Habitual Aspect Markers in Two Kwa Languages (Eʋe and Ga): The Form and Syntax

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Abstract

The paper examines the linguistic materials of habituality in both Eʋe and Ga comparatively. This extends to determining the state of the materials in the syntax of Eʋe and Ga, that is, how aspect is marked variously from the syntactic viewpoint. The earlier studies on habituality, (see Aziaku 2012 & Aziaku & Awoonor-Aziaku 2021), discussed the orthography and phonologically conditioned morphemes of -na in Eʋe. The data for this study was obtained from both oral and secondary sources. The study concluded that the linguistic materials used to mark generic events are **na**, **a**, **ɔ**, **e**, and **nɛ**, in Eʋe and **a** and **ɔ** in Ga. Concerning aspect marking in the targeted languages, the past tense is not located in the verb and the form is repeated in serial verb constructions (SVCs).

Keywords: Habituality, linguistic materials, morphemes, SVCs, and generic.

1. Introduction

This paper is a comparative study of the habitual marker *–na* in Eʋe and its counterparts *a* and *ɔ* in Ga. The materials deployed in the languages to state the occurrence of generic events differ in various forms. Thus, it is probable that the Eʋe and Ga languages will demonstrate similar characteristics. The two languages are of the Kwa family from the Niger-Congo phylum spoken in some regions of West Africa and are studied in schools in Ghana. Throughout the twentieth century, the Kwa languages have been considered, without prejudice as closely related in genetic terms. Appreciable among these languages are the Eʋe and the Ga languages. The Eʋe language is spoken in some parts of Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria, while Ga is spoken in Ghana.

In Ghana, the Eʋe language has some of its major dialects as Aŋlɔ, Eʋedome, and Tɔŋu, and these dialects are distinct in terms of phonological realisations, morphological processes, lexical and syntactic structures. Duthie (1988) stated that the Eʋe language is not a lingua franca; however, speakers of Central Togo like Avatime, Lelemi, and other neighbouring towns use it as such. He explained that only a minority group uses the Eʋe language as a lingua franca, and cited the speakers of Avatime, Lelemi, and others as people who use the language as a lingua franca. Nevertheless, the Eʋe language is used for cultural, social, and commercial purposes. Due to the variation in the dialects of the language, different scholars have varied views of the number of vowels that exist in the Eʋe language. Atakpa (1997) and Ansre (2000) identified seven oral and seven nasal vowels, however, an eighth pair is attested. Ackumey (2021) identified sixteen vowels in the Eʋe language. All the above scholars including Kpodo (2014) gave varied accounts of the consonants of Eʋe ranging from 31 to 34. The Eʋe language is a tonal language with high, mid, and low tones that are generally classified as high and non-high tones (Capo 1991), the Ga language on the other hand is a tonal and primeval language of the people of the Ga state. Dakubu (1968) alluded to Teshie-

Nungwa, Osu, and a variety of Ga spoken in Accra as the three dialects of Ga. However, Ollennu (2016) asserted that the Ga language is a two-tone language with no dialects except for vocabulary differences among the communities and is spoken mainly in the Greater Accra region. The Ga language has forty-four sounds, consisting of five nasal and seven oral vowels and thirty-two consonant sounds. It has an open syllable, and its sentence structure is mainly SVO.

Habituality occurs within the systems of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM). However, for this study, habituality from an aspectual viewpoint refers to the internal temporal contour of a situation, in particular that the situation must occupy a large slice of time. Habituality is an imperfective form of aspect marking. According to Comrie (1985, 39), the habitual aspect marking refers to a situation that is protracted over a long period or a situation that occurs frequently during an extended period. Sentences with habitual aspectual meaning refer not to a sequence of situations recurring at intervals, but rather to a habit, a characteristic situation that always holds. It extends to the point that the situation becomes the characteristic feature of the whole period, even if the situation in question does not hold at a particular time (Cutrer 1994, 150). For an action to be termed habitual, it must have occurred on a regular or iterative basis. Many languages express habituality differently. Dahl (1985) indicated that some languages including Czech and Swahili have systematic morphological markers for habituality. However, in other languages, there are cues for habituality, such as the simple present in English, and the use of certain adverbials (Dahl, 1995). Friedrich and Pinkal (2015) contend that the automatic recognition of habitual sentences in these languages is non-trivial. According to Dakubu (2008, 91), a term like "habitual" in Ga and probably other Kwa languages should be treated not as a name of a simple aspectual feature but as the name of the combination of features. The habitual materials have not been examined comparatively in the Kwa languages. The Eʋe and Ga languages share common boundaries in the southern part and interact on several fronts. There is the need to examine the linguistic features and realisations of habituality in the two languages. The paper specifically examines –na as a habitual marker in Eʋe and its counterparts ɔ and *a* in the Ga language, indicating their differences and similarities.

