégélé hi- yu- u yu- vé

D.S.

Song 2, Translation

Xihlambyetwana	xá manana	welele	xite	ngelengelengele
The little pot	of my mother	tralala!	goes	ideophone representing the sound of a newly baked clay pot rolling along the ground
welele				
tralala!				

(This is a song sung for an infant aged one week, i.e. it is likened to a clay pot that has survived the hazardous firing process, and its cry is likened to the welcome sound of a sturdy clay pot as it is rolled along the ground in an acoustical test of its soundness. Infant mortality is high. Dead infants are buried in broken clay pots.)

Of the above two versions of Song 2, both observe "high" at *xá*; version A ignores the "low" at the end of *mánáná* but version B observes it; and both observe the "high-fall" at *xíté*. Neither version observes the "high" at *wéílé* (see the three melody tones following *ngéíngéíngéí*), but then this is the song's concluding word, and a cadential drop in pitch is musically desirable.

Song 3. Í nhlámpfi bák mabòmú ó gèdlè mánané gèdlè mánané

(sung by a chorus of women at Mutsetweni)

call

í nhlámpfi bák ma-bò-mú

response

ó gè-dlè má-ná-á-né gè-dlè má-ná-á-né

added part

ha-á ha-á

ma-bò-mú

Song 3, Translation

I nhlampfi bak mabomu o gedle manane gedle manane  
 The fish splash around mother around mother

(This is a fish-netting song, commonly sung within the context of muchongolo, the Tsonga national dance.)

In the melody of this song there is a sharp descent from G to C, followed by a sharp ascent to E. This melodic descent and ascent accomodates the central low syllable bô of mabômú, and the accomodation suggests that, regardless of the apparent freedom exhibited by much of a song's melody, the obvious speech-tone contours of key words are preferably retained.

Song 4. Yó nàvènávé Nténgûlé nà wèná áhí yèni Mànténgûlà ù  
téká tá wèná ú fúnéngétá hí mbítá áhí yèni Mànténgûlé

Song 4, Version A (sung by a chorus of women at Mhinga's location)

regular call (opening call differs)

response

16

yó nà- vé nà- vé Nté- ngu- lá nà wè- ná áhí yèni Ma- nte- ngu- le va

2nd drum

16

1st drum and clap

te- ka tá wè- ná ú fu- ne- nge- tá hí mbi- ta áhí ye- ni Ma- nte- ngu- le

## Song 4, Version B (sung by Johannes Mathye)

a- hí ye- ní Mâ- ntè- ngu- là té-ka tá wená ú fú- nê- ngé- tá hí m- bí- tá  
 hí fá- mbi Mâ- ntè- ngú  
 Nte- ngu Nte- ngu- la n'wa- na- nga

## Song 4, Version C (sung by John Chauke)

voice  
 16 (+2)  
 Ma- na- ná Mâ- ntè- ngu- le- e  
 rattle  
 16 (+2)  
 voice  
 u te-ka swa we- na ú fu- nê- ngé- tá hí mbi- tá ma- na- ná Mâ- ntè-  
 rattle  
 voice  
 ngu- là wa nte- ngu nte- ngu s' ve- na  
 bow



Song 4, Translation

Yo navenave Ntengula na wena ahi yeni  
 Tempter! Child-of-the-Drongo-Bird! Yes, you

Mantengula u teka ta wena u funengeta  
 Child-of-the-Drongo-Bird! You hide all your secrets

hi mbita ahi yeni Mantengula  
 under a mortar Yes, you Child-of-the-Drongo-Bird!

(Refers to a legendary bird that hides its secrets but reveals everybody elses, i.e. it is customarily blamed for the spread of gossip.)

Of the above three versions of Song 4, all exhibit a melodic fall between the two syllables of mbitá (the two tones following fúnéngétá hí) regardless of the "fall-high" speech-tones of the word. A possible explanation is that mbitá occurs at the conclusion of a verbal and musical phrase, preceding the new phrase áhí yéní Mántèngùlè, which must preferably commence "high" in relation to its predecessor.

