PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE

ON

ASSURING THE FEASIBILITY OF STANDARDIZATION

WITHIN DIALECT CHAINS

NOORDWIJKERHOUT, THE NETHERLANDS

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T. G. Bergman, *editor*

Summer Institute of Linguistics

Africa Area, Nairobi, Kenya

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foreword

Of necessity, communication involves standardization. The sender and receiver adjust to each other's idiolect or dialect or language. For written communication to be used successfully, it is desirable for the sake of the people involved that a single form be used by as large a number of communities and dialects as possible. It is desirable because increasing the number of people who can communicate with each other increases the pool of potential authors and readers. Having more audience motivates the authors to write. Having more to read motivates literacy. Governments request maximum standardization in language planning. It reduces the cost to government and for education thus allowing them to accomplish what otherwise they find difficult or impossible. Knowing your neighbors better should also lower tension and promote unity.

Yet, the circle must not be drawn too large. If people cannot learn to understand the standard form easily and quickly, literacy will fail just as surely as it will if the circle is drawn too small. The chosen standard must be both understandable and desired by the people involved. Thus the task is to discover the optimum speech form to serve the maximum feasible number of dialects or languages; it involves both linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

In the past, boundary drawing has usually been part of dialect intelligibility analysis, modified subsequently by the results of language attitude evaluation. Political and social pressures in many places, however, indicate the need for efforts toward standardization over a broader scope of dialects and languages than has been assumed from intelligibility tests. Over time the written form for major languages such as English and German has adequately served dialects with wide differences. We need to find ways to facilitate and promote that in other language continua where the circumstances (political, social, motivational) make it appropriate. There is strong interest in, indeed insistence on, standardization in many countries of Africa. We assume this will include initial literacy and preparation of some literature in a greater number of dialects/languages coordinated with definite promotion and instruction toward a smaller number of standards.

To put it differently, standardization may be possible between speech varieties that are not comprehensible on first meeting, but which with adequate exposure may become comprehensible. One can talk of a two-day or of a three-week difference, for example, referring to the length of time living with the new variety before understanding it. People with widely differentiated speech may be able to agree on a standard written form while retaining differences in spoken form and pronunciation.

Although a large body of literature exists on language planning on a

national or large regional level, not much has been written for the
local level. This round table conference was sponsored by SIL and the
J. Howard Pew Freedom Trust in September 1988 to begin correcting that
situation. It is anticipated that more will be developed on this
subject in the future.

Frank Robbins   Ted Bergman
Africa Area Director   Task Assessment Coordinator
Summer Institute of Linguistics   Summer Institute of Linguistics
Nairobi – Kenya   Nairobi – KENYA

preface

The idea that the Summer Institute of Linguistics should proactively study the possibilities of wider dialect standardization is an idea that crystalized with Frank Robbins after talking with Mark Karan. Mark outlined the situation in southern Benin with the many Gbe dialects, the problems this presents to the Benin government, and the potential advantages that would accrue if the way to unite these many speech varieties could be found. Frank decided SIL should find ways to put its best efforts into wider standardization and asked me to organize the task.

Language planning at the national and regional level has been studied extensively. But almost nothing exists in the literature describing standardization on the local level. It was thought that a major contribution would be made if projects that SIL embarked upon should be well documented so that whether successful or not, others could learn from the experience.

The first phase of any such project is background research, next, language survey assessment, then, strategy planning. A proposal was written for this beginning phase which set objectives, outlined a plan of action, and estimated costs. Supplemental funding was requested and granted from the J. Howard Pew Freedom Trust. Eight dialect groups from different parts of Africa where SIL was working were selected and sociolinguists, both guests and members of SIL, were invited to attend a round table to discuss the issues and help each other with ideas and information. Travel expenses for the Round Table were provided by the Trust.

Since this was the first meeting in this effort, it was primarily the invited guests who had prepared material to present. For most participants, there was interaction on a more informal basis. Although it wss not planned beforehand, the quality of the prepared presentstions by our guests was such that it was felt that others would benefit if a proceedings were prepared for general distribution. A second round table meeting is planned for May 1989.