2. Purpose of the study

It is intriguing to note that the Ga language, which shares boundaries with Eʋe, possesses a linguistic habitual feature determined phonologically while the habitual feature in Eʋe remains a grammatical and phonological phenomenon. The study seeks to establish contrastively the habitual marker in Eʋe and Ga. It also seeks to extend the syntactic forms of the habitual materials in both languages.

3. Research Questions

Most of the studies conducted in this field looked at habitual materials from different perspectives; the current study seeks to compare the forms of habitual materials in Eʋe and Ga. The study examines the habitual markers' forms and different realisations or distributions in the two languages. The following questions underpin the discussion:

a. Do the habitual materials in Eʋe and Ga exhibit feature similarity?
b. What are the syntactic features of the habitual markers in both Eʋe and Ga?

4. Review of related literature

The linguistic materials for habituality are represented differently in Eʋe and Ga. In Eʋe language, –na is the predominant form, which is the focus of this study, and to lay the foundation of what is to be discussed

in the paper, the researchers describe the different realizations of –na in Standard Eʋe. According to Comrie (1976), habitual markers are used to explain non-incidental situations, which are characteristic of extended periods. As observed by Osam (2008, 80), events that mark habitual have the feature of being a habit or customary, hence, the –na in Eʋe expresses a habitual or customary action. The verb is an essential element in marking habituals in the Eʋe language and the –na habitual marker, depending on the verb it follows, changes its form. Thus, a morphological defining feature of verbs in Eʋe is that they can take a habitual suffix –na, –a, or -nɛ (this form pertains to the Standard Eʋe). For instance,

Intransitive verb	Habitual marker (-na)	Sentence structures
1) va (come)	vana (come.HAB)	Kofi vana Dzoɖagbewo. (Kofi comes on Mondays)
2) dzo (go)	dzóna (go.HAB)	Edzóna. (He/She leaves)
3) si (run)	sína (run.HAB)	Míesina (We run away)

In the above intransitive verb structures, the habitual suffix -na is realized fully without any form of truncation. However, in transitive verb constructions, the -na habitual suffix becomes -a in the Standard Eʋe (Banini, 1963; Atakpa, 1993; Amegashie 2004; Aziaku, 2012). Ameka stated that the prescriptive rule about the alternation between -na and -a is that the full form -na occurs if there is no complement following the verb and -a is used if there is a complement. In Standard Eʋe, the habitual marker –na also takes the form –nɛ which is normally triggered by the presence of a pronominal object in a habitual construction. For example, -na becomes nae (na + 3rd person singular pronoun e), which becomes –nɛ (Aziaku, 2012). For example,

Transitive verb	Habitual marker (-a)	Sentence structures
4) gbe (pluck)	gbea (pluck.HAB)	Egbea ne. (he plucks coconut)
5) to (pound)	toa (pound.HAB)	Mana toa de gbe sia gbe. (Mana pounds palm nut every day)
6) no (drink)	noa (drink.HAB)	Kofi noa tsi (Kofi drinks water)
7a) ku (mine)	ku+na+e (sika) (mine.HAB.pron.obj) -kunɛ(coalescence)	Ghanatɔwo kua sika. (Ghanaians mine gold) Ghanatɔwo kunɛ. (Ghanaians mine it)
b) ɖa (cook)	ɖa+na+e (rice) (cook.HAB.pron.obj) -ɖanɛ (coalescence)	Kofi ɖaa mɔlu. (Kofi cooks rice) Kofi ɖanɛ. (Kofi cooks it)

In the sentences above, the –na has a different realization as – a since the verbs are transitively used. Here, the –na has been truncated to –a because there is a need for a complement to the verb. In examples (4), (5), and (6), the verbs, gbea, toa and noa needed ne, de and tsi as complements to make complete thoughts.

However, examples (7a and 7b) are the same habitual marker-*na* replicating itself as - *nɛ* in the sentence structure. The complement (sika) to the verb *mine* changes to the third person singular 'e' and since no single letter should stand alone or articulated as a single item, the pronoun 'e' enclicised to –*na* habitual marker to coalescence as *nɛ* in the final sentence marking an action in continuity.

