

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

THE SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF PHRASAL VERBS IN GA



Thesis submitted to the Department of Ghanaian Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Philosophy Degree in Ghanaian Language

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.*

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### Supervisors' Declaration

*We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.*

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Co-Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the syntax and semantics of Ga phrasal verbs. It examined the basic elements that constitute the Ga phrasal verb and focused on the various manifestations of the phrasal verb in respect of its transitivity. The study also discussed the meanings of the phrasal verbs through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), as well as their idiomaticity and polysemy.

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources, and the entire study was rooted in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. A purely descriptive and qualitative research, the study revealed three main findings: first, the Ga phrasal verb – as a single semantic unit that expresses idiomatic meaning – comprises two main parts: the verbal element and the post-verbal element. Second, Ga phrasal verbs can be categorized into three syntactic types, namely intransitive, mono transitive and di-transitive. A few of the phrasal verbs, however, can be considered ambi-transitive or transitive-intransitive. Third, Ga phrasal verbs express both basic/literal and metaphorical/figurative meanings, and are usually not polysemous owing to their high idiomaticity. These findings hold significant implications for the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, pedagogy, language documentation and further syntax and semantics research on Ga phrasal verbs.

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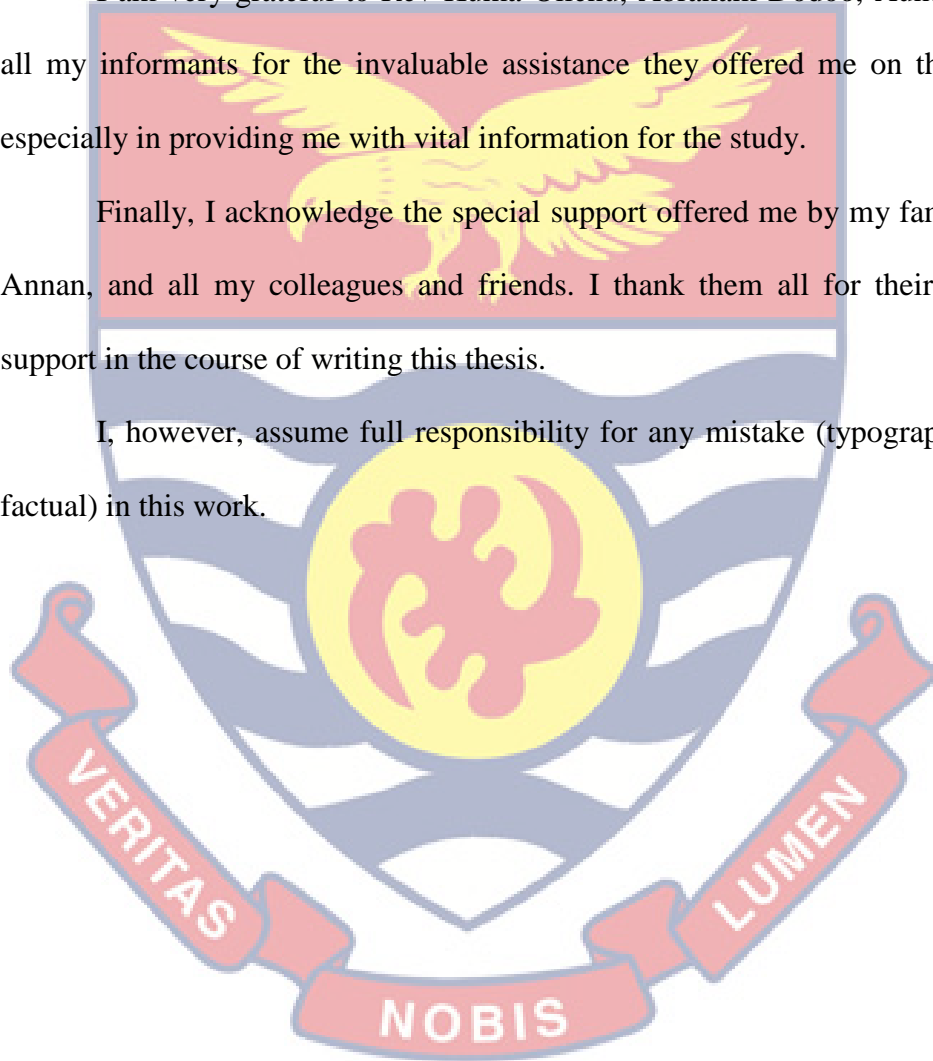
Again, I am indebted to Dr. Emmanuel Amo Ofori, a lecturer at the Department of Ghanaian Languages and Linguistics, Mark Nartey, an M.Phil. student at Norwegian University of Science and Technology and Mr. Benjamin Kubi a friend, a brother and a colleague at the Department of Ghanaian Languages and Linguistics who were always willing to provide me with any material I needed and also for proof-reading the work chapter by chapter. I really appreciate these kind gestures.

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I, however, assume full responsibility for any mistake (typographical or/and factual) in this work.



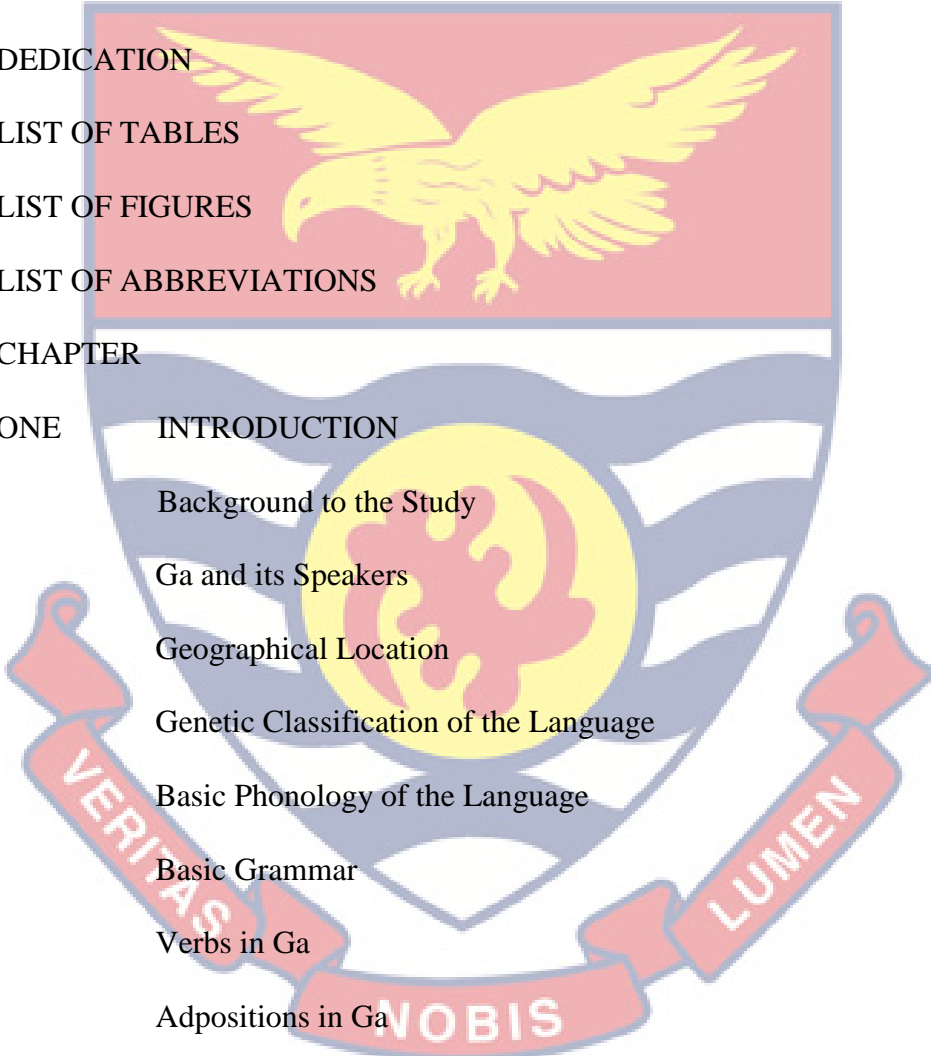
DEDICATION

To my Family



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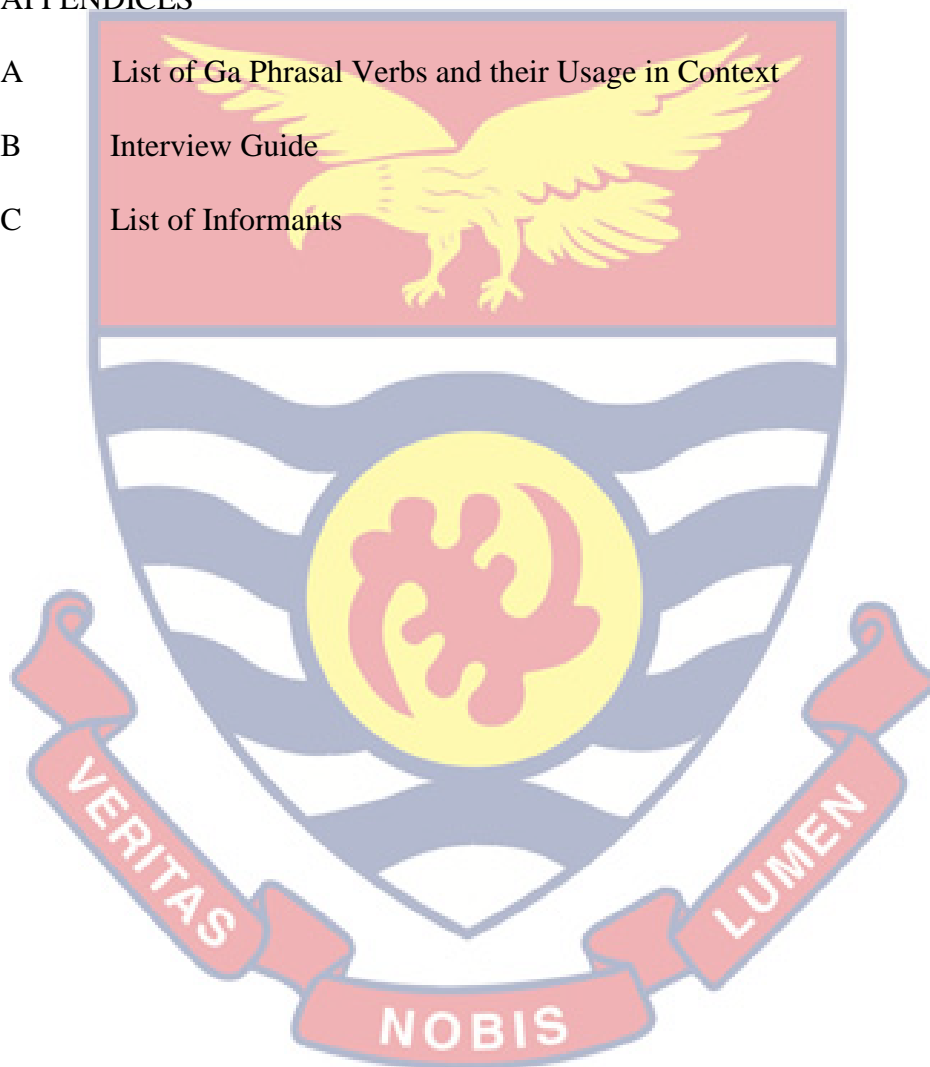




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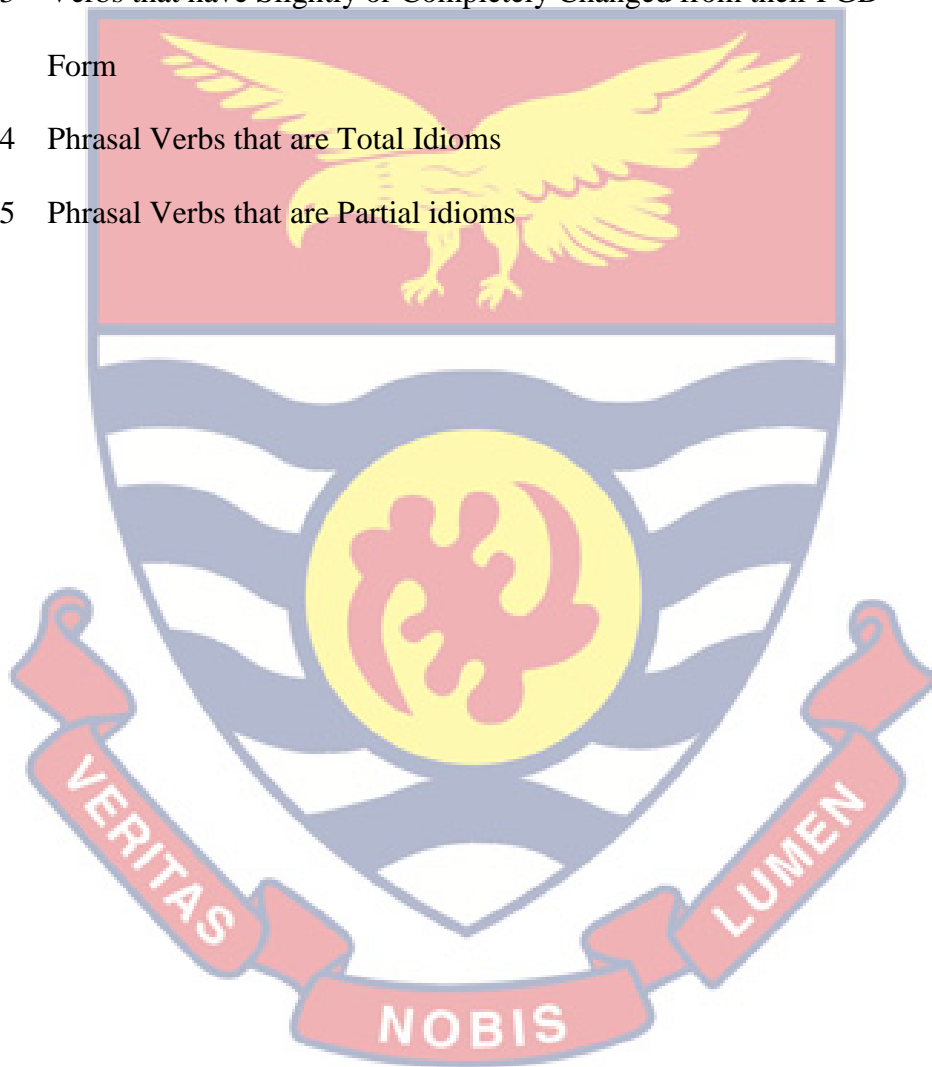
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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1SG 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun

2SG 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun

3SG 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun

3PL 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronoun

ADV Adverb

ASSOC Associative marker

AUX Auxiliary

CMT Conceptual Metaphor Theory

DEF Definite marker

FUT Future

FIG Figure

HAB Habitual

IDEO Ideophone

IMP Imperative

IMP PRON Impersonal Pronoun

ICV Inherent Complement Verb

NEG Negative



NP	Noun Phrase
Od	Direct Object
Oi	Indirect Object
OBJ	Object

PDE	Present day English
PERF	Perfective
PROG	Progressive
POSS	Possessive
PST	Past Tense
PGD	Proto-Ga-Dangme
PL	Plural
PV	Phrasal Verb
REF PRON	Reflexive Pronoun
SVO	Subject- Verb- Object
SOV	Subject-Object-Verb
SUBJ	Subject
VPO	Verb-Particle-Object
VOP	Verb-Object-Particle

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

Phrasal verbs are a widely accepted phenomenon in languages such as English, Dutch and German (Jackendoff, 2002). Katunar, Matea, Raffaelli and Sojat (2010) have also observed that phrasal verbs can be found in the Croatian language, although there are just a few. In a similar vein, Sekyi-Baidoo (2006) conducted a research on this phenomenon and established its existence in the Akan language. According to Celce -Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), only a limited number of languages possess phrasal verbs. Newmeyer (2005, p.113) confirms this assertion by saying that "...such constructions are less common in other language families and can therefore be considered typologically unusual." Does this mean that the phenomenon exists in only the above mentioned languages? One will not be able to provide any concrete answer unless researches are carried out in other languages regarding the phenomenon. It is in line with the observation above that this research sought to find out how phrasal verbs are manifested in Ga if they do exist.

#### Ga and Its Speakers

The people who speak the Ga language are known as Gamei (Ga people). It is not very certain where the Gas migrated from, but one tradition has it that



they came from the present-day Middle East (Amartey, 1990). This claim is supported by the similarity between the Homowo festival celebrated by Gamɛi and the Feast of the Passover celebrated by the Jews. Another tradition has it that Gamɛi migrated from Ile-Ife in Nigeria, first settled in Benin then moved in four groups namely: Wo Kpele, Wo Krowo, Wo Doku and Wo Sogba to their present abode (Amartey, 1990, p.17). The four groups established four of the seven Ga states in the order in which they arrived in the Gold Coast, namely: Tema, Nungua, La and Ga Mashi. Later, Osu and Teshie were also established by those who had already settled on Ga land (Amartey, 1990). Kpone, a hitherto Dangme state, is now the last of the Ga states. The states are autonomous with each having its own paramount chief, and sub-chiefs who owe allegiance to the paramount chief.

### **Geographical Location**

The southern boundary of Ga land is the Gulf of Guinea and the northern boundary is at the foot of the Akwapim Hills in the Eastern Region. To the west, Ga land shares boundary with the Central Region at Kasoa, and to the east, the boundary is at Prampram. Ga has big towns and villages which can be found in the west stretching from Odorkor as far as to the western boundary at Kasoa, then northward along the immediate west of the Densu River to Samsam. On the east, is a line of towns and villages starting from Kpone then northward to Dodowa. All towns and villages that fall under Ga land have their founders or indigenes from one of the original Ga paramountcies. Ga Mashi has such towns and villages

as Ofankor, Amasaman, Pokuase to the north and Bortianor, Weija and Kokrobite to the south. Osu has towns and villages like Adenkreb, Boi, Haatso and Papao. La has towns like Madina, Legon, La Bawaleshie and Oyarefa. Teshie has towns like Samsam, Kweiman, Abokobi, Pantang and Danfa. Nungua has Oyibi and Katamansu as some of their towns while Tema has Sasabi, and Kpone has Appolonia (Kotey, 2014).

### **Genetic Classification of the Language**

Hall (2001), states that all Ghanaian languages, along with most sub-Saharan ones, are classified in the Congo-Kordofanian phylum. This is subdivided into eleven families and all Ghanaian languages can be classified under only three of these: namely Gur, Kwa and Mande. Duthie (1996) places the Kwa languages under the Volta-Congo language group which also falls under the bigger Niger-Congo language family. According to the sub-classification of the Kwa, Ga and its close relative Dangme spoken east of Accra form a family that belongs to the Nyo group (Bendor-Samuel, 1989, p.21). The ethnologue of the languages of the world confirms that Ga belongs to the Nyo group and this is illustrated in figure (1).

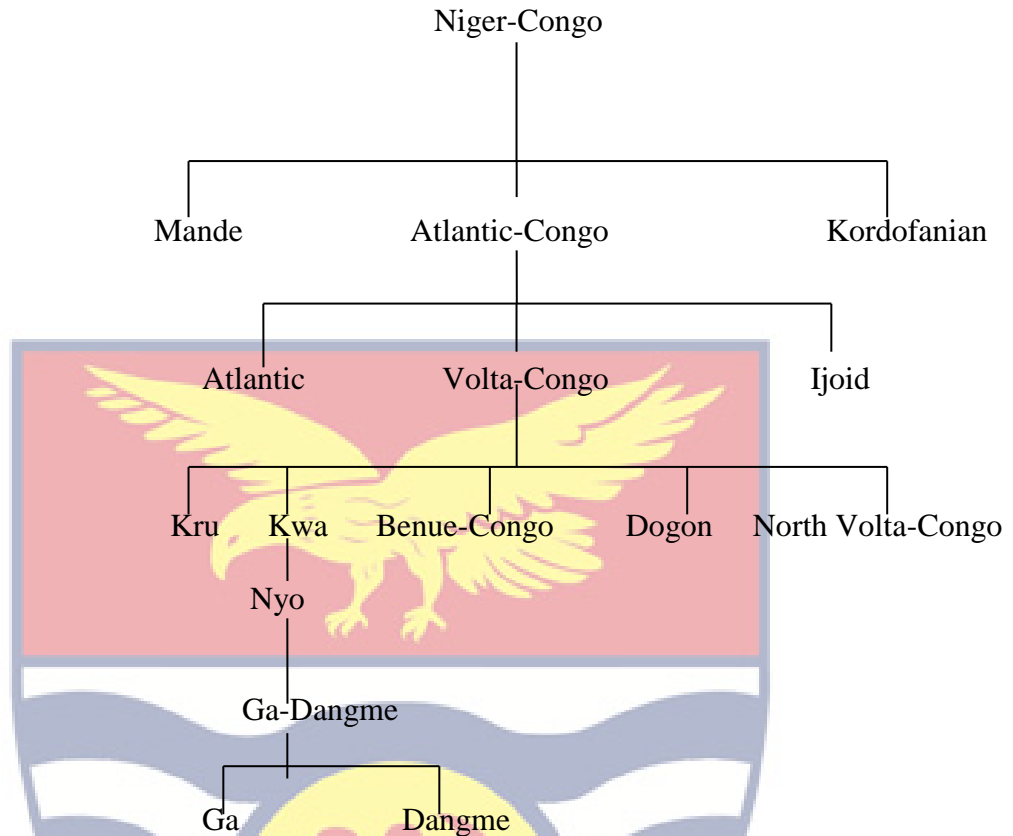


Fig 1: The Ga-Dangme Language Family

Source: Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 2013

Ga is the indigenous language of the people in seven of the ten districts that constitute the Greater Accra region (Ghana Government Gazette, 2000 as cited in Kotey, 2014). These seven districts with their capitals are as follows; Ga South – Weija , Ga East – Abokobi, Ga West – Amasaman, Accra-Metropolitan Authority (A.M.A) – Accra, Adenta – Adenta, Ledzokuku/Krowo (LEKMA) – Teshie-Nungua and Tema (T.M.A) – Tema. Out of the seven Ga districts mentioned, Ga is predominantly spoken in only four districts namely: Ga South, Ga East, Ga West, and Ledzokuku/Krowo. The 2010 census organized in the country showed that out of 4,010,054 residents in Greater Accra Region, 1,235,985 are Ga speakers (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

Ga is one of the major languages used by the media for both entertainment and news broadcasting in Ghana. It is also one of the eleven Ghanaian languages used for instruction in schools at the lower primary level and taught as a subject at the upper primary and all levels of education in the country. The language has had a long history of academic study compared to many other West African languages. According to Dakubu (2002), the first grammar of Ga was published in 1764 in Copenhagen. Apart from this, in 1858 Zimmermann compiled and published *A Grammatical Sketch of the Ga Language*, the first and so far the only comprehensive grammar of Ga. Today, there are many published works in Ga.

### Basic Phonology of the Language

Nasalization and tone are phonemic in Ga (Wentum, 1997; Dakubu, 2002). They play very crucial roles in the language. For instance tone and nasalization cause the meaning differences in the words in (1) and (2) respectively. Following common practice, /´/ indicates high tone, /^/ indicates low tone, /˘/ indicate what we may call mid-tone, and /~/ indicates nasalization.

- (1) a. kplá - ‘to sing’                      lã - ‘to dream’  
       b. má - ‘corn dough’                      mà - ‘to build’
- (2) a. kpá - ‘to stop’                      kpã - ‘to stretch’  
       b. shà - ‘to spoil’                      shã - ‘to burn’

Conventionally, tones are not marked in Ga orthography but in this work, tones are marked on all words (except proper names) because the marking will help to differentiate between words that have the same orthographic form but

different meanings. It is worthy to note that in this work tone marks on words will be the same even if they appear in context. Nasalization, however, is sometimes marked in Ga orthography in order to avoid lexical ambiguity. This thesis does not follow this nasalization marking convention in the orthography of the language i.e. nasalization will be marked on all nasalized words.

### Basic Grammar

Generally, word order and pronominal forms signal grammatical relation in Ga. A simple declarative sentence has an SVO word order (Dakubu, 2003 as cited in Korsah, 2011). That is the subject precedes the verb while the object comes after the verb. If the construction happens to have two objects, then the indirect object will precede the direct object. These are illustrated with the examples in (3) below, where Akua is the subject and Kwaku is the object.

(3) a. Akua tɛ́ Kwaku

Akua PST-call Kwaku

‘Akua called Kwaku.’

b. Akua tɛ́ lɛ́

Akua PST-call 3SG.OBJ

‘Akua called him.’

c. È- tɛ́ Kwaku

3SG.SUBJ-call Kwaku

‘She called Kwaku.’

d. Akua há Kwaku shiká

Akua PST- give Kwaku money

‘Akua gave Kwaku money.’

Examples (3b) and (3c) show that the form of a pronoun used may indicate whether an entity is a subject or an object in any given construction. It is important to mention that there is no gender distinction in pronouns. Also in example (3d) Kwaku and *shika* ‘money’ are the two objects. Kwaku is the indirect object while *shika* is the direct object. It is seen above that the indirect object always precedes the direct object in any Ga construction. Therefore, the structure of a simple declarative sentence in Ga is Subject + Verb + (indirect object) + (direct object).

### Verbs in Ga

Grammatical categories associated with the verb in Ga include tense, aspect, mood and polarity. With regard to the first three, Dakubu (2008) remarks that the Ga verb system marks aspect and modality, but not (or marginally) tense. According to her, there is a tendency among speakers to give the aorist (i.e. the uninflected verb) a default past interpretation, and to interpret the progressive and habitual as present. This assertion is supported by Aboh and Essegbey (2010) when they intimate that most Kwa languages do not encode tense grammatically, instead a specific tense may be derived from a particular tense and aspect combination.

The Ga verb consists of the verb stem which is the head of the verb, and the grammatical affixes which represent tense, aspect, mood and polarity in the

syntax. Other elements that form auxiliaries to the verb are the auxiliary *kɛ-*, the polarity element *-ka-* and the deictic auxiliaries *-ba-* and *-ya-*. In the orthography, however, the subject pronoun, when applicable, and the auxiliaries, when applicable, are written together with the obligatory verb stem as one word. The basic morphological structure of the verb therefore consists of the obligatory verb stem, marked by a set of verbal affixes (Adjei, 1999). The examples in (4) show how the verb stem, tense, aspect, and modality may be realized in Ga. Also they illustrate how the inflection of negation on verbs varies with its tense, aspect and modality features. Under negation only the negative form of the verb has been provided; this is because negation only affects the verbs.

		<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
(4)	a. Future:	Adei bàá-tsé Kofi Adei FUT-call Kofi ‘Adei will call Kofi.’	tsé-ŋ
	b. Perfective:	Adei é-tsé Kofi Adei PERF-call Kofi ‘Adei has called Kofi.’	tsé-kò
	c. Progressive:	Adei mii-tsé Kofi Adei PROG-call Kofi ‘Adei is calling Kofi.’	tsé-ê
	d. Habitual:	Adei tsé-ò Kofi Adei call-HAB Kofi ‘Adei calls Kofi.’	tsé-ê

In the above examples therefore, the obligatory verb stem is *-tsé* ‘call’ and the verbal affixes that indicate tense, aspect, modality and polarity are the following: *bàá-*, *mì-*, *é-*, *-ò*, *-kò*, *-ê* and *-ŋ*.

Words with multiple meanings are a common phenomenon inherent in any natural language and this is found with two main word classes: nouns and verbs. But our main concern is with the verbs. It is possible for a verb to have several related meanings, and it is also possible for it to have different or unrelated senses or meanings. If it has different meanings then it is a case of homonymy and if it has several related meanings then it is the case of polysemy. In fact, most of the Ga words, especially the verbs, are homonymous and polysemous in nature. Usually, the meaning of the verb may depend mainly on the words it collocates with. For example, the verb *bò* can mean ‘to create’ as in *bò gbòmò* ‘to create human’, ‘to deliver a message’ as in *bò àmànǎ*, ‘to cheer’ as in *bò òshé*, ‘to warn’ as in *bò kòkò*, and ‘to play truancy’ as in *bò kó*, to mention but a few. The verb in the illustration carries more than one semantic load or meaning but these meanings do not relate in anyway because of the word that follows it; therefore the verb in focus is homonymous in nature. However, the verb *gbà* which means ‘to tell’ as seen in *Egbà mì ànòkwálé lē* ‘He told me the truth’ or ‘to converse’ as in *Amegba sane*, and ‘to prophesy’ as in *Nò ní òsòfó lē gbà lē bà mǎ* ‘What the pastor prophesied manifested’ is a polyseme because all the three different meanings are related.



## Adpositions in Ga

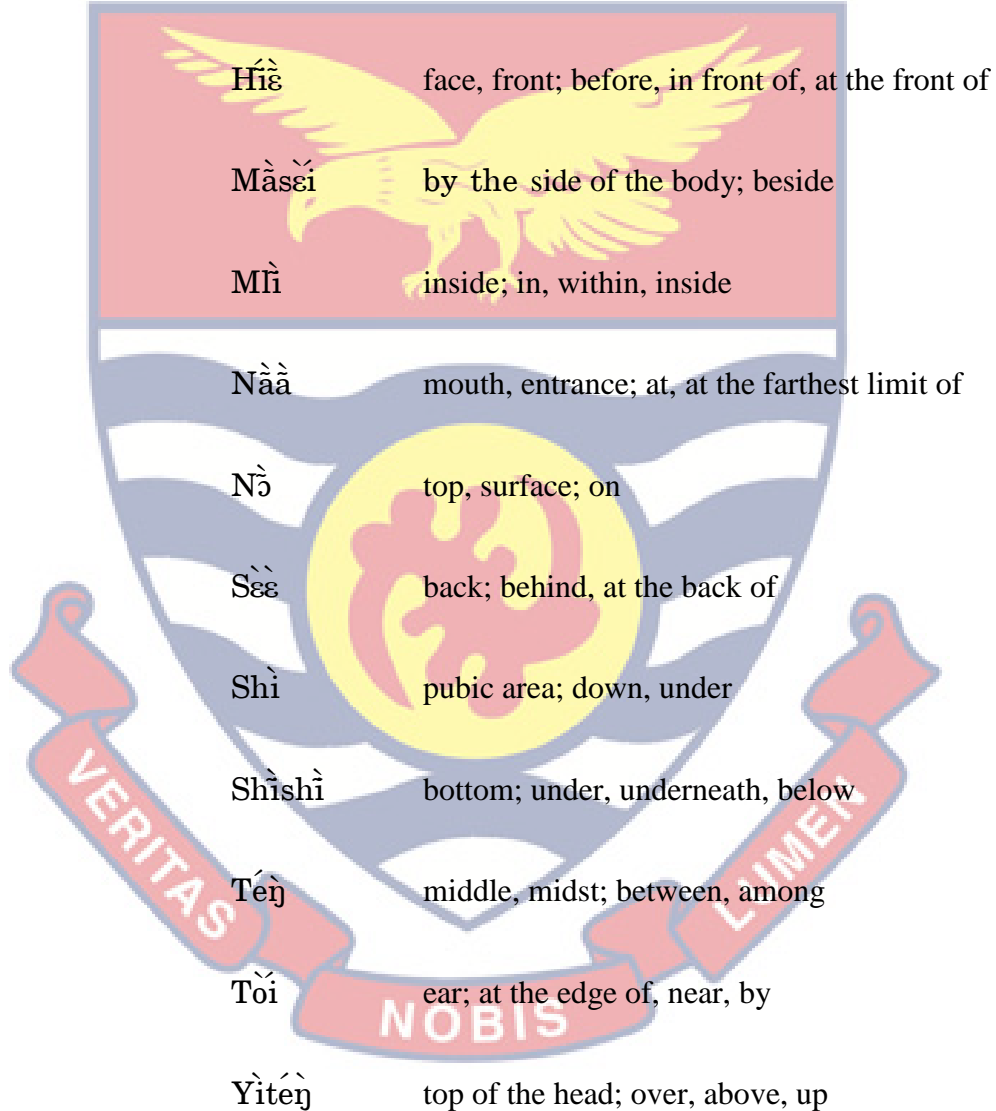
An adposition is a general term for both a preposition and a postposition. However, it has been observed that the language exhibits postpositions and postpositional phrases. Based on language universals, as expressed in Greenberg (1966, P. 79), "...with overwhelmingly greater than chance frequency, languages with normal SOV order are postpositional" (universal 4). However, the fact that Ga exhibits postpositions presupposes that the language was originally an SOV language before it shifted to SVO through language change (Kotey, 2014). Dakubu (1998, p. 3) made an observation on the categorial status of postpositions. She writes:

Postpositions are clearly nouns, both morphologically and syntactically, but it is also obvious that they constitute a special class, on several criteria. Grammatically, they can take the plural suffix, but this is not very common. Syntactically, although they are heads of possessive NPs, they are never modified by any of the other constituents of an NP, such as adjectives or determiners. Semantically too they are restricted, compared to other nouns and compared to the same item when it occurs non-postpositionally. Some, such as *hiɛ*, *naa*, *sɛɛ*, occur as fully lexical nouns, with lexical meanings and as such they can occur with the usual range of nominal affixes and modifiers. Others are more difficult to identify lexically. Some also seem to have underlying lexical

meanings although they are not actually used as lexical nouns with that meaning.

The Ga postpositions are listed in (5) below, with lexical meanings followed by more functional meanings after the semi-colon.