The chart which follows shows the eight African dialect clusters that were chosen for special study and development. The persons shown as SIL leaders were chosen by the SIL administrators of the countries involved and were each participants in the Round Table. They are Ole Bjorn Kristensen, Rene Vallette, Andrew Ring, Robert Carlson, Richard Watson, Keith Beavon and Gordon Williams. Other participants were Frank Robbins, Ethel Robbins, Elizabeth Johnson, Constance Kutsch Lojenga, Mark Karan, Deborah Hatfield, Kate Ring, and Ted Bergman in addition to the authors of the articles in this volume listed later.

THE EIGHT AFRICAN DIALECT CLUSTERS REPRESENTED AT THE ROUND TABLE ON DIALECT STANDARDIZATION, 1988

	TEKE	FULFULDE	MOLE	SENUFO	MORU-MA'DI	MEKAA	GBE	MANDE, N.
COUNTRIES	Congo, (Gabon, Zaire)	Senegal, Benin, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Sudan, Cameroon, Chad, Cen. Afr. Rep.	Ghana	Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali	Sudan, Zaire, Uganda	Cameroon, (Eq. Guinea, C. A. R., Congo)	Benin (Togo, Nigeria)	Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Gambia, Mauritania, Liberia, Sierra Leone
LGS. MAX/MIN	7 / 4	10 / 7	5 / 2	16 / 7	10 / 6	16 / 8	17 / 1-3	? 25 / 15
SIL LEADER entity	Kristensen Cen Af Gr	Vallette BF/Niger	Ring Ghana	Carlson CI/Mali	Watson Sudan	Beavon Cam/Chad	-- Togo/Benin	Williams Senegal/G/G-B
POPULATION	400,000	12,000,000	500,000	1,500,000	900,000	? 300,000	? 1,500,000	? 10,000,000+
LITERACY	? <50%	? <5%	5 - 10%	<25% in CI <5% BF & Mali	? 10 - 30%	5 - 25%	15% +/-	?
TRANSLATIONS finished in-progress	Yaka/Laali Kukuya Teke West.	Adamawa (Cam.) Parakou (Ben.) Toucouleur (Se) N. Burkina Faso	Waale Lauara Jirapa	3 NT 8	Lugbara, Avokaya, Ma'di	none Kooziea Mekaa Bajyeli	Gen. Gun. Fon	Bambara Dyula (SIL) Malinke (NTM) Xassonke (Nor/F Mandinka (WEC) Kono (LBT) Soninke, plus ?

Prof. Dr. **Ursula Wiessmann**, who is the principal technical consultant to this project, gave the keynote address. Her paper concerns the Kaingang people with whom she worked in Brazil where standardization was successful. Not only does it provide us with a scientific case study, but it also provides inspiration that standardization, at least in the circumstance cited, is possible. She saw people with varying speech varieties come together to use a common literature who would not have done so at all based on the usual linguistic differences criteria.

Dr. **Etienne Sadembouo** proposes two procedures: how to combine community involvement and sociolinguistic expertise through the use of a language committee, and how to choose the best speech form out of a dialect complex for written standardization. He bases these recommendations on his very extensive review of each of the language programs in his country, Cameroon, where he has drawn from their experience in failures and successes. The typology and weighting procedure recommended for decision making was tried out by the participants of the Round Table who felt that it works very well. If it proves to be acceptable it provides the missing link between SIL's *Sociolinguistic Profile*, which is a checklist of factors important to decision making, and the decisions themselves. Dr. Sadembouo finds that even in the early stage of language survey assessment, the communities affected should participate in the planning.

Prof. Dr. **H. B. C. Capo**'s paper concerns orthographic principles and ideas for uniting the huge number of Gbe dialects--22 spoken in southern Benin, 16 in Togo, 18 in Ghana, and 7 in Nigeria. Dr. Capo thinks that all speakers could learn to read the Gen variety with just a little effort and write the way they speak once a unified orthography could be agreed upon. He himself speaks four of the dialects belonging to three of the five clusters within the Gbe network.