Habituality occurs in serial verb constructions (SVC) as well. Baker (1989) cited in Agbedor (1994), explains SVC as a construction in which a sequence of verbs appears in what seems to be a single clause. He mentioned that there is usually one tense/ aspect specification for the whole chain of verbs and the verbs in SVC form a complex verb phrase (VP). However, Ameka (2006) indicated that each VP in an SVC is marked for its aspect and modality. He mentioned among many characteristics that the Eʋe SVCs are monoclausal constructions in which two or more VPs appear as a single predicate without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency. The VPs may be marked for the same or different categories provided they are semantically compatible, for instance, progressive, aorist, and habitual as indicated below in example (8).

8) Daa   Ámaví <u>trɔ</u>   tso   asi   me   <u>yi-na</u>
TITLE   NAME turn come. from market containing.region.of   go-HAB

 ɖé   aʃé   me
ALL   home containing.region.of

Madam Amavi returned from the market and was going home.

'Madam Amavi was going home from the market.'

In the example above, VP$_1$ (<u>trɔ</u>) and VP$_2$ (tso) are in the aorist interpreted as past, while VP$_3$ (yi) is marked for the habitual interpreted as current motion. In Amuzu (2013), he demonstrated with an example what Ameka meant by the characteristics of SVCs. Examples (9) and (11) below are asterisked because they do not conform to the written form of the standard Eʋe.

9) * Police-wo   me   *lé*$_1$-na   wó *tu*$_2$-na   o   ta-e
Police-PL   NEG   catch-HAB 3PL lock-HAB   NEG   head-FOC

'It is because the police do not arrest and lock them up.'

The example above does not include a coordinator, however, the verbs *lé* and *tu* are conceptualized together as a two-in-one event sharing the same subject *police-wo* and object *wó* (3PL) and are marked similarly for the habitual aspect. In other ways, as illustrated by Amuzu, the individual verbs in an SVC may have the same or different transitivity values. Examples (10a) and (10b) below indicate the same and different transitivity values respectively.

10) a. Mango *ge*-na   *kaka*-na   ɖe ati-a   te.
Mango drop-HAB scatter-HAB at tree-DEF under.

'Mangoes drop and scatter under the tree.'

 10) b. Vi-nye-wo   me *te*-a-ŋu *va*-na   gbɔnye o.
child-1sg-PL NEG   can-HAB come-HAB me-POS   NEG

 'My children do not visit me.'

With example (10) a, the verbs *ge* and *kaka* are transitive constructions, hence, the habitual particle *-na* is added. In the case of (10) b, the transitive verb *te* in VP$_1$ accepted the habitual suffix *-a* and is in series with an intransitive verb *va*. The author again mentioned that in some dialects of Eʋe, when two transitive verbs in SVC share the same object, the object appears only with the first verb, and it appears as an S-V-O-V clause structure. This structure is used irrespective of the modality or aspectual categories the transitive verbs carry. This is evident in example 11) below, where the verbs take the habitual *-na*.

11) *Ama ḍa₁ -na nu ḍu₂ -na.
Name cook-HAB thing eat-HAB
'Ama cooks and eats.'

It is important, however, to note that the category of tense- which in other languages locates the time of an event indicated by a verb regarding the moment of speaking or writing is not determined by the Eʋe verbs, rather, aspect and modality are expressed with particles (Ameka, 2006; Ameka and Kropp Dakubu 2008). The researchers probed the different ways by which habitual aspects are marked in the Ga language. In Eʋe and Ga languages, the verb is essential in marking habitual aspects. Whilst marking the habitual in Eʋe is grammatical, involving the addition of a lexical habitual suffix, Ga habitual marking is phonological. The verb takes –a/-ɔ depending on the final vowel sound of the verb. When the vowel of the verb stem is /a/, the habitual marker –a is used but when the vowel of the verb stem ends with any other vowel sound, the habitual marker -ɔ is used. Similarly, this is evident in the Tɔŋu dialect of the Eʋe language. Thus, the vowel ending of the verb determines whether the habitual marker –a or -ɔ is used. However, there is lengthening when the verb ends with /a, ɔ/, labialization when the verb ends in /u, o/, and palatalization occurs with /i, e/. This is illustrated in the examples below.