(5) Hè skin, area of physical contact; around, at, surface

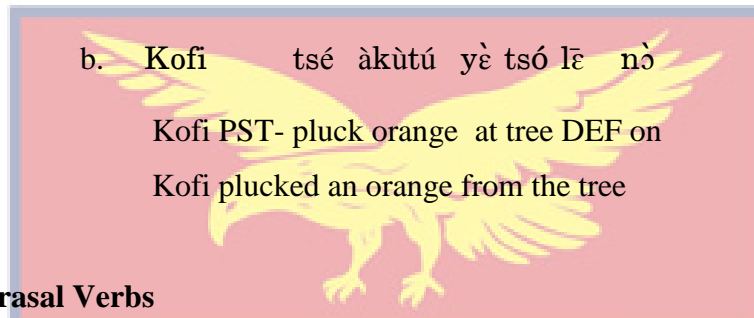


It should be noted that “yè” is the only constituent that behaves like a preposition in the language. It is demonstrated in example (6a) below. But, sometimes it cannot stand on its own in a construction without a postposition

(Kotey, 2014). The combination of “yè” and a postposition would give a single prepositional English meaning as example (6b) shows.

- (6) a. Kofi hé àkùtú yè Ga  
 Kofi PST- buy orange at Ga  
 ‘Kofi bought an orange at Accra’

b. Kofi tsé àkùtú yè tsó lē nò  
 Kofi PST- pluck orange at tree DEF on  
 Kofi plucked an orange from the tree

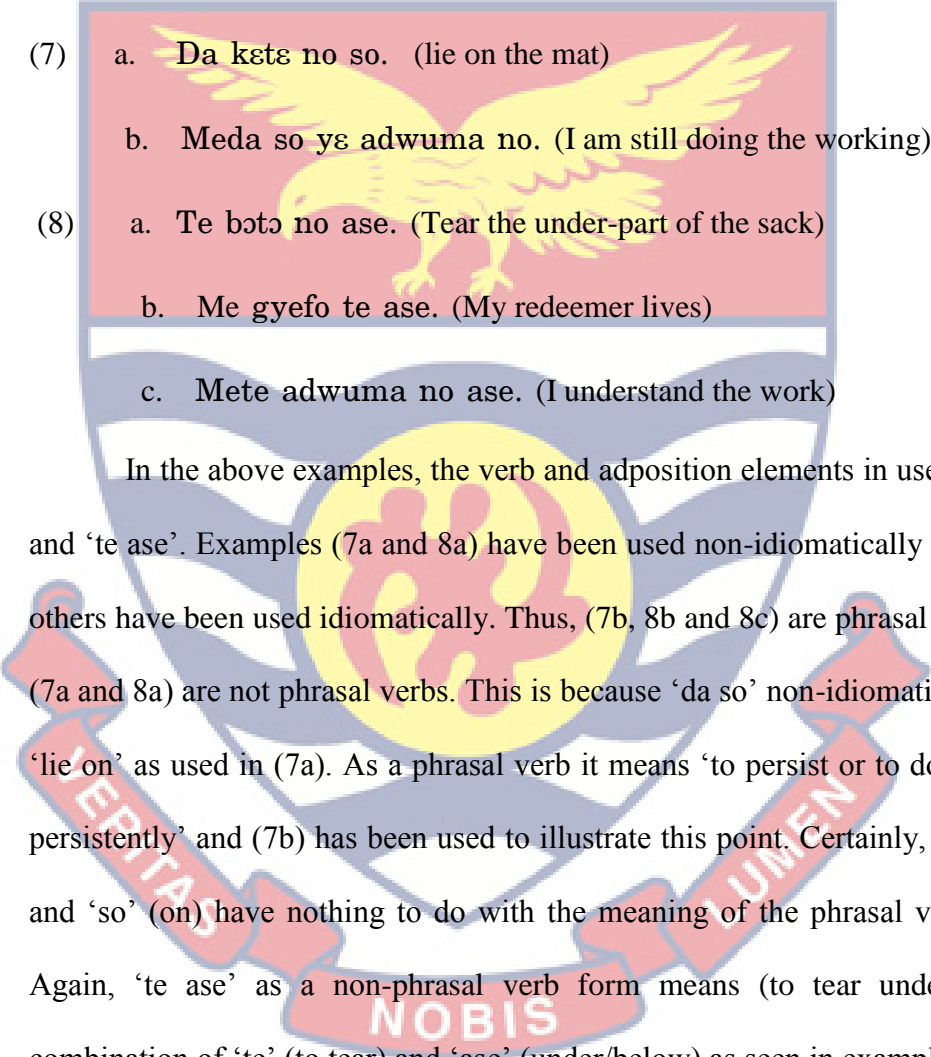


### Phrasal Verbs

The term phrasal verb was first introduced by Smith (1925), and this name will be adopted in this work because it is the commonest designation and the predominant one in most books (Mitchell, 1958; Bolinger, 1971; McArthur, 1989; Palmer, 1988; Greenbaum, 1996; Darwin and Gray, 1999; Liao and Fukuya, 2004; Gardner and Davies, 2007). Other labels employed in the literature for the concept include separable verb (Francis, 1958), verb-adverb combination (Kennedy, 1920), compound verb (Curme, 1931; Kruisinga 1931), discontinuous verb (Live, 1965), verb-particle construction (Lipka, 1972), two-word verb (Anthony, 1954; Taha, 1960; Meyer, 1975; Siyanova and Schmitt, 2007), verb-particle combination (Fraser, 1976), particle verbs (Dehé, 2002) etc.

Sekyi-Baidoo (2006, p. 154) defines a phrasal verb as an idiom that is “...basically a verb and adposition element combinations which bear a single semantic significance which is different from the meaning of ordinary verb and adposition (preposition/postposition) combination in which the meaning is to

some extent the aggregate of the meanings of the constituent words.” According to him, what one can describe as a phrasal verb exhibits a basic meaning which is different from the meaning which will ordinarily accrue to the compound if the meaning of its constituents is to be considered, and these are illustrated in the following Twi constructions below:

- 
- (7) a. Da kɛtɛ no so. (lie on the mat)  
 b. Meda so yɛ adwuma no. (I am still doing the working).
- (8) a. Te bɔtɔ no ase. (Tear the under-part of the sack)  
 b. Me gyefo te ase. (My redeemer lives)  
 c. Mete adwuma no ase. (I understand the work)

In the above examples, the verb and adposition elements in use are ‘da so’ and ‘te ase’. Examples (7a and 8a) have been used non-idiomatically whereas the others have been used idiomatically. Thus, (7b, 8b and 8c) are phrasal verbs while (7a and 8a) are not phrasal verbs. This is because ‘da so’ non-idiomatically means ‘lie on’ as used in (7a). As a phrasal verb it means ‘to persist or to do something persistently’ and (7b) has been used to illustrate this point. Certainly, ‘da’ (to lie) and ‘so’ (on) have nothing to do with the meaning of the phrasal verb ‘da so’. Again, ‘te ase’ as a non-phrasal verb form means (to tear under) being a combination of ‘te’ (to tear) and ‘ase’ (under/below) as seen in example (8a). As a phrasal verb, it means ‘to live/be alive’ or ‘to understand’ as seen in example (8b and 8c) respectively. As we can see these meanings have nothing to do with the basic meanings of ‘te’ (tear) and ‘ase’ (under) put together.

This phenomenon which has been described above by Sekyi-Baidoo seems to be present in the Ga language. For instance the verb-adposition combination *bà mǐ̀* which consists of the verb *bà* ‘come’ and the adposition element *mǐ̀* ‘inside/in’ has the meaning ‘to manifest’ as seen in the sentence

*Kofi làm̀ ìē bà mǐ̀* ‘Kofi’s dream manifested’ or ‘to be angry’ as seen in the construction *Kwei búùlùfèém̀ ìē há nùúmó ìē bà mǐ̀ lèébi ńéé* ‘Kwei’s stupid behaviour infuriated the old man this morning’, both of which cannot be derived solely by combining the basic meanings of the original verb and postposition. Thus, *bà* and *mǐ̀* have coalesced to form a single semantic unit.

Most phrasal verbs in languages such as English, Dutch and Akan carry different meanings. Seidl and McMordie (1978, p. 114) in their book *English Idioms* hint at this when they say that “...any one combination may have several idiomatic meanings, depending on the words which precede and follow it, i.e. its collocations”. For instance, the English phrasal verb ‘pick up’ has a multitude of different meanings depending on the context. Here are some of the many ways in which the phrasal verb ‘pick up’ is used:

- (9) a. Pick up that book. (to take up by hand)
- b. Please, pick up your room. (to tidy up)
- c. The airport van picked up its passengers. (to take on)
- d. He picks up foreign languages fairly easily. (to learn)
- e. He picked up his package at the post office. (to claim)
- f. She picked up some milk on her way home. (to buy)

- g. He picked up a virus on his trip. (to come down with a disease)
- h. The police picked up the bank robber. (to take into custody)

The above feature exhibited by most phrasal verbs can also be found with some of the verb-adposition combinations in the Ga language. For example, a verb-adposition combination like *fò mli* ‘to cut in’ carries more than one

meaning, depending on the context in which it is used. It can mean ‘to cancel’, ‘to interrupt’ and ‘to be absent’. The following constructions illustrate the different meanings of the verb-adposition combination *fò mli*:

- (10) a. Tsòóló núkpá lɛ fò Kwame gbéi mli  
 Headteacher DEF PST- cut Kwame name inside  
 ‘The headteacher cancelled Kwame’s name.’
- b. E- fò wíémó lɛ mli  
 3SG.SUBJ PST- cut conversation DEF in  
 ‘He interrupted the conversation.’
- c. Kuma fò nítsúmō mli ɣméné  
 Kuma PST- cut work in today  
 ‘Kuma absented himself from work today.’

The three examples above make it clear that the meaning of the verb-adposition combination in focus differs depending on the context.

The above illustrations give hint that the phenomenon of phrasal verbs may exist in the Ga language, but to establish for a fact that the phenomenon is present in the language requires an elaborate enquiry. The researcher believes that

the verb and adposition combinations discussed above that exhibit some characteristics of phrasal verbs may turn out to be phrasal verbs in the Ga language and they may not be the only ones that exhibit those characteristics. This research therefore, intends to investigate this phenomenon to identify the other verb and adposition combinations that are likely to be phrasal verbs.

### **Statement of the problem**

A considerable amount of studies have been done on the syntax and semantics of Ga verbs. Notable among these are Dakubu (1970, 2004, 2008), Adjei (1999) and Korsah (2011). But to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the studies has specifically been devoted to phrasal verbs in the language. The researcher therefore, notices that there is a lacuna regarding the literature on the Ga language when it comes to this phenomenon.

The study therefore, aims at identifying and describing the syntactic and semantic features of the Ga phrasal verbs that are assumed by the researcher to be present in the language. Syntactically, the study will look at the basic elements that form the Ga phrasal verbs and then explore the various manifestations of the phrasal verb in respect to the principles of transitivity. Semantically, the study will focus on the meaning of phrasal verbs through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory and also look at idiomaticity and polysemous nature of phrasal verbs.

## Research Questions

The following questions guided the researcher in carrying out the research.

1. What syntactic elements constitute the Ga phrasal verb?
2. What are the syntactic and semantic features of Ga phrasal verbs?
3. How is idiomaticity expressed in Ga phrasal verbs

## Significance of the study

There is an apparent dearth of information on the phenomenon of phrasal verbs in Ga. Preliminary studies on the phenomenon have not shown that they do exist in the language. Some people are even of the opinion that the phenomenon does not exist in the language and that is why there is lack of information on it in Ga grammar books. This research therefore is an attempt to establish the fact that the Ga language is among the languages that have phrasal verbs.

Again, the lack of adequate literature on the semantics of Ga has created a vacuum for both Ga teachers and learners. Teachers find it difficult getting materials that will help them explain certain semantic phenomena to their learners. Learners on the other hand do not have materials to back their claims when dealing with issues in Ga semantics. Both teachers and learners have to rely mostly on English literatures to understand issues in semantics to the extent of applying their knowledge gained in English to the Ga language.

To solve this problem in a way, but not eliminating it in entirety, the outcome of this research would prove useful to translators and teachers preparing pedagogical materials for teaching; it would also serve as a source of reference material for learners.



Similarly, it is also hoped that the outcome of this study will serve as a document and a guide to other researchers in linguistics.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Unlike the English language which has corpora for the studies of phrasal verbs, the same cannot be said of the Ga language. Any researcher who undertakes studies in phrasal verbs would have to go through the stress of collecting verbs and adposition combinations and sort out those that are phrasal verbs in the language before proceeding to what he/she intends to do with those phrasal verbs compiled. Also since Ga is a tonal language and tones play a major role in bringing about meaning variations between words that may have the same form, it will be expedient on the part of the researcher to tone mark all words. The collection, description and tone marking of these data can prove difficult sometimes. This challenge can prolong the proposed research. This challenge could however, be addressed by enlisting the services of trained research assistants to help with the process.

### **Organization**

The research is presented in five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by providing general background information that will serve as a basis for the study. This chapter considers the background to the study, the Ga language and its speakers, the problem that informs the research and the research questions

that are formed out of the problem. The chapter also discusses the significance of the study, limitation, and ends with the organization of the research.

The second chapter captures the review of related literature and the theoretical framework. In this chapter, issues discussed include the concept of phrasal verbs with emphasis on the syntactic and semantic features of phrasal verbs. In this section also the relative importance of elements that comprise the phrasal verb is also looked at.

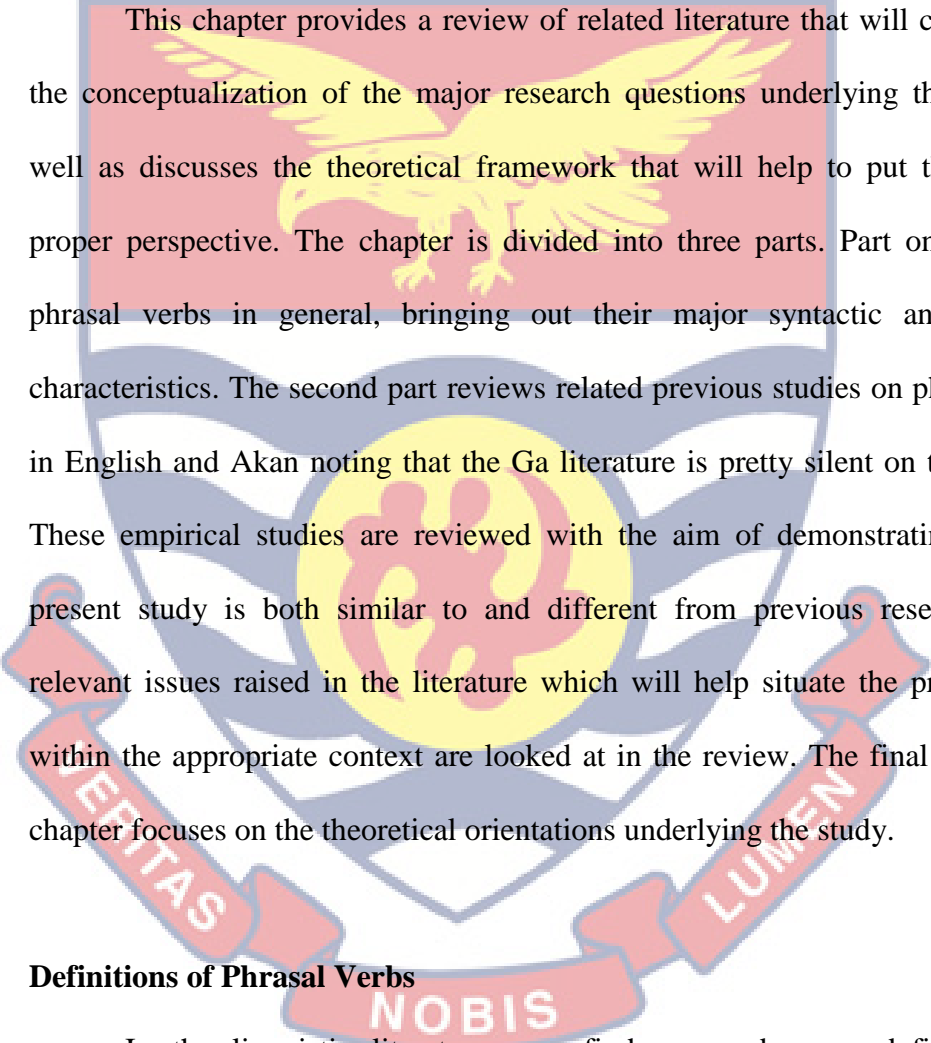
The third chapter describes the methodology adopted for the work. This constitutes the method of data collection, data transcription and the method of data analysis.

Chapter four provides the discussion on results of the data collected. The data is grouped under the various elements that form the phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs that have the same verbal elements form one group and those that have the same adposition elements are also placed in another group. Again, the phrasal verbs that have different forms but the same meaning also form a separate group. These groupings facilitated the discussions on the syntactic and semantic features of the phrasal verbs. The conceptual metaphor theory was used in the discussion of the meaning of phrasal verbs.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter. It involves the summary of the whole work, implication of the study, the conclusions that are drawn from the analysis and provides recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE



This chapter provides a review of related literature that will contribute to the conceptualization of the major research questions underlying the study, as well as discusses the theoretical framework that will help to put the study in proper perspective. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part one discusses phrasal verbs in general, bringing out their major syntactic and semantic characteristics. The second part reviews related previous studies on phrasal verbs in English and Akan noting that the Ga literature is pretty silent on the concept. These empirical studies are reviewed with the aim of demonstrating how the present study is both similar to and different from previous research. Thus, relevant issues raised in the literature which will help situate the present study within the appropriate context are looked at in the review. The final part of this chapter focuses on the theoretical orientations underlying the study.

#### Definitions of Phrasal Verbs

In the linguistic literature, one finds a good many definitions and explanations of the term *phrasal verb* given by scholars (for example, Fraser, 1974; Cornell, 1985; Side, 1990; Darwin and Gray, 1999; Gardner and Davies, 2007). Not surprisingly, various terms such as separable verb, compound verb, verb particle construction and two word verb have been used to refer to this

language feature. In this study, however, the term is used with recourse to the explanation of phrasal verb given in Chapter 1. In a general sense, phrasal verbs refer to a combination of two lexical elements: a verb and a particle (Bolinger, 1971; Fraser, 1974; Lindner, 1983; Side, 1990). A quick scan of the literature shows that the various definitions given to phrasal verbs are not bereft of problems. Such problems have often been discussed with particular reference to the grammatical status of the particle in phrasal verb constructions (Bolinger, 1971; Sroka, 1972; Cappelle, 2005; Thim, 2006; Rodriguez, 2013). That is, whether the particle must be an adverbial particle (for example, *up, out, down, off*) as in ‘look up’, ‘get out’, ‘break down’ and ‘take off’; or whether the particle could also include prepositions (for example, *after, into, with*) as in ‘deal with’, ‘look after’ and ‘run into’.

A number of researchers, for instance, are of the view that the post-verbal particle is best described as an adverb, rather than a preposition because many of the English prepositions are homomorphic with adverbs (Fraser, 1974; Erades, 1975; Claridge, 2000; Heaton, 1965; Spasov, 1966; Palmer, 1988; Gardner and Davies, 2007), while other scholars argue that the particle need not refer only to adverbs, but also to prepositions (Bolinger, 1971; Sroka, 1972; Brinton, 1988; Denison, 1981; Dixon, 1982; Neagu, 2007). In a total departure from the two dissenting views on the nature of the particle expressed above, some scholars maintain that the particles are a distinct category: that is, they are different from adverbs and prepositions, although they are adverbial in origin (Thim, 2006; Cappelle, 2005; Elenbaas, 2007). Also departing from the earlier views above, Mitchell (1958, p. 103) notes that “it is better to abandon the word class approach

and to treat phrasal verbs as a type of verb formed by two words in which the particle forms “one grammatical piece with the verbal component.”

Evidently, there is some disagreement among scholars with regard to the status of the particle element in the phrasal verb. Essentially, this study draws on the definition proposed by Sekyi-Baidoo (2006), albeit with a slight modification. He defines a phrasal verb as “...verb and adposition element combinations which bear a single semantic significance which is different from the meaning of ordinary verb and adposition combination” (p. 154). His intimation on the nature of the particle overlaps with Bolinger (1971), Sroka (1972), Brinton (1988), Denison (1981), Dixon (1982) and Neagu (2007) on the use of preposition as the particle element. That notwithstanding, his definition is quite distinct owing to the fact that he does not make mention of adverbs. Besides, Sekyi-Baidoo makes mention of postpositions under the umbrella or amorphous term of adposition. Hence, although his definition concurs with Bolinger, Sroka, Brinton, Denison, Dixon and Neagu, it also seems to be in agreement with Thim, 2006; Cappelle, 2005; and Elenbaas, 2007 in a way. This agreement with Thim, Cappelle and Elenbaas is deduced from what he said when he was differentiating between a phrasal verb and an ordinary verb and adposition combination. He sees the particle as a distinct category from the adposition. Sekyi-Baidoo notes that “...sometimes, the adposition element does not admit a complementation of the object, unlike in the ordinary verb + adposition compound in which there is necessarily an object complementation. In such instance, position element is referred to as a particle” (p.154).

Deducing from Sekyi-Baidoo's views on the nature of the particle in the phrasal verb, we notice that to him when the second element of the phrasal verb admits a complementation, then it is likely to be an adposition, and when it does not, it is likely to be a particle. Thus, he sees the particle as being different from the adposition. Sekyi-Baidoo's description and explanation of the phrasal verb are appropriate for the current study because the definition captures what pertains in Ghanaian languages as far as the phrasal verb is concerned. In Ghanaian languages, especially Ga, adverbs modify verbs and cannot combine with verbs to create new meanings. Also, verbs can only combine with postpositions (and not prepositions) to create new meanings. In this study, however, Sekyi-Baidoo's position that the second element becomes an adposition or a particle based on complementation will not be adopted in defining the phrasal verb. Instead, the adposition element will be considered as a particle because according to Yutaka (2013) the term 'particle' was introduced by Jespersen (1927) as one part of speech including adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections; also in the literature (as already pointed out above), some scholars consider the particle in phrasal verbs as an adverb or a preposition. Therefore, in this study, the particle is considered as a postposition element.

Having shed light on some of the definitions of the phrasal verb and, more importantly, established its working definition for the study, the subsequent paragraphs focus on some issues raised in the literature on the phrasal verb. These issues are both syntactic and semantic in nature.

## Syntactic Issues of Phrasal Verbs

The main issues on the syntax of phrasal verbs have centered on the syntactic elements that constitute phrasal verbs, the types of phrasal verbs in respect of transitivity and separability, and the syntactic tests that can be used to identify whether a certain combination of words could be considered a phrasal verb or not. Given that the syntactic constituents of the phrasal verb have been touched on in the previous paragraphs, the focus of this section will be on the other issues made mention of above.

### Syntactic Types of Phrasal verbs

An important principle that needs to be clarified with respect to phrasal verbs is the notion of transitivity (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik, 1985). Transitivity is not being used here in the wide sense of the general system of participant relationships in a clause as seen by Halliday (1967) as the various kinds of processes and the participants who are associated with each other. Rather, transitivity is being used here in the traditional sense. It simply means the number of objects a verb requires in a given instance (Crystal, 2009; Huddleston and Pullum, 2005). Cobuild (1990, pp. 137-138) for instance, makes this distinction:

If an action or event involves only one person or thing, you mention only the performer of the action (the subject) and the action (the verb)... Clauses of this kind are called intransitive verb... If the action or event involves another person or thing which the action affects, relates to, or produces, you put a noun group referring to

them after the verb group. This is called the object of the verb or clause... Clauses which have direct objects are called transitive clauses, and the verbs which occur in transitive clauses are called transitive verbs... a small number of transitive verbs also allow you to mention who benefits from an action or receives something as a result... verbs which can take an indirect object, as well as a direct object are called ditransitive verbs.

It can be deduced from Cobuild's distinction above that transitivity can be classified into three types: intransitive, transitive and ditransitive.

Drawing on the traditional sense of transitivity, Sekyi- Baidoo's (2006), study reveals that the Akan phrasal verb has three forms as far as transitivity is concerned: intransitive, monotransitive and ditransitive phrasal verbs; noting that no complex transitive form has yet been identified. He grouped the intransitive phrasal verbs into the copulative, active and the ergative. According to him the copulative ones only describe the subject and cannot be used in the imperatives while the active intransitive phrasal verbs can be realized in the imperative. With the ergative, he intimated that the actual object features syntactically as a subject; and the action involved is presented as a state, or being, or described as the subject. With regard to the monotransitive phrasal verbs – whether reciprocal or reflexive – the study identifies two types: those that take nouns as objects and those that take verbs as objects.

The study showed that the transitive phrasal verbs with nouns as object usually have the structure: Verb + NP + adposition where the NP is a noun or nominal while those with verbs as objects have the structure: Verb + adposition +



object (verbal). And as regards ditransitive phrasal verbs, Sekyi-Baidoo notes that they can be realized in two clause structures in Akan: first, in clauses where the direct object is neither associated with the verb stem nor the position element but the two as a whole constitute a single semantic unit as a ditransitive verb. Second, the ditransitive phrasal verb may be realized in clauses where a position element (a preposition) is used to introduce the indirect object such that the preposition and the indirect object constitute a prepositional phrase.

On the point of transitivity, linguists classify English phrasal verbs into two: intransitive phrasal verbs and transitive phrasal verbs (Yeagle, 1983; Heaton, 1965; Sangoor, 2012; Lindner, 1983; Fraser, 1976; Kamarudin, 2013; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999). Sangoor (2012) made an assertion that some phrasal verbs are both transitive and intransitive. Grigore et al (1998) as cited in Olteanu (2012, p. 23) confirmed this assertion by stating that “one and the same phrasal verb may be both transitive and intransitive (e.g. Please *wake me up* at 6 in the morning/I usually *wake up* at 6 in the morning).” According to Kamarudin (2013), the transitive phrasal verbs are always followed by a direct object, which can be a noun phrase (e.g. She picked up *the phone*) or a clause (e.g. My sister found out *that her husband had been planning a surprise party for her*), while on the other hand, the intransitive phrasal verbs do not and cannot take objects (e.g. The price of petrol will *go up*/ The flight will *take off*).

In addition to the transitivity of phrasal verbs, ‘separability’ or “the inability of the particle to be moved to a position after the noun phrase” (Quirk et al, 1985, p. 1156) is another important concept with respect to phrasal verbs, which is closely related to the notion of transitivity discussed above. In this

regard, most transitive phrasal verbs are separable and they allow particle movement either before or after the object noun. However, if the object is a pronoun, the particle usually comes after the pronouns (Murphy, 2002; Stageberg, 1965; Heaton, 1965; Kamarudin, 2013). In the event where the object that precedes the particle is a pronoun, Erades (1975) has a different opinion. He submits that “objects denoting ideas that have news value, irrespective of whether they are nouns or pronouns, long or short, have end-position; those that have no such value come between the verb and adverb” (p. 189). Erades’ notion of “news value” dictates that the particle will only precede the object (noun or pronoun) when the object introduces a new idea into the discourse, whereas the object can precede the particle if the pronoun or noun is not a new topic either to the discourse or to the speaker and hearer.

On intransitive phrasal verbs, Heaton (1965) claims that normally, the particle in intransitive phrasal verbs cannot be separated from its verb and that they always stay together. Stageberg (1965, p. 225) seems to share the same opinion as Heaton when he states that “the verb and the adverbial particle are inseparable in the intransitive phrasal verbs.” The lexical verb and the particle are always adjacent. Thus, in intransitive phrasal verb *take off*, the verb ‘*take*’ cannot be separated from the particle ‘*off*’ as in ‘The flight will *take off* in ten minutes’.

Following from the above discussion, it can be realized that both English and Akan phrasal verbs have separable transitive and inseparable intransitive phrasal verbs. The study assumes that this can also be the case for the Ga phrasal verbs which are yet to be identified and discussed. The existence of both transitive and intransitive phrasal verbs in Ga is a possibility and it is also possible that only

one transitivity type can be found in the language. Still, the existence of Ga phrasal verbs which can be both transitive and intransitive as seen with some of the English phrasal verbs cannot be ruled out.

There is no gainsaying the point that Sekyi-Baidoo's study reviewed above is utterly essential to the present study, especially on the notion of transitivity. Hence, since the present study, like Sekyi-Baidoo's, focuses on a Kwa (Niger-Congo) language, it should be interesting to find out the extent to which Sekyi-Baidoo's findings are corroborated or repudiated by the present study.

### **Tests of Phrasal Verbs**

A number of syntactic tests have been proposed in the literature. Fraser (1965, 1970, 1976) was one of the first scholars to try to define a clear line between the syntactic behaviour of verb-adverb combinations and phrasal verbs proper, though many of his tests have been later refuted by several scholars such as Bolinger, 1971; Declerck, 1976 and Lindner, 1983 (Rodriguez, 2013). The proposed syntactic tests are especially useful to distinguish phrasal verbs from other combinations of a verb and an adverb or a preposition. Others seem to be more useful to check the degree of cohesion between the verb and the particle in a phrasal combination, particularly in those of the intransitive type, given that the majority of the tests are designed for transitive phrasal verbs. This section provides an account of five of these tests, together with a discussion of the pros and cons of using them as distinctive of the category at issue.

## Particle Placement

One of the tests most often quoted in the literature is particle placement. Works mostly quoted among others are Heaton, 1965, p. 55; Bolinger, 1971, p. 10-11; Fraser, 1976, p. 2; Hiltunen, 1983a, p. 18; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1153; Brinton, 1988, p. 164; Palmer, 1988, p. 219; Biber et al., 1999, p. 404; Claridge, 2000, p. 52; Dehé, 2002, p. 76; Hampe, 2002, p. 16-17; Gries, 2003, p. 1; Cappelle, 2005, p. 78). In transitive phrasal verbs, the particle can be placed either before the NP object (Verb Particle Object order), hereafter (VPO order) or after it (Verb Object Particle order), hereafter (VOP order), as seen in (11a and 11b respectively). According to Rodriguez (2013) these tests help to distinguish phrasal verb particles from prepositions, such as *on* in (12), which must precede an NP, and from adverbs, which normally follow NP as seen in (13).

- (11) a. She turned *on* the light  
 b. She turned the light *on*
- (12) a. She *called on* her friends.  
 \*b. She *called* her friends *on*.
- (13) a. She left the house *early*  
 \*b. She left *early* the house

Conversely, when the direct object of a phrasal verb is a pronoun, the adverbial particle must follow it (Bolinger, 1971; Fraser, 1976; Hiltunen, 1983; Palmer, 1988; Dehé, 2002; Hampe, 2002; Cappelle, 2005) as shown in (14), whereas pronouns must necessarily follow prepositions, as shown in example (15).

- (14) a. She *turned it on*  
       \*b. She *turned on it*.
- (15) a. She *called on* them.  
       \*b. She *called* them *on*.

Several reasons have been adduced in the literature to account for this difference. Some scholars have pointed out that it is stress that determines the position of the object: when the object is stressed, it must have end position, whereas if it is weakly-stressed (as pronouns usually are), it must appear in mid-position (Kruisinga and Erades, 1953; Fraser, 1976; Brinton, 1988; Gries, 2003). Nevertheless, pronominal objects can sometimes be placed at the end of the clause when some kind of contrastive stress is intended (Erades, 1961; Bolinger, 1971; Fraser, 1976; Claridge, 2000).

Another frequently adduced reason for the difference in particle placement is the length and/or complexity of the object (Erades, 1961; Fraser, 1976; Brinton, 1988; Gries, 2003). The length of a constituent is usually defined in terms of the number of words and/or syllables it has, whereas its complexity mostly depends on the type of syntactic dependents it takes (Gries, 2003; Cappelle, 2005). Although it has been argued that the effect of length and complexity must be analysed separately (Gries, 2003), what is true is that both can be said to contribute to the weight of constituent (Cappelle, 2005). Thus, following the ‘principle of end-weight’ (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik, 1985, p. 1361), long objects are normally placed after the particle, whereas short ones (such as pronouns) typically occur before it. This criterion would well account for the fact that usually long or heavy nominal objects (e.g. Certainly Ferguson has not *given*

*up* the ghost of trying to land the Championship), as well as participial clauses (e.g. Jude had *given up* trying to make contact), tend to cause the particle to precede them. However, long or complex objects can also occur between the verb and the particle (e.g. I wish you'd take that ridiculous hat of yours off) (Rodriguez, 2013, p. 70-71).

According to Erades (1961), although stress and length are important factors, what actually seems to condition the position of the object is its news value. Consequently, pronouns, which refer to a previously mentioned entity, as well as empty nouns such as things, matter, business, stuff, subject (Bolinger, 1971; Gries, 2003), tend to appear before the particle, whereas other NPs show variability to whether the referent in them is familiar or not.

Although Bolinger agrees with Erades in the relevance of news value, he insists on the fact that accent must not be dismissed as a determining factor. Many of Bolinger's observations about particle placement are related to Halliday's (1967, 1985) ideas about the information structure of the clause, which, like Bolinger's are based "on the interplay between stress and end-focus" (Gries, 2003, p. 25). According to Halliday (1967), the unmarked word order of the English clause is first given and then new information, the latter receiving focus (stress, phonological prominence). This phenomenon is commonly known as 'the principle of end focus' (Downing and Locke, 1992, p. 244) and phrasal verbs are a particularly suitable way to respond to its requirements: one of the main properties of phrasal verbs is precisely that the division into two words permits different stress possibilities (Bolinger, 1971; Fraser, 1976), which allows "the important semantic feature" to be put "in the normal position for the nuclear

accent” (Bolinger, 1971, p. 49), that is, the final position. Thus, taking Halliday’s (1985, p. 185) example, if in a sentence like (16) below, we want to emphasize the fact that the meeting was cancelled (not summoned), we can only do it by means of stress, given that placing the verb in clause-final position would be ungrammatical.