Song 5. Hiyà héhà Mógèné ndzà áhí byéletéla n'wáná wálé  
ndzèni kù tlulá ká mhàlá sálàni hiyá káyá Mógèné  
 (sung by a chorus of women at Njakanjaka)

call

18

H'ya ká- yá- a- a hé- ha- a- a- a Mò- ge- nè ndzà

(2)fa- mba-a- a

response

1

call

clap

18

response, continued

ahí byeletela n'wana wale

ndze-ni ku tlu-la ka mha-la sa-la-ni h'ya ka-ya-a - a Mo-ge- ne h'ya

call

DS

### Song 5. Translation

Hiya heha Mogene                      ndza ahi byeletela    n'wana wale  
 I'm going to Mogene (place)    It teaches                      the child

ndzeni      ku tlu-la                      mhala                      salani                      hiya kaya  
 'inside'    of the jumping    of the antelope    I'm going    home to

Mogene

Mogene (place)

(Refers to pregnancy. Mothers-to-be sing the song in December, when the impala antelope is carrying its young. The impala is famed for its leaping ability. As the antelope foetus "learns" about jumping from its mother's jumping, so does the human foetus learn of life's values before birth, from its mother. Its movements are "proof" of this.)

In the above song, the "high-low-low" speech-tones of Mógèné are melodically observed, as are the eight repeated "highs" of byéiétélá n'wáná wálé. From the end of the latter phrase to the first word of the

next, ndzèní, a speech-tone "high-low" is indicated and this, also, is melodically observed. The five speech-tones of kù tíúúá ká mhà-- "low-high-falling-high-low" are all observed by the melody, as is the "low" at the end of sálání.

The musical characteristics of the initial statement of a Tsonga song are considerably influenced by the rise and fall of Tsonga speech-tone, and by the length and rhythmic stress<sup>1</sup> of the syllables. Once melody and rhythm are set, subsequent "statements" may be a product of both linguistic and purely musical forces (the latter will be discussed under the next sub-heading).

The relationship between Tsonga song-words and their musical setting generally involves more than mere imitative processes. Hornbostel's statement that "itches of the speaking voice, indeed, appear to determine the melodic nucleus; but they have no influence upon its inborn creative forces"<sup>2</sup> assumes particular significance in the light of many compositional practices of Tsonga. There are musical forces limiting the influence of speech-tone on melody, and musical forces limiting the influence of speech-stress on rhythm.

Some Tsonga melodic principles: musical forces limiting the influence of speech-tone on melody

There exists, within Tsonga communal vocal music, a phenomenon which might be termed "pathogenic" descent. An analysis of Tsonga "pathogenic" descent reveals that 24% of songs exhibit a first-to-last-tone descent of a 5th; 20% exhibit a first-to-last-tone descent of an octave; 13% exhibit a first-to-last-tone descent of a 4th; and 100%

<sup>1</sup>Of Sambian Tonga song-rhythm it is reported that "the theory that the determinant lies entirely in natural speech length and stress is not consistently born out." (Rycroft, David. "Tribal Style and Free Expression". African Music, 1:1, 1954, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Von Hornbostel, E. M. African Negro Music. London: Oxford University Press, p. 31.

exhibit a first-to-last-tone intervallic descent of one kind or another. These descents are neither sharp nor gradual, but occupy a series of plateaux, and exert limiting counter-influence against speech-tone domination, particularly at sentence-endings where a musical drop is desirable.

There exists within Tsonga communal vocal music a special vocabulary of melismatic syllables such as huwele, welele, hayi-hayi, yowe-yowe, etc., during the singling of which a melody is released from any possible obligation to obey speech-tone rise and fall. Nketia states of Akan singing that "unlike other syllables, interjectory syllables e, ee, o, oo, etc., may be sung to one, two, or more notes."<sup>3</sup> Examples of Tsonga melismatic non-lexical syllables are given below.<sup>4</sup>

Melismatic Example 1 (he-ri-le-e-e-e, Chauke-e-e-e, mavele-e-le)

call 26

Ha ti-nyandha- ye- ye va-va- nu- na va ti- ndlop' ti-le ka

response

Cha-u-ke M-gu-nga ndlo- pfu hi he- ri-le e

e-e ti-le ka Chau- ke e-e e hi va ku-

ma va lo be-la na mi-hlo-ti va ri- la ma ve e

le

<sup>3</sup>Nketia, J. H. 1963. Folk Songs of Ghana. Legon: University of Ghana, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>This refers to the carrying of a single syllable over many notes, as in the "ah" in Alleluiah: i.e. a non 1-to-1 relationship.

Melismatic Example 2 (ha-a-yi-i, ka-ya-a-a)

call response

Mee ndzi kho- ngo- te- la n'va- na- a a ye

ha-a- yi-i n'va-na wa le ka- ya- a-a

Melismatic Example 3 (va-hla-le-e, myame-me-e-e-e-e-e-yo)

resp.