Table 1: Habitual marking in Ga

Verbs ending with a+(-a)	Verbs ending with other vowel sounds +(-ɔ) HAB	Ga	English
Ba (comes)+a…baa Mibaa biɛ. I come here.	bi (ask)+ ɔ…biɔ	Mi biɔ saji.	I ask questions.
ŋma (write) +a…ŋmaa Eŋmaa nii H/She writes.	kane (read) + ɔ…kaneɔ	Naa kaneɔ Ga.	Naa reads Ga.
La (sing) +a…laa Kofi laa daa. Kofi sings every day.	ho (cook)+ ɔ…hoɔ	Ehoɔ Omɔ.	He cooks rice.
	tsu (send) + ɔ…Tsuɔ	Mame tsuɔ Abla.	Mother sends Abla.
	nɛ (rain)+ ɔ… nɛɔ	Enɛɔ.	It rains.

The table above shows examples of Ga verbs with both -a and - ɔ endings. As indicated earlier, verbs with the last vowel stem /a/ accept the habitual particle -a and this is evident in 'ba', 'ŋma', and 'la' where in marking habitual, one can say 'Mibaa biɛ' meaning the participant performs the action (coming here) all the time. In like manner, - ɔ as a habitual marker used in the verbs 'bi', 'kane', 'ho', tsu', and 'nɛ' reveals that the actions are customary. Hence, it can be concluded that habitual marking in Ga is a phonological process that is determined by the last vowel in the verb stem.

SVCs in Ga largely resemble constructions classified under this in other languages as generally conceived. An SVC is a sequence of verbs or VPs without intervening co- or subordinating particles, and without any subordination or argument-of relation obtaining between the adjacent verbs (Dakubu, 2007). SVCs consistently display patterns of agreement of tense, mode, and aspect between the VPs, either implicitly or explicitly, and independently of the number of VPs in the sequence (which is in principle unbounded, although largely restricted to two in the cases of interleaving VPs). Additionally, any full verb stem or the

main verb undergoes inflection, thus, the inflectional categories can be realised either by segments (which may or may not have assigned tones) or by floating tones. Dakubu stated that the prefixed floating low tone characterises both habitual and aorist and is expressed by downstep, so that habitual thus has double marking. For instance,

12) Kofi wɔɔ kɛmɔɔ shwane fɛɛ.

Kofi wɔ̀ ɔ̀ kɛ̀ mɔ́ ɔ̀ shwane fɛɛ

Kofi sleep HAB MOVE hold HAB afternoon all

'Kofi sleeps every afternoon.'

5. Methodology

The design of the study is a qualitative content analysis. The researchers compared the linguistic materials in two languages, which are genetically connected. The paper followed the format below: Introduction, Objectives, Literature review, Methodology, Data presentation and analysis, Conclusion, and Acknowledgement. The researchers collected data from books written in Eʋe and Ga. The Eʋe books selected were *Agbemɔ* authored by Kpodo (2017) and *Eʋegbegbalẽ Gbãtɔ na Dziniɔ Sekeŋdri Sukuwo* by Atakpa and Atakpa (2005). The Ga books selected were *Awusa Yaafo* by Laryea (2022) and *Ga verbs and their constructions extended changed to expanded* by Dakubu (2010). The books were purposively selected based on the fact that the main authors are lecturers of the language at the university level. It is assumed that their language is of high standard - with correct spelling and grammar. Agbemɔ is a fictional narrative that rendered the language in its natural form – in some instances in a conversational form. The researchers selected two texts from Atakpa and Atakpa (2005) to have the language in its natural form. The four books were scouted around together with other books before their selection. The data was manually selected from the books and coded based on the researchers' intuition as native speakers.

6. Data presentation and discussion

This section presents the data on habitual marking in both languages, through the analysis of simple sentence patterns, and serial verb constructions. As indicated in the methodology, the data is an extract from existing materials authored by scholars of Eʋe and Ga languages.

6.1. Habituality in a simple sentence

The section highlights habituality in two simple sentence types which are transitive and intransitive constructions. Examples (13-17) illustrated below indicate *-na* in its truncated form *-a* as it is realised in *transitive constructions* and in examples (18- 22), -na is realised fully in *transitive constructions*. Here, the sentence structure demands an object to make a complete thought. For example:

13) Kofi **ʃoa** nu.

Kofi beat+HAB mouth

'Kofi talks.' (HAB)

14) Ðeviawo **dzia** ha.

Child+DEF+PL sing+HAB song

The children sing (HAB) songs.

'The children sing.'

15) Ŋutsu la **dea** agble ƒe sia ƒe.