(16) They CANCELLED the meeting.

However, an ordering like that in (16), with the focus in non-final position, goes against the principle of end-focus and constitutes a marked sentence carrying “additional overtones of contrast, contradiction or unexpectedness” (Halliday, 1985, p. 185). By contrast, if a phrasal verb is used for the same purpose, the division of the verb into two different elements allows the particle to be placed in final position, so that at least one part of the compound is allowed the unmarked position in the clause as illustrated in (17).

(17) They called the meeting OFF.

This explanation can also account for the fact that pronouns are usually placed before the particle, the unmarked position for pronouns. Therefore, the placement of the particle before or after the object seems to depend on external factors (news value, weight of object, stress), rather than on the nature of the combinations.

Some other scholars, by contrast, have argued that there is a tendency for idiomatic phrasal verbs to appear with the particle preceding the object (Gries, 2003). Thus, Biber et al. (1999) find that phrasal verbs with an idiomatic sense do not usually allow the object to interrupt the sequence, whereas objects are more easily inserted between the verb and the particle when the combination has a

literal meaning. Similarly, Palmer states that “with transitive phrasal verbs there is a greater likelihood of the particle preceding the noun phrase if idiomatic, and following it, if not” (1988, p. 228), and he quotes the examples *put up a fight* and *find out the truth* as idiomatic forms that do not permit separation at all. According to Quirk et al. (1985), the object tends to follow the particle in fixed expressions of the type *give up hope*, “where there is a strong idiomatic bond (frequently matching a change from literal to metaphorical) between the phrasal verb and the object” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1155) and where the reversed word order is not possible or, at least, sounds awkward. Notice, however, that the same phrasal verb with a different object NP does allow order alternation (e.g. *give up alcohol/give alcohol up*).

According to Gries (2003), the criterion of idiomaticity cannot be considered as definite for two main reasons. First, some idiomatic phrasal verbs allow both syntactic orderings (e.g. *She made up her face/She made her face up*); and second, it is not always easy to determine whether the meaning of a phrasal verb is totally idiomatic or literal. What seems true, however, is that there are a number of fixed or set (generally idiomatic) constructions with phrasal verbs which do not admit word order alternation or to put it in Erades’ words, “where the word-order is traditional and apparently immutable” (Erades, 1961, p. 57).

In his comprehensive analysis of particle placement, Gries (2003) has tested the majority of the variables traditionally said to influence particle distribution both individually (mono-factorial analysis) and in connection to one another (multivariate analysis). Gries establishes the so-called ‘Processing Hypothesis’, according to which the choice of the word order by speakers



depends on the processing effort required. This processing effort is said to be determined by the interrelation of four main factors: phonological, morpho-syntactic, semantic and informational structure. In the light of his analysis, Gries comes to the conclusion that, when much processing effort is required, the preference is for the VPO order, whereas the VOP order is favoured when little processing effort is necessary. Not only does he find out that all of the variables included in his Processing Hypothesis contribute to determine one or another distribution, but also that some of the variables are interrelated. Therefore, from the discussion one observes that particle placement is better accounted for in terms of the combined influence of a number of variables, rather than by appealing to individual features such as the length of the direct object or the idiomaticity of the verb particle.

This section has provided a very broad view of the particle placement test, together with some of the drawbacks of its application as a defining test for phrasal verbs. By way of conclusion, it seems necessary to remark that, although it is true that the majority of phrasal verbs in English admit both the VPO and the VOP distribution, the particle placement test cannot be used as an absolute criterion for the characterization of these constructions. This is because the choice between the VPO and the VOP orders depends on a complex network of factors, rather than on the intrinsic characteristics of the combinations themselves. This test will not be considered in the current study because from all indications it seems not to be an absolute criterion for distinguishing between phrasal verbs and other verb combinations. Moreover, the test has been refined in a different test; therefore the polished test would be preferred in the current study instead of it.

### The Definite NP Test

As another test for the syntactic characterization of phrasal verbs, Bolinger (1971) proposes the definite noun phrase test. According to him, this test is a refinement of the particle placement test and it is the most reliable test to identify phrasal verbs. Claridge (2000, p. 53) also uses it because it “sorts out both pure adverbs and pure prepositions, and it emphasizes the unitary nature of verb + particle.” For Bolinger, the part of the particle placement test according to which the particle may follow the direct object is of no use, because any adverb (not only phrasal verb particles) may occupy such a position.

The new proposed test by Bolinger (1971) highlights the ability of the particle to “precede a simple definite noun phrase (a proper name or *the* plus a common noun) without taking it as its object” (p. 15). It must be noticed that Bolinger refers here to the object of the particle, not to the object of the phrasal verb. According to Rodriguez (2013) this important distinction is based on the division established by some scholars between transitive and intransitive prepositions. As noted by Denison (1981), the label ‘transitive preposition’ corresponds to what we traditionally know as a preposition, that is, the head of a prepositional phrase. Its designation as transitive stems from its obligatory collocation with a following complement: a preposition cannot appear on its own, but must be the head of a prepositional phrase. The term ‘intransitive preposition’, in turn, refers to what is traditionally known as an adverb. To Denison, the distinction between the two types is, however, difficult in practice because most adverbs are identical in form to prepositions. Taking this into account, according to Rodriguez (2013, p. 77), Bolinger’s test may be reformulated by stating that “if

the particle of a verb particle combination can precede a definite NP, it will be a phrasal verb particle and not a preposition.” In other words, the test implies that any verb particle combination will be a phrasal verb whenever such a combination may be followed by a simple definite NP, as in Bolinger’s example in (18) below.

(18) They *pushed in* the door

As seems obvious, however, such a test does not distinguish between phrasal verb particles and prepositions, because the ordering verb + particle + object NP is also kept when the NP is the complement of a preposition, as shown in Rodriguez (2013, p. 78) as example (19) below, where *in* functions as a preposition.

(19) How do you find it *living in* the flats compared with anywhere else you’ve lived?

However, according to Bolinger, the distinction between prepositions and particles can be made by replacing the NP by a pronoun: if the pronoun precedes the particle, then it will be an adverbial particle, as demonstrated in (20a and 20b), whereas if it follows the particle, it will be a preposition, as shown in example (21a and 21b) below.

(20) a. They pushed it *in*.  
\*b. They pushed *in* it.

(21) a. How do you find it *living in* them compared with anywhere else you’ve lived?  
\*b. How do you find it *living* them *in* compared with anywhere else you’ve lived?

Therefore, as stated above, the test turns out useful to distinguish between phrasal verb particles and prepositions. Moreover, it is also helpful to differentiate pure adverbs from adverbs which can be particles of phrasal verbs. As Vestergaard (1974) indicated, an adverb cannot precede a definite NP, (e.g. \*They *pushed inward* the door), whereas the particle of a phrasal verb can (see example (18) above).

Bolinger's NP test seems to work for transitive phrasal verbs, the only apparent drawback being its limited usefulness with highly idiomatic combinations and with combinations which do not permit the particle to precede the object (Palmer, 1988). In any other respects, however, the test seems to be valid for the identification of transitive phrasal verbs in English, but the researcher wonders whether it will work for the Ga phrasal verbs that will be identified. This is because the nature of the particles that form the English phrasal verbs are likely to be different from the ones that would form the Ga phrasal verbs, but all the same the test will be considered in the present study.

### **Adverb Insertion**

Another criterion for the identification of phrasal verbs is the adverb insertion test, which has been regarded by several scholars as the only test "that works for both transitive and intransitive combinations" (Claridge, 2000, p. 51). The test postulates that true phrasal verb particles do not allow modification by an adverb (Mitchell, 1958; Fraser, 1976; Bolinger, 1971). In other words, insertion of an adverb between the verb and the particle (immediately before the particle) is, in principle, impossible in phrasal verbs.

Nevertheless, according to Fraser (1976, p. 25-27), “modifications by certain adverbs are allowed in some cases: *right* (when equivalent to right away, in which case it functions as a kind of time adverb) and *all*, as well as by expletives of the type of the *hell* or the *heck*”, as shown in his examples below:

(22) I'll *look* the information *right up*.

(23) They *cleaned* it *all up*.

(24) I'll *look* it the *hell up* after I finish eating.

To this list of adverbs which can modify phrasal verb particles Quirk et al. (1985) add *straight* and Olsen (2000) as quoted in Dehé, (2002) adds *clean*. Quirk et al. (1985), however, point out that these exceptions help us to distinguish literal from idiomatic meanings of the same phrasal verb. This opinion is also shared by Palmer (1988), who states that adverbs are more likely to be inserted between the elements of a combination if this is not idiomatic. In those cases in which insertion is possible, a literal interpretation of the meaning of the phrasal verb seems more appropriate, whereas more idiomatic meanings are deduced from those cases in which no adverb is inserted between the verb and the particle. Compare in this respect examples (25) and (26) below from Quirk et al. (1985, p. 1154), where the insertion of the adverb *right* implies that the interpretation of the verb in (25) is literal, whereas that in (26) is more idiomatic.

(25) She *brought* the girls *right up*. (She caused the girls to come up the stairs)

(26) She brought the girls up. (She reared/raised the girls)

As intimated by Bolinger (1971), besides distinguishing literal from idiomatic meanings, adverb insertion is an indication of the degree of bondage or

unity between verb and particle, though “it cannot be imposed as an absolute criterion” (p. 12).

Bolinger also mentions insertion of a whole adverb phrase as a more reliable test, because such an insertion is apparently impossible in all cases. However, in spite of being a test which “obviously draws the line between phrasal verbs and other verb-adverb combinations” (Vestergaard, 1974, p. 305), Bolinger does not use it formally, probably because of the awkward sounding sentences obtained after such insertion.

From the above discussion, therefore, the adverb insertion test is useful in distinguishing between phrasal verbs and other verb combinations and also useful in classifying English phrasal verbs in terms of scale: the stronger the unity (cohesion or bondage) between the verb and the particle, the lower the possibilities of the adverb insertion between them, and vice versa. However, this test would not be applicable in differentiating between phrasal verbs and other verb combinations in the Ga language. This is because an adverb can never be inserted between any verb and particle in Ga. This assertion is illustrated below:

- (27) a. Gbékē lē jè mĩ òyá.  
 Child DEF PST- leave inside ADV  
 ‘The child quickly dodged.’
- \* b. Gbékē lē jè òyá mĩ  
 child DEF PST- leave ADV inside  
 ‘The child quickly dodged.’



other words, the fact that some transitive phrasal verbs cannot be passivized is an indication of a stronger unity and cohesion between the phrasal verb and its direct object.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that prepositional verbs can sometimes be passivized as well. For this reason, the Passivization test is not really decisive in the distinction between both types of particle verbs and it cannot be taken as a reliable criterion for the identification of phrasal verbs (Rodriguez, 2013). Other scholars, such as Jespersen (1970), consider that this test may be used to prove a close connection between the verb and the particle. Similarly, Live (1965) argues that the retention of the particle along with the verb in the passive construction constitutes evidence that supports the view that the verb and the particle belong together.

The Passivization test will not be of much help either in distinguishing between phrasal verbs and other verb combinations or proving a close connection between the verb and the particle. This is because Passivization does not work in Ga.

### **Transformation into an Action Nominal**

This syntactic test proposed by Fraser (1976) implies that true phrasal verbs can be transformed into an action nominalization, whereas prepositional verbs cannot (see also Bolinger, 1971; Claridge, 2000). According to Bolinger (1971), it is only transitive phrasal verbs that can be transformed into action nominal. For example:



*He looked up the information.* → *His looking up of the information.*

(Bolinger, 1971, p. 8)

However, Bolinger (1971) points out that this is also an unsatisfactory test because of problematic applications as in (e.g. \*The walking across the bridge was a matter of minutes). Therefore, Bolinger comes to the conclusion that the possibility of occurrence or non-occurrence of such nominalizations is apparently determined by the nature of the actions involved, rather than by the structure of the phrases. Following from this, Fraser (1976) then further refines the action nominalization test and adds that the test can be used to separate idiomatic from literal phrasal verbs or, in his terms, to distinguish true phrasal verbs from other combinations involving a verb and an adverb. In this respect, he discusses the differences between *throw up*, as used, for example, in (29) and (30) below, in which such a transformation is only allowed when the combination has a literal meaning, that is, when the particle is an adverb and not a phrasal verb particle.

(29) \*The throwing of his dinner up

(30) The throwing of the ball up.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by Declerck (1976) and supported by Lindner (1983), there is much disagreement among native speakers as to the acceptability of this type of transformations. For some speakers, a transformation such as *His bringing of the dinner in* is completely acceptable, whereas others consider it inappropriate.

According to Rodriguez (2013), the action nominalization test proposed by Fraser (1970, 1976) works neither for the distinction of phrasal from prepositional verbs, nor for separating idiomatic from literal meanings of phrasal

verbs. This may also be the case for Ga phrasal verbs; nonetheless, it will be considered in the present piece of research to ascertain the veracity of this assertion.

### Listing Test

Another test proposed by Bolinger (1971) is listing. But he points out that this method has two shortcomings. Firstly, phrasal verbs are very productive with respect to lexical innovation in English. Therefore, the list could not be exhaustive, as new phrasal verbs would be continually added to it. The second problem is that “it would vary according to dialect” (Bolinger, 1971, p. 17). Therefore, the British and the Americans, for instance, may find many of each other’s phrasal verbs odd (Darwin and Gray, 1999).

Thus, Bolinger (1971) suggested that the most practical one would be to list the particles, as they are a relatively closed class of words. This means phrasal verbs should be grouped together according to the particle rather than the verb because “the particle is integral to the meaning of the phrasal verb and in some cases carries more weight of meaning than the verb” (Side, 1990, p. 146). However, this suggestion is criticized by Darwin and Gray (1999, p.75) who argue that the listing is not a test because “some words can appear to be particles and at the same time belong to other parts of speech.” Therefore, while Bolinger’s list of particles seems endless, Fraser’s (1976) analysis shows that only 16 words act as particles. Gardner and Davies (2007) also listed 16 adverbial particles in their study of frequent phrasal verbs in a native speaker corpus. *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs*, however, has compiled a much longer and

comprehensive list of about 48 particles, which include both adverbial particles and prepositional particles (Kamarudin, 2013).

The researcher shares in Darwin and Gray's view that listing cannot be a test. It neither helps to differentiate between phrasal verbs and other verb combinations nor checks the degree of cohesion between the verb and the particle in a phrasal combination. It would rather be useful in grouping phrasal verbs before doing any kind of analysis on them. Therefore this listing would rather be employed in the data analysis section of the current study, but not as one of the tests that will be used to identify the phrasal verbs.

In what concerns the syntactic characteristics of phrasal verbs, this section provided a description of the most relevant tests that have been used to characterize these combinations and distinguish them from related constructions. The only tests which have proved satisfactory to identify phrasal verbs in English are the definite NP test and the test according to which an adverb phrase cannot be inserted between the verb and the particle. These are supported by the test of particle placement with object pronouns, which must be, nevertheless, applied carefully, given that it may be influenced by a number of factors, such as stress, length and/or weight of the object and the idiomaticity of the compound. In turn, a number of tests seem to be useful to ascertain the degree of cohesion or unity between the verb and the particle, namely the adverb insertion test, within which we distinguish insertion of *all*, *clean*, *right*, and *straight*, *the heck* and *the hell*, and Passivization. Finally, the remaining criteria, namely the nominalization test and the listing test were rejected as reliable tests for various reasons. Of the different syntactic tests proposed in the literature for the identification of phrasal

verbs and discussed above, only the definite NP test, the nominalization test would be considered together with Sekyi-Baidoo's (2006) and Katunar et al's (2010) methods of identifying a phrasal verb which will be elaborated in chapter four since they do not fall under the proposed syntactic tests. In addition, the listing will not be seen as an identification method in this study, rather it will be reliable for grouping phrasal verbs.

### **Semantic Issues of Phrasal Verbs**

This section contains some description and discussion of the semantics involved in both the verbs and the particles. The other issues centre on the semantic types of phrasal verbs, the polysemous nature and the idiomaticity of phrasal verbs.

### **The Semantics of the Verbs and Particles**

In principle, any kind of lexical verb can function as the verbal element in a phrasal combination. However, certain tendencies have been observed. The verbs are most commonly native, that is, of Germanic origin (Martin, 1990; Thim, 2006). It has also been observed that although polysyllabic verbs can be found occasionally in certain phrasal combinations, many of the root verbs are monosyllabic, and are frequently verbs of movement and action (Bolinger, 1971; Dixon, 1982; McArthur, 1992; Hampe, 2002; Olson, 2013). One root verb can underlie a range of phrasal verbs, for example *get* underlies *get away*, *get back*, *get out*, *get off*, *get on*, *get in* and *get up*, etc. Lewandowska and Hanks (1996) also notice that the verbal element tends to be semantically underspecified or

delexical verbs such as *get, go, set, take* or *put*. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) claim that these types of verbs are commonly known as light verbs. The next observation made is on the productivity of some lexical verbs.

There exist several lists containing the most productive verbs for the formation of phrasal combinations. Fraser (1976), for example, mentions *take, put, go, get, turn, lay, set, make* and *fall* as the commonest verbal bases. Rodriguez (2013) claims that the most recent of these lists is probably that in Biber et al. (1999). According to these authors, the most productive lexical verbs in present day English (hereafter PDE) are *take, get, come, put, go, set, turn, bring*, verbs which are, as well, unusually polysemous, as the authors note. However, particles do not usually occur with stative verbs, such as *believe, hear, hope, know, want, resemble, see*, etc. (Bolinger, 1971; Fraser, 1976; Brinton, 1985; Claridge, 2000), the compound *hear out* being probably the only exception. Therefore, although the set of verbs to form English phrasal verbs, is in principle, not limited, certain tendencies can be observed. Verbs that form phrasal verbs in Ga might also show certain tendencies and this information would enlighten the researcher in this regard. Having discussed the semantics of the verbal element, the semantics of the particles are delved into in the following paragraph.

The meaning of the individual particles in phrasal verbs is an issue which requires closer inspection, because of their central status in the compound. The semantic changes caused by the addition of a particle to a verb are probably what make phrasal verbs such an idiosyncratic feature of the English language, so close to idioms and phraseological units (Rodriguez, 2013). Most scholars seem to agree that the particles occurring in phrasal verbs were used in previous stages to

denote location or direction and they eventually came to express other more metaphorical meanings (e.g., Bolinger, 1971; Denison, 1985; Claridge, 2000; Gries, 2003; Rodriguez, 2013; Olson, 2013, Kamarudin, 2013). In general terms, four different types of particles can be distinguished, namely literal, aspectual and/or aktionsart, metaphorical and idiomatic. It is important to notice, however, that “one and the same particle may have more than one meaning, and the meaning it carries depends on the verb it combines with” (Elenbaas, 2007, p. 2). As remarked by Pelli (1976), an expressive verb (e.g. *jump*) will cause the particle (e.g. *up*) to adopt a concrete directional meaning, whereas a rational verb (e.g. *put*) may or may not (e.g. *put up* ‘lodge’). Therefore, although the particles contribute an important part of the meaning to the compound, the semantic classification of phrasal verbs ultimately depends on the relationship between both elements of the compound.

The first of the particle to be discussed is the literal particle. As stated above, phrasal verb particles originally denote location and directional meanings. Some of these particles have kept these literal meanings in PDE, as is the case with *down*, *in*, *out* and *up*. According to Cappelle (2002, p. 56) a particle is literal “if its meaning is constant across different verb particle constructions, in other words, if the meaning is not dependent on the particular verb it combines with.” Cappelle bases his definition on semantic independence of the particle from the verb. For him, literal particles can be preposed (e.g. *Up he climbed*) and can appear in a verbless pattern (e.g. *Hands up*). For Cappelle, “if a dividing line is to be drawn at all, it should not be between directional particles and non-directional ones, but rather, between particles that have a clear meaning of their own and

particles whose meaning can only be understood in relation to a verb” (2005, p. 118). For this reason, he argues that some non-directional particles can also be found in a verbless pattern (e.g. *Lights out*) or in a preposed construction (e.g. *Out went the lights*).

Aspectual/aktionsart is another type of particle. It has been variously seen as “markers of perfective, terminative or resultative aspect” (Curme, 1931 as cited in Rodriguez, 2013, p. 28). Other scholars, however, have pointed out that “the aspectual meaning of particles is better understood as an aktionsart meaning, namely that of expressing the goal or endpoint of a situation” (Brinton, 1988, p. 163).

As can be seen, further difficulties in the treatment of phrasal verbs arise at this point concerning the distinction between aspect and aktionsart. As noted by Brinton, the main problem stemming from such a distinction is the fact that the term aspect has traditionally been used to designate both what is meant by aspect and by aktionsart, when, in fact, they are distinct features (Brinton, 1988, pp. 2 – 4 ).

Although no agreement has been reached to date, aspect is generally defined as “the grammatical category representing distinctions in the temporal structure of an event.” In other words, as pointed out by Brinton (1988, p. 3) aspect relates to:

the speaker’s viewpoint or perspective on a situation. The speaker may choose to portray an event as completed (perfective aspect), or as ongoing (imperfective aspect), or as beginning (ingressive aspect), continuing (continuative aspect),

ending (egressive aspect), or repeating (iterative or habitual aspect).

For most scholars, however, the term aspect is a much broader category also including the lexical aspect or aktionsart. The German word “aktionsart” or “kind of action” (Brinton, 1988, p. 3), a term first coined by Karl Brugmann in 1885 (Kortmann, 1991), generally refers to “a distinction of aspect which is expressed lexically, rather than grammatically. In other words, aktionsart, lexical aspect, situational aspect or inherent aspect, refers to “lexically expressed aspectual distinctions” (Guerrero-Medina, 2000, p. 1), that is, “to the characteristics of what is inherent in the lexical items which describe the situation” (Li & Shirai, 2000, p. 3). It “has nothing to do with grammar but relates solely to the semantics of the verbs and predicates, more exactly to those semantic properties having to do with time” (Kortmann, 1991, p. 13). To quote an example, “*know* is inherently stative (i.e. continuous and homogenous), while *jump* is inherently punctual (i.e. momentary and instantaneous)” (Li & Shirai, 2000, p. 3). In what concerns the different types of aktionsart, according to Brinton (1985, p. 159), possibly “the best known categorization is Zeno Vendler’s four way distinction of ‘state’, ‘activity’, ‘accomplishment’ and ‘achievement’.” Of the four subtypes of aktionsart, only the latter, achievements, are punctual, whereas the remaining three are durative.

As can be seen, the distinction between aspect and aktionsart is quite controversial and it is hard to establish the boundaries between these two categories which very often overlap (Cappelle, 2005, p. 345). Moreover, phrasal verb particles have been attributed both types of meaning. Thus, according to



Brinton (1988), some (though not all) of the particles contribute an aktionsart meaning to the verb, more specifically, telic aktionsart. In other words, some particles have the function of making situations telic, that is, of converting activities into accomplishment (e.g. *eat* vs. *eat up*). This is the reason why they do not normally occur with stative verbs, because the notion of ‘state’ is incompatible with the notion of ‘goal’ (Brinton, 1988, p. 173). Brinton argues that *up*, *down*, *out*, *off* and, less frequently, *through*, *over*, and *away* are the particles which most commonly serve the purpose of goal, and phrasal verbs with them are normally equivalent to simple verb with an expression of the type *to the end*, *completely*, *until it is finished*, or *all of it/them* (Brinton, 1988). This is illustrated with Brinton’s own examples below:

- (31) a. The children are *eating up* the candy.  
 b. The children are eating *all of the* candy.
- (32) a. The management decided to *close down* the plant.  
 b. The management decided to *close* the plant *completely*.

Although particles contribute the notion of goal, they say nothing about whether this goal is achieved or not. Such a function corresponds to grammatical aspect, that is, whether an action is perfective (complete) or imperfective (incomplete). Thus, a phrasal verb particle may indicate telic aktionsart (completion, goal, accomplishment) in a sentence in which the verbal tense indicates that no completion of the action has been achieved (Brinton, 1988). In (30 a) above, for instance, the phrasal verb *eat up* indicates telic aktionsart (‘eat to the end’, ‘eat it all’), because the telic activity of *eating* is turned into an accomplishment. However, grammatical aspect (imperfectivity) indicates that the

action has not finished yet, but is rather going on at the moment of producing the utterance.

Other particles, however, are better described as markers of aspect. Thus, according to Brinton (1988), particles *on*, *along*, and *away* often indicate iterative and/or continuative aspect. This means that “they portray a situation which may otherwise have stopped as continuing, or they portray the situation as repeated” (Brinton, 1988, p. 175). The distinction between particles expressing iterative and those conveying continuative aspect is ultimately determined by the aktionsart qualities of the verb.

Some other particles also have the ability to express inchoative or inceptive aspect (Cappelle, 2005; Rice, 1999) that is they have “the effect of focusing on the initial stage of the event” (Cappelle, 2005, p. 346). Cappelle (2005) also describes a number of semi-aspectual uses of the particles. Therefore, it suffices to say that some phrasal verb particles function as markers of telic aktionsart, whereas others function as aspectual markers, mainly of continuative and iterative aspect and, marginally, of ingressive aspect and other minor semi-aspectual distinctions.

The next type of particle to be discussed is the metaphorical or figurative particle. Some phrasal verb particles have developed metaphorical or figurative meanings from their original connotations of movement. The type of metaphor that usually affects phrasal verb particles is Lakoff & Johnson’s (1980) ‘orientational metaphor’ (Rodriguez, 2013, p. 48). These metaphors are related to spatial orientation. In English, for example, and in many other cultures, we find the metaphor *Happy is up; Sad is down*. Hence, we use *I’m feeling up* to express

happiness and *I'm feeling down* to express depression (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). A metaphor of this kind can be perceived in the particles of combinations such as *cheer up* 'become less sad', *liven up* 'feel happier or more lively', *get down* 'depress'. Other particles which seem to have developed metaphorical meanings include *around* referring to an 'event without a goal' (e.g. play around, fool around, and mess around), *back* and *behind* to refer to 'past time', 'delay in time' (e.g. date back, fall behind, lag behind, leave behind, look back), (Rodriguez, 2013).

Providing an extensive description of all possible metaphorical meanings of particles is not the focus of this work. Moreover, sometimes the metaphorical meanings of the verb and the particle are so deeply rooted in the language that they are no longer perceived as metaphorical uses. In addition to this, it must also be noted that very often it is hard to say whether a particular particle is used figuratively, with aspectual sense, or with various meanings at one and the same time. On the other hand, non-literal meanings of phrasal verb particles also depend, to a greater or lesser extent, on the meaning of the verbal element they combine with, which may also have developed metaphorical senses (Elenbaas, 2007).

The last of the particle to be discussed is the idiomatic particle. When particles and especially the verb and the particle as a compound undergo several layers of metaphor, their meaning turns out non-compositional and cannot be deduced from their constituents any more. Therefore, although a particle normally portrays one or more of the meanings here described (movement, telic aktionsart, continuative aspect or metaphorical/figurative meanings), in certain cases it may

form an idiomatic unit with the verb, in such a way that the individual connotations of both the verb and the particle can no longer be inferred. Consider these examples given by Rodriguez (2013, p. 50), *black out* ‘become unconscious’, *lead off* ‘begin’ or *take up* ‘assume’. In this sense, it may be stated that particles have acquired an idiomatic or non-compositional meaning.

Considering the literature on the semantics of the two constituents of the phrasal verb is very essential to the current study. This is because the above discussion brings to light the semantic characteristics of the verb and the different types of particles that form the phrasal verbs. This information gives the researcher an insight into what to look for when dealing with the constituents of the Ga phrasal verbs.

### **Semantic Types of Phrasal Verbs**

Traditionally, phrasal verbs have been classified within three different semantic categories, namely *literal*, whose meanings can be predicted from the meanings of the parts, *semi-idiomatic* or *partially idiomatic*, mostly used to refer to combinations containing an aspectual/aktionsart particle, and *non-compositional* or *idiomatic*, whose meanings cannot be deduced from those of the individual members of the compound. In the literature, different scholars have different names for the three semantic types of phrasal verbs. Bolinger (1971, p. 114), calls them “first-level stereotype, second-level metaphor and second-level stereotype, Fraser (1976, p. 56), on the hand names them “literal, systematic and figurative”, while Spasov (1966, p. 48), calls them “non-idiomatic, semi-

idiomatic and idiomatic. But in the discussion, the traditional names will be maintained.

Literal phrasal verbs have elements that appear to retain much of their meaning. Using examples from Quirk et al's (1985, p. 432), the meanings of *sit* and *down* in *sit down* can be easily retrieved by combining the meaning of each of the elements (*sit* + *down*). Thus, the meaning of literal combinations can be deduced from their individual components.

Although most scholars seem to agree that there is a category of literal phrasal verbs (e.g., Bolinger, 1971; Lipka, 1972; Declerck, 1976; Lindner, 1983; Palmer, 1988; Claridge, 2000; Thim, 2012), (e.g., Live, 1965; Fraser, 1976). They often prefer the term 'free combination' to refer to this type of structure (e.g., Quirk et al., 1985; Biber, 1985). Quirk et al. (1985) maintain that the meaning of free combinations is not opaque, that is, it can be deduced from its individual parts, whereas no predictions about meaning can be made with phrasal verbs. They further argue that, whereas phrasal verb particles cannot be moved to front position, those in free combinations can. However, they conclude that the boundary between both types of constructions is still unclear.

There are several reasons to include non-idiomatic combinations within the category of phrasal verbs (Hampe, 2002); the most salient one probably being the fact that idiomaticity is a matter of degree and that it is, therefore, not easy to establish a clear cut dividing line between what is actually a phrasal verb and what a free combination is (Palmer, 1988). Moreover, idiomatic and non-idiomatic constructions share many syntactic characteristics, which point to the fact that they are not completely distinct groups (Hampe, 2002). More so, as

intimated by Gries (2008, p. 6) “semantic unity is not incompatible with non-compositionality.” In other words, a given verb particle combination may form a semantic unit even if the meaning of the parts is transparent.

Considering the above, I share in the view of the scholars who agree that there is a category of literal phrasal verbs, but since this study is a preliminary study that investigates existence of phrasal verbs in Ga, the focus will be on only one semantic type of phrasal verb, the idiomatic phrasal verbs. Later studies will be devoted to the literal type.

The label ‘semi-idiomatic, second-level metaphor or systematic’ has traditionally been employed to refer to those combinations containing aspectual/aktionsart particles (Rodriguez, 2013). Downing and Locke (2006) claim that in these combinations, the lexical verb keeps its literal or metaphorical meaning, while the particle is used as an aspectual marker of various kinds. This means that the particle can express the completion, beginning point, end-point, or continuation as a kind of non-completion. They also claim that the meaning of semi-idiomatic phrasal verbs is neither transparent as the meaning of non-idiomatic phrasal verbs, nor opaque as the meaning of fully idiomatic phrasal verbs. They illustrated this with *drink up*. According to them, the meaning of the semi-idiomatic phrasal verb *drink up* is to drink all of your drink. The verb *drink* means taking liquid into your body through your mouth, while the particle *up* does not retain its basic meaning in this example, that is, it does not indicate that something is lifted to a higher place. Here, the particle *up* indicates that something is completely done or used so that there is nothing left. Namely, the particle shows that the action is completed.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen- Freeman (1999) also intimate that semi-idiomatic phrasal verbs can be subdivided into “semantic classes depending on the semantic contribution of the particle” (p. 432). Their subdivisions include inceptive, continuative, iterative and completive.

The third semantic type of phrasal verb is the idiomatic phrasal verb. Idiomatic, second-level stereotype or non-compositional combinations are those whose meanings cannot be deduced from their individual components in isolation. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), idiomatic phrasal verbs are the easiest to identify, as they are phrasal verbs that have idiomatic meanings in which the meaning of the whole verb is not related to the meaning of the parts of the verb. Rodriguez (2013) notes that, the level of opacity in the meaning of this type of combinations varies quite considerably from one phrasal verb to another. According to her, some idiomatic meanings can be easily understood if one thinks of how metaphorical shifts may have led to contemporary non-compositional uses.

The above discussions indicate that there are three semantic types of phrasal verbs in the literature: literal, semi-idiomatic and idiomatic phrasal verbs. Although some scholars do not agree on the inclusion of the literal type as one of the categories of phrasal verb and choose to give it a different name instead of calling it a phrasal verb, others agree that it is part of the semantic types. Information obtained in the literature on the semantic types of phrasal verbs is very crucial to the current study. It would help in the identification of the semantic types of phrasal verbs that exist in Ga.

### **Polysemous and homonymous nature of phrasal verbs**

When it comes to the issues of polysemy, one point meriting our note is the distinction between homonymy and polysemy. Homonymy refers to the relation between different lexical items which have unrelated meanings but exhibit an identical linguistic form, orthographic or phonetic (Ravin and Leacock, 2000). A polysemous word, in contrast, is one single lexical item which has different related senses. These senses are invariably applications of the main sense of a word in different conditions and contexts (Lyons, 1995; Ravin and Leacock, 2000; Thakur, 2007; Sekyi-Baidoo, 2002).