N-ko- ca- ni va-hla-le-e N- ko- ca- ni nya me- me- e

pitched drum (exact pitch not shown)

leg-rattles

e- e- e- e- yo Ja- vu- la Nko- can'

There exists within communal vocal music a system of "harmonic equivalence" whereby tones a 5th (inverted 4th) distant are regarded by the Tsonga as interchangeable. This system of tone-substitution results in otherwise-inexplicable melodic "highs" and "lows" during unchanging speech-tones. Examples are given below.

First example of "harmonic equivalence" (the word hlambyetwana which contains exclusively "low" speech-tones, is melodically represented by D's during the first cycle, and by A's during the second cycle, D and A being "harmonically equivalent"):

1st time  
hlambyetwana xa ma-na-na hi-yo ha xi-lo

2nd time  
hlambye-twa- na xa ma- na- na hi- yo ha xi- lo

Second example of "harmonic equivalence" (note the substitution of D for A at mina and at maxangu--D and A are "harmonically equivalent"):

voice  
He mina ndzi vo-na maxangu swa rilisa vona maxangu swa

voice  
mi- na tekiwa kambirhi swa rilisa vona maxangu swa ri-li

voice  
'na ndzi vo-na maxangu swa rilisa mina ndzi vona maxangu swa ri- li

voice  
ndzi vo-na maxangu swa rilisa mina ndzi ma-xa-ngu swa ri- li

There exists within Tsonga communal vocal music, word-changes which occur during the successive cycles of a song. Choice of these new words is generally made so that their speech-tone approximates that of the old words, and could, should the singers so desire, be sung to the same melody. Where the melody changes (as in the following example), it does so according to an implicit "harmonic" framework which could be considered as the real control.

Example: implicit "harmonic" framework as the real control

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "Ma-yi-va- vo- o". Above the first few notes is the word "call". The middle staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "se la- ndze wa- so- cha nwa ve- na- a- a a yi hlo- mi-i i". Above the first few notes is the word "resp.". The bottom staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "se- la- ndze wa- so- cha nwa ve- na- aa-yi-va- vo- o". Above the first few notes is the word "call". Vertical arrows indicate the alignment of notes across the staves, showing how the melody changes between cycles.

There exists, within Tsonga communal vocal music, occasions on which musical considerations completely overrule speech-tone considerations. The following melody exhibits purely musical characteristics (a descending 4th GD filled-in with 2nds and complemented by a 3rd CA, the whole spanning a 7th) that disregard the speech-tones, which are thus: téká tá wená ú fúngéngétá hí mbítá.

The musical notation shows a single staff with a descending melody. The lyrics are: "te-ka ta wena u fune-nge-ta hi a- bi-ta". The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, starting on a high pitch and descending through a 4th GD, filled-in with 2nds, and complemented by a 3rd CA, spanning a 7th.

Musical forces limiting the impact of speech-stress on song-rhythm

Of particular use to the Tsonga in the relaxation of speech-stress controls is vowel elision, terminal-syllable contraction, and terminal-syllable prolongation. Examples are given below.

Example 1 (the word h'ta is a contraction of hi ta):

unison chorus

Mpfu-la  
ya na tho-tho-tho h'ta dya ma-timba tho-tho-tho

Example 2 (the word dlayan' is a contraction of dlayani, and the word fambile-e exhibits terminal-syllable prolongation):

solo

Dla-yan' ma-vu-lu-vu-lu ngho-ndzo yi fa-abi-le-e ha

clap

wo ngho-ndzo yi fa-abi-le-e



Example 3 (the word *lesw'* is a contraction of *leswi*, and the word *njhani* exhibits terminal-syllable contraction to *njhan'*):

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is labeled 'call' and contains the lyrics 'A wu fa-ngi', 'lesw' gangisa va-sati va va', and 'a wu fa-ngi'. The second staff is labeled 'response' and contains the lyrics 'lesw' a wu fa-ngi'. The third staff is labeled 'response' and contains the lyrics 'vena vu-la kue-nze (njhan')'. The fourth staff is labeled 'drum' and shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Circles are drawn around the words 'lesw'' and '(njhan')' in the lyrics.

Vowel elision permits the singer (a) to execute one long tone instead of two short tones, and (b) to fit a long word into a relatively short musical space. Terminal-syllable contraction permits the singer to utilize, on the concluding single tone of his song, an otherwise-trochaic bisyllabic word. Terminal-syllable prolongation permits the singer to utilize, on the concluding two tones of his song, an otherwise-monosyllabic word.