Man   the (DEF)   do (HAB)   farm year every year.
'The man farms (HAB) every year.'

16) Egblɔa   Mawunya le Sɔleme.
3SG+say+HAB   Gospel in church.
'He/she preaches the Gospel in church.'

17) Ami ʃlea   blí.
Ami buy+HAB   corn.
'Ami trades corn.'

A point made earlier shows that the transitivity value of the verbs "ʃo", "dzi", "de", "gblɔ", "ʃle", requires that the truncated -*na* be added to the verb stem to connote a customary action. Example (13) shows that Kofi does not remain quiet after uttering a word, he regularly engages in talking. Although one can identify that the English equivalent of the sentence structure does not need an object to reveal a habitual aspect, the Eʋe version, as a matter of necessity has an object "nu" to make a complete thought and show that the action is in a habitual aspect. In like manner, "dzi", "de", "gblɔ", "ʃle" as transitive verbs require -a habitual particle and their objects "ha", "agble", "sɔleme", "blí" to mark habituality.

18) Ébuna.
3SG lost+HAB
It/He/She gets missing.

19) Vidzĩwo ʃana.
Babies   burp+HAB
Babies burp. (HAB)

20) Da la xatsana.
Snake DEF coil.HAB
The snake coils.

21) Míetsana.
1PL+gallivant+HAB
We roam (HAB).

22) Amewo kuna.
Human +PL die (HAB)
Humans are mortal.

As can be observed from the examples, when a verb in intransitive construction is marked to show the habitual aspect, the marker -*na* is attached to the verb. In examples (17) to (22), the -*na* habitual marker is attached to the verbs "bu" (lost), "ʃa" (burp), "xatsa" (coil), "tsa" (gallivant), and "ku" (die). In examples (18) and (21), the subjects, "É" and "Míe", which are the 3SG and 1PL pronouns respectively are attached when assuming the subject position of a construction. However, since the habitual particle is added to the verb, the rule is to write them as one word. Notwithstanding, a few speakers of the language find it difficult

to get the right orthography of –*na* as a habitual in this position. This, Aziaku (2012), Milroy and Milroy (1991) posit as the absence of the rule in the spoken language and that all native speakers have implicit knowledge of the grammar of their language. Hence, formal and functional differences exist between speech and writing. Examples (22) to (27) exemplify this phenomenon. The Tɔŋu dialect of Eʋe spoken in the southeastern part of Ghana presents a different form of -*na* (see Aziaku & Awoonor-Aziaku 2021).

23) Kofi **ʃlea** awu. SE/ Tɔŋu
Kofi buy+HAB dress
Kofi ʃle+na +e = Kofi ʃlenɛ SE
Kofi ʃlie Tɔŋu
'Kofi buys it'

24) Aʃetɔ Kɔku **kpaa** ati SE/ Tɔŋu
TITLE Kɔku carve+HAB wood
Aʃetɔ Kɔku carves.(HAB)
Aʃetɔ Koku kpa+na+e= Aʃetɔ Koku kpanɛ
Aʃetɔ Koku kpɛe Tɔŋu
'Mr Koku carves it'

25) Ðevia **luɔ** /luwɔ/ ɖa. Tɔŋu
Child+DEF comb+HAB hair

26) E**wɔɔ** ɖa. Tɔŋu
3SG+do+HAB hair
H/She styles (HAB) hair

27) Adzo **ʃɔɔ** /ʃowɔ/ dzogbɔ. Tɔŋu
Adzo prepare+HAB porridge
'Adzo prepares porridge.'

28) E**vaa** aʃe. Tɔŋu
3SG+come+HAB house
'H/She comes home.'

29) Tsi **dzaa**. Tɔŋu
Rain fall+HAB
'Rain falls.'

30) Gbe **kaa** ŋunye. Tɔŋu
Grass touch+HAB body+POS
'Grass touches my body.'

31) E**dzie** ha. / Edziye ha. Tɔŋu
'3SG+sing+HAB song.'

'It/He/She sing (HAB) songs.'

32) E**fie** nake. / Efiye nake.Tɔŋu
3SG+split+ HAB firewood
'It/He/She splits firewood.'

In examples (23) and (24), the habitual particle –*na* has a third realization as the –*na* combines with its pronominal object and becomes –*nɛ*. It happens when the *-a* of the *-na* that supposedly should join the pronoun "e" rather coalesces to become ɛ. Thus, *Kofi ʃlea awu* becomes *Kofi ʃlenɛ* and *Koku kpaa ati* becomes *Koku kpanɛ* respectively. This form is similarly expressed in Tɔŋu without the insertion of 'n' but rather an alteration in the verb stem resulting in apophony. Hence, Tɔŋu versions will read *Kofi ʃlie* and *Koku kpɛe*.