In many of the literature that were reviewed, the linguists made mention of the polysemous nature of phrasal verbs in passing but did not delve into it (Saleh, 2011; Wild, 2010; Kovacs, 2007). Wild (2010) notes that phrasal verbs represent two kinds of polysemy: the polysemy of individual phrasal verb forms (for example, the many meanings of *take up*); and the polysemy of the verbs which produce phrasal verbs (the meanings of *take up* can be seen as contributing to the polysemy of *take*, as well as deriving from it). Sekyi-Baidoo (nd) was the one who gave much attention to this concept. According to him phrasal verbs are considered polysemous when they relate one another phonologically and semantically, and when they collectively differ from the meaning derived from the aggregate meaning of their constituent words. He went further to say that in spite of the need for some deviation in the establishment of phrasal verbs, there is also the need for some recognizable degree of relativity between the meanings of the verb or adposition element as used in the phrasal verb and as exists in non-idiomatic usage for phrasal verbs to be regarded as polysemous. In differentiating



between polysemous and homonymous phrasal verbs, he writes that “phrasal verbs that relate to one another are polysemous whilst those that share only a formal realization but no semantic relationship are termed homonymous” (Sekyi-Baidoo, nd, p. 12).

He used *gyina so* ‘lit. to stand on something’ to illustrate this issue of polysemy. *Gyina so* as a phrasal verb has the following meanings: to be in top form, to use something as a reason for a further action and to persist. The meanings of *gyina so* are all associated with the original, non-idiomatic meaning of ‘to stand’, giving the image of one keeping an upright posture and all derived associations, which has been applied to different contextual environments. *Gyina so* ‘to be in top form’ presents the picture in which one stands and therefore shows a greater height than others, and can thus be seen to be superior or in top form. Similarly, the phrasal verb meaning ‘to use something as a basis for an action’ also is derived from the image of one standing and, thus, getting the active posture which enables him to execute an activity. Again, the meaning ‘to persist’, is derived from the picture associated with ‘standing’ which involves maintaining an erect, upright posture in spite of the difficulty associated with it.

It can be seen from the above that the meanings of the phrasal verb are polysemous because they are all associated with the original non-idiomatic meaning, thus, they relate to one another, but one thing worthy of note is that according to Sekyi-Baidoo (2006) the polysemic phrasal verbs do lose their polysemy as a result of their continual application to different circumstances.

Homonymous phrasal verbs, on the other hand, are identical basically in their phonology both in their verb stems and their adposition elements.

Homonymous phrasal verbs, like all other phrasal verbs, may also exhibit different degrees of opacity or transparency as far as the relationship between the meaning of the compound and the constituent words are concerned. Where there is semantic relativity, it means the semantic dissimilarity between the transparent phrasal verbs in a homonymous relationship is not as a result of any arbitrary or idiomatic meaning imposed on any of the compounds. Rather, it means that the two or more phrasal verbs in the homonymy are related to different verbs that are themselves homonymous. In such instances, the phrasal verbs inherit the homonymy of their constituent words. Cases in point are: *bɔ adze* ‘to begin’ *bɔ adze* ‘to come to an end’. In the example, the two semi-transparent phrasal verbs are related to ‘bɔ’ (to create, to make) and ‘bɔ’ (to fall, or to hit strongly) respectively. Similarly, the meanings as of the constituents of the different semantic manifestations of ‘bɔ’ show that they are connected to different verbs which happen to be homonymous (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2002).

The above illustrations have established that there exist polysemous and homonymous phrasal verbs in Akan. This has relevance to the current study because using it as a reference point, the researcher will be able to find out whether there are polysemous and homonymous phrasal verbs in Ga and whether they do behave like the phrasal verbs in Akan.

### Phrasal Verbs and Idiomaticity

Idiomaticity is an issue frequently discussed with respect to phrasal verbs (Kamarudin, 2013). Various terms have been used in discussing the issue of

idiomaticity, such as ‘literal’, ‘transparent’, ‘non-literal’, figurative’, ‘opaque’ and ‘idiomatic’, to name some commonly used terms. The term ‘literal’ is usually, equivalent to ‘transparent’, while ‘non-literal’, is equivalent to ‘figurative’ and ‘idiomatic’. Both ‘literal and ‘transparent’ are frequently used in opposition to ‘figurative’ and ‘idiomatic’ (see, Dagut and Laufer, 1985; Laufer and Eliasson, 1993; Liao and Fukuya, 2004). Similarly, in this study, the term literal phrasal verbs is used to refer to phrasal verbs which are non-idiomatic and transparent in meaning, while non-literal phrasal verbs refer to those that are idiomatic and non-transparent.

According to Sekyi-Baidoo (2002), “idiomaticity may be seen as the level of deviation between the surface meaning of an utterance and the actual meaning or intention it is supposed to convey.” Sekyi-Baidoo (2006) noted that idiomaticity considerations are not restricted to only phrasal verbs. Balint (1969), Chafe (1968), Mc Mordie (1972) and Palmer (1981) all recognise that even ordinary words can be said to be idiomatic or non-idiomatic. With phrasal verbs, however, idiomaticity is basically on the basis of the fact that the meaning of the phrasal verb as a single semantic unit is different from the meaning of the combination of verb item and adposition element as a syntactic unit composed of independent semantic entities which have separate, independent meanings in or outside the combination, which are factored into the meaning of the resulting phrase (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2006).

There is a general consensus among linguists in considering idiomaticity as a continuum, with the most opaque and idiomatic units at one end and the literal, transparent ones at the other; while the middle area is occupied by those

where at least one element is transparent. Similarly, based on the semantic types of phrasal verbs discussed above, phrasal verbs are scattered along the continuum. At one end there are literal phrasal verbs which are very transparent as both elements in the combination retain their individual meanings; thus we can easily understand the meanings of literal phrasal verbs simply by stringing together the meaning of each element in the combination. At the other end of the continuum there are non-literal or idiomatic phrasal verbs in which their meanings cannot be derived simply by combining the meanings of each element. There is another group of phrasal verbs that falls in the middle area of the continuum: ‘aspectual phrasal verbs’, in which one of the elements in the combination is transparent and retains its regular meaning, while another element is non-transparent in meaning (Kamarudin, 2013)

Among these three semantic types of phrasal verbs, Sekyi-Baidoo (2006) focused on the idiomatic phrasal verbs. According to Palmer (1981), within this type of phrasal verbs idiomaticity is often a matter of degree. He distinguishes between total idioms and partial idioms. Based on Palmer’s distinction, Sekyi-Baidoo (2006), described some Akan phrasal verbs as total idioms and others as partial idioms. According to him, the phrasal verbs that are described as total idioms have a high degree of idiomaticity. That is, there exists a high degree of deviation between the meaning of the components together and the meaning of the phrasal verbs as a single unit of meaning, while those that are described as partial idioms, have appreciable degrees of relativity between the meaning of the phrasal verb as a unit and the aggregate meaning of the component elements. As he intimated, in phrasal verbs described as partial idioms the relativity or

transparency is associated with the verb stem which, thus, becomes the pivot for the meaning of the compound as a whole and the adposition item also gives the semantic deviation or idiomaticity.

Similarly, in this study, the focus is on the idiomatic phrasal verbs. Therefore, Sekyi-Baidoo's discussion on idiomaticity of the Akan phrasal verbs is of optimum relevance when it comes to the discussion on the idiomaticity of Ga phrasal verbs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory that the work will be situated in is the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), sometimes called Cognitive Metaphor Theory was developed by researchers within the field of cognitive linguistics. The theory was proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and underlies the fact that “our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature and it plays a central role in defining our everyday realities”. They argued that few or even no abstract notions can be talked about without metaphor: there is no direct way of perceiving them and we can only understand them through the filter of directly experienced, concrete notions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

In the cognitive linguistics view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain (Kövecses, 2002). Leezenberg (2001, p. 6) elaborated further on it by saying that “It involves conceptualizing one domain of experience in terms of another.” The basic principle of CMT is that basically, the way we think is metaphoric (Evans and

Green, 2006). For instance in ‘Time is money’, the concept of ‘time’ is conceptualized in terms of another domain, ‘money’. Metaphors are, thus, “conceptual structures and are not merely linguistic in nature, although, of course, they are normally realized linguistically” (Croft and Cruse, 2004, p. 197). This notion stems from the cognitive semantic principle that semantic structure is conceptual structure; linguistic units are not mere words but they are concepts in the mind of the speaker. Also quoting Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) example of conceptual metaphor *argument is war*, they argue that even though *argument* and *war* are two different things, “the essence of metaphor is in understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 104). As in the case of *argument is war* above, the scenario of people having an argument is conceptualized to be similar to people fighting in a war. Thus various expressions and concepts commonly related to a *war* are used when discussing an argument (e.g. “He shot down all my arguments”, “He attacked every weak point in my argument”). These examples are taken from Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.104.

One important concept in understanding conceptual metaphors is the notion of mapping, a concept borrowed from mathematics. Mapping is “the most fundamental notion of CMT”. It refers to a systematic correspondence between closely linked ideas (Grady, 2007, p. 190). According to Lakoff (1993), mapping is conventional and is a fixed part of our conceptual system. Mapping gives rise to two main types of conceptual domains: the source domain and the target domain. Croft and Cruse (2004, p. 195), define the source domain as “the domain supporting the literal meaning of the expression” and the target domain as “the domain the sentence is actually about”. For instance, in the expression, “I invested

a lot of time in her”, ‘time’ is the target domain because it is the idea expressed in the sentence. Correspondingly, ‘money’ is the source domain because it is the concept employed in describing an idea, ‘investment’.

According to Kövecses (2002), source domains are typically concrete, physical and delineated concepts while target domains are usually abstract and less delineated. Going back to ‘time’ and ‘money’, ‘money’ is physical and concrete. Thus, we can touch it. However, ‘time’ is an abstract concept that cannot be touched.

This framework is appropriate for the study because, the meanings of phrasal verbs also go easily from the concrete to the abstract, and metaphors serve as a link between them. This assumption is shared by cognitive scholars such as Lindner, 1981; Lakoff, 1987; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003; Tyler & Evans, 2003. According to them foreign learners often do not recognise the metaphor underlying the abstract meanings, as a result they find many phrasal verbs difficult to understand.

In fact the meanings of many phrasal verbs are metaphorical, and if you understand the metaphors they use, it will be easier to understand and remember their meanings. Consider the following pairs of examples:

- (33) a. The dog *dug up* an old bone. We *dug up* some interesting facts.  
b. Two planes were *shot down*. Each proposal was *shot down*.

In each pair, the first phrasal verb has a literal meaning and refers to a physical action, while the second is metaphorical and describes an action that is similar in some way to the first. For example, when someone *digs up* information,

they discover it, and the process seems similar to the way in which dogs find bones that have been buried in the ground.

Some phrasal verbs have only metaphorical meanings. For example, *to breeze in* means to enter a place confidently, without seeming to care what other people think: perhaps the attitude and action reminds us of the movement of a breeze. Similarly, *to rope someone in* means to persuade someone to do something that they do not really want to do: perhaps it reminds us of the way in which people use ropes to catch animals or to collect them together.

The above only talks of English phrasal verbs. This does not imply that the theory can only apply to phrasal verbs in English. It does also apply to some verb particle constructions in Ga. Let's consider the example below:

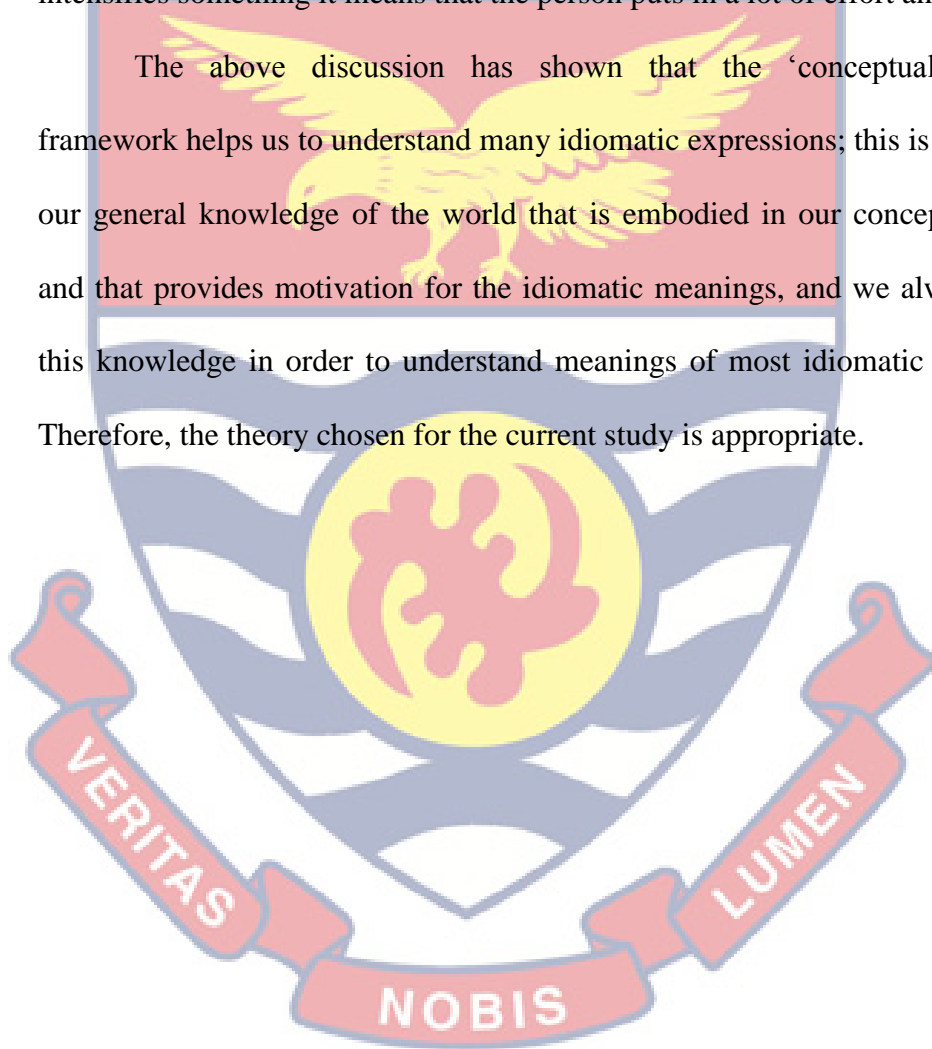
- (34) a. Gbékē nùù lē nyǐē àgbá lē nǎ.  
 Child boy DEF PST- walk bridge DEF on  
 'The boy walked on the bridge.'
- b. Gbékē nùù lē nyǐē àtádé lē nǎ.  
 Child boy DEF PST- walk attire DEF on  
 'The boy ironed the attire.'

In example (34a), *nyǐē nǎ* is used literally. It refers to a physical action whereby a boy makes a movement by walking on a bridge. 34b, however, is metaphorical and describes an action that is similar in some way to the 34a because in ironing the iron moves over the attire just like a person walking over a bridge.



Similarly, an example like *míã mĩ* ‘to squeeze in’ which idiomatically means ‘to intensify’ has a metaphor serving as a link between the literal meaning and the idiomatic meaning. When a person squeezes something, it means the person uses his energy to do the squeezing. In the same vein when a person intensifies something it means that the person puts in a lot of effort and energy.

The above discussion has shown that the ‘conceptual metaphor’ framework helps us to understand many idiomatic expressions; this is because it is our general knowledge of the world that is embodied in our conceptual system and that provides motivation for the idiomatic meanings, and we always rely on this knowledge in order to understand meanings of most idiomatic expressions. Therefore, the theory chosen for the current study is appropriate.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

For every form of scientific investigation, there are a number of alternative processes available for obtaining data to facilitate an understanding and interpretation of the relevant phenomena. This chapter specifically discusses the sources of data, the tools and procedures for data collection, transcription and analysis.

#### Data Source

The study on Ga phrasal verbs is a purely qualitative study and involves data from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data constitute recordings of electronic media programmes (local radio and television stations) and speeches made by people around, including the researcher. The local radio and television stations that the recordings were made from are Obonu FM, GTV, and TV Africa. The researcher chose these three stations because unlike other stations, they broadcast some of their programmes, including news, in Ga. Programmes that were recorded comprise news bulletins, educative programmes and plays that were shown or aired.

The secondary data constitute published and unpublished documents. The published works consist of Ga textbooks and Ga literary texts, whilst dissertations and theses on the Ga language formed the unpublished works. These primary and secondary sources were considered because they are rich sources that provide

illustrations and information on the correct usage of expressions in a particular language. Bauer (2007, p. 100) confirms the importance of using a literary text when she states that, “literary texts are generally seen as being texts of great inherent value, illustrating the very best use of language.”

### **Data Collection Tools and Procedure**

Creswell (2003), in citing Wolcott (1994), states that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data. This includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about meaning, personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned and offering further questions to be asked.

According to Creswell (2008), the methods of data collection in qualitative research are traditionally based on open-ended observations, interviews and documents. Among these three methods, interviews and documents as well as recording were employed to collect data for the present study. The subsequent paragraphs will discuss how data was collected using these methods.

### **Data from some Selected Ga Textbooks and Ga Literary Texts**

Two textbooks and eight Ga literary texts were selected for the data collection. The two textbooks are for primary five and six. The reasons why the textbooks were chosen from the primary school were that there are no Ga textbooks for Senior High Schools let alone for the universities; secondly, these

textbooks contain short stories and varied topics which the researcher believes will be helpful in the data collection for the current study. Among the eight literary texts that were considered, four of the books were drama texts and the other four prose. The basis for the selection of these textbooks and literary books rests on two factors: the dates of the publication of the selected books and the writers of the said books. Regarding the dates, that is, between 1966 and 1992, there is evidence of originality in the usage and also correct application of the verb and adposition combinations in sentences. The various authors are prolific writers and are well versed in the language.

The prose books consulted are Yaka Denme by Amartey (1992), Blema Kakalɔ by Ababio (1967), Etsuɔ Fe Nɛkɛ by Engmann (1968) and Nɔ Ko Yɛ Jɛɛ by Nanor (1989).

The four drama books that were consulted are Mɔ Ko Nɔ Leebi written by Abbey (1994), Otswa Tɛ Otswa Ohɛnaa by Amartey (1966), Mojawe written by Yartey (1973) and Odoi Din, Legɔɛ Mantɛ by Klufio (1966). In addition, the textbooks consulted are Nileegbɛ 5 and Nileegbɛ 6 by Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1976 and 1977 respectively.

The procedure employed in collecting data from these selected documents was that the researcher read the books and while reading, sentences that contained verb and adposition constructions were underlined with a pencil. Afterwards, these underlined sentences were compiled in an exercise book and the verb and adposition combinations in each sentence was extracted and written beside the sentence. What the researcher observed was that the same verb and adposition

combinations kept recurring in the majority of the books; therefore in compiling them only one entry was given for such combinations. As a result, although the books provided 616 verb and adposition combinations 300 were retained as data for the study.

### Data from Recorded Programmes

Obonu FM, Ghana Television (GTV) and TV Africa are popular radio and television stations situated in the Greater Accra Region. Unlike many radio stations that have affiliate radio stations throughout most of the regions in Ghana, Obonu FM does not have any affiliate. This radio station and television stations broadcast some of their programs in Ga and this was the reason why the researcher chose them. Programmes that GTV broadcast in Ga that were recorded are *Adult Education in Ga* and *Showcase in Ga*. Adult Education and Showcase in Ga are mostly shown every Wednesday, from 5 o'clock to 5: 30 p.m. and 4 o'clock to 5 o'clock p.m. respectively. As the name suggests, the Adult Education programme is meant to educate the public on issues. During this programme varied topics are discussed and people who are considered to be experts in a particular topic are invited to educate the public. The showcase programme is also a kind of entertainment programme. This programme gives opportunity to drama troupes to showcase their performances. The researcher watched the programmes for a month on every Wednesday (2<sup>nd</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2014) and recorded them. The average time span for the Adult Education programme was 30 minutes and that of the showcase was one hour. Five recordings each were made from both programmes. The grand total recordings for both programmes (450 minutes

which is equivalent to 7 hours, 30 minutes) offered about 60 verb and adposition combinations.

News bulletins were the only recorded programmes from TV Africa. The news is shown everyday from Monday to Friday at 4 o'clock to 4: 30 p.m. The researcher watched the news for only a week (5<sup>th</sup> May to 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2014) and recorded each. The total recording time was 150 minutes which was equivalent to 2 hours, 30 minutes. This recording yielded 20 verb and adposition combinations. The programme that was the main focus of the researcher from the Obonu FM programme line-up was a play which was normally aired every Saturday, from 7: 15 to 7: 45 pm. After the play, listeners are given the opportunity to phone-in and express their views on a question that will be asked based on the play. The phone-in session last only fifteen minutes. Therefore, the duration of the play together with the phone-in session is 45 minutes. The researcher listened to the programme for less than a month (5<sup>th</sup> April to 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2014) and recorded it. The total recording time was 180 minutes which is equivalent to 3 hours. The programme offered 30 verb and adposition combinations. The researcher chose to listen to this programme because there is some kind of variation in how the language is used now and how it was used sometime in the past and the researcher believes that new verb and adposition combinations may be added to the already existing ones; this belief was proved right in the kind of verb and adposition combinations that were obtained. In sum, the total number of verb and adposition combinations obtained from the recorded programmes was 110.

## Interview Sessions

Interviewing is a commonly used method of collecting information from people. Cannell and Kahn (1968), as cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 351), defined research interview as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation”. According to Creswell (2008), qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers.

Kumar (2005) classified interviews according to the degree of flexibility. On the one hand, interviewing can be very flexible, when the interviewer has the freedom to formulate questions as they come to mind around the issue being investigated; and on the other hand, it can be inflexible, when the investigator has to keep strictly to the questions decided beforehand. The flexible and inflexible interviews are known as structured and unstructured interviews respectively.

In the present study the unstructured interview was used. This is because it made the researcher who is the interviewer to have complete freedom in terms of the wording she used and the way she explained questions to the interviewees. Also it enabled the interviewer to formulate questions and raise issues on the spur of the moment, depending upon what occurred in the context of the discussion. Cohen et al. (2007), note that, although, in unstructured interviews the content, sequence and wording are entirely in the hands of the interviewer, it requires careful planning. Therefore, this fact was taken into consideration by the researcher.

There are several types of unstructured interviewing. The one that was employed in this study was the one- on- one interview. Creswell (2008), states that in one- on- one interview the researcher asks questions and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time, and several one- on- one interviews can be made. In view of this, the interviews were carried out through a selection of five competent natives of the language (see appendix C for their names and background information). These people were consulted in order to give information on the meaning of the compiled verb and adposition combinations and to provide additional verb and adposition combinations which have not been included in the list. The researcher held two separate meetings for each of the interviewees in order to exhaust all the verb and adposition combinations compiled. During the interview a semi- structured interview schedule or guide (see appendix B for the guide) was used and the consultants' permission were sought before any recording was made.

### **Data Transcription**

In this section, the researcher presents how data was translated into written forms and prepared for analysis. Generally, verbal data such as interviews, news bulletins and programmes recorded from radio and television stations need to be changed into written text before it could be used for any meaningful work. If the data comes from existing texts like those retrieved from the two textbooks and eight literary books, the choice of the content must be justified by what the researcher wants to know (Patton, 2002).



Based on this prerequisite, the researcher transcribed all the verbal texts into written texts by using the orthographical method of transcription. The transcribed texts were then translated into English using both the literal and idiomatic translation techniques. The translated texts were cross-checked and verified by the co-supervisor, who is well versed in both languages and actually teaches translation. Also, multiple occurrences of the same form of verb and adposition combinations were given single entries in the compilation. For instance, in an instance where the same form was used with a different sense such as *Kofi tsíé gbékē lē híé*. ‘Kofi woke the child up’, *Kofi tsíé èsùòmò ní èyóò èhá Ama lē híé*. ‘Kofi rekindled his love for Ama’ and *Kofi tsíé sàné lē híé*. ‘Kofi reawakened the matter’, only one of them was picked to represent the form but the different senses were noted since they were used to determine whether the verb and adposition combination was a phrasal verb or not.

#### **Procedure for Data Analysis**

Finding answers to the research questions requires analysis of the data. The data analysis was purely descriptive and it was done manually without the use of any computer software. In analysing the data, certain procedures were followed.

The first procedure was to separate the ordinary verb and adposition combinations from the ones that are phrasal verbs. In doing this, Sekyi-Baidoo’s (2006) and Katunar et al’s (2010) methods of identifying a phrasal verb were used. According to Sekyi-Baidoo a phrasal verb has an idiomatic meaning that

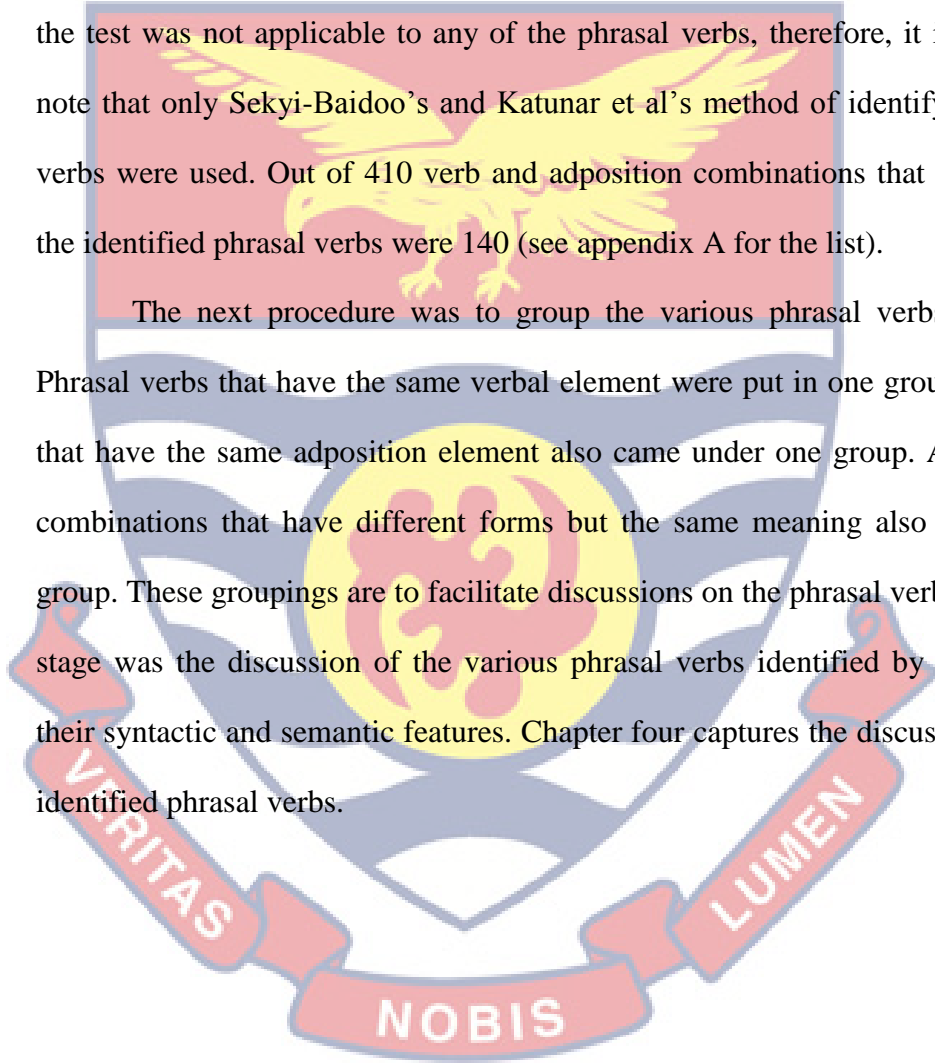
deviates from the meaning of the combination of a verb item and adposition element. For instance, if we have verb and adposition combinations like *tò shìshì* (arrange under), *fā shìshì* (uproot under), *dāmō shìshì* (stand under), *nū shìshì* (hear under), *tà mǐ* (to stir inside/in), *jà mǐ* (to divide in/inside), *bà mǐ* (to come in), what was done was to separate the phrasal verbs from the non-phrasal verbs. In doing this the researcher's focus was on the ones that have idiomatic meanings. Those that do not have idiomatic meaning were not considered as phrasal verbs but rather ordinary verb and adposition combinations. Among the ones listed above, the ones that were considered as phrasal verbs in the language are *tò shìshì* (to set up), *nū shìshì* (to understand), *bà mǐ* (to manifest, to be angry). This is because apart from their literal meaning as we have seen above, they also have idiomatic meanings. Thus the basic difference between the ordinary verb and adposition compound and the phrasal verb is the issue of transparency or idiomaticity respectively. We therefore distinguish one use of a combination of verb and adposition element as a phrasal verb and the other as not, because that which we describe as a phrasal verb exhibits a basic meaning which deviates from the meaning which will ordinarily accrue to the compound if the meaning of its constituents is to be considered.

The criteria that Katunar et al. (2010), also make mention of are the semantic unity of the verb and particle construction as well as the distributional properties which sanction the replacement of any of its parts by any other lexical unit. After looking at the idiomatic criterion explained above the other two criteria

given by Katunar and friends were also applied in order to arrive at the constructions that really qualify to be Ga phrasal verbs.

After using Sekyi-Baidoo's and Katunar et al's methods to identify the phrasal verbs, the assumed applicable syntactic tests outlined in chapter two were used to further test the derived phrasal verbs. But the observation made was that the test was not applicable to any of the phrasal verbs, therefore, it is worthy to note that only Sekyi-Baidoo's and Katunar et al's method of identifying phrasal verbs were used. Out of 410 verb and adposition combinations that were tested, the identified phrasal verbs were 140 (see appendix A for the list).

The next procedure was to group the various phrasal verbs identified. Phrasal verbs that have the same verbal element were put in one group and those that have the same adposition element also came under one group. Again, those combinations that have different forms but the same meaning also formed one group. These groupings are to facilitate discussions on the phrasal verbs. The final stage was the discussion of the various phrasal verbs identified by focusing on their syntactic and semantic features. Chapter four captures the discussions on the identified phrasal verbs.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS ON GA PHRASAL VERBS

This chapter presents the analysis and discussions on the syntax and semantics of Ga phrasal verbs. It begins with the distinction between phrasal verbs and other verbal compounds. The discussion of the syntax of the types of Ga phrasal verbs based on transitivity follows. Again, the semantics of the main characteristics of the verbal elements and the particles that form the Ga phrasal verbs are examined. In addition, the chapter examines the meanings of the identified Ga phrasal verbs through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Finally, it looks at the idiomaticity and the polysemous nature of phrasal verbs.

#### **Differentiating Phrasal Verbs from other Verbal Compounds in Ga**

Before any analysis of Ga phrasal verbs, it is expedient to distinguish them from other compound verbal structures in Ga. These other structures are serial verbs, inherent complement verbs, verb and noun compounds and the non-idiomatic verb and adposition combinations.

#### **Serial Verb Constructions**

In general, serial verb constructions are referred to as “a grammatical concept which involves series of different verbs and their arguments occurring in what seems to be a single clause” (Adjei, 1999, p.118). Adjei (1999, p. 116)

outlined four characteristics of the Ga serial verb: the verbs in the construction have the same subject, the pronoun form of the subject must be repeated on the second verb if the subject is a pronoun, the verbs do not have a conjunction between them and they express a single event and lastly, the verbs express the same time. The sentences below illustrate the concept of serial verb in Ga.

- (35) a. Odoi b̀ò- ̀ò t͡sɛ́- ̀ò Kwei  
 Odoi shout-HAB call-HAB Kwei  
 ‘Odoi shouts to call Kwei.’
- b. È- b̀ò è- t͡sɛ́ Kwei  
 3SG PST-shout 3SG PST-call Kwei  
 ‘He/she shouted to call Kwei.’
- \*c. Odoi b̀ò- ̀ò t͡sɛ́ Kwei  
 Odoi shout-HAB PST-call Kwei  
 ‘Odoi shouts to call Kwei’

The serial verbs in the above constructions are *b̀ò* ‘shout’ and *t͡sɛ́* ‘call’. It can be observed that in (35a) the subject is Odoi and in (35b) a pronoun has been used instead of the noun Odoi, but in both cases the two verbs share the same subject. The only difference that can be seen is that when the subject is a noun it is used only once in the construction and it is always seen with the first verb, but when it is a pronoun it must be repeated on the second verb. In addition it is evident from examples (35a and 35b) that both verbs should express the same time which expresses a single event. If this does not happen then the construction

becomes ungrammatical as shown in (35c). In (35c) the first verb *bò* is marked for habitual aspect while the second verb *tsé* expresses a different time.

From the discussion on Ga serial verbs, one thing that is clear and sufficient for our present discussion is that serial verbs are verbal compounds consisting of two or more verbs which occur in a single non-complex construction and which exhibits no overt signs of coordination. Some of them are idiomatic like the phrasal verbs as indicated by Bamgbose (1974). To establish the idiomaticity of some of these Ga serial verbs let's consider *hé* 'receive' *yè* 'eat' in the construction *Kofi hé sà̀nè lḕ è̀yè̀* 'Kofi believed the story' and *yè̀* 'eat' *búá* 'gather' in the construction *Máyè mábúá̀ bò̀* 'I will help you'. In the two constructions, the serial verbs interpret as 'to believe' and 'to help' respectively. Here, the composite meaning of the serial verb construction cannot be made transparent by considering the meanings of the individual verbs. Thus, the interpretation is an idiomatic one, which cannot be derived in any obvious way by combining the meanings 'receive' and 'eat' as well as 'eat' and 'gather' which are usually assigned to the verbs when they occur by themselves. Whereas such serial verbs share the idiomaticity of phrasal verbs, their constitution basically, differs from phrasal verbs which necessarily have particles.