Mr. **Leonce Bouka** has written a paper for us describing the Teke dialects in Congo and Gabon. His paper was translated for us from the French by Mr. Ole Bjorn Kristensen. Both these men have begun work on this dialect chain which has four main divisions and other subdivisions. Although he is Congolese he is not a native Teke speaker. His doctoral studies in Brussels are concerning the whole Teke continuum.

Dr. **Richard Watson** coordinates three survey teams conducting the first phase of research on the Moro-Ms'di dialect complex. One team works among the people living in Sudan, another works in Zaire and the third is in Uganda. His paper hss to do with the orthography approach

necessary to standsrdize in the different nations with their differing literacy and political expectations.

Dr. **Musimbi Kanyoro** offers balance out of her knowledge of the Luiya, cautioning against combining too many dialects without adequate basis for doing so or without adequate provision of necessary concomitants. Dr. Kanyoro's native tongue is one of the 17 varieties of Luyia. Her grandfather was one of the principals involved when the Bible was produced in a "standard" Luyia. And, she has studied the language prfessionally. When the Scriptures were first published, they were received and bought with great enthusiasm. But despite great hope they have not been used widely at all. Verb tenses can change to mean opposite tenses in certain dialects, word meanings change drastically, only five of seven contrasting vowels are written, tone is not marked at all. People do not identify with it as their language. At the time when the "union translation" came out, the people were feeling a need for unity against other, larger groups which threatened them. Later when the threat was removed, there was more felt need for emphasizing individuality. As Dr. Kanyoro analyses the situation, several things must be recognized: Bible translation alone is not sufficient, other written literature must be produced as well; the orthography decided upon must be backed by the government and taught in the public schools; the churches, too, must support the Union translation; the mood of the people needs to be positive toward wanting to become unified.

THE NEOLANGUAGE APPROACH TO ORTHOGRAPHY:

THE CASE OF GBE

HOUNKPATI B. C. CAPO

University of Ilorin, Nigeria
and
Université Nationale du Bénin

THE NEOLANGUAGE APPROACH TO ORTHOGRAPHY:

THE CASE OF GBE

1. INTRODUCTION
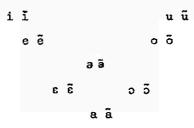
1.1. THEORETICAL BASIS

It is well known today that in Linguistics, as in other sciences, attempted and projected applications, practical ends to be achieved, have often preceded the statement of the theoretical positions on which they isplicitly depend. This is particularly true for orthography in the well estsblished languages such as Greek, Arabic, French, English, etc. In recent times, however, orthography design, as prompted by African and Amerindian languages, and orthographic reforms of languages with a certain writing tradition, have been preceded by explicit reflection on the principles that may underlie a good orthography, although the latter has been seen merely as an application of phonology, or of phonology and morphology. Nowadsys it is advocated that orthography be considered as a separate branch of Linguistic Sciences in which phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis (the tradi-tional isveis of descriptive Linguistics) are inter-related. In this context, one can easily understand that there asy be different theoretical approaches to orthography. The present writer has recently elaborated on the neolanguage approach (Capo 1979) which could be sum-marized as followe: a language is defined as a group of lects which are clearly closely related iinguistically . . . and where there is a consid-erable degree of autual intelligibility between the speakers. This conception of a language calls for a comparative orientation to lin-guistic investigations. The neolanguage approach aims at establishing the precise degree of relationship between the lects. Its logical con-clusion is the spscification of operstional demarcation of boundaries

between related languages and their dialects, i.e., a more defendable classification. Its major contribution is that it provides sufficient information on which efforts to improve the unsatisfactory existing patterns can be based. Its application provides a basis for the development of a comprehensive orthographic system for dialects of the same language, and the gradual evolution of a superposed variety for individual dialect clusters. The consequent orthography must be pandialectal and language specific, morphophonemic and consistent with itself, having the unifying, demarcative, integrating, perrenizing and progressive functions, so that the neolanguage (or the standard form of the language) has the properties of flexible stability and intellectualization (Capo 1980b). The aim of the present paper is to illustrate how the principles deriving from this conception can be applied to a specific dialect chain, namely Gbe.

1.2. PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION OF GBE

Gbe is a dialect cluster spoken in