Additionally, examples (25) to (32) represent habitual marking in Tɔŋu. The –*na* habitual marker can be phonologically conditioned in the Tɔŋu dialect of Eʋe. In example (25), the sentence could be written in the SE as *Đevia lua ɖa.* However, the *-na* is truncated to *-a,* and *n* is deleted. Instead of lengthening *-a*, a different consonant /w/is inserted between the last sound /u/ of the verb "*lu*" and the habitual marker *-a*. The "-a" subsequently changed to [ɔ]. That is, the "-a" of "-na" which is unrounded has changed to rounded [ɔ]" after /w/. The change of the habitual marker –*a* to -ɔ can be as a result of the aid to be the influence of the environment of the labial-velar /w/. It is thus obvious that the presence of /w/ has lent some labial feature to "-a", changing it to collocate with /w/. That is, there is a deletion, insertion, labialisation, raising, and rounding (*see* Aziaku and Awoonor-Aziaku 2021). In the case of example (26), *Ewɔ* plus ɔ plus ɖa, "She styles hair". In SE, this would have been "Ewɔa ɖa". The *-na* is similarly truncated to *-a*, while "n" is deleted. In Tɔŋu Eʋe, the "-a" is subsequently raised and pushed back to collocate with /ɔ/ of the verb "wɔ". In this example, we can say that "-a" is raised, backed, and rounded to collocate with the vowels /ɔ/ and /w/ which are naturally rounded. Lastly, in example (27), the "-a" habitual marker is either maintained in SE or changed to /u/ in Tɔŋu. Thus, "Eʃoa dzogbɔ", will become "Eʃowɔ dzogbɔ" in Tɔŋu. In examples (28) to (30) of the Tɔŋu Eʋe, habituality is marked by lengthening. The last vowel /a/ of the verbs "va", "dza", and "ka" is lengthened in pronunciation by the addition of the habitual marking particle –*a*. This is evident in examples (28) and (30), where the verbs marking habituality coincide with marking habitual aspect in the SE, when the verbs are transitive. Examples (31) and (32) demonstrate the –*e* variant of habitual marking in the Tɔŋu dialect. It is revealing that there is a case of palatalization, where the truncated habitual marker *-a* changes to "-e". In the examples above, the verbs marking habitual aspect are "dzi" and "fe". Before this, a palatal /j/ is introduced between the last sounds of the verb, mostly if the last sound of the verb is "e", thus *-a* changes to collocate with /j/. The introduction of /j/ causes both the habitual marker and the last sound of the verb to raise towards /j/. Here, the –*na* becomes -ye; /n/ becomes "y", "a" becomes "e" while /e/ of "fe" becomes /i/ in some words. Thus, we have "dzi" and "fi" instead of "fe" in (32).

The Ga variety of Kwa languages exhibits the habitual aspect. In the Ga language, the habitual aspect is marked using the particle –*a* when the last sound on the verb stem ends with the vowel sound /a/ and the habitual marker - ɔ when the last vowel sound of the verb stem ends with any other vowel sound. For instance,

33) Amɛ`-**bà-à** bíɛ

3P-come-HAB here
'They come here.'

34) Adoley **shàà**   hejuhe   lɛ   daa otsi.
Adoley scrub.HAB   bathroom DEF   every week
Adoley scrubs the bathroom every week.

35) Gbekɛ yoo lɛ **tswàà** bɔɔlu.
Child   girl DEF play-HAB football
The girl plays football.

36) Nuu lɛ **ŋmàà** nii.
Man the write+ HAB things
The man writes.

37) Ama **bùɔ̀** fai.
Ama bu+HAB cap
Ama wears a cap.

38) Nimo **wiè ɔ̀** yɛ klas.
Nimo speak+HAB class
Nimo talks in class.

39) E**wɔ̀ɔ̀** shikpɔŋ.
3SG+sleep+HAB floor
He/She sleeps on the floor.

40) Mi**jò-ɔ̀**
1SG+dance+HAB
I dance.

41) Yoo lɛ **bɛ̀ɔ̀** shia lɛ mli daa leebi kɛ gbɛkɛ.
Woman DEF sweep+HAB house DEF inside every morning and evening
The woman sweeps the house every morning and evening.