### Inherent Complement Verbs

Inherent complement verbs (hereafter ICVs) are a kind of obligatory complement- taking verbs which abound in most Kwa languages. Typically, when

they occur with other complements, their meanings usually tend to change. Nwachukwu (1987, p. 22) defines an ICV as a verb “whose citation form is obligatorily followed by a meaning-specifying noun complement.” Nwachukwu (1985), intimates that the root (i.e. the verb) and its nominal complement form one semantic unit, and any dictionary entry which excludes the complement is so ambiguous as to be meaningless. This implies that the meaning of the verb is sort of tied to the meaning of the inherent complement. According to him, it is this property that motivates the ‘term’ inherent in the name inherent-complement verb. Another apparent implication is that it is virtually impossible to dissociate the meaning of the verb from the meaning of its complement. This position is supported by Essegbey’s (1999) view that the verb is semantically underspecified, such that it requires its inherent complement to make its meaning in any particular construction more precise.

According to Korsah (2011, p. 81) Ga ICV is thus “any transitive verb whose function as a predicate depends on its complement”. He classifies this type of verb into two: the regular and the irregular. To him, the regular inherent complement verbs can occur with different complements to yield different predicate meanings, for example, *b̀ k̀m̀i* ‘make/create kenkey’, *b̀ gb̀m̀ɔ̀* ‘create human’, *b̀ ̀p̀àà* ‘to hire labour and *b̀ m̀d̀èỳ* ‘to show a good effort’ while the irregular ones only occur with specific complements to yield specific predicate meaning e.g. *sh̀e gb̀èỳèi* ‘to be afraid’, *l̀e l̀ài* ‘to fetch firewood’, *j̀o f̀òi* ‘to run’ and *k̀u s̀èè* ‘to return’. He again remarks that it is very easy to

retrieve the semantics of the verb of the regular ICVs because they have homonymous non-ICV counterparts in the language while in irregular ICVs, independently retrieving the semantics of the verb is more difficult because neither any homophonous non-ICV forms of the verbs exist in the language nor do the verbs occur with other complements so that their meanings could be traced directly from their collocation with other complements.

Looking at the Ga inherent Complement verbs that co-occur with the postpositions as their inherent complements one will say that they have the same form and meaning as the Ga phrasal verb so they can be placed under both phrasal verb and inherent complement verbs. But the difference between the two is that most phrasal verbs do not have only one meaning: they have different meanings depending on the type of object they take. Unlike the inherent complement verbs that have only one meaning irrespective of the objects they take. This is exemplified in (36). More so, verbs in phrasal verbs only co-occur with particles every time as compared to inherent complement verbs that can co-occur with both nouns and postpositions. Another distinguishing feature is that when glossing in phrasal verb constructions, the basic meaning of the verbs and the particles are provided as well as their idiomatic meanings whereas in inherent complement verbs only the basic meaning of the complement is provided.

- (36) a. Gbékē lē ɲmē shĩnãã lē mĩ  
 Child DEF ICV door DEF in  
 ‘The child locked the door.’



b. Yòò lē kɛ Kofi wó nò

Woman DEF AUX Kofi PST- lift on  
 ‘The woman quarreled with Kofi.’

c. Yòò lē wó Moi nò yè èhèshìbàà lē hèwò

Woman DEF PST- lift Moi on at his humility DEF because  
 ‘The woman promoted Moi because of his humility.’

In example (36a) the inherent complement verb *ɲmɛ̃ mlĩ* has only one meaning ‘to lock’, and no matter the construction in which it appears it will carry that same meaning. This combination can also be considered as a phrasal verb because the meaning cannot be understood from the individual meaning of the verb and the postposition taken together. But in example (36b and 36c) the verb *wó* ‘lift’ and its particle *nò* ‘on/up’ is a phrasal verb and not an ICV, because the combination has more than one meaning and this is as a result of the kind of objects or words it collocates with depending on the meaning intended.

### Verb and Noun Compounds

Verb and noun compounds are known as incorporation (Kotey, 2014). In Ga, some of these combinations are euphemistic and therefore share the idiomaticity of phrasal verbs. The constituents are orthographically separated, but semantically, they are compounds which make a single meaning which is not associated with the individual elements but with the compounds as a whole. Examples are *tò* (arrange) plus *yìj* (mind) – ‘to decide’, *yè* (eat) plus *tsũĩ*

(heart) – ‘to worry’, *ye* (eat) plus *ayiŋ* (white clay) – ‘to be victorious’. They are also different from phrasal verbs because their verbs only combine with nouns not particles.

### Non-idiomatic/Ordinary Verb and Adposition Combination

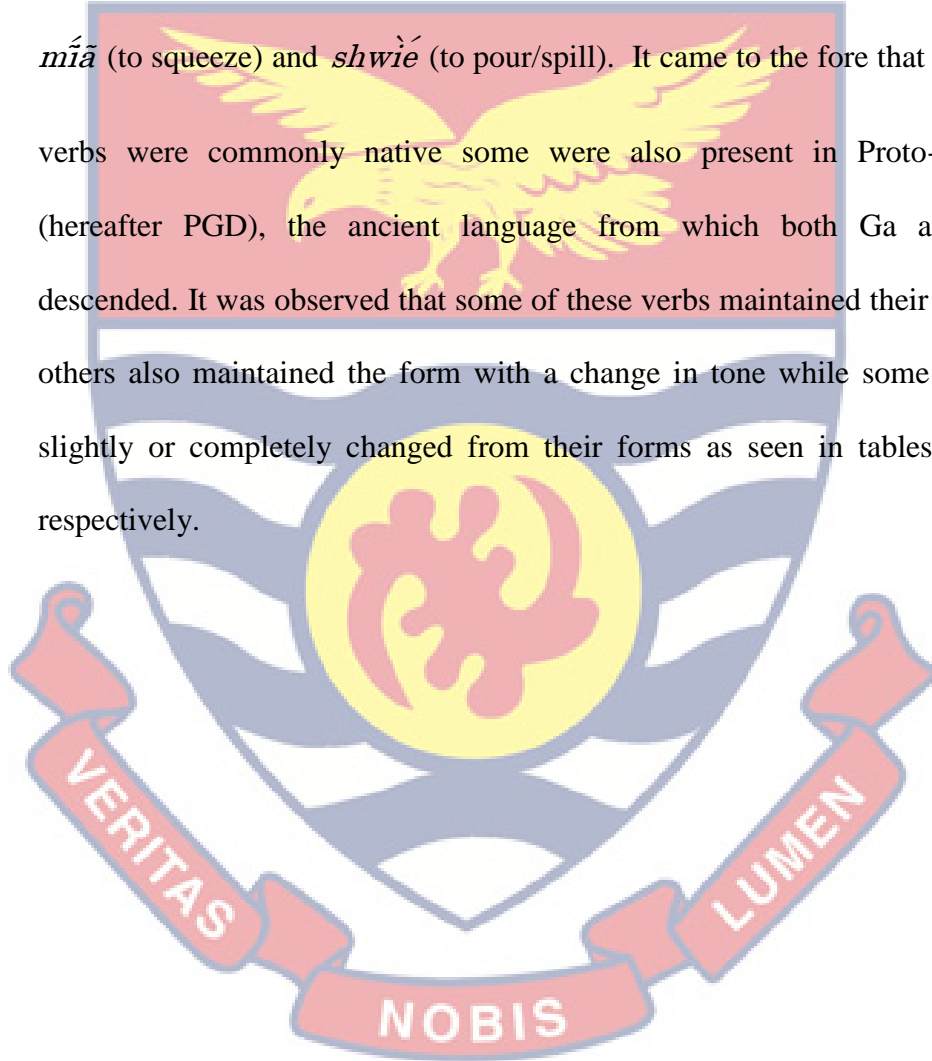
Closest to the phrasal verb is the ordinary verb and adposition combination. Sometimes the structures of these two forms are the same. The difference is in the fact that the phrasal verb is a single semantic unit which has idiomatic meaning; the constituent elements are therefore not seen to be contributing their meaning as far as their place in the idiomatic structure is concerned. In contrast, each of the elements in ordinary verb and adposition combination makes a distinct semantic contribution to the meaning of the compound. They are, thus, not idiomatic. Such compounds include *bà mli* ‘come in’, *bà nɔ* ‘come on’, *dámɔ sɛɛ* ‘stand behind’ and *fò nãã* ‘to cut the mouth’

### Characteristics of the Verbal and Post-Verbal Elements

Generally speaking, any kind of lexical verb and postposition can function as the verbal element and post-verbal element respectively in a phrasal combination. However, the data for the study show that the verbs that form the root and the postpositions that form the particle of Ga phrasal verbs exhibit certain characteristics. This section delineates these observed properties.

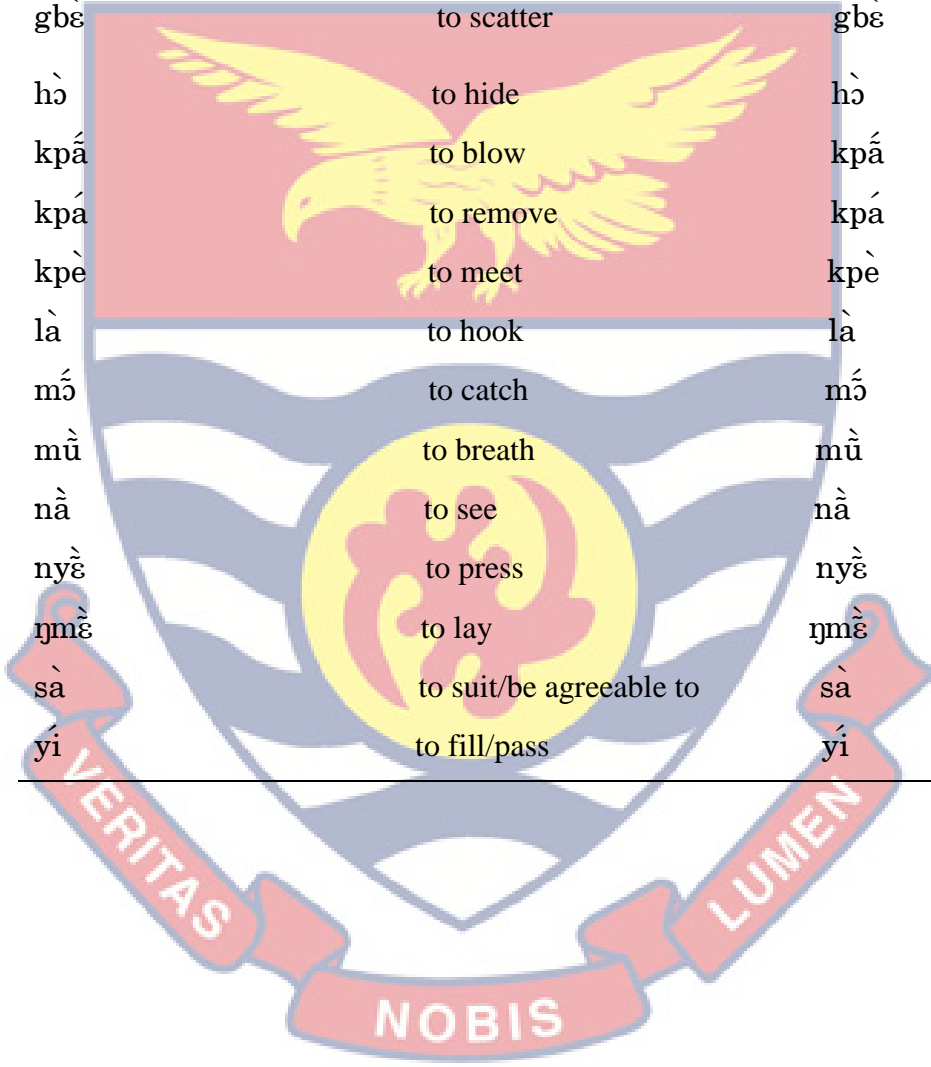
The majority of verbs in Ga are native, that is, of Ga origin, but some have also been adopted from other languages. The most common source language is

Akan, but there are several others, including Portuguese, Danish, English, Ewe, German, Hausa, and French (Dakubu, 2009). Verbs adopted from these languages could form the root of phrasal verbs, but it was realised that almost all the verbs that form the roots of the identified phrasal verbs were native words with the exception of only two verbs that had their source from Akan. These are *míã* (to squeeze) and *shwié* (to pour/spill). It came to the fore that although the verbs were commonly native some were also present in Proto-Ga-Dangme (hereafter PGD), the ancient language from which both Ga and Dangme descended. It was observed that some of these verbs maintained their PGD forms; others also maintained the form with a change in tone while some others have slightly or completely changed from their forms as seen in tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively.



**Table 1: Verbs that have maintained their PGD form**

Verb	Meaning	Proto-Ga-Dangme form
bú	to wear	bú
dò	to bend	dò
gbá	to split	gbá
gbè	to scatter	gbè
hò	to hide	hò
kpá	to blow	kpá
kpá	to remove	kpá
kpè	to meet	kpè
là	to hook	là
mó	to catch	mó
mù	to breath	mù
nà	to see	nà
nyè	to press	nyè
ɲmè	to lay	ɲmè
sà	to suit/be agreeable to	sà
yí	to fill/pass	yí



**Table 2: Verbs that have maintained their PGD form with a change in tone**

Verb	Meaning	Proto-Ga-Dangme form
bà	to come	bā
fi	to tie	fī
gbè	to kill	gbe
hà	to scramble	hā
yè	to eat	yē
jè	to leave	jē
kpè	to sew	kpē
kù	to break	kū
mà	to put	mā
nù	to hear	nū
nyò	to sink	nyó
tsi	to block	tsī
tò	to arrange	tō
wò	to wear/put	wō

**Table 3: Verbs that have slightly or completely changed from their PGD form**

Verbs	Meaning	Proto-Ga-Dangme Form
fò	to cut	po
hǐě	to hold	hě-
nyǐě	to walk	nyɛ-
shǐ	to leave	śí
shà	to burn	siā
shà	to winnow	sià
wó	to lift	hué
ɲmálā	to scrape/scratch	ɲmā-

Another observed tendency was that although monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic verbs are present in the language, only monosyllabic and disyllabic verbs can function as the root of Ga phrasal verbs. Even among these two types, many of the root verbs were monosyllabic with just a few being disyllabic. The disyllabic root verbs identified are 16 in number, and they are: bóte (to enter), dàmə̀ (to stand), gbà̀lā (to pull), gbála (to tear), gbéle (to open), gbée (fall), hǐě (to hold), jálé (to rinse), jìe (to remove), mǐá (to squeeze), nǎá (to step), nyǐě (to walk), ɲmálā (to scrape/scratch), sǎá (to clean), shwìe (to pour) and tsǐe (to wake).

Furthermore, apart from Ga verbs being monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic, where we saw that only monosyllabic and disyllabic verbs can function as the root verbs of phrasal verbs, they can also be described as stative or dynamic. According to Korsah (2011, p. 40), stative verbs “designate states or conditions of particular entities”. Such verbs show the state of things in terms of quality or quantity, length or breath, height or depth. These verbs do not allow the progressive aspect. As intimated by Korsah (2011, p. 40) and confirmed by Kotey (2014, p. 40), “Ga stative verbs tend to translate as adjectives in English”. Some examples of this type of verbs are: *kè* (to be long), *kwò* (to be tall), *ká* (to be left opened), *yí* (to be full) and *wà* (to be hard). But Kotey (2014) notes that some verbs such as *lèé* (broad), *fá* (many/plenty) and *dá* (big /grow) can be used either as stative or dynamic. Saeed (2009), grouped stative verbs into two types: inherently stative and inchoative. The inherently stative verbs allow the speaker to view a situation as a steady state and as such they cannot be used with the progressive aspect or imperative mood. They do not focus on the beginning or end of the state. Examples of these kinds of verbs in Ga are: *je* (resemble), *hi* (live), *le* (know), *ye* (have) and *nyé* (hate).

The other type is referred to as the inchoative verbs which focus on the change of state. Examples of these verbs in Ga are: *gbò* (to be old), *shà* (to be burnt), *dò* (to be hot) and so forth. Based on Saeed’s grouping of the stative verb and the Ga examples that have been provided, it is evident that not all Ga stative

verbs translate as adjectives in English as claimed by Korsah. On the other hand, dynamic verbs imply action (Saeed, 2009). They describe activities, processes and events that can begin and finish. Examples of these verbs in Ga are:  $\eta\acute{m}\grave{a}$  (write),  $ny\grave{i}\grave{e}$  (walk),  $w\acute{o}$  (lift),  $y\grave{e}$  (eat) etc. According to Kotey (2014), motion verbs can also be called action verbs, and since all action verbs are dynamic verbs, then it implies that all motion verbs are dynamic verbs.

On the point of stativity and dynamicity of verbs it was discovered that the verbs that form the verbal element of Ga phrasal verbs were all verbs of movement and action with the exception of seven being stative verbs. The stative verbs identified that can form the root verb of phrasal verbs are:  $d\grave{a}$  (to grow/be big),  $h\grave{i}$  (to detest/hate),  $n\grave{a}$  (to see),  $n\grave{u}$  (to hear),  $s\grave{a}$  (to suit/be agreeable),  $sh\grave{a}$  (to burn) and  $t\acute{s}$  (to wrong). This observed characteristic of the Ga root verbs is also exhibited by root verbs that form the English phrasal verbs. Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) notes that apart from a few stative verbs, most of the verbs used with particles are verbs of motion, either physical or abstract.

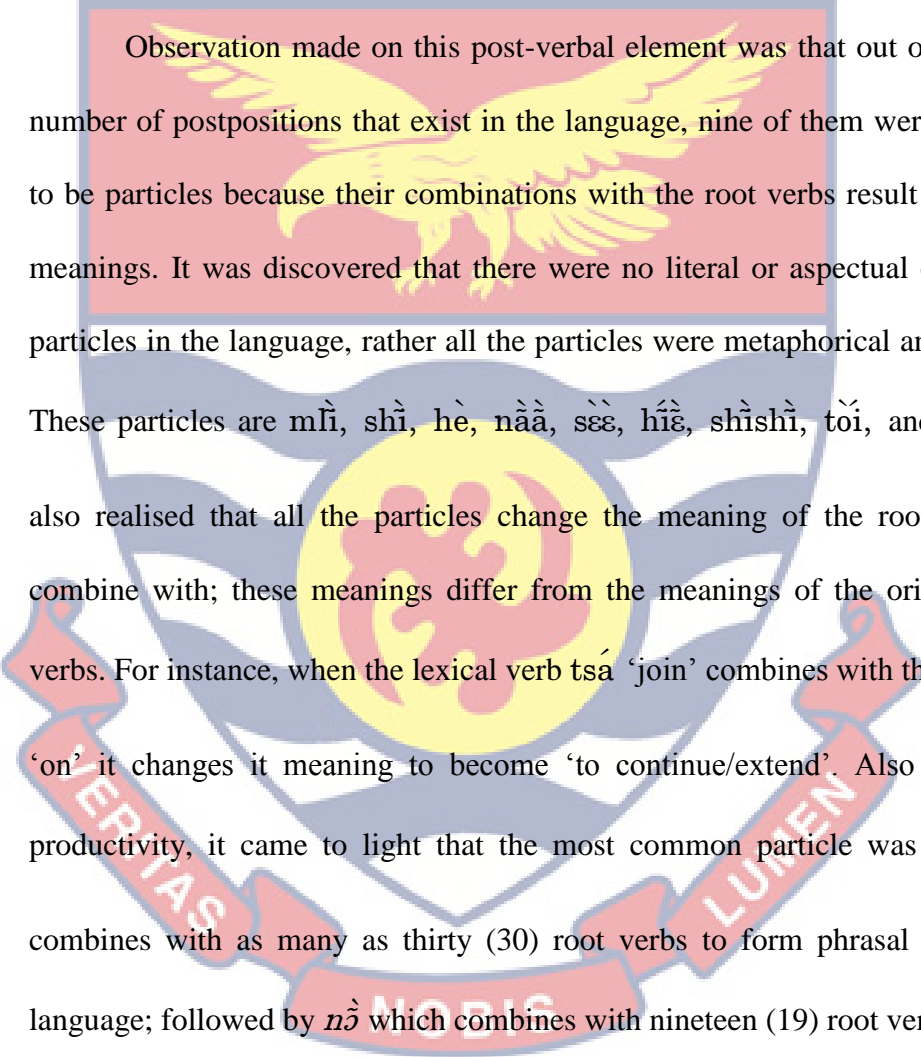
The next observation made was that one root verb can underlie a range of phrasal verbs. That is one root verb can be used with more than one particle to form many phrasal verbs. It was seen that most of the root verbs can be used with two or more particles to form different phrasal verbs, but the most productive root verbs, that is, those that can be used with more than three particles are only eight. These root verbs and the particles they can be used with to form phrasal verbs in Ga have been outlined below:



- (37) a. **Jè:** jè nò (to forget), jè mlĩ (to die), jè he sèè (to repent) and jè shĩshĩ (to start).
- b. **Bà:** bà mlĩ (to manifest), bà nò (to be proud), bà híè (to be tipsy) and bà hè shĩ (to humble).
- c. **Kwé:** kwé nò (to guard), kwé mlĩ (to investigate), kwé sèè (to deputize), and kwé híè (to insult).
- d. **Nyĩé:** nyĩé sèè (to chase), nyĩé nò (to iron), nyĩé shĩshĩ (to undermine), nyĩé hè (to pursue), and nyĩé mlĩ (to intervene).
- e. **Shĩ:** shĩ mlĩ (to wear), shĩ hè (to dance), shĩ nò (to be part of) and shĩ sèè (to add that).
- f. **Tsé:** tsé nò (to reduce price), tsé nǎǎ (to reply), tsé hè (to separate from) and tsé híè (to be serious about something)
- g. **Yè:** yè mlĩ (to steal glances), yè nǎǎ (to bargain), yè nò (to rule), yè hè (to be acquitted) and yè sèè (to succeed someone)
- h. **Fò:** fò mlĩ (to cancel), fò hè (to fence), fò sèè (to stop), fò nǎǎ (to slander), fò shĩ (to wander) and fò shĩshĩ (to underline)

In chapter two, we saw that there were so many controversies surrounding the status of the second element of the English phrasal verb, namely the post-

verbal particle. Some linguists were of the view that the particle is an adverb, while others say it is a preposition. Others even claim that the particle is a distinct class. This issue does not arise in Ga because only postpositions can combine with verbs to form phrasal verbs in the language. Therefore, particles in Ga are postpositions. They form a more or less bound unit with the verbs.



Observation made on this post-verbal element was that out of the limited number of postpositions that exist in the language, nine of them were considered to be particles because their combinations with the root verbs result in idiomatic meanings. It was discovered that there were no literal or aspectual or aktionsart particles in the language, rather all the particles were metaphorical and idiomatic. These particles are *mli*, *shì*, *hè*, *nàà*, *sèè*, *híè*, *shìshì*, *tóí*, and *nò*. It was also realised that all the particles change the meaning of the root verbs they combine with; these meanings differ from the meanings of the original lexical verbs. For instance, when the lexical verb *tsá* ‘join’ combines with the particle *nò* ‘on’ it changes its meaning to become ‘to continue/extend’. Also in terms of productivity, it came to light that the most common particle was *mli* ‘in’. It combines with as many as thirty (30) root verbs to form phrasal verbs in the language; followed by *nò* which combines with nineteen (19) root verbs.

### The Syntactic Types of Ga Phrasal Verbs

In chapter two, we saw that two syntactic types of phrasal verbs exist in the English language: intransitive and transitive phrasal verbs, while three exist in

the Akan language: intransitive, mono transitive and di-transitive. There is yet another type of the English phrasal verb which can function intransitively and transitively at the same time, but it is not considered as a major type because it blends the characteristics of both the transitive and the intransitive phrasal verbs. In the data, it was realized that the Ga phrasal verb has three major forms and these are intransitive, mono transitive and di-transitive and another type which can be used transitively and intransitively at the same time, just like that of English. This section gives account of the various types of phrasal verbs identified.

### Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

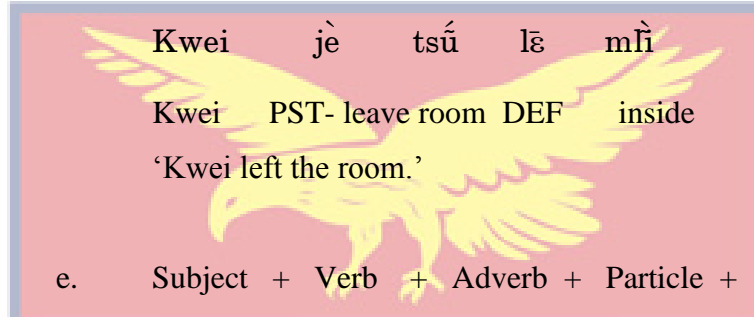
There are a number of intransitive phrasal verbs in Ga. These verbs do not carry or take any object, and they are inseparable. Structurally, the intransitive phrasal verbs are realised as: Subject + Verb + Particle (Adjunct) . Let us consider the following:

(38) a. Subject + Verb + Particle  
 Hèlatsè lē mīihà shī  
 Sick person DEF PROG-scramble down  
 ‘The sick person is writhing in pains.’

b. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 \*Hèlatsè lē mīihà Kwei shī  
 Sick person DEF PROG-scramble Kwei down

- c. Subject + Verb + Particle + (Adjunct)  
 Kwei jè mǎi gbékè nǎǎ  
 Kwei PST- leave inside evening this  
 ‘Kwei died this evening.’

- d. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle



Kwei jè tsú lē mǎi  
 Kwei PST- leave room DEF inside  
 ‘Kwei left the room.’

- e. Subject + Verb + Adverb + Particle + (Adjunct)

\*Kwei jè oya mǎi gbékè nǎǎ  
 Kwei PST-leave earlier inside evening this

The phrasal verbs *hà shǐ* and *jè mǎi* in example (38a, and c) respectively are both intransitive phrasal verbs. These verbs, as illustrated above, do not take any object. We observe in example (38b) that, should they take an object, the sentence will be ungrammatical and meaningless or it will no longer be a phrasal verb as illustrated in (38d), rather, it will become an ordinary verb and adposition combination. Also, all the examples given in (38) above point to the fact that intransitive phrasal verbs in the Ga language cannot be separated, no matter what; they cannot be separated by an object as seen in (38b and d) and they cannot also be separated by an adverb, as illustrated in (38e).

It must be noted that there are different types of intransitive phrasal verbs in the Ga language. These are, copulative, ergative and active phrasal verbs. The

copulative phrasal verbs only describe their subjects. This is illustrated in example (39a, b and c) below:

- (39) a. SUBJ + Verb + Particle + Adjunct  
 Gbékē nū̀ ìē é- bà nò tsó  
 Child boy DEF PERF-come on too much  
 ‘The child is too proud.’

- b. SUBJ + Verb + Particle + Adjunct  
 Kofi hà -à shì tsó  
 Kofi scramble-HAB down too much  
 ‘Kofi is too impatient.’

- c. Subject + Verb + Particle  
 Moi shé̀tì ìē m̀ì m̀ì- sà shì  
 Moi shirt DEF inside PROG- agreeable down  
 ‘Moi’s shirt is smelling.’

In example (39a), the subject is *gbékē nū̀ ìē* (the boy) and the phrasal verb is *bà nò* (lit. come on). The meaning of this phrasal verb is ‘to be proud’. It can be seen that the phrasal verb describes the subject as someone who is proud. In the same vein, the phrasal verb in example (39b) is describing Kofi as an impatient person and (39c) is making us aware of the state of Moi’s shirt which is also the subject of the construction.

The examples given above are not the only copulative phrasal verbs in the language. Other copulative phrasal verbs are provided below. However, the list of

the copulative phrasal verbs below is not situated in a context and, thus, only their meanings are provided:

(40) a. *bà mĩ̀* (lit. come in) to manifest, to be excited, to be angry

b. *há shĩ̀* (lit. to scramble down) to writhe in pain

c. *yí shĩ̀* (lit. to pass down) to be possessed

d. *nǎǎ mĩ̀* (lit. to step in) to dress gorgeously

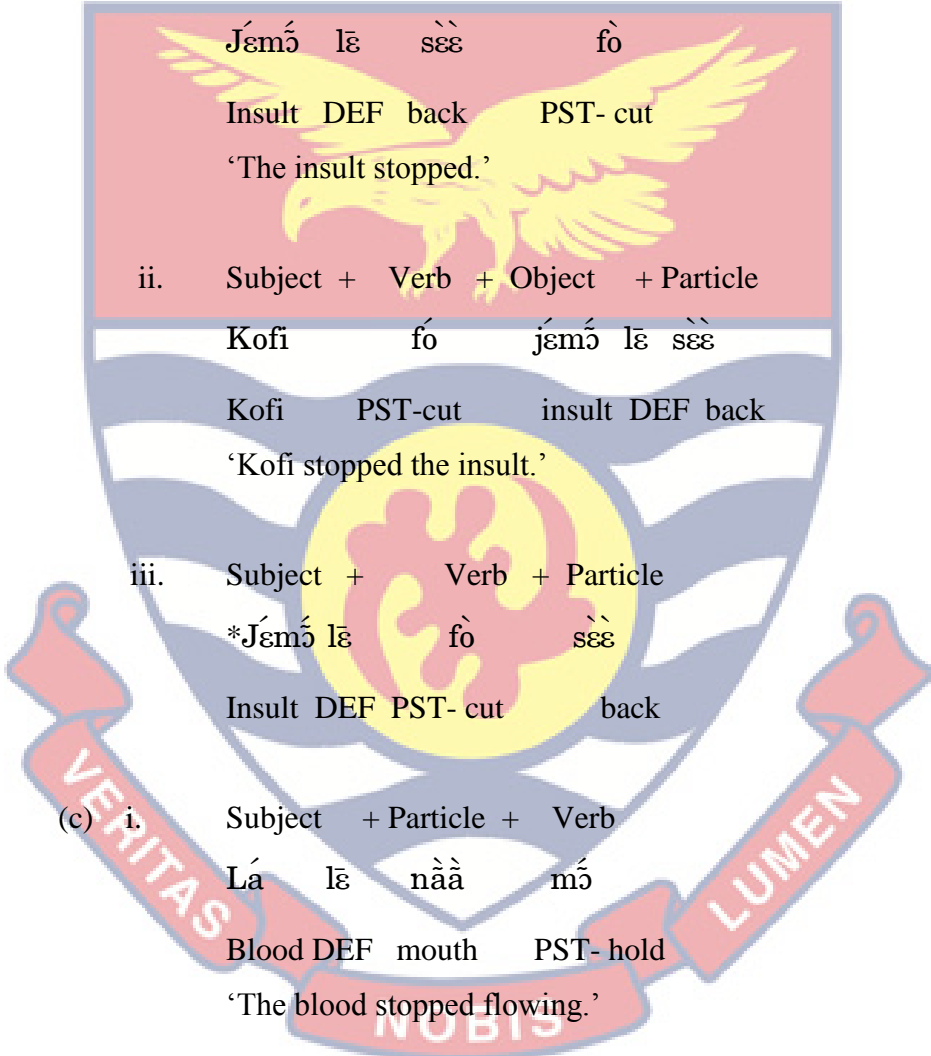
The second type of intransitive phrasal verbs is the ergative. According to Crystal (2009), ergative verbs are so-called because their subjects originate as objects. This means that the noun which should function as the object in a construction features syntactically as the subject in ergative constructions.

Ergative phrasal verbs in Ga include *jè shĩshĩ̀* (lit. leave under) meaning ‘to start’, *bú shĩ̀* (lit. wear down) meaning ‘to turn over’, *fò sèè̀* (lit. cut back) meaning ‘to stop’, *mǒ nǎǎ̀* (lit. hold mouth) meaning ‘to stop from flowing’, *ymè mĩ̀* (lit. lay in) meaning ‘to lock’, *tsà nǒ̀* (lit. join on) meaning ‘to continue’, *wó nǒ̀* (lit. lift on) meaning ‘to revive’ and *shá shĩ̀* (lit. scrub down) meaning ‘to wreck’. Let us consider the following:

(41) (a) i	Subject	+	Verb	+	Particle
	Kàà		lē é- jè		shĩshĩ̀
	Examination		DEF PERF-leave		under
	‘The examination has started.’				

- ii. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Níkàsélàì lē é- jè kàà lē shìshì  
 Students DEF PERF-leave examination DEF under  
 ‘The students have started the examination.’

- (b) i. Subject + Particle + Verb



Jémó lē sèè fò  
 Insult DEF back PST- cut  
 ‘The insult stopped.’

ii. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Kofi fò jémó lē sèè  
 Kofi PST-cut insult DEF back  
 ‘Kofi stopped the insult.’

iii. Subject + Verb + Particle  
 \*Jémó lē fò sèè  
 Insult DEF PST- cut back

(c) i. Subject + Particle + Verb  
 Lá lē nàà mǒ  
 Blood DEF mouth PST- hold  
 ‘The blood stopped flowing.’

- ii. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Néesìfónyò lē mǒ lá lē nàà  
 Nurse DEF PST- hold blood DEF mouth  
 ‘The nurse stopped the blood from flowing.’