Another method of freeing song-rhythm from speech-stress controls is the use of letters *n* and *m* as independent syllables--Kubik reports of Yoruba singing that "these *m* and *n* sounds are considered musically as syllables and can bear one note."<sup>5</sup> Tsonga examples are given below.

<sup>5</sup>Kubik, Gerhard. 1968. "A16--Yoruba Story Songs". *African Music* 4.2: 13.

Use of n or m as syllables: example 1

call response  
Mbi-ta ya vu-lo mbe ya re-ka-re-ka

call response  
ho ne-la hi m-pfu-la ya re-ka-re-ka

call response  
hi ri xi-be dle-la ya re-ka-re-ka etc

Use of n or m as syllables: example 2

call  
Nghunghu-nya- ne m-hie-vo ya va-ntu

resp.  
sa mba-va-za hi hayi yo-o se su-ma-ni

drum  
clap

call  
sa mba-va-za Nghu-nghu-nya- ne m-hie-vo ya va-ntu

drum  
clap

In example 1 above, the *m* of *mpfula* occupies an entire crotchet and enables this bisyllabic word to straddle three musical tones. In example 2, the *m* of *mhlovo* is used as a musical anacrusis for the two quavers on which *hlo-vo* are sung.

Within Tsonga vocal composition, many musical factors combine to limit speech-tone domination, not the least of which is perhaps a desire for musical contrast between call and response. Concerning the resultant "distortion" of word-meaning, the present writer sought the opinion of native Tsonga linguists in ascertaining to what extent speech-tone may be ignored within a Tsonga vocal composition. The consensus was that context is as important as speech-tone, and where, for musical reasons, the latter is dispensed with, recourse to context adequately clarifies meaning.

#### Programmatic musical settings

Onomatopoeicisms such as *dluva-dluva* 'jump', *vula-vula* 'gossip', *cele-cele* 'carousing', and *ngomu-ngomu* 'ogre' receive programmatic treatment at the hands of Tsonga composers, being set to reiterative, motional, or accelerative tone-patterns. Similar treatment occurs elsewhere in Africa, for Kubik states of Yoruba singing that "gbinrin (the sound of dropping iron)...is worked into the pattern *gbinrin ajalubale gbinrin*" and that "erin (elephant) suggests the dull movements of a walking elephant."<sup>6</sup> Tsonga examples are given below.

#### Onomatopoeic example 1: the reiterative setting of *dluva-dluva* 'jump'

voice

nho- nga- ni ni- ni- ni- ni ma- ko- ti dlu-va- dlu- va

ni- ni- ni- ni- ni ma- ko- ti dlu- va- dlu- va

nho- nga- ni ni- ni- ni- ni ma- ko- ti dlu-va- dlu- va

Onomatopoeic example 2: the motional setting of vula-vula 'gossip'

Swi-vu-la-vu-la nka-ta mi-na swi na nwa-Gway'-ma-ne-

Onomatopoeic example 3: the accelerative setting of cele-cele  
'carousing'

He nyna xi nga vu-yi- ha he nuna xi nga vu-yi- l ce-le-ce-le

Onomatopoeic example 4: the reiterative setting of ngomu-ngomu 'ogre'

he n'wana we- le-le ngomu-ngomu ho xo fa-mba x'he ta-van

Formal structure

Tsonga communal vocal music, when compared to Venda and other Southern African musics, appears to reveal a predilection for longer metrical periods. These periods contain interesting proportions of call to response, and contain multiple reappearances of the call and response within any one cycle.

Representative formal structures evinced by Tsonga songs

	<u>Total</u>
Song A (call=9 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=9 ♩ + response=9 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩).....	36 ♩
Song B (call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=14 ♩) .....	26 ♩
Song C (unison chorus=2 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + unison chorus=2 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + divided chorus=4 ♩) .....	16 ♩
Song D (call=6 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=6 ♩ + response=9 ♩) .....	24 ♩
Song E (call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=8 ♩) .....	20 ♩

Song F	(call=10 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩)	..... 30 ♩
Song G	(call=4 ♩ + response=7 ♩ + call=1 ♩ + response=12 ♩)	..... 24 ♩.
Song H	(call=6 ♩ + response=10 ♩ + call=6 ♩ + response=10 ♩ + call=5 ♩ + response=27 ♩)	..... 64 ♩
Song I	(call=2 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=11 ♩)	..... 18 ♩.
Song J	(call=18 ♩ + response=18 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩)	..... 60 ♩
Song K	(call=6 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=6 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=4 ♩)	..... 32 ♩