42) E-**fɨ-ɔ̀** kpɔ.
3SG+tie+HAB knots
H/She ties a knot.

In the examples above, sentences (33) to (36) with the verbs 'bàà', 'shàà', 'tswàà', and 'ŋmàà' are verbs with their last verb stem sound being /a/ hence, they require –a to mark habitual. However, in examples (37) to (42), the last sounds of the verbs 'bù', 'wiè', 'wɔ', 'jò', 'bɛɛ', and 'fɨ' ends with /u/, /e/, /ɔ/, /o/,

and /ɛ/ respectively and require the Ga habitual particle -ɔ attached to them. However, as stated earlier, the prefixed floating low tone characterises both habitual and aorist and is expressed by downstep. Hence, there is double marking in all verbs marking habitual aspects. It is interesting to note in (41) that the bare form of the verb 'bɛɛ' does not accept a habitual particle unless there is a deletion of the last /ɛ/. Hence, instead of 'bɛɛɔ', the verb marking habitual becomes 'bɛɔ'. In addition, there is a similar instance in the verb 'doo' (sieve). When marking habitual, the form changes to 'doɔ' as there is a deletion of the last vowel /o/ before the habitual particle. This coincides with the case made earlier in Tɔŋu, where some kind of alteration occurs in the verb stem preceding the habitual marker. One can identify that, unlike the Eʋe language where habitual marking is grammatical and phonological, Ga habitual marking is phonological. Examples of habitual form in serial verb constructions;

6.2 Habituality in Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs)
The section examines instances of SVCs in the data to establish the forms of linguistic materials used in their constructions.

43) Amewo   ʃe   nya ɣaɣlawo **tea** ŋu **ɖia** go ɖe   Atikpo ʃe nuŋɔŋlɔwo me. (*Agbemɔ* p.25)
Person+PL POS word confidential +PL can   come out PREP   Name POS writing PREP
"Atikpo's writings reveal people's confidential matters."

44) Wó**wɔa**   esia **tsɔna**   **wua** kunuwɔwɔ la nu.   (*EGDSS,* p. 28)
3P +do (HAB) DEM. take (HAB) end (HAB) funeral rites
"They do this to end the funeral rites."

45) Sukuviwo kple   tsitsiawo   siaa **tɔna xlẽ a** nu siwo Atikpo **ŋlɔna**. (*Agbemɔ* p. 25)
Student +PL CONJ elderly (PL) CONJ stop (HAB) read (HAB) things Name write (HAB)
"Both school-going children and adults stop to read Atikpo's writing."

46) Ŋku ɖoɖo nudzɔdzɔ   tɔxɛ aɖewo dzi   **nyea**   azã tɔxɛ aɖewo dukɔmeviwo
N V (RED) happening special (PL) PREP become +HAB festivals citizens
ɖuna tsɔna trɔa ʃe tae.   (*EGDSS,* p. 22)
celebrate+HAB take+HAB turn+ HAB year
"Memorialising an event becomes a thing the citizens do to mark the beginning of a new year."

47) **Wotua** hotsui   memie **kɔa** tsi ɖe edzi   wò**zua** dzogbɔ
3PL+grind+HAB cowries ADJ pour+HAB water on it 2S+become+HAB porridge
wo**sina** nɛ **tsɔa** ɖe **kpena** nɛ wò**gena** ɖe dɔme nɛ.   (*EGDSS,* p. 25)
3PL+smear+HAB 3S take+HAB some feed+HAB 3S 2S+enter+HAB PREP stomach 3S
"They grind cowries into the powder mix it into a solution apply it on the body; as they feed it the remains."

The extracts above indicate serial verb constructions in Eʋe. In example (43), the verbs *te-a* and *ɖi-a* are transitive verbs realised in the SVC structure hence, they require the habitual marker –*a*. In the sentence, both verbs share the same subject 'Amewo ʃe nya ɣaɣlawo' and the habitual is marked on both verbs. It is also revealing that the role of V₁ is complete with the role of V₂. However, in examples (44), (45), and (46) the verbs assume different transitivity values. In (44), there is an intransitive verb 'tsɔna', between

the first and last verbs 'wɔa' and 'wua', which are transitive verbs with the objects being 'esia' and 'kunuwɔwɔ' respectively. Although 'tsɔna' and 'wua' assume different transitivity states, they share a common object. Similarly, the features in examples (44) and (45) coincide. This reaffirms Westerman's view that in Eʋe, there is no limit to the number of verbs in an SVC and that is evident in (46) and (47) where all four and five verbs in both constructions respectively, each marks habitual aspect irrespective of their positions. Hence, it can be concluded that SVCs in Eʋe mark habitual aspects on all verbs. Now let's turn to examine some Ga examples.