In 41, all the examples labelled (i) are the ergative constructions whereas those labelled (ii) are their corresponding non-ergative forms. Those examples labeled (i) are ergatives because, for instance, using example (41 a i) as a case in point, we can see clearly that *kàà lē* ('the examination') which is the subject of the ergative construction is no longer playing that role in the non-ergative construction: It has moved from the subject position to the object position as seen in (41 a ii). On the other hand, in the non-ergative construction, *nīkàsélòì lē* 'the students' has now become the subject while *kàà lē* which initially was the subject has moved to its original position as object. The observation made here is that, in some of the ergative constructions, the particle precedes the verb as seen in examples (41b i, and c i). This suggests that, should the word order of the verb and the particle be maintained, the constructions would either be ungrammatical or meaningless as illustrated in (41b iii).

The third category of phrasal verbs to be discussed is active intransitive phrasal verbs. The term, *active*, as used here denotes *action*; that is, some of the phrasal verbs describe actions made by the subject. Such phrasal verbs include:

- (42)
- a. *Jè mī* (lit. leave in) to dodge
  - b. *Tswà shì* (lit. hit down) to fall down, to close a meeting
  - c. *ŋmǎ shì* (lit. write down) to dart off
  - d. *Shwíé nǎ* (lit. pour on) to set off
  - e. *Yè nǎǎ* (lit. eat mouth) to dress elegantly, to bargain



f. Yí mlì (lit. pass in) to set off

The different types of intransitive phrasal verbs described above exhibit three main observed characteristics. The first characteristic is that the meaning of the phrasal verb as a unit is different from the meaning of the individual words. Phrasal verbs are thus fixed expressions. In all the examples given, the verb and their particles always work as a unit. For instance, if the meaning ‘to be proud’ is targeted, then the verb *bà* ‘come’ and the particle ‘*nǎ*’ must come together. Should a different verb be combined with the same particle or a different particle be matched with the same verb, the targeted meaning would not be realised. It would rather result in a different meaning other than the targeted meaning or it will even produce a non-phrasal verb.

The second characteristic is that, generally, the particles in all the intransitive phrasal verbs are not mobile. The only exceptions to this feature are some of the ergative phrasal verbs. That is, in some of the ergative types, we realised that some of the verb particles preceded the verbal element instead of following or coming after the verb. This results in verb-particle movements.

The last observed characteristic of the phrasal verbs is that, the verbs and the particles in all the identified types of intransitive phrasal verbs are inseparable. Even those ergative types that can be moved or are mobile (as seen in 41b and c) are inseparable.

### Transitive Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs in Ga also have transitive forms. These transitive phrasal verbs can be mono-transitive, where they take on a single object as a verbal complement or ditransitive, when the verbs take two objects. Example 43 buttresses these assertions:

- (43) a. Subject + Verb Object + Particle  
 Lóyafonyò lē bótē sàné lē mǐ  
 Lawyer DEF PST- enter case DEF inside  
 ‘The lawyer investigated the case.’
- b. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Tsǒǒlɔ́ núkpá lē fò Kwame gbéi mǐ  
 teacher senior DEF PST- cut Kwame name inside  
 ‘The head-teacher cancelled Kwame’s name.’

The phrasal verbs *bótē mǐ* (‘to investigate’) and *fò mǐ* (‘to cancel’) in examples (43a and b) respectively, are both mono-transitive phrasal verbs. This is because they both take only one object. In example (43a), the object is *sàné lē* ‘the case’, while in (43b), the object is *Kwame gbéi* (‘Kwame’s name’). It is also seen that both objects are noun phrases and they precede their particles. However, the transitive phrasal verbs in Ga are not only realised by noun phrases.

Transitive phrasal verbs in Ga can sometimes take clauses as their objects. It was observed in the data that only two (2) phrasal verbs can take clauses as their objects. These phrasal verbs are given below:

- (44) a. Subject + Verb + Particle + Object  
 Àmè kpè mǐ ákè àmè- bàà- yà shǐã  
 3PL- PST- sew inside that 3PL-FUT- go home  
 ‘They decided to go home.’

- b. Subject + Verb + Particle + Object

È- kè- shì sèè ákè ó- bà mrá  
 3SG- AUX PST-hit back that 2SG-come early  
 ‘He added that you should come early.’

- c. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle

Àmè kpè báagì lè mǐ  
 3PL PST-sew bag DEF inside  
 ‘They sewed the inner parts of the bag.’

Phrasal verbs that take the clauses as their objects are *kpè mǐ* (‘to decide’) and *shì sèè* (‘to add’). These two phrasal verbs always take clauses as their objects, no matter the construction, and the position of their objects is always after the particle. Should any of them take any type of object other than the clause, it will result in a non-phrasal verb as seen in (44c) above.

Transitive phrasal verbs can also be realised by pronouns. One thing observed is that whenever the object is a noun and it is animate, then, it can be replaced by a pronoun and vice versa. But there are some object pronouns that can never be replaced by nouns. Although these pronouns make anaphoric references to their subject referents, they can never be replaced by the actual nouns in the

construction. These pronouns are normally referred to as anaphors. This assertion is exemplified in the following:

- (45) a. SUBJ + Verb + OBJ + Particle  
 Gbékē lē bú è- nāā.  
 Child DEF PST- wear 3SG POSS- mouth

‘The child died.’

- b. SUBJ + Verb OBJ + Particle (Adjunct)  
 Òsófò lē fì è- mĭ gbìì étē.

Pastor DEF PST- tie 3SG POSS-inside days three

‘The pastor fasted for three days.’

- c. SUBJ + Verb + OBJ + Particle (Adjunct)  
 Moi kpá è- mĭ yè àsá lē nò.

Moi blow 3SG POSS- inside at sitting room DEF on

‘Moi rested in the sitting room.’

- d. SUBJ + Verb + OBJ + Particle  
 \*Gbékē lē bú gbékē lē nāā

Child DEF PST- wear child DEF mouth

- e. SUBJ + Verb + OBJ + Particle  
 Òsófò lē kpá Kwei mĭ

Pastor DEF PST- blow Kwei inside

‘The pastor is ahead of Kwei’

In examples (45a, b, and c), it can be seen that the transitive phrasal verbs *bú nāā* (‘to die’), *fì mĭ* (‘to fast’), and *kpá mĭ* (‘to rest’) all take the

pronoun ‘è’ as their object. This particular pronoun is used because the noun is in the subject position. Thus, if the subject noun changes position, it will in turn affect its object. Therefore, if we have a construction like *Odoi kɛ̀ Adote shí` àmɛ̀hè`* (‘Odoi and Adote danced’), we can see clearly in the construction that

instead of using the pronoun ‘è’, ‘à̀mɛ̀`’ has been used. This is because the subject is plural and it requires a pronoun that is also plural. Thus, the noun occupying the subject position affects the type of pronoun that the phrasal verb should take as its object. Again, in example (45d), the construction is considered ungrammatical. This is because the phrasal verb requires an object that will make an anaphoric reference to its subject for the meaning to be complete, and the only object that can fit in here is a subject pronoun and not a subject noun. In addition, if a different noun is used as the object, the meaning will change as illustrated in example (45e). It will mean that the subject is not doing the action to him or herself or referring back to him/herself but to another person. In this example, the subject is not doing the action to another person; rather, the subject is being compared to the object. That is, the subject and the object are non-referential.

Apart from the pronouns discussed above, there is yet another type of pronoun that can be used as the object in Ga transitive phrasal verbs. This type of pronoun is called the reflexive pronoun. Transitive phrasal verbs that take reflexive pronouns, according to Sekyi-Baidoo (2006), are known as reflexive phrasal verbs. He intimated that reflexive phrasal verbs are transitive verbs in which the subject and the object are referentially identical. This idea then is that

the subject did the action to itself. The objects of such verbs are reflexives such as *míhè* ('myself'), *èhè* ('him/herself'), *àmèhè* ('themselves'), *nyèhè* ('yourselves'), *wàhè* ('ourselves') and *óhè* ('yourself').

It must be noted that these reflexive phrasal verbs are always used with reflexive pronouns as objects, and they cannot change their objects without altering the meaning they carry. Those which use 'hè' include *jè hè sèè* ('to repent'), *kwé hè nò* or 'yè hè nò' ('to exercise restraint'), *wó hè nò* ('to be arrogant'), *bà hè shì* ('to be humble'), and *bò hè tóí* ('to be expectant'). As indicated earlier, replacing the reflexive pronouns will cause a change in meaning. Let's consider these examples.

(46) a. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Kwei yè è- hè nò  
 Kwei PST- eat 3SG REF PRON on  
 'Kwei exercised restraint.'

b. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Kwei yè mǎ lē nò  
 Kwei PST- eat rule DEF on  
 'Kwei obeyed the rule.'

c. SUBJ + Verb + OBJ + Particle + Adjunct  
 Odoi kwé è- hè nò yè jùlòì lē àhè  
 Odoi PST- look 3SG REF PRON on at thieves DEF surface  
 'Odoi was on guard against the thieves.'

- d. SUBJ + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Odoi kwé sěi lē nò  
 Odoi PST- look chair DEF on  
 ‘Odoi looked on the chair.’

When we compare examples (46a and b), we see that in example (46a), the meaning of the phrasal verb is ‘to exercise restraint’ because the object is reflexive, but because the reflexive object has been replaced by a non-reflexive object, *młá lē* (‘the rule’) in example (46b), it has altered the meaning to mean ‘to obey’ which is also a transitive phrasal verb. That notwithstanding, it is not always that the replacement of a reflexive object by a non-reflexive will result in another phrasal verb. Sometimes, when a reflexive object is replaced by a non-reflexive, the latter becomes a non-phrasal verb, as illustrated in example (46d).

Considering the discussions so far on the transitive phrasal verbs, the main observable features exhibited by all the verbs with the exception of one is that the verb and the particle are always separated by an object. There was no instance where the object was found after the particle. The only instance where the object came after the particle was when the object was a clause. This can mean that because the clause is normally longer, it cannot come before the particle. If we put the clause, which in this case, is the object in between the verb and the particle, then there will be an absence of word order and the construction will sound illogical.

### Di-transitive Phrasal Verbs

The transitive phrasal verbs we have discussed so far take mono-transitive complementation. In addition to mono-transitive phrasal verb complementation, there are phrasal verbs that involve two objects. This type of phrasal verb is known as di-transitive phrasal verbs. Di-transitive verbs in general exhibit a three-argument relationship between the subject, a direct object whose involvement makes the action of the verb possible, and an indirect object who receives or benefits from the action. Di-transitive phrasal verbs also exhibit this three-argument relationship. They are realised in this clause structure in Ga:

- (47) Subject+ Verb + NP (Oi) + NP (Od) + Particle
- Kwei tsɔ́ɔ́ mǐ sàné lɛ shìshì
- Kwei PST- show 1SG matter DEF under
- ‘Kwei explained the issue to me.’

It can be observed from the above that the two objects that phrasal verb *tsɔ́ɔ́ shìshì* takes which are *mǐ* (‘me’) and *sàné lɛ* (‘the matter’) come before the particle. There was no instance where the particle preceded either the direct object or the indirect object: It always comes after the two objects. Below is another example of this structure:

- (48) Subject + Verb + NP (Oi) + NP (Od) + Particle
- Kofi tsɔ́ɔ́ mǐ àméò lɛ nǎà
- Kofi PST- show 1SG tomatoes DEF mouth
- ‘Kofi told me the price of the tomatoes.’



It was realised that the di-transitive phrasal verbs in Ga were not many. So far, only two of these phrasal verbs have been identified and these are those already presented above.

### Phrasal verbs that are used both transitively and intransitively

Apart from the three major syntactic types of phrasal verbs discussed above, there is another type which can be both transitive and intransitive at the same time, depending on the context. We will not consider this as a major type because it is not unique; rather, it combines the features of both the intransitive and the transitive phrasal verbs. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon.

- (49) a. i. Subject + Verb + Particle + Adjunct  
 Amartey gbá m̀lì ɲm̀ɛ̀n̄ɛ̀  
 Amartey PST- split inside today  
 ‘Amartey was lucky today.’
- ii. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle Adjunct  
 Amartey gbá s̀ànè l̄ɛ̀ m̀lì kpòó  
 Amartey PST- split matter DEF inside IDEO  
 ‘Amartey revealed the secret.’
- b. i. Subject + Verb + Particle + Adjunct  
 Abbey gbèé shì shwàné n̄ɛ̀ɛ̀  
 Abbey PST-fall down afternoon this  
 ‘Abbey died this afternoon.’

- ii. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle  
 Abbey gbèé yòò lē shĩ  
 Abbey PST- fall woman DEF down  
 ‘Abbey caused the woman’s downfall.’

- c. i. Subject + Verb + Particle + Adjunct

Mĩ kè lē wó nò nyè  
 1SG AUX 3SG PST-lift on yesterday  
 ‘I quarreled with him yesterday.’

- ii. Subject + Verb + Object + Particle + Adjunct

Wò wó nĩsúmó lē nò ékóóǹ.  
 1PL PST- lift work DEF on again  
 ‘We started work again.’

It can be seen that in examples (49a i, b i, and c i), the phrasal verbs are used intransitively, whereas in examples (49 a ii, b ii and c ii), they have been used transitively. This means one and the same phrasal verb can be used as intransitive, as well as transitive. What is worth noting is that the meaning does not remain the same – It changes. We can see that in (49a i) where the phrasal verb *gbá mlĩ* (‘lit. split in’) has been used intransitively, it carries the meaning ‘to be lucky’, but in (49a ii) where it has been used transitively the meaning has changed to become ‘to reveal a secret’. In the same vein, the phrasal verb *wó nò* (‘lit. lift on’) in example (49c i) means ‘to quarrel’ when used intransitively, but when used transitively, it means ‘to start’. This implies that there exist some

phrasal verbs that are not purely transitive and purely intransitive; rather, they can be used both transitively and intransitively.

It is evident from the discussions above that when we talk of transitivity of phrasal verbs, then, we are referring to the valency of the phrasal verb. That is, we refer to the ability of a phrasal verb to admit or require an object or otherwise in order to complete the meaning of the action denoted by the verb. The discussion also points to the fact that among transitive phrasal verbs, the type of object a particular phrasal verb collocates with, determines the meaning to be associated with it.

### **The Semantics of Ga Phrasal Verbs**

Having discussed some of the syntactic issues on Ga phrasal verbs, we will now delve more into the semantics of phrasal verbs in this section. First of all, we will look at the basic meanings and the metaphorical meanings of the particles and proceed to look at the meanings of the phrasal verbs and see whether metaphor underlies the meaning of these phrasal verbs. In addition, the idiomaticity and the polysemous nature of the phrasal verbs will be discussed.

### **Basic and Metaphorical Meaning of the Particles**

A particle plays a crucial role in the definition of phrasal verbs. When it is combined with a particular verb, it often creates a unique meaning for the phrasal verb as a whole. The fact that a particle has a close association with the meaning of phrasal verbs requires a further analysis of various senses of a particle in terms of its literalness and figurativeness. This section will look at the basic and

metaphorical meanings of only four out of the nine particles since the remaining five do not have any extended meanings.

To commence, we will look at the particle *shìshǐ*. *Shìshǐ* has the basic interpretations ‘below’, ‘under’, ‘underneath’ and ‘at the bottom of’ which can be inferred from the meanings of the phrasal verbs. It is important to note, however, that such interpretation is associated with the totality of the sense of the phrasal verb. This means that the particle ‘shìshǐ’, unlike in a verb and adposition combination, does not make a separate independent contribution to the meaning of the phrasal verb. Let us consider the following:

- (50)
- a. *jè shìshǐ* (to start/begin)
  - b. *nyǐè shìshǐ* (to undermine)
  - c. *tò shìshǐ* (to set up, to begin)
  - d. *wò shìshǐ* (to take an appetizer (alcohol))
  - e. *nǚ shìshǐ* (to understand)
  - f. *tsǒǒ shìshǐ* (to explain, to translate)

In each of the examples above, the postpositional interpretation of *shìshǐ* denoting location or place or position is evident. This interpretation is, however, related to the meaning of the phrasal verb in varying degrees of metaphorical transfer. For instance,

- *jè shìshǐ* (lit. come from the bottom) - to start

- tò shìshì (lit. to arrange the bottom) - to start, to set up

depict an instance in which some action occurs at ‘the bottom’ of a phenomenon. According to Sekyi-Baidoo (2006, p. 9), “in ordinary latitudinal growth, the bottom is associated with the beginning.” Therefore, we can say that the metaphorical meaning of the particle which is ‘beginning’ is seen in both jè shìshì and tò shìshì. This is because they both have the meaning ‘to begin an activity’.

In a related meaning, *shìshì* is emotively associated with the ‘core’ the ‘crust’ or ‘where the real or the basic thing is’. This sense is evident in such phrasal verbs as *nũ shìshì* literally ‘to hear the bottom’ or ‘to hear the under part’. Thus, *nũ shìshì* means to ‘hear’ or ‘know’ not just the topic or focus, but the crust of that information, and this precisely is what constitutes ‘understanding’. Similarly, *tsõõ shìshì* means to show the depths or core of an issue or phenomenon; and to do so is actually ‘to explain’.

Again, the particle *shìshì* reflects the idea of ‘tampering with someone’s foundation’ or ‘roots’. The use of *shìshì* to indicate this idea is evident in the phrasal verb *nyĩẽ shìshì* (lit. to walk under someone). *Nyĩẽ shìshì*, for instance, depicts literally a situation in which someone walks under another person. In walking under the person you get to discover what the person is made of which forms the foundation of that person’s being or his posture: You get to

see the part of the person which otherwise cannot be seen by someone walking beside him/her. Thus the secrets of that person become bare to you, and as a result you use this secret against the person in order to be elevated to his/her position. In using this person's secrets against him/her, we see it as a way of weakening the base or destroying the foundation of the person's being, resulting in his/her downfall. This picture captures the practice of undermining someone.

Similarly, *shìshì* also reflects the idea of 'laying up a foundation for something'. The use of *shìshì* to indicate this idea is seen in the phrasal verb *wò shìshì*. This phrasal verb, for instance, depicts literally a situation in which the foundation of a house is laid before the actual building of that house takes place. This image captures the practice of taking appetizers before eating. Normally, before some people take certain foods especially fufu, they like to take alcohol first before eating the food. Therefore, in both phrasal verbs *nyíé shìshì* and *wò shìshì* the particle *shìshì* is associated with the notion of 'foundation'.

The second particle to consider is *mī*. *Mī* has the basic meanings 'in', or 'within', or 'inside', or 'the inner part of' which can sometimes be inferred from the phrasal verbs, but the observation made was that very often the particle is used idiomatically, so it is difficult getting other extended meanings. So far only two metaphorical meanings were identified. The first is that the particle *mī* expresses an idea of 'joining or getting involved in an activity or event and sometimes becoming the centre of that activity or event.' This was evident in

phrasal verbs such as *dãmò mĩ* (lit. stand in/within), *fò mĩ* (lit. cut in) and *nyě mĩ* (lit. walk in/within). *Dãmò mĩ*, for instance, literally shows a person standing inside something, either a basin, water, or any physical thing that one can stand in. Thus it shows a movement from the outside of an enclosed space or container to the inside of it. This literal meaning of *mĩ* has been extended to an abstract situation where a person outside the performance of an activity or event moves in to join the activity. In this instance he/she does not only get involved in the activity but becomes the centre around which the activity revolves. This is captured in the meanings of *dãmò mĩ* ‘to intercede, guarantee and represent’. It can be realised that in these three meanings of the phrasal verb there is someone getting involved in a situation that he/she was not formerly part of, and the person does not only join in the activity but he/she becomes the centre of the activity. In similar vein, *nyě mĩ* and *fò mĩ* which mean ‘to intervene’ and ‘to interrupt’ respectively also reflect the notion of joining or getting involved in an activity or event.

A second derived sense of *mĩ* has to do with the idea of visibility and accessibility. When an entity is in a confinement, one needs to move inwards for that entity to become visible and accessible. This is not only true of concrete objects but also of abstract entities to which one moves inwards to uncover the intricacies in a case. Before one can uncover hidden things in a case one needs to plunge into the case, that is, by investigating. In so doing the facts pertaining to

that particular issue become visible and accessible to the person. Therefore, a feature that is characteristic of some verbs with *mli* is that what was hidden or unknown becomes visible or known through investigation or probing. This line of thought can be followed if we consider phrasal verbs such as *bote mli* ‘enter in’ and *kwε mli* ‘look in’ in examples 51a and b respectively.

- (51) a. *Loyafonyo le bote sanε le mli*  
 Lawyer DEF PST- enter matter DEF inside  
 ‘The lawyer investigated the case.’
- b. *E kwε sanε le mli fitsofitso*  
 3SG PST- look matter DEF inside thoroughly  
 ‘He investigated the matter thoroughly.’

The third particle to consider is *nɔ̃*. *Nɔ̃* has the basic interpretation ‘on’ or ‘on top of’ which can sometimes be deduced from the meanings of phrasal verbs. This basic meaning emphasizes the presence of contact. Thus, it denotes two objects (often an entity and a larger surface) touching each other, being close to each other or getting closer to each other. This interpretation is, however, related to the meaning of some phrasal verbs in varying degrees of metaphorical transfer. Based on the data, three metaphorical meanings were identified. The first metaphorical meaning was ‘control’. This sense is evident in phrasal verbs such as *yi nɔ̃* ‘lit. to fill on’, *ye nɔ̃* ‘lit. to eat on’ and *kwε nɔ̃* ‘lit. to look on’. *Yi nɔ̃*, for instance, depicts an instance in which a person comes into contact with a



spirit. In this case the individual and the spirit become the two objects that are in contact. Immediately the two are in contact the individual does not do things according to his or her will; it is the spirit that dictates what he/she should do or say. Thus, the spirit dominates the individual thereby having control over him or her. We can see that the meaning of the phrasal verb ‘to be possessed’ is indeed associated with the idea of ‘control’. Similarly, *yè nɔ̃* which means ‘to rule’ and *kwé nɔ̃* which means ‘to supervise’ both reflect the idea of ‘control’. For instance in the examples below:

- (52) a. Ɔleshɪ Blɔfo yè Ghana nɔ̃ afi bábáóó  
 Britain PST-eat Ghana on years many  
 ‘Britain ruled Ghana for many years.’
- b. Nùù lɛ kwé nít्सूलó lɛ nɔ̃  
 Man DEF PST- look worker DEF on  
 ‘The man supervised the worker.’

In (52a) the Britain and Ghana are the two objects in contact. The British are those who are in control of affairs. Therefore, the Ghanaians who are under the control of the British will do the bidding of their superiors: they cannot do anything without consulting their superiors. In the same vein, in example (52b), the man is the one in charge of the worker. The worker cannot do anything without talking it over first with the man who is his supervisor. Thus it is seen clearly that the idea of ‘control’ is evident in the phrasal verbs *yè nɔ̃* and *kwé nɔ̃*.

A second extended sense of *nɔ̃* has to do with the idea of ‘putting pressure on an entity’. When one entity is on top of another entity, the entity above puts its weight on the one beneath it thereby putting pressure on the entity underneath. This sense is elucidated in phrasal verbs such as *nyɛ̃ nɔ̃* ‘lit. press on’ and *tá nɔ̃* ‘lit. sit on’. *Nyɛ̃ nɔ̃*, for instance, describes literally, a situation in which someone is putting his/her weight on another, either using part of his body or the whole body. This literal situation can also be captured in an abstract sense. Someone can put his weight on another without necessarily doing it physically. If a person uses words, gestures and other means to force another to do something, we can say that that person is putting weight or pressure on another. And this captures the meaning of ‘to force to do something’. In the same vein, *tá nɔ̃* means ‘to suppress’. In suppressing one’s promotion or happiness or something, it does not mean that someone is physically sitting on the things mentioned since it is impossible to do that physically; rather it means that through the doings of someone, another person’s promotion or happiness is prevented. In this phrasal verb also, the idea of ‘putting pressure on an entity’ is reflected.

One last identifiable sense of *nɔ̃* indicates ‘continuation of an action or situation’. This is exhibited in the phrasal verb *tsá nɔ̃*. Let’s illustrate this sense with the following constructions:

- (53) a. *Mì tsá mí- níkasémō lē nɔ̃*  
 1SG PST- join 1SG POSS learning DEF on  
 ‘I continued my learning.’

- b. Nùù lē tsá gbògbò lē nò  
 Man DEF PST- join wall DEF on  
 ‘The man extended the wall.’

Example (53a) depicts a person learning, but this person had to stop his or learning at a point in time due to something. After finishing with the activity that pulled him away from learning the person comes back to learning again. This image captures the idea of continuity. Thus we see the learner continuing with the action of learning. Similarly, in example (53b), we see a man who had initially built a wall, but due to certain circumstances, he decides to raise the wall. Here, we can see the continuation of an action. This action is the building of the wall. Therefore, the sense of *nò* which is ‘continuation of an action or situation’ is reflected in the phrasal verb described above.

The last particle that will be looked at is *sèè*. *Sèè* has the basic interpretations ‘back’, ‘at the back of’ and ‘behind’. This particle has three metaphorical meanings. The first and foremost is that it expresses the idea of ‘support’. This sense is reflected in phrasal verbs such as *dámò sèè* ‘lit. stand behind’ and *nyíè sèè* ‘walk behind’. *Dámò sèè*, for example, literally depicts a person who has positioned himself/herself behind another person. It can be that that person is standing there either to offer help or he/she is standing there because it is a queue. This literal sense of *sèè* has been extended to an abstract situation where a person does not physically position himself/herself behind another to help, but rather offers that help through sayings and actions, and this

precisely is what constitutes ‘the act of showing support’. Similarly, *nyĩé sɛ̀ɛ̀* which also has the meaning ‘to support’ depicts a person supporting the doings of another through words and actions.

In a related meaning, *sɛ̀ɛ̀* is associated with ‘lateness’. *Sɛ̀ɛ̀* which basically means ‘behind’ is not only seen in terms of two concrete objects where one is behind the other, but it can also be viewed in terms of an abstract entity, time, and a concrete object, human, where the concrete object is behind time. This sense is evident in such phrasal verb as *kpè sɛ̀ɛ̀* literally ‘to meet behind’. *Kpè sɛ̀ɛ̀*, for instance, shows a situation in which a meeting has been organized for members or a meeting has been scheduled between two people and a set time has been given for members to attend, but some members come after the set time. In this scenario the members are behind the scheduled time instead of coming before the set time. This imagery captures the practice of lateness.

*Sɛ̀ɛ̀* also expresses the idea of ‘returning to an earlier location’. It is commonly used to indicate the return of an object/entity to its earlier/initial location. This sense is evident in the phrasal verb *kũ sɛ̀ɛ̀* which literally means to ‘break back’. Let us consider the examples below:

(54) a. Kofi kũ sɛ̀ɛ̀ ketèè shíã ní àkpá nĩtsúmō lē.

Kofi PST- break back AUX-go house when IMP-close work DEF.

‘Kofi returned home after work.’

b. Moi kù sɛ̀ɛ̀ ètè̀è skul bè ní èyè níí ètà yè shíã lē

Moi PST- break back go school time that eat food finish at home DEF  
 ‘Moi returned to school after he finished eating at home.’

In example (54a) we can see that Kofi left the house to work and after finishing the day’s work at the office he came back home. Here, Kofi’s initial position was the house and that was his earlier location and we see him returning to his initial location. In the same vein, in example (54b), we see that the initial location of Moi was the school. He left the school to the house to take probably his lunch. After eating we see Moi going back to his earlier location which was the school. These two constructions show that the particle *sɛ̀ɛ̀* expresses the idea of ‘returning to an earlier location.’

From the above discussions, it has been established that out of the nine (9) particles used in forming Ga phrasal verbs only the basic meanings of four can be extended metaphorically. It was also realized that when the meaning of a particle is not literal, but extended metaphorically, to abstract and non-visible domains, it often creates the unique meaning of a phrasal verb. It was also observed that the metaphorical meanings derived from the basic interpretations were associated with the totality of the sense of the phrasal verb.

### Metaphorical Meaning of the Phrasal Verbs

In fact, the meanings of many phrasal verbs are metaphorical, and if we understand the metaphors the phrasal verbs use, it will be easier to understand and remember their meanings. For decades or so, cognitive linguistics has explored

phrasal verbs based on this metaphorical understanding. Metaphorical understanding allows us to “conceive, characterize and express high-level abstract reality” (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003, p.7). That is, through metaphorical understanding the meaning of abstract or non-visible concepts manifested by phrasal verbs are effectively understood. This section gives an analysis of the metaphorical meaning of some Ga phrasal verbs. In the data a lot of phrasal verbs were found out to have metaphorical meanings, but only a few will be discussed.

We will commence the discussion with *tĩ hɛ̀* ‘to give a hint of’ which literally means ‘to scrape/scratch surface’. There is, on the surface, no semantic connection between ‘scrapping’ and ‘hinting’. Over time however, transparency develops between the two, with the metaphorical perception of an event or story as a solid substance with scales or layers of skin. In this connection, the nature of activity capturing the removal of the skin or layers determines the details of the message. It is in this context that *tĩ* is transparently interpreted: *tĩ* denotes a minimal tampering with the scales or layers of the metaphorical message, which captures the idea ‘giving a hint’ rather than ‘telling’

The second phrasal verb that will be looked at is *tsà shìshì̀*. Let us consider the examples below:

- (55) a. Nùù lɛ̀ mĩ̀- tsà tsó lɛ̀ shìshì̀  
 Man DEF PROG-dig tree DEF under  
 ‘The man is digging under the tree.’

- b. Nùù lē tsà yòò lē shìshì  
 Man DEF PST- dig woman DEF under  
 ‘The man investigated the woman.’

In example (55), the construction in (a) has a literal meaning and refers to a physical action, while the second is metaphorical and describes an action that is similar in some way to the first. One can dig under a tree to get to the root of the tree, but one cannot physically dig the under of a woman. Therefore, this action of digging is metaphorical compared to a situation where a man finds out more about a woman he wants to marry that is, the not- so- obvious things about the woman, just like the roots of a tree, which are not obvious. He investigates the background of the woman in order to know precisely every little detail about the woman.

The next phrasal verb that will be looked at is *nyǐě nǎ*. Let’s consider the examples below:

- (56) a. Gbékē nùù lē nyǐě àgbà lē nǎ  
 Child man DEF PST- walk bridge DEF on  
 ‘The boy walked on the bridge.’
- b. Gbékē nùù lē nyǐě atàdé lē nǎ  
 Child man DEF PST- walk attire DEF on  
 ‘The boy ironed the attire.’

In example (56a), ‘*nyǐě nǎ*’ is used literally. It refers to a physical action whereby a boy makes a movement by walking on a bridge. The (b) is metaphorical and describes an action that is similar in some way to the (a)

because in ironing the iron moves over the attire, just like a person walking over a bridge.

Similarly, *míã mlî* ‘to squeeze/tighten in’ which, as a phrasal verb, means ‘to intensify’ has a metaphor serving as a link between the literal meaning and the idiomatic meaning. When a person squeezes or tightens something, it means the person uses his energy to do the squeezing or tightening. In the same vein when a person intensifies something it means that the person puts in a lot of effort and energy.

The last phrasal verb that will help in illustrating metaphor that underlies the meaning of some Ga phrasal verbs is *shà mlî* ‘to reshuffle’ which literally means ‘to winnow in’. This phrasal verb, which literally depicts the removal of chaff or other waste from the main substance, is being compared to how ministers or leaders are reshuffled. In the processes of ministerial reshuffling, non-performing ministers are removed and others are brought on board. These non-performing ministers or leaders who are made to step down can be likened to the chaff that is sieved out of the main substance.

Contrary to what has been discussed above, it was observed in the data that quite a few of phrasal verbs do not have metaphorical meanings. That is, one cannot understand their idiomatic or abstract meaning by looking at their literal or concrete meaning. There is no connection at all between their literal and idiomatic meanings. Some of such phrasal verbs were *dà shî* ‘lit. grow down’, *dò hè* ‘lit. turn surface’, *fò shî* ‘to wander’, *gbá mlî* ‘lit. split in’ among others. For



instance, the literal meaning of the phrasal verb *dà shĩ* which is ‘to grow down’ has nothing to do with its idiomatic meaning which is ‘to thank someone’. None of the phrasal verb elements gives a clue as to what the meaning of that phrasal verb is. Thus we can say that all these phrasal verbs are purely idiomatic and they do not have any metaphorical meanings at all.