The transmission, from one generation to another, and from one geographical area to another, of Tsonga musical principles

The Tsonga have a reputation among their neighbors for possessing an extensive body of folklore (ntumbuluku wava khale). They are themselves particularly proud of this folklore and ensure that their children become acquainted with it. Generally, in the daytime, small children learn from older children the legend-telling words of the game-songs (tinsimu tavana to huha) used in games such as Xifu fununu--The Beetle, and Mbita Ya Vulombe--The Pot of Money, both of which were reported over fifty years ago by Junod. In the evening they watch the adult "exorcism" dances, or listen to the story-songs (tinsimu ta mintsheketo) sung by their maternal grandmother at certain times of the year.

Young boys who gather round a visiting bow-player receive an intriguing music "lesson" (ntsakela-vuyimbeleri) as he carefully tunes his string-lengths to a Tsonga 4th, just as older boys learn by observation how to construct their own hand-piano (timbila) and to correctly arrange and tune its seventeen keys.

In the girls' puberty school (khomba) and the boys' circumcision school (murhundzu) songs are learned under rather rigorous conditions, and the present writer encountered urban Tsonga old men and women, miles and "years" removed from their rural initiation schools, who could recite or sing rapid and apparently meaningless initiation formulae for up to thirty minutes, with brief rests.

The young people's competitive team-dancing (xifase) of the drumming school and the adult competitive team-dancing (rhambela phikezano) of the beer-drinks are performed during village-to-village visits and contribute toward the geographical dissemination of Tsonga music old and new, as do the musical activities of itinerant doctors and minstrels.

By carefully observing the correct method of producing the rhythmic and melodic patterns used during these various visits, and by themselves reproducing the heard rhythms upon upturned canisters or pebble-filled stick-rattles (mafowa) while singing, children develop familiarity with, and mastery of, many Tsonga musical principles. This does not imply a latent desire to become musical specialists; engagement in normal social life (which is general) involves the Tsonga in music whether they like it or not, because music is an essential part of Tsonga social life. The acquisition of musical skills are incidental to acquisition of other skills necessary to social and biological maturation.

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THE VERBAL STATUS OF THE NP-LINKER IN GĀ<sup>1</sup>

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0. Kropp Dakubu in a recent paper on the Gā verb lists in her "extended verbal group" (among other verbal items) the "auxiliary verb...kɛ 'take, be with'" [1970:74], and explains further: "It is treated as a verb (not a particle) mainly for syntactic reasons."

1. Anyone who works on the Gā language has to account, sooner or later, for what on the surface appear to be two homophonous formatives kɛ: the one mentioned, and another which is used as a linker of NP's, from minimal constructions formed by two simple nouns, as in:

(1) kɔfɪ kɛ əkúá ná dzù-lɔ́ lɛ<sup>2</sup>  
Kofi and Akua saw thief the

or its pronominalized version:

(2) ɛ́ kɛ́ lɛ́ ná lɛ́  
he<sub>1</sub> and she saw him<sub>2</sub><sup>3</sup>

to maximally expanded ones like:

(3) núú-mó lɛ́ kɛ́ ɛ́ ná-nɛ́-mɛ́-í ényɔ́ ní gbè mí nyɛ́-mí lɛ́ ná dzù-lɔ́ lɛ́  
old-man the and his friends two who killed my brother/sister the  
saw thief the  
'The old man and his two friends who killed my brother (or sister)  
saw the thief.'

<sup>1</sup>An earlier version was presented at a Staff Seminar, Dept. of Linguistics, Univ. of Ghana. I should like to express my special gratitude to K. Ford for his useful comments. My thanks also go to one of my Gā informants, Miss M. Akita.

<sup>2</sup>In the presentation of examples (-) is used to represent morpheme-boundaries. Underlying forms are written (thus mɪ́ɪ́ 'inside', rather than the phonetic realization [mɪ́ɪ́], see Trutenau [in press]), in a slight adaptation of current Gā orthography (an exception is the recent loan from English, petrol, which, if native Gā, would have required an underlying form pɛ̀tòlɔ́), though the transcription is phonological in orientation. Tonemarks indicate the "deep tones": (´) deep high; (ˊ) deep mid; (̀) deep low.

<sup>3</sup>In some glosses subscripts are used to indicate identity/nonidentity of reference.