48) Nuu jio, yoo jio, **ajuɔ ahaa** mɔ fɛɛ mɔ. (Awusa Yaafo, p.g 41)

Man either woman or   3PL+bath+HAB 3PL+bath+HAB all of them

"Whether man or woman, they bath for everyone."

49) Àmɛ̀-**yè-ɔ̀**   àmɛ-**búà-à** lɛ̀ Dakubu, 2010 (ACDoGV, pg.171)

3P eat+HAB 3P help+HAB 3S

"They help her."

50) Ama **kpɛ -ɔ̀** atade   **e-wò-ɔ̀** gbekɛ lɛ.

N   sow+HAB dress PRO wear+HAB child DET

"Ama sows dress for the child."

51) Mami lɛ **bò-ɔ̀**   e-tsɛ̀-ɔ̀ gbekɛ lɛ.

Mother the shout+HAB PRO call+HAB child DET.

"The woman shouts to call the child."

In the above examples of Ga serial verb constructions, the verbs occurred without any form of morphosyntactic marking of linking or subordination. In the structures presented above, the verbs are only two and are suffixed with habitual markers. In (49), the verbs 'ye' and 'bu' have been written with their preverbs 'amɛ`', as single entities. This is the case in Eʋe as well. When a pronoun is in the subject position, it is written together with the verb, and since no single morpheme can be written alone in the language, the habitual morpheme must be written attached to the verb. However, when the noun precedes a verb, the orthographical principle requires that both words be written separately. This is evident in (50) and (51), where the subjects *Ama* and *Mami* are written separately from the verbs and the verbs marking habitual (*kpeɔ* and *boɔ* respectively). It can be observed that although each of the verbs depicts an independent meaning, the entire SVC connotes a single idea. The habitual markers are suffixes with several allomorphs; however, none of these allomorphs in Ga has high tones as in all the sentences above.

7. Conclusion

This paper analyses habitual marking in two Kwa languages: Eʋe and Ga. The researchers examine the various forms of the habitual marker –na in Eʋe and the habitual marking particles –a and -ɔ in Ga. The habitual marker has its forms as –na, -a, and –nɛ in the Standard Eʋe, also known as the prescribed Eʋe. In the standard Eʋe, the usage of -na, -a, and –nɛ is linked to whether the verbs are transitive or intransitive and also the presence of a pronominal object in transitive constructions. The study in glimpse stated the phonological processes –na undergoes when enclicising with a pronominal object to become -nɛ.

However, this form is not observed in the colloquial Eʋe as shown in examples (9) and (11) by Amuzu (2013). The Tɔŋu Eʋe exhibits varied forms as –e, -a, and - ɔ and are attached to the verbs. These forms are dependent on the last vowel of the verb stem. The analysis reaffirms Aziaku and Awoonor-Aziaku's (2021) discovery of lengthening, labialization, and palatalisation that occurs in Tɔŋu with verbs ending with /ɔ/, /a/, /u/, /e/, and /o/. The realisations in Tɔŋu exhibit phonological conditioning and apophonic characteristics, while the Ga variant reveals a phonological condition in that habitual marking in Ga depends on the vowel sounds that end the verb. Thus, while habitual marking in Ga is phonological, the standard Eʋe prescribes a form that depends on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive as indicated earlier. Habitual marking in the standard language is grammatical and phonological. The –na/ -a, -ɔ, -e, and nɛ and –a/-ɔ habitual materials in Eʋe and Ga respectively, are attached to the verb making it an essential element in determining habituality in both languages. In Eʋe, verbs marking habituality in serial verb constructions may share an identical aspectual marking or transitivity value. While the Eʋe language could take unlimited verbs in denoting either a sequence of actions, cause and effect, or means and results in SVCs, the Ga language only takes two verbs that connote the same idea, are referents to the same subject and share similarity in TAM marking. The verbs in habitual SVCs have a grammaticalized meaning that falls under the aspectual category of TAM. In the serial verb construction, the habitual material can be attached to each verb.

Further research to compare both languages is a significant opportunity to look at the negativity in marking habitual events. This aspect of the study has the potential to provide insight into the structure of both languages and to contribute to the theories of typology, which classify both languages based on some features.

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