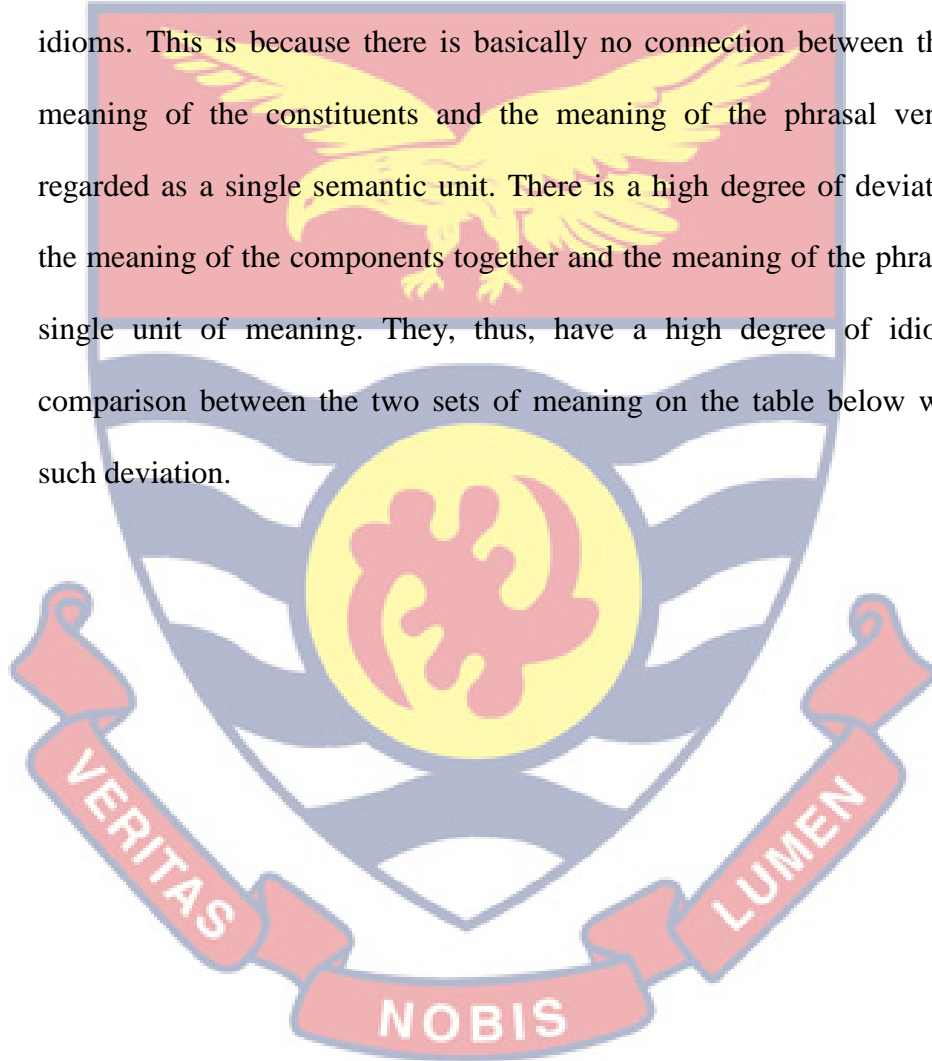
In the above discussions we observed that the meanings of the phrasal verbs were abstract and through metaphorical understanding these abstract meanings exhibited by the phrasal verbs were effectively understood. It was also observed that in the data most of the phrasal verbs had metaphorical meanings, but quite a few did not.

### **The Idiomaticity of the Ga Phrasal Verb**

We will look at the relationship between the phrasal verb as a single semantic unit and the surface meaning that could be derived from it as a combination of verb and adposition item, which are independent semantic units. According to Sekyi-Baidoo (2006) this relationship may be referred to as a phrasal verb’s idiomaticity. He intimates that idiomaticity may be seen as the level of deviation between the surface meaning of an utterance and the actual meaning or intention it is supposed to convey (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2002). We can therefore deduce from the intimation made and say that idiomaticity is basically on the basis of the fact that the meaning of the phrasal verb as a single semantic unit is different from the meaning of the combination of verb item and adposition element as a syntactic unit composed of independent semantic entities which have separate, independent meanings in or outside the combination, which are factored

into the meaning of the resulting phrase. Palmer (1981) establishes that idiomaticity is often a matter of degree. He distinguishes between total idioms and partial idioms, and this distinction is the bedrock on which our discussions on idiomaticity lie.

Based on his distinction, we can describe some Ga phrasal verbs as total idioms. This is because there is basically no connection between the aggregate meaning of the constituents and the meaning of the phrasal verb, which is regarded as a single semantic unit. There is a high degree of deviation between the meaning of the components together and the meaning of the phrasal verb as a single unit of meaning. They, thus, have a high degree of idiomaticity. A comparison between the two sets of meaning on the table below will establish such deviation.



**Table 4: Phrasal Verbs that are Total Idioms**

Phrasal Verbs	Meaning as Phrasal Verb	Meaning From Constituents
bò tǒi	to listen, obey, be expectant	to shout at the edge of
dà shì	to thank someone	to grow down
dào hè	to cherish	to turn surface
fò shì	to wander	to cut down
gbá mǐ	to be lucky	to split in
jàlé mǐ	to explain	to rinse in
jè mǐ	to die, dodge	to leave in
jè shìshì	to start	to leave under
kpá mǐ	to stretch, rest	to blow in
là mǐ	to slap	to hook in
nǎǎ shì	to inform secretly	to step down
nǎǎ mǐ	to dress gorgeously, worsen	to step in

Looking at the table above, we can see clearly that the idiomatic meaning of the phrasal verb (meaning as phrasal verbs) totally deviates from the non-idiomatic meaning (meaning from constituents). For instance, *nǎǎ mǐ* non-idiomatically means ‘to step in/inside’. As a phrasal verb it means ‘to dress gorgeously’ or ‘to worsen a situation’. Certainly, there is no connection between the aggregate meaning of the constituents and the meaning of the phrasal verb. Thus, none of the elements gives a clue as to what the meaning of the phrasal verb will be.

Some phrasal verbs have appreciable degrees of transparency between the meaning of the phrasal verb as a unit and the aggregate meaning of the component elements. Palmer (1981) calls them partial idioms. Some Ga phrasal verbs can be described as partial idioms. This is because one of the constituents gives a clue as to what the meaning of the phrasal verb will be. Let us consider the table below.

**Table 5: Phrasal Verbs that are Partial Idioms**

Phrasal Verbs	Meaning as Phrasal Verb	Meaning From Constituents
bà n̄	to come off, be in vogue, be proud	to come on
bà m̄l̄	to manifest, be angry, be excited	to come in/inside
bóte m̄l̄	to investigate	to enter in
fò m̄l̄	to be absent, interrupt, cancel	to cut in
kwé n̄	to supervise, guard	to look on
kwé m̄l̄	to investigate	to look in
m̄iã m̄l̄	to intensify	to squeeze in
tsì n̄ãã	to hospitalize, prevent	to block mouth

In the phrasal verbs above, the transparency is associated with the verb stem which becomes the pivot for the meaning of the compound as a whole. The particle also gives the semantic deviation or the idiomaticity. For instance, in *bà n̄* ‘to come off, be in vogue, be proud’ and *bà m̄l̄* ‘to manifest, be angry, be excited’, there is the idea of something which was not in existence coming into force or appearing. This idea is associated with the verb item *bà* ‘come’. On the other hand, the addition of the particle *n̄* ‘on’ and *m̄l̄* ‘in/inside’ gives the

phrasal verbs meanings which deviate from just ‘come’. These deviations are, mainly, from the fact that the particles assume a meaning that differs from its original meaning. Again, in *tsĩ nãã* which means ‘to hospitalize, prevent’, there is the notion of blocking something from occurring or blocking the movement of someone. This idea is associated with the verb item *tsĩ* ‘block’. In this case too, the addition of the particle gives the phrasal verb meaning which deviates from just ‘block’.

The above discussion has established the distinction between phrasal verbs that are total idioms and those that are partial idioms. Quite a number of the phrasal verbs were found to be total idioms with just a few being partial idioms. It was seen that in all the phrasal verbs that are partial idioms the transparency was associated with the verbal element with the particle giving out the deviation in meaning. Thus, it is always the verbal element that gives a clue as to what the meaning of the phrasal verb is.

### **Polysemy in Ga Phrasal Verbs**

In polysemy, we are talking about the different related senses of a lexical unit or word. According to Sekyi-Baidoo (2006) phrasal verbs are considered polysemous when they relate one another physically and semantically, and when they collectively differ from the meaning derived from the aggregate meaning of their constituent words. In spite of the need for some deviation in the establishment of phrasal verbs, there is also the need for some recognizable degree of relativity between the meanings of the verb and the particle as used in

the phrasal verb and as exists in non- idiomatic usage for phrasal verbs to be regarded as polysemous. Where there is a high degree of idiomaticity or opacity between phrasal verbs and the meanings of their constituent words, there cannot hold between them a polysemous relationship. This is because the meanings of the phrasal verbs will be very arbitrary, and predictability, rather than arbitrariness or randomness is a crucial factor in the realization of polysemy. This section will give an account of the analysis made on Ga polysemic phrasal verbs. *Gbèé shì* and *dámò mĩ* will be the phrasal verbs in focus.

The phrasal verb *gbèé shì* has the following idiomatic meanings: ‘to lose respect or status’, ‘to cause someone’s downfall’, ‘to die or cease to exist’ and ‘to backslide’; these different meanings are all associated with the original, non-idiomatic meaning of ‘to fall down’, giving the image of someone moving from an upright posture or a higher position to a declined posture of lying on the ground. That is, it expresses the idea of movement from a higher position to a lower position. The first meaning of *gbèé shì* ‘to lose respect or status’ presents the picture of someone who at first was held in high esteem but has lost that respect due to something he or she did. Similarly, the phrasal verb meaning ‘to backslide’ also paints the picture of someone who used to be active and enthused about the things of God but has become dull and no longer shows interest in such things. This picture captures a person who was, at one point in time, up the Christian ladder but now finds himself at the bottom of the ladder.

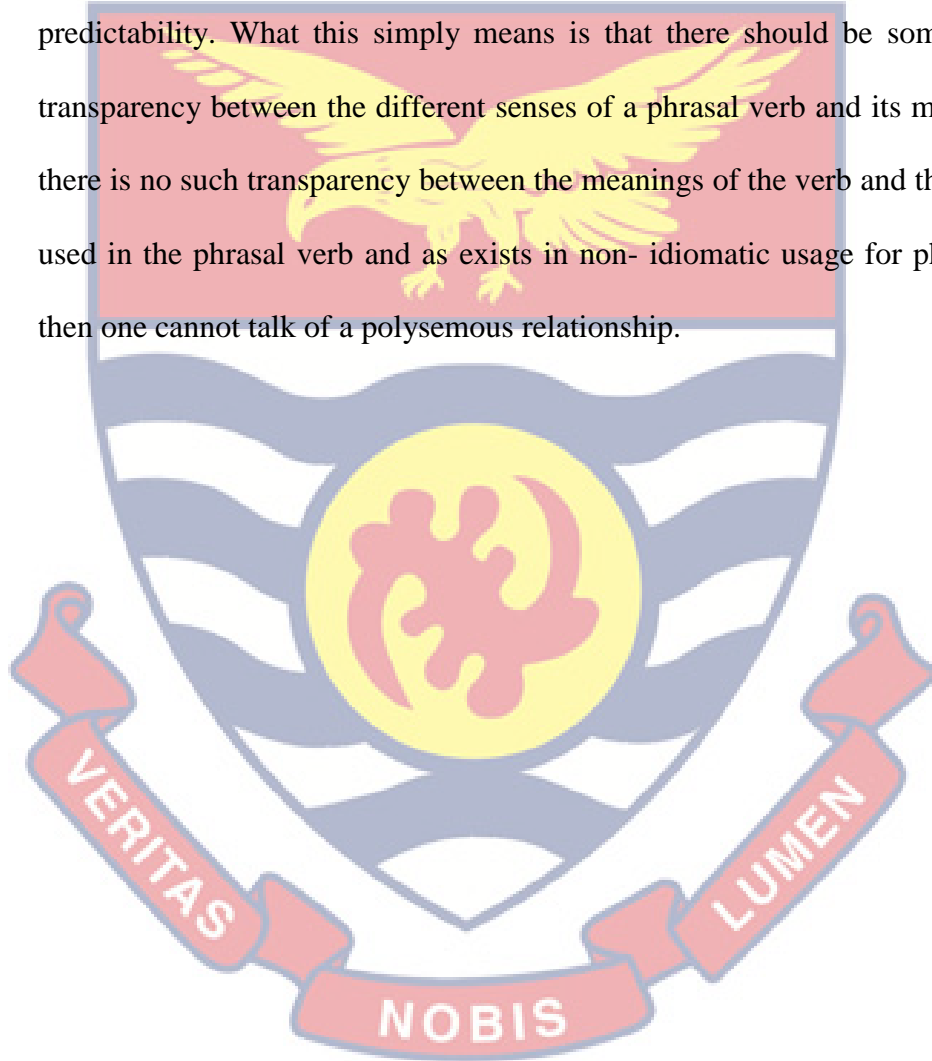
Again, the meaning ‘to cause someone’s downfall’ depicts a person who has everything he/she wants but due to someone’s action he has lost those things,

meaning that the person has moved from a position where he has everything which can be considered as a higher position to a position where he has lost everything which also can be viewed as a lower position. Finally, the meaning ‘to die’ or ‘to cease to exist’ both show someone or something that used to be alive and vibrant but does not exist longer. A person who is dead can never be seen having an erect posture, he will be seen lying on the ground and a business that has collapsed cannot be considered as functioning. Therefore, we can say that this meaning is derived from the non-idiomatic meaning of the phrasal verb.

*Damò mlì* which literally means ‘to stand in/inside’ also has the following idiomatic meaning: ‘to intercede’, ‘to represent’ and ‘to guarantee’. These idiomatic meanings are related because they are all associated with the idea of ‘doing something on behalf of someone’ and they emanate from a single sense. This general sense is ‘to stand in’ which is the non-idiomatic meaning of the phrasal verb. The non-idiomatic meaning gives the image of someone standing in something. Physically, that something could be water, a basin or an object that one can stand in. For instance, the first meaning of the phrasal verb ‘to intercede’ presents a picture where there is an issue to be settled by someone and another person comes in to stand in for the former. Here, we can see that the issue has nothing to do with the latter; he/she rather comes in to do something on behalf of another person. In this context what he/she is standing in is not water or anything else, rather an issue to be solved. Similarly, the phrasal verb meaning ‘to represent’ and ‘to guarantee’ both paint a picture where someone gets involved in

an issue that does not concern him/her only; he only moves in to stand in the gap for another person.

The discussion above has highlighted the polysemic uses of *gbèé shĩ̀* and *dàmò mĩ̀*. We realized that the key factor in the realization of polysemy is predictability. What this simply means is that there should be some degree of transparency between the different senses of a phrasal verb and its main sense. If there is no such transparency between the meanings of the verb and the particle as used in the phrasal verb and as exists in non- idiomatic usage for phrasal verbs, then one cannot talk of a polysemous relationship.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The primary objective of the research was to investigate the syntax and semantics of Ga phrasal verbs. The study focused attention on the syntactic and semantic features of the phrasal verbs as well as their idiomatic and polysemous nature. This final chapter gives a summary of the work, presents the implications of the study, gives the conclusion, and makes recommendations for further research.

#### Summary of Research

This research identified and explored the syntax and semantics of Ga phrasal verbs. Specifically, it sought to find out whether phrasal verbs exist in the grammar of Ga. Consequently, the researcher formulated three basic research questions to guide the study:

1. *What syntactic elements constitute the Ga phrasal verb?*
2. *What are the syntactic and semantic features of Ga phrasal verbs?*
3. *How is idiomaticity expressed in Ga phrasal verbs?*

With these research questions in view, the researcher adopted a descriptive approach to research to examine and illustrate how Ga phrasal verbs manifest in discourse. In addition, the research drew on qualitative content analysis and was informed by various methodological procedures – including research design, data source, data collection procedure and data translation and transcription procedure

– that built the necessary ground for the study and contributed to the conceptualization of the study.

The data were analyzed using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Sekyi-Baidoo's (2002, 2006) notion of idiomaticity of Akan phrasal verbs also informed the analysis. Together, these two ideas enabled the researcher to shed light on the Ga phrasal verbs and to bring some useful insights to bear on them.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

With specific reference to the research questions, the following are the major findings made in the study:

First, it is evident from the research that phrasal verbs constitute a single semantic unit that expresses idiomatic meaning. To this end, Ga phrasal verbs can be distinguished from other verbal compounds in Ga, including serial verbs, inherent complement verbs, verb and noun compounds as well as non-idiomatic verb and adposition combinations. The Ga phrasal verb comprises two parts: the verbal element and the post-verbal element. The verbal element is usually a lexical (dynamic) verb – either native or adopted and adapted from neighbouring languages – while the post-verbal element is always a postposition. It was also seen that not all postpositions in Ga could form the post-verbal element in a phrasal verb.

Furthermore, the research reveals that syntactically, Ga phrasal verbs are of three types, namely intransitive, mono transitive and di-transitive. There are a few, however, that can be used both transitively and intransitively, and so can be

considered ambi-transitive phrasal verbs or transitive-intransitive phrasal verbs. The intransitive phrasal verbs do not take on objects, and their verbal and post-verbal constitution cannot be breached. That is, the verbal and post-verbal elements that make up the phrasal verb cannot be separated from each other. The Ga intransitive phrasal verb can be copulative, ergative or active.

Unlike the intransitive phrasal verbs in Ga, the mono transitive phrasal verbs take on a single object, usually a nominal or an entire clause. Importantly, the object, invariably, occurs between the verbal and the post-verbal elements, thereby separating the elements from each other. The di-transitive phrasal verbs, on the other hand, take on two objects in view of which such phrasal verbs exhibit a three-person relationship between the subject, the direct object and the indirect object. It is noteworthy that in Ga di-transitive phrasal verbs, the two objects always precede the post-verbal element, but follow the main verbal element. The Ga phrasal verbs that can be used both transitively and intransitively are largely context-dependent, and may not be classified as a major sub type of Ga phrasal verbs.

Thirdly, the semantic analysis shows that the Ga phrasal verbs express both basic/literal and metaphorical/figurative meanings. However, not all Ga phrasal verbs can have their basic literal meanings extended to a metaphorical meaning. Metaphor indeed underlies the meaning of most Ga phrasal verbs, and it is by understanding these metaphors that the overall meaning of the phrasal verbs can be properly construed and easily remembered.

Finally, with regard to idiomaticity of Ga phrasal verbs, the study found that Ga phrasal verbs are idiomatic expressions in that their basic meanings may

not necessarily correspond with their actual intended meanings. In this regard, the phrasal verbs may be considered total idioms – in which case there is no relationship whatsoever between the aggregate meaning of the constituents and the meaning of the phrasal verb regarded as a single unit – or partial idioms because one of the constituent elements gives a clue to what the meaning of the phrasal verb will be. The extent of idiomaticity of the Ga phrasal verbs is also linked to their polysemous/polysemic meaning. Thus, the higher the idiomaticity and/or opacity of the phrasal verbs, the less likely it is that they will be polysemous in nature. It is only a few Ga phrasal verbs that have polysemous meanings.

### **Implications of the Study**

The findings of the present research have at least three implications.

First, the study has pedagogical implications. Given that the study is a linguistic descriptive study of a relatively under-researched language, it stands to reason that the findings of the study will be useful in the formal instruction and learning of Ga. The findings adduced in this study will, therefore, be helpful for both teachers and learners of Ga. Ga, a popular Ghanaian language, is taught as a subject from basic school to university level in Ghana; hence, the information revealed by this study should prove helpful in the teaching and learning of Ga phrasal verbs.

Also, the pedagogical value of the study can be seen in its potential to serve as a basis of comparison for Ga phrasal verbs and the phrasal verbs of other Ghanaian languages, especially languages of the Niger-Congo (Kwa branch).

Such comparative studies, undeniably, will further enhance the understanding of Ga phrasal verbs, as they will shed more light on the phenomenon. In terms of pedagogy, therefore, the study should be relevant for Ga language students, teachers, researchers, translators, textbook writers, curriculum designers, and educationalists.

Second, the study has theoretical implications for Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). CMT submits that the conceptual system of humans from which they think and act, and which is central in defining their everyday realities is largely metaphorical. Similarly, the present study finds that the meanings that underlie the Ga phrasal verbs are, invariably, metaphorical, thereby lending credence to CMT. Again, CMT points out that metaphors are conceptual structures that are realizable linguistically. In this light, the present study shows how, as a linguistic category, phrasal verbs give linguistic expression to a cognitive process. Importantly, by applying CMT to Ga (a language to which it may not have been previously applied), the present study extends the application and usefulness of CMT to a language under-researched in the CMT literature.

Finally, the findings of the study have implications for the scholarship on phrasal verbs in Ghanaian/African languages in general and Ga in particular. Against the backdrop that the Ga literature is nearly silent on phrasal verbs, this study may be a good attempt at igniting research interest in such an important linguistic category as the phrasal verb. Moreover, this research adds to the increasing interest in African linguistic research on syntax and semantics as it, in itself, makes a modest contribution in this area.

## Conclusion

Though there has been silence on Ga phrasal verbs in the literature, the foregoing brings the phenomenon to light. Indeed, they constitute an important category in the grammar of Ga. Their meanings affect the import of what is said and/or communicated. They represent an aspect of Ga grammar that contributes significantly to how an utterance is encoded, decoded or interpreted. It is hoped that this study has contributed to research in Ga syntax and semantics, and it is the researcher's desire that this study will engender further studies on Ga phrasal verbs in an effort to broaden and deepen our understanding of such an important linguistic phenomenon.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications emanating from the study, the following are suggested as areas that further research is desirable:

First, future studies could draw on a corpus-based and/or assisted approach to explore the syntax and semantics of the Ga phrasal verbs. Given the time constraints of this study, a large corpus could not be constructed for the study. Hence, a future study that sets out from the outset to explore the Ga phrasal verb by means of a comprehensive corpus will have the merit of either affirming or repudiating the claims herein adduced.

The second line of future research would be to do a comparative study of the Ga phrasal verbs with its Niger-Congo (Kwa branch) counterparts like Akan and Dangme. Research with this focus will investigate the differences and similarities between the syntactic and semantic features of the phrasal verbs of the

two or more languages as well as the factors that could possibly account for them. A comparative study of Ga and English should also be possible.

Finally, an empirical study focusing on specific or specialized data of phrasal verbs should be rewarding. The present study collected data on phrasal verbs from diverse media. A study that looks at a specialized corpus – for instance, phrasal verbs in Ga language teaching materials should reveal very interesting findings.



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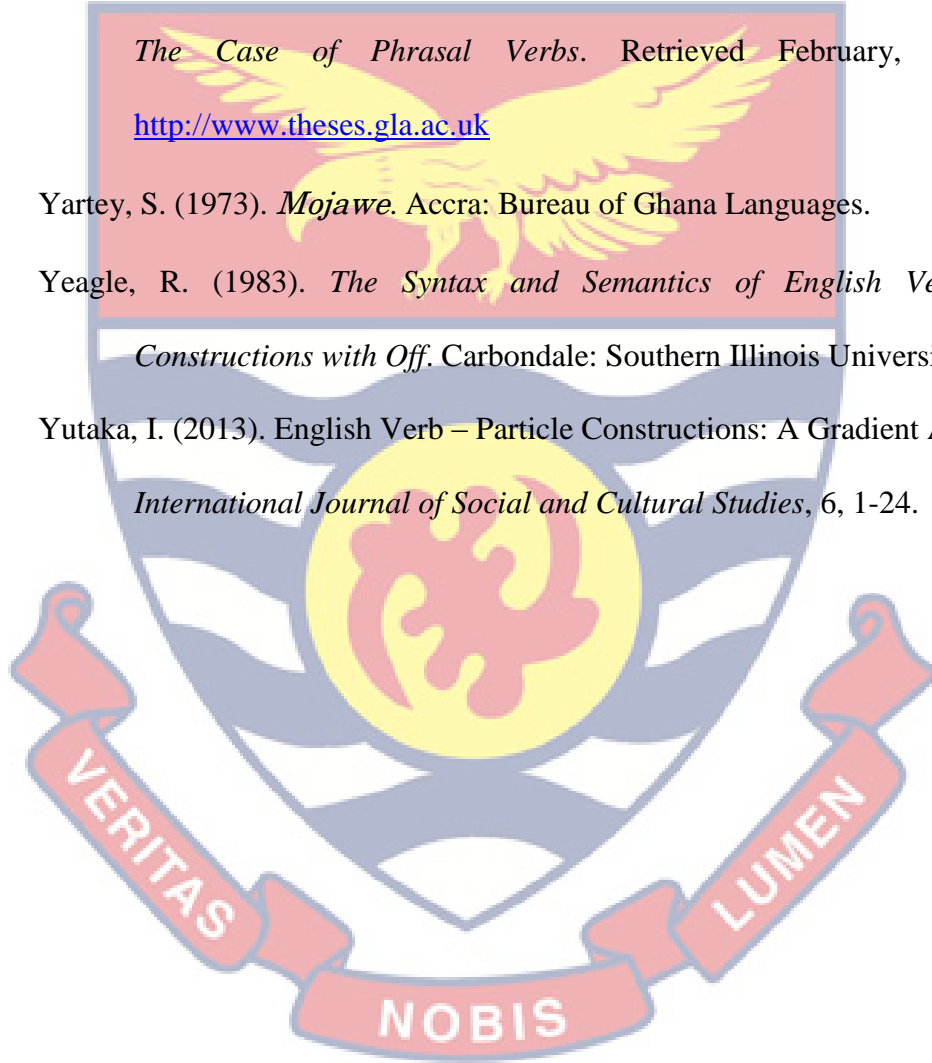
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## APPENDIX A

## List of Ga Phrasal Verbs and their Usage in Context

## 1. B`a m`fi

come in/inside

- a. to manifest → Moi lam`d` l`e b`a m`fi.  
Moi dream DEF PST-come in  
'Moi's dream manifested.'

- b. to be angry → Kwei j`e`j`b`a l`e h`a e- p`a`p`a b`a m`fi.  
Kwei's behaviour DEF PST-make his father PST-come in.  
'Kwei's behaviour infuriated his father.'

- c. to be excited → M`i`sh`e` s`a`n`e l`e h`a Kojo b`a m`fi ɣm`e`n`e`  
Good news DEF made Kojo PST-come in today  
'The good news made Kojo excited today'

- d. to be drunk → D`a`a l`e h`a n`u`u l`e b`a m`fi  
Alcohol DEF PST-make man DEF PST-come in  
'The man became drunk because of the alcohol'

## 2. B`a n`o`

come on/up

- a. to come off → Y`o`o`k`p`e`e`m`o l`e b`a n`o`  
Marriage ceremony DEF PST-come on  
'The marriage ceremony came off.'

- b. to be in vogue → Y`i`ts`w`e`i n`e`e b`a n`o` e- t`se- k`o.  
Hairstyle this PST-come on NEG-long-PERF  
'This hairstyle was in vogue not long ago.'

- c. to be arrogant → Gb`e`k`e n`u`u l`e e- b`a n`o` t`s`o`.  
Child boy DEF PERF-come on too much.  
'The boy has become too arrogant.'

## 3. B`a h`i`e`

come front/face

- to be tipsy → D`a`a l`e b`a n`u`u l`e h`i`e`  
Alcohol DEF PST-come man DEF face  
'The man was tipsy.'

## 4. B`a sh`i`

come down

a. to be humble→ Nítsúlō lē bà è- hē shì  
Worker DEF PST-come 3SG REF PRON down  
'The worker humbled himself.'

b. to humiliate→ È- bà Tēte shì  
3SG PST-come Tēte down  
'He humiliated Tēte.'

c. to reduce price→ Lòò lē jàrà è- bà shì  
fish DEF price PERF-come down  
'The price of the fish has been reduced.'

5. Bè shì  
shrink down

a. to hide → È- bè shì yè tsù lē sèè  
3SG PST-shrink down at room DEF behind  
'He hid behind the house.'

b. To take it easy → Mì- bè shì  
I shrink down  
'I am taking it easy.'

6. Bóte mǐ  
enter in/inside

• to investigate→ Lóyàfónyò lē bóte sàné lē mǐ  
Lawyer DEF PST-enter matter DEF inside  
'The lawyer investigated the case.'

7. Bò tǒi  
Shout near

a. to listen→ Ama bò mì tǒi  
Ama PST-shout me near  
'Ama listened to me.'

b. to be expectant→ Moi bò è- hē tǒi  
Moi PST-shout 3SG REF PRON near  
'Moi was expectant.'

c. to obey→ Aku bò è- mǎmí wíémǎ tǒi  
Aku shout POSS-mother speech near  
'Aku obeyed her mother.'

8. Bú nǎà  
wear mouth



- a. to cover→ Ama bú tsénsí lē nǎǎ  
Ama PST-wear saucepan DEF mouth  
'Ama covered the saucepan with the lid.'
- b. to die→ Gbékē lē bú è- nǎǎ  
Child DEF PST-wear 3SG- mouth  
'The child died.'
- c. to be silent→ Èká- bú è- nǎǎ yè mí- sòlèmò nǎǎ hè  
3SG NEG- wear 3SG POSS-mouth at my prayer this surface  
'He should not be silent on my prayer.'
9. Bú nǎǎ  
wear on
- to cover→ È- kè tsò bú gbè lē nǎǎ  
3SG-AUX board PST-wear pot DEF on  
'She covered the pot with a board.'
10. Bú shǐ  
wear down
- To turn over→ Mǐ- kè plète lē bú shǐ  
I AUX plate DEF PST-wear down  
'I turned the plate over.'
11. Bù hē  
count surface
- to guard→ È- bù níbií lē à - hē  
3SG PST-count things DEF ASSOC-surface  
'He guarded the things.'
12. Dámò sèè  
stand back/behind
- to support→ Yòò lē dāmò è- bí lē sèè  
Woman DEF PST-stand POSS-child DEF back  
'The woman supported his child.'
13. Dámò mǐ  
stand in/inside
- a. to intercede→ È- dāmò sǎnè lē mǐ è- há wò  
3SG PST-stand case DEF inside 3SG-give 1PL  
'She interceded for us in the case.'
- b. to represent→ Mǐ- nyémí yòò lē dāmò mǐ è- há mǐ  
1SG POSS sister DEF PST-stand inside 3SG-give 1SG  
'My sister represented me.'

- c. to guarantee → Kuma dà m̀ m̀lì è- há m̀ àfà m̀ shìkà lē  
Kuma PST-stand inide 3SG-give me loan me money DEF  
'Kuma guaranteed my loan.'

## 14. Dà shì

grow down

- to thank someone → M̀i- dà b̀ shì  
1SG grow 2SG down  
'I thank you.'

## 15. D̀ h̀

turn surface

- to love → P̀lìsìfonyò lē d̀- ó è- m̀ Ghana h̀  
Police DEF turn-HAB 3SG POSS - country Ghana surface  
'The police man love his country Ghana.'

## 16. F̀ m̀lì

cut in/inside

- a. to cancel → Ts̀l̀ ǹkpá lē f̀ Kwame gb̀i m̀lì  
teacher senior DEF PST-cut Kwame name inside  
'The headteacher cancelled Kwame's name.'

- b. to interrupt → È- f̀ wìem̀ lē m̀lì  
3SG PST-cut conversation DEF inside  
'He interrupted the conversation.'

- c. to be absent → Kuma f̀ ǹts̀m̀ m̀lì ñm̀ǹ  
Kuma PST-cut work inside today  
'Kuma absented himself from work today.'

## 17. F̀ h̀

cut surface

- a. to fence → Odoi f̀ ñm̀ lē h̀  
Odoi PST-cut farm DEF surface  
'Odoi fenced the farm.'
- b. to surround → P̀lìsìfòì lē f̀ j̀l̀ lē a- h̀  
Policemen DEF PST-cut thieves DEF ASSOC-surface  
'The policemen surrounded the thieves.'

## 18. F̀ s̀

Cut back

- to stop → Ǹ lē f̀ j̀m̀ lē s̀  
Man DEF PST-cut insult DEF back  
'The man stopped the insult.'

## 19. Fò shì

cut down

- to wander around→ Skùl̩ gbékē lē fò shì  
School child DEF PST-cut down  
'The student wandered around.'

## 20. Fò nǎǎ

cut mouth

- to slander→ È- fò mì- nǎǎ yè nítsumō  
3SG PST-cut 1SG POSS- mouth at work  
'He slandered me at work.'

## 21. Fò shìshì

cut under

- to underline→ Nũũ lē fò mí- gbēi lē shìshì  
Man DEF PST-cut 1SG POSS-name DEF under  
'The man underlined my name.'

## 22. Fì mǐ

tie in

- to fast→ Òsófó lē fì è- mǐ gbìi été  
Pastor DEF PST-tie 3SG POSS- inside days three  
'The pastor fasted for three days.'

## 23. Fí shì

be firm down

- to endure→ È fí shì shiŋŋ kè- tèè gbéle mǐ  
3SG PST-be firm down strongly AUX-go death inside  
'He endured till death.'

## 24. Fí sèè

be firm back

- to support→ È- fí mí- sèè yè sànyéyéli lē mǐ  
3SG PST-be firm 1SG POSS -back at case DEF inside  
'He was on my side during the court trial.'

## 25. Hò mǐ

hide inside

- to keep long→ Tsófàtsè lē yà- hò mǐ dǎnì è- bà  
Medicine man DEF AUX PST-hide in before 3SG come  
'The medicine man kept long before coming.'

## 26. Gbá mǐ

split inside

- a. to be lucky→ Amartey gbá mǐ ŋméné  
Amartey PST-split inside today  
'Amartey was lucky today.'

- b. to be blunt→ Yaayaa gbá mǐ kpóó áké é- yààà  
 Yaayaa PST-split in IDEO that 3SG NEG-go  
 ‘Yaayaa told me bluntly that she won’t go’
- c. to reveal secret→ Nùúmó lē gbá sà̀nè lē mǐ kpóó  
 old man DEF PST-split matter DEF inside IDEO  
 ‘The old man revealed the secret.’

27. Gbá nǎ̀

split mouth

- to disturb→ Nǒ kò mǐ- gbá è- nǎ̀  
 Something PROG-split 3SG POSS mouth  
 ‘Something is disturbing her.’

28. Gbálá mǐ  
 tear inside

- a. to explain→ È- gbála àkǒntáà lē mǐ è- há mǐ  
 3SG PST-tear maths DEF inside 3SG PST-give 1SG  
 ‘He explained the maths to me.’

- b. to separate→ Wò- gbála mǐ yè Osu  
 1PL PST-tear inside at Osu  
 ‘We separated at Osu.’

29. Gbà̀ tǒi  
 pull ear

- to punish→ Nùù lē gbà̀ Oko tǒi  
 Man DEF PST-pull Oko ear  
 ‘The man punished Oko.’

30. Gbè nǎ̀

kill mouth

- a. to make sth blunt→ Odale gbè kàkǎ lē nǎ̀  
 Odale PST-kill knife DEF mouth  
 ‘Odale made the knife blunt.’

- b. to finish→ Anum è- gbè nǐtsúmō lē nǎ̀  
 Anum PERF-finish work DEF mouth  
 ‘Anum has finished the work.’

31. Gbé́lé nǎ̀

open mouth

- to commission→ Má- gbé́lé nǐtsúmō néé nǎ̀ ɲmǐnǐ  
 I FUT-open work this mouth today  
 ‘I will commission this work today.’

32. Gbèé mǐ

fall inside

• to be odd→

Námò è- gbèé mǐ yè wà- tẹ̀  
 who PERF-fall inside at 1PL- middle  
 ‘Who is the odd one in our midst.’

33. Gbèé shǐ

fall down

a. to die→

È- gbèé shǐ lèebi nǚ́ yè Korle Bu  
 3SG fall-PST down morning this at Korle Bu  
 ‘He died this morning at Korle Bu.’

b. cause someone’s downfall→

Yòò lē mǐi- gbèé lē shǐ  
 Woman DEF PROG- fall 3SG down  
 ‘The woman is causing his downfall.’

c. to lose respect→

Ò- gbèé shǐ yè àsafo lē mǐ  
 2SG PERF-fall down at organization DEF inside  
 ‘You have lost respect in the organization.’

d. to cease to exist→

Nítsúmò lē è- gbèé shǐ  
 Work DEF PERF-fall down  
 ‘The business has ceased to exist.’

34. Gbè mǐ

scatter inside

• to spread out→

Àmè- gbè māmà lē mǐ  
 3PL PST-scatter cloth DEF inside  
 ‘They spread out the cloth.’

35. Hà shǐ

scramble down

a. to be impatient→

Kofi hà -a shǐ tsó  
 Kofi scramble-HAB down too much  
 ‘Kofi is too impatient.’

b. to writhe in pain→

Hèlatsè lē mǐi- hà shǐ.  
 Sick person DEF PROG-scramble down  
 ‘The sick person is writhing in pains.’

36. Hì nǎà

detest mouth

- to quarrel → È -kε è- nàànyò lē hì nàà  
3SG AUX 3SG POSS friend DEF PST-detest mouth  
'He quarreled with his friend.'

37. Hé shǐ

take down

- to become popular → Nkrumah gbéì è- hé shǐ díè̀t̀sè  
Nkrumah name PERF-take down very  
'The name Nkrumah has become very popular.'

- to endure → Ga kùsúm̀ bǎá- hé shǐ  
Ga custom FUT- take down  
'Ga custom will endure.'

38. Jálé mǐ̀

rinse in

- a. to explain → Akua jálé sǎ̀nè lē mǐ̀ è- há mǐ̀  
Akua PST-rinse matter DEF in 3SG PST-give 1SG  
'Akua explained the matter to me.'

- b. to slap → È- jálé mǐ̀ è- há lè  
3SG PST-rinse-PST inside 3SG PST-give 3SG  
'He gave him a hard slap.'

39. Jè nò

leave on/on top of

- a. to forget → Mǐ- híè jè nò.  
1SG POSS face PST-leave on  
I forgot.

- b. to back off (insult) → Kofi kèè mǐ- jè è- nò  
Kofi said 1SG-leave 3SG on  
Kofi said I should back off.

- c. to grow up with → Àmè tǎ̀mò mèì nì àmè- kε- jè nò lē  
3PL like those that 3PL AUX PST-leave on DEF  
'They are like those they grew up with.'

40. Jè mǐ̀

leave in

- a. to die → Kwei jè mǐ̀ gbékè nèè  
Kwei PST-leave inside night this  
'Kwei died this evening.'

b. to dodge→ È- fò tɛ lɛ shí mǐ- jè mǐ  
 3SG PST-throw stone DEF but 1SG PST-dodge inside  
 ‘He threw the stone but I dodged.’

41. Jè sɛ̀

leave back/behind

a. to stop supporting→ Mǐ- pàpá jè mǐ- sɛ̀  
 My father PST-leave 1SG-POSS back  
 ‘My father stopped supporting me.’

b. to look for someone→ Ama bà- jè mǐ- sɛ̀  
 Ama AUX PST- leave 1SG POSS back  
 ‘Ama came to look for me.’

c. to repent→ Jùlò lɛ jè èhè sɛ̀  
 Thief DEF PST- leave 3SG REF PRON back  
 ‘The thief repented.’

d. to go behind→ È jè Kwei sɛ̀ nǐ è- yà hé shìkà lɛ  
 He PST-leave Kwei back and 3SG AUX- collect money DEF  
 ‘He went behind his friend to collect the money’

e. to cheat→ Nùù lɛ jè è- nǎ lɛ sɛ̀  
 Man DEF PST-leave 3SG POSS wife DEF back  
 ‘The man cheated on his wife’

42. Jè shǐshǐ

leave under

• to start → Gbékɛ́bíí lɛ jè kàà lɛ shǐshǐ nyè  
 Children DEF PST-leave exam DEF under yesterday  
 ‘The children started the exams yesterday.’

43. Jié mǐ

remove inside

a. to discriminate→ Òo- jié nǐ à- mǐ tsó  
 2SG PROG-remove things ASSOC-inside too much  
 ‘You are discriminating too much.’

b. to explain→ Saka jié sàné lɛ mǐ há mǐ  
 Saka PST-remove matter DEF inside PST- give 1SG  
 ‘Saka explained the matter a little to me.’

44. Jié nǎà

remove mouth

- to respond→ Nùù lē jìé nǎǎ òyá tsò  
Man DEF PST-remove mouth fast too much  
'The man responded too quickly.'

## 45. Kpá mǐ

blow inside

- a. to stretch→ Moi kpá- á è- mǐ tsò  
Moi blow-HAB 3SG POSS inside too much  
'Moi likes stretching himself too much.'

- b. to rest→ Moi kpá è- mǐ yè àsá lē nò  
Moi PST-blow 3SG POSS- inside at sitting room DEF on  
'Moi rested in the sitting room.'

46. Kpá nǎǎ  
remove mouth

- to check→ Àmè- kpá shìká lē nǎǎ  
3PL PST- remove money DEF mouth  
'They checked the money.'

47. Kpá shì  
remove down

- to observe→ Aba kpá lē shì nì è- nǎ ànòkwálé lē  
Aba PST-remove 3SG down and 3SG PST-see truth DEF  
'Aba observed him and discovered the truth.'

48. Kpè mǐ  
sew in

- to decide→ Wò- kpè mǐ áké wò- bǎá- yà shía  
We PST-sew inside that 1PL- FUT- go home  
'We decided to go home.'

49. Kpè sèè  
meet back

- to be late→ Asamoah kpè sèè kè- bà nítsumō  
Asamoah PST-meet back Aux PST-come work  
'Asamoah was late to work.'

50. Kù mǐ  
break in

- to fold → Teley kù àtádé lē mǐ  
Teley PST-break dress DEF inside  
'Teley folded the dress.'

51. Kù nǎǎ  
break mouth



a. to eradicate→ Tsòfà lē kù hèlà lē nàà  
 Medicine DEF PST-break sickness DEF mouth  
 ‘The medicine eradicated the sickness.’

b. to cut short → Kwesi kù Amarh nàà  
 Kwesi PST-break Amarh mouth  
 ‘Kwesi cut Amarh short.’

52. Kù sèè

break back

• to return→ Naa kù è- sèè kè- bà shíã  
 Naa PST-break 3SG POSS back AUX PST-come home  
 ‘Naa returned home.’

53. Kó sèè

take back

• to understand→ Yoo lē kó sàné lē sèè  
 woman DEF PST-take matter DEF back  
 ‘The woman understood the issue.’

54. Kó hè

take surface

• To concern→ Sàné lē kó-ò Kwame hè  
 Matter DEF take-HAB Kwame surface  
 ‘The issue concerns Kwame.’

• to sneak out→

Gbékè nùù lē è- kó è- hè  
 Child boy DEF PERF-take 3SG POSS- surface  
 ‘The boy has sneaked out.’

55. Kó híè

take face

• to drink alcohol→ Nùù lē kó è- híè dānì è- bà  
 Man DEF PST-take 3SG POSS face before 3SG came  
 ‘The man drunk alcohol before coming.’

56. Kwé nò

look on

a. to supervise→ Odoi kwé nít súlòì lē à- nò  
 Odoi PST-look workers DEF ASSOC-on  
 ‘Odoi supervised the workers’

b. to guard→

Tete kwé nò è- há mì  
 Tete PST-look on 3SG PST-give 1SG  
 ‘Tete guarded it for me.’

57. Kwé mǐ

look in

- to investigate→ È- kwé sǎnè lē mǐ fítsofítso  
He PST-look matter DEF inside thoroughly  
'He investigated the matter thoroughly.'

58. Kwé sèè

look back

a. to stand in for→

Odai kwé mǐ - sèè  
Odai look-PST 1SG POSS back  
'Odai stood in for me.'

b. to deputise→

Mǐ- kwé mǐ- nùkpá lē sèè  
1SG PST-look 1SG POSS boss DEF back  
'I deputized for my boss.'

59. Kwé híè

look face

a. to insult→

Gbékè lē kwé nùúmó lē híè  
Child DEF PST-look old man DEF face  
'The child insulted the old man.'

b. to expect→

Má -kwé ó- híè wó  
1SG FUT-look 2SG POSS face tomorrow  
'I shall expect you tomorrow.'

c. to discriminate→

Nùù lē kwé- ò mèi à- híè  
Man DEF look-HAB people ASSOC-face  
'The man discriminates against people.'

60. Là mǐ

hook inside

• to slap →

Polísifonyò lē là mǐ è- há jùlò lē  
Policeman DEF PST- hook inside 3SG PST-give thief DEF  
'The policeman slapped the thief.'

61. Mǎ shì

put down

a. to confront→

È- kè lē mǎ shì  
He AUX 3SG put down  
'She confronted him.'

- b. to have a good sale→ Jàràyéí lē mà shì  
Selling DEF PST-put down  
'Selling was good.'
- c. to get straight to the point→ Ófainé kè sàné lē àmà shì  
Please AUX issue DEF put down  
'Please get straight to the point with the issue.'

## 62. Mǒ nǎà

- hold mouth
- a. to settle→ Àmè- mǒ sàné lē nǎà  
They PST-hold matter DEF mouth  
'They settled the matter.'
- b. to stop from flowing → Néésìfonyò lè mǒ lá lē nǎà  
Nurse DEF PST-hold blood DEF mouth  
'The nursed stopped the blood from flowing.'
- c. to keep quiet→ Núù lē mǒ è- nǎà  
Man DEF PST-hold 3SG POSS- mouth  
'The man kept quiet.'

## 63. Mǎ mǎ

- squeeze inside
- to intensify→ Kwashi mǎ è- fòidámò lē mǎ  
Kwashi PST-squeeze 3SG POSS running DEF in  
'Kwashi intensified his running.'

## 64. Mǎ híè

- Squeeze front
- to make an effort→ Ayita mǎ è- híè eye nii lē  
Ayita PST-squeeze 3SG POSS face he ate food the  
'Ayita made an effort to eat the food.'

## 65. Mù nǎà

- breathe mouth
- a. to hem → Mì- mù àtadè lē nǎà  
1SG PST-breath dress DEF mouth  
'I hemmed the dress.'
- b. to conclude→ È- mù è- wíémò lē nǎà  
3SG PST-breathe 3SG POSS- speech DEF mouth  
'He concluded his speech.'

66. Nà nǎǎ

see mouth

- to understand→ Kwame nǎ sǎnè lē nǎǎ  
Kwame PST-see matter DEF mouth  
'Kwame understood the issue.'

67. Nǎ sǎǎ

get back

- to make profit→ Mǐ- nǎ níhǎǎmǎ lē sǎǎ  
1SG PST-get selling DEF back  
'I made profit from the selling.'

68. Nǎ mǐ

see inside

- to understand→ Yǎǎmǎ lē nǎ mǐ há mǐ  
Old woman DEF PST-see inside PST-give 1SG  
'The old woman understood me.'

69. Nǎǎ nǎ

step on

- a. to alert → Ababio nǎǎ mǐ- nǎnè nǎ  
Ababio PST-step 1SG POSS-leg on  
'Ababio alerted me.'

- b. to accelerate→ Tsǎnèkúdǎ lē nǎǎ tsǎnè lē nǎ  
Driver DEF PST-step lorry DEF on  
'The driver accelerated the car.'

70. Nǎǎ mǐ

Step in/inside

- a. to dress gorgeously→ Yǎǎ lē è- nǎǎ mǐ  
Woman DEF PERF- step inside  
'The woman has dressed gorgeously.'

- b. to worsen→ È- nǎǎ sǎnè lē mǐ  
3SG PST-step matter DEF inside  
'He worsened the matter.'

71. Nǎǎ shi

step down

- to inform secretly→ Kwei nǎǎ shǐ è- kǎǎ mǐ nǎ fǎǎ nǎ  
Kwei PST-step down 3SG PST-tell me thing all thing  
'Kwei informed me secretly about everything.'

72. Nǎ shǐshǐ

hear under

- to understand→ È- nù sàné lē shìshì  
3SG PST-hear matter DEF under  
'She understood the matter.'

73. Nyiē sèè

walk back

- a. to chase→ È kè tū nyiē jùlò lē sèè  
3SG-AUX gun PST-walk thief DEF back  
'He chased the thief with a gun.'

- b. to support→

Nùù lē nyiē è- bí lē sèè  
Man DEF PST-walk 3SG POSS- child DEF back  
'The man supported his son.'

- c. to woo →

Nùù lē nyiē óbláyòò lē sèè.  
Man DEF PST-walk young girl DEF back  
'The man is wooing the young girl.'

74. Nyiē nò

walk on

- to iron → Gbékè lē nyiē àtádé lē nò.  
Child DEF PST-walk dress DEF on  
'The child ironed the dress.'

75. Nyiē shìshì

walk under

- to undermine→ Saka nyiē Ado shìshì  
Saka PST-walk Ado under  
'Saka undermined Ado.'

76. Nyiē hè

walk surface

- to pursue→ Má- nyiē hè má há bò  
1SG FUT-walk surface 1SG FUT-give you  
'I will pursue it for you.'

77. Nyiē mǐ

walk in

- to intervene→ Tète yà- nyiē sàné lē mǐ hà mǐ  
Tète AUX PST-walk matter DEF inside PST-give me  
'Tète intervened in the matter for me.'

78. Nyè nò

press/squeeze on

- to force→ Kofi nyè è- nò dánì è- tèè  
Kofi PST-press 3SG POSS on before 3SG PST-go  
'Kofi forced him before he went.'

## 79. Nyò mǎ

sink inside

- a. to become lost→ Gbòbilò lē nyò kòò mǎ gbìì été  
Hunter DEF PST-sink forest inside days three  
'The hunter got lost in the forest for three days.'

- b. to understand→ Sǎnè lē è- nyò- kò mǎ èhákò mǎ  
Matter DEF NEG-sink-PERF inside 3SG NEG-give 1SG  
'I don't understand the issue.'

## 80. Ɔmè nò

lay on

- to increase price→ A- Ɔmè petro jára nò  
IMP PRON PERF-put petrol price on  
'The price of petrol has been increased.'

## 81. Ɔmè shì

lay down

- a. to postpone→ A- nyè - ɔ àkè yàrà Ɔmè- ò shì  
IMP PRON able-HAB that funeral lay-HAB down  
'A funeral can be postponed.'

- b. to die → Nùúmó lē kè- Ɔmè shì lèébi nǎé

Old man DEF AUX PST-lay down morning this  
'The old man died this morning.'

## 82. Ɔmè mǎ

put inside

- to lock → Saka Ɔmè shínǎà lē mǎ  
Saka PST-put door DEF inside  
'Saka locked the door.'

## 83. Ɔmà shì

write down

- to dart off→ È- kè- Ɔmà shì  
He AUX PST-write down  
'He darted off.'

## 84. Ɔmálā shi

scratch down

- to fall down→ Gbékē lē ᵐmālā shì  
Child DEF PST-scratch down  
'The child fell.'

85. Sà shì

suit down

- to smell→ Àtádé lē mli mī- sà shì  
Dress DEF inside PROG-suit down  
'The dress is smelling.'

86. Sà hè

Suit surface

- to touch→ È nìné sà mī- hè  
3SG POSS- hand PST-suit 1SG POSS surface  
'His hand touched me.'

87. Sà nàà

suit mouth

- to taste→ È sà níyéní lē nàà  
3SG PST-suit food DEF mouth  
'He tasted the food.'

88. Sàà hè

Clean surface

- a. to dress up→ Aku sàà è- hè nì è- tèè sòlèmò  
Aku PST-clean 3SG POSS-surface and 3SG PST-go church  
'Aku dressed up and went to church.'

- b. to prepare→ Níkàsélò lē è- sàà è- hè jògbàjù  
Student DEF PERF-clean 3SG POSS-surface well  
'The student has prepared adequately.'

89. Shí mī

hit in side

- a. to dilute→ Otu kè nū shí wónū lē mī  
Otu AUX water PST-hit soup DEF inside  
'Otu diluted the soup with water.'

- b. to wear→ Mǎ- shí mī- tàdé hèè lè mī ᵐméné  
1SG FUT- hit 1SG POSS- dress new DEF inside today  
'I will wear my new dress today.'

90. Shí hè

hit self

- to dance→ Odoi shí è - hè  
Odoi PST-hit 3SG POSS surface  
'Odoi danced.'

## 91. Shí nò

hit on

- to be among→ Nũũ lē shí wò- nò  
Man DEF hit 3PL- on  
'The man is amongst us.'

## 92. Shí sèè

hit back

- to add something→ È- kè- shí sèè ákè ó- bà mǎa  
3SG AUX PST-hit back that 2SG PST- come early  
'He added that you should come on time.'

## 93. Shí sèè

leave back

- to forget→ Àmè- shí sǎnè lē sèè  
3PL PST-leave matter DEF back  
'They forgot about the case.'

## 94. Shá hè

scrub surface

- a. to scold → Ago shá Akua hè há lē  
Ago PST-scrub Akua surface PST-give 3SG  
'Ago scolded Akua.'

- b. to hurry→ Mì- shá mì- hè kè- tèè sòlemò  
1SG PST-scrub 1SG POSS surface AUX PST- go church  
'I hurried to church.'

## 95. Shá shǐ

scrub down

- a. to wreck→ È kè lèlè lē yà shá shǐ yè tésàà nò  
3SG-AUX boat DEF AUX PST-scrub down at rock on  
'He wrecked his boat on the rock.'

- b. to hurry→ Odai shá shǐ nǐ ó- yà- tsè Moi ó há mì  
Odai scrub down and 2SG-AUX-call Moi 2SG PST-give 1SG  
'Odai hurry up and call Moi for me.'

## 96. Shá nò

scrub on

- to confront→ È- bàà- shá mì- nò ñmǎnǎ  
3SG FUT-scrub 1SG POSS- on today  
'He will be confronted by me today.'

## 97. Shǎ mǐ

burn inside



- to drive at a top speed → Nùù lē shà tsòné lē mǐ  
Man DEF PST-burn car DEF inside  
'The man drove the car at a top speed.'

## 98. Shà mǐ

winnow inside

- a. to reshuffle → Mǎhǐēnyǐéǎ lē shà mǎ̀sò̀lò̀i lē à- mǐ  
President DEF PST-winnow ministers DEF ASSOC in  
'The president reshuffled the ministers.'

- b. to slap →

Ala shà mǐ è - há Kòjo  
Ala PST-winnow inside 3SG PST-give Kòjo  
'Ala slapped Kòjo.'

## 99. Shwíé nò

pour on

- a. to set off → Mǐ- bà- shwíé nò léébi mǐ  
1SG AUX PST-pour on morning inside  
'I will set off in the morning.'

- b. to drum →

Má- shwíé mǐ lē nò  
1SG FUT-pour drum DEF on  
'I will beat the drum.'

100. Shwíé sèè  
pour back

- to take along → Akoto kè mèi lē shwíé è - sèè  
Akoto AUX people DEF PST-pour 3SG POSS back  
'Akoto took the people along.'

101. Tsá nò  
join on

- a. to continue → Mǐ tsá mǐ- níkasémó lē nò  
1SG PST-join 1SG POSS studies DEF on  
'I continued with my studies.'

- b. to extend →

Nùù lē tsá gbòbò lē nò  
Man DEF PST-join wall DEF on  
'The man extended the wall.'

102. Tsà shìshì  
dig under

- to investigate → Nùù lē tsà yòò lē shìshì  
Man DEF PST-dig woman DEF under  
'The man investigated the woman.'

103. Tsà shì  
Dig down

- to chase→ Gbèé lē tsà Kwei shì  
Dog DEF PST-dig Kwei down  
'The dog chased Kwei.'

104. Tí shì  
be thick down

a. to fall on your bottom → Aku sháne nì è- tí shì  
Aku PST-slip and 3SG PST - be thick down  
'Aku slipped and fell on her bottom.'

b. to be taken by surprise → Páatì lē tí mì shì  
Party DEF PST- be thick 1SG down  
'The party took me by surprise.'

105. Tí nò  
be thick on

- to stumble upon → Kwei yà- tí shìkà lē nò.  
Kwei AUXPST -be thick money DEF on  
'Kwei stumbled upon the money.'

106. Tá nò  
sit on

- to suppress→ Ajo tá Mansa mīshèè nò  
Ajo PST- sit Mansa happiness on  
'Ajo suppressed Mansa's happiness.'

107. Tá shì  
sit down

- to have a meeting→ Ònúkpáì lē kè àmè- tá shì lèebi nēè  
Elders DEF AUX 3PL PST- sit down morning this  
'The elders had a meeting with them this morning.'

108. Tò nò  
wrong on

- to disobey→ È tó Nyòŋmò mlá lē nò  
3SG PST- wrong God law DEF on  
'He disobeyed God's law.'

109. Tsòò shìshì  
Show/teach under

- a. to explain→ Ònúkpá lē tsòò sàné lē shìshì  
Elder DEF PST-show matter DEF under  
'The elderly explained the matter.'

b. to translate→

Kwei tsòò wíemɔ lē shìshì  
Kwei PST- show language DEF under  
'Kwei translated the language.'

110. Tsòò nǎà

Show/teach mouth

a. to tell the price of sth →

Aku tsòò mǐ àméò lē nǎà  
Aku PST- show 1SG tomatoes DEF mouth  
'Aku told me the price of the tomatoes.'

b. to explain→

È tsòò nò kò nǎà  
3SG PST- show something mouth  
'He/she explained something.'

111. Tì hè  
Scratch surface

• to give a hint→

Mì- tì sǎnè lē hè.  
1SG PST- scratch matter DEF surface.  
'I hinted at the matter.'

112. Tì mǐ  
scratch inside

a. to repeat→

Bɔi tì mǐ è- há mǐ  
Bɔi PST- take inside 3SG PST-give 1SG  
'Bɔi repeated it for me.'

b. to deepen→

Aba ti è- nǐnmǎà lē mǐ  
Aba PST- scratch 3SG POSS-writing DEF inside  
'Aba deepened her writing.'

113. Tsǐ nǎà  
block mouth

a. to hospitalize→

Dátrɛfɔnyò lē tsǐ helátsè lē nǎà  
Doctor DEF PST- block patient DEF mouth  
'The doctor hospitalized the patient.'

b. to prevent→

Polisifonyò lē tsǐ òshàrá lē nǎà  
Police DEF PST- block accident DEF mouth  
'The police prevented the accident.'

114. Tsé nò  
tear on

• to reduce →

Níhǒǒlɔ lē tsé dùàdé lē nò  
Seller DEF PST- pluck cassava DEF on  
'The seller reduced the price of the cassava.'



b. to begin→ Àmè tò yáá lē shìshì  
 3PL PST -arrange net DEF under  
 ‘They have started making the net.’

121. Tsó mfi  
 turn inside

• to purge→ Gbòbilò lē tsó è- mfi  
 Hunter DEF PST- turn 3SG POSS- inside  
 ‘The hunter purged himself.’

122. Tsó híè  
 pass/turn front/face

• to take the lead→ Ófainé tsó híè má- bà kè- fèè sèè  
 Please pass front 1SG FUT-come AUX do back  
 ‘Please take the lead I will come later.’

123. Tsó sèè  
 turn back

• to die → Mǎnyè lē tsó è- sèè nyè  
 Queen DEF PST- turn 3SG POSS-back yesterday  
 ‘The queen died yesterday.’

124. Tsó nò  
 pass/turn on

• to somersault → Tsònè lē tsó nò  
 Car DEF PST- turn on  
 ‘The car somersaulted’

• to iron→ Kwei kè dàdé tsó mì- tàdé lē nò  
 Kwei with iron PST-pass 1SG POSS- dress DEF on  
 ‘Kwei ironed my dress.’

• by means of→ Mǎ tsó nò mǎ fèè gbòmò  
 1SG FUT-pass on 1SG FUT- do human being  
 ‘I would by means of that become somebody.’

125. Tswà shì  
 Hit down

• to fall down→ Gbékè lē tswà shì  
 Child DEF PST- hit down  
 ‘The child fell.’

126. Tsíè híè  
 wake face

a. to rekindle→ Kofi tsíè è- sùòmò lē híè  
 Kofi PST- wake 3SG POSS-love DEF face  
 ‘Kofi rekindled his love.’

- b. to reawake→ Kofi tsíé sàné lē híé  
Kofi wake-PST matter DEF face  
'Kofi reawaken the matter.'
- c. to resurrect→ Àshwáíféélò lē tsíé gbónyò lē híé  
Magician DEF PST-wake dead person DEF face  
'The magician resurrected the dead person.'

## 127. Wò mǐ

put inside

- a. to add extra→ È wò àméò lē mǐ  
3SG PST- put tomato DEF inside  
'He added extra tomato'
- b. to be useless→ Ajo lē à -kè lē wò mǐ há è-mámí  
Ajo the IMP PRON AUX the put in PST-give his-mother  
'Ajo is the useless one among his mother's children'

## 128. Wò shìshì

put under

- to drink alcohol→ Kwei wò shìshì dǎnì è- yè níyénìi lē  
Kwei PST-put under before PERF-eat food DEF  
'The man drank alcohol before eating the food.'

## 129. Wó nǎ

Lift/raise up/on

- a. to quarrel→ Mì kè lē wó nǎ nyè  
1SG AUX 3SG PST- lift on yesterday  
'I quarreled with him yesterday.'
- b. to start something→ Wò wó nǐtsúmǎ lē nǎ ékóǎ.  
1PL PST- lift work DEF on again  
'We started the work again.'
- c. to revive→ È wó è-tsé nǐtsúmǎ lē nǎ ékóǎ  
He PST- lift 3SG POSS-father work DEF on again  
'He revived his father's business'
- d. to be rough→ Ɔshò lē è- wó nǎ fíó.  
Sea DEF PERF- lift on small.  
'The sea is a little rough'

e. to inform→ Mì wó àmè- tǒi nǝ lèebi nǝǝ.  
 1SG PST- lift 3PL POSS- ear on morning this  
 ‘I informed them this morning’

f. to hurry up→ Ófainé wó ó- nǎnè nǝ.  
 Please raise-IMP 2SG POSS- leg on  
 ‘Please hurry up.’

g. to promote→ Ònúkpá lē wó Moi nǝ.  
 Boss DEF PST- Lift Moi on  
 ‘The boss promoted Moi.’

h. to be arrogant→ Gbékē yòò lē wó -ǝ è- hè nǝ  
 Child girl DEF lift-HAB 3SG POSS-surface on  
 ‘The girl is arrogant.’

130. Wò shǐ  
 put down

a. to promise → Mì- nǎǎnyò lē wò shǐ àkè è- bǎǎ- bà  
 1SG POSS friend DEF PST-put down that 3SG FUT-come  
 ‘My friend promised to come.’

b. to gather→ Mǝi è- yà- wò shǐ yè jǎmè  
 People AUX PST- put down have there  
 ‘Many people have gathered there.’

c. to warn→ Yòò lē wò Kofi shǐ lèebi nǝǝ  
 Woman DEF PST-put Kofi down morning this  
 ‘The woman warned Kofi this morning.’

131. Wò hè  
 put surface

a. to exaggerate→ Yòò lē wò sǎnè lē hè  
 Woman DEF PST- put matter DEF surface  
 ‘The woman exaggerated the matter.’

b. to be fussy→ Gbékē lē wò -ǝ è- hé tsǒ  
 Child DEF put-HAB 3SG POSS-surface too much  
 ‘The child is too fussy.’

132. Wò nǝ  
 Sleep on

- to be patient→ Wò- wò nò wò- há lē  
1PL PST- sleep on 1PL PST- give 3SG.  
'We were patient with him.'

133. Yè mǎi  
eat in

- a. to steal glances→ Aba yè mǎi è- há è- mǎmì  
Aba PST-eat inside 3SG PST-give 3SG POSS-mother  
'Aba stole glances at her mother.'

- b. to worry → Sǎnè lē yè è- mǎi bèi sǎǎǎ  
Matter DEF PST- eat 3SG POSS- inside time long  
'The matter worried her for a long time.'

134. Yè nǎǎ  
eat mouth

- a. to bargain→ È- yè nǐbii lē à- nǎǎ  
3SG PST- eat things DEF ASSOC-mouth  
'He/she bargained for the things.'

- b. to dress nicely → Maale yè nǎǎ kè- tèè sòlèmò.  
Maale PST- eat mouth AUX PST -go church  
'Maale dressed nicely to church.'

135. Yè nǒ  
eat on

- a. to obey→ Káyáyòò lē yè mǎ lē nǒ  
Porter DEF PST- eat law DEF on  
'The porter obeyed the rule.'

- b. to fulfill→ È- yè shǐwòò lē nǒ  
3SG PST- eat promise DEF on  
'He fulfilled the promise.'

- c. to rule→ Ȧleshì Blǎfo yè Ghana nǒ  
Britain PST- eat Ghana on  
'Britain ruled Ghana.'

136. Yè hè  
eat surface

- to be acquitted→ Nǔù lē yè è- hè  
Man DEF PST-eat 3SG POSS surface  
'The man was acquitted.'

137. Yè sèè  
eat back



- to succeed→ Tawia yè ònúkpá lē sèè  
Tawia PST- eat boss DEF back  
‘Tawia succeeded the boss.’

138. Yí mǎi  
Pass inside

- a. to set off→ Sandra kè- yí mǎi  
Sandra AUX PST- pass inside  
‘Sandra set off.’

- b. to get lucky→ È- yí mǎi è- há lē kèkè.  
3SG PST- pass inside 3SG PST-give 3SG just  
‘He just got lucky.’

139. Yí nǎ  
fill on

- a. to dawn on→ È- yí è- nǎ ákè à- jù lē  
3SG PST- fill 3SG POSS-on that IMP PRON PST- steal 3SG  
‘It dawned on him that he had been robbed.’

- b. to possessed→ Mùmò lē yí è- nǎ  
Spirit DEF PST- fill 3SG POSS- on  
‘The spirit has possessed him.’

140. Yí shǐ  
Pass down

- a. to descend→ Ama yí shǐ bàlèòò  
Ama PST- pass down slowly  
‘Ama descended slowly.’

- b. to be possessed→ Wóyòò lē yí shǐ  
Priestess DEF PST- pass down  
‘The priestess was possessed.’

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

#### DEPARTMENT OF GHANAIAN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

The researcher is a student offering Ghanaian Language (Ga). The questions for the interview form part of her research on the topic the “The Syntax and Semantics of Phrasal Verbs in Ga”. Questions stated will be further explained by the interviewer in order to ease responses to be provided by the respondent. To assist her arrive at appropriate conclusions on the topic. She would be grateful if you would answer the following questions. All responses given will be held in complete confidence.

1. The name of the respondent.
2. The respondent’s age.
3. Where the respondent come from.
4. The respondent’s mother tongue.
5. Other languages that the respondent can speak.
6. How long the respondent has been living or has lived in his/her hometown or village.
7. Educational background of respondent.
8. Has the respondent heard of phrasal verbs before?
9. If he/she has what does he knows about it.
10. If not researcher will explain what it is.
11. Researcher will proceed to main questions on phrasal verbs. Below will be some of the questions that will be asked:

- a. If you meet an expression like ‘ye naa’ what meanings can you associate with it?
- b. Apart from these expressions discussed, is there any that you have in mind which has not been mentioned?



## APPENDIX C

### List of Informants

The following five informants were consulted in collecting data for the study.

1. Mr Emmanuel Nii-Adjetey Adjei – a Ga lecturer, University of Education, Winneba.
2. Dr. Mrs Cecilia Kotey – a Ga and linguistics lecturer, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
3. Rev. Seth Nii- Ashikwei Kuma Ollenu – a reverend minister, Presbyterian church of Ghana, Osu Ebenezer.
4. Abraham Nii Dodoo – a first degree holder and a Ga teacher at Private Odartey Lamptey ‘2’ J.H.S.
5. Madam Grace Asheley Amarah – she is over eighty five years. She had no formal education but reads the Ga bible. She lives in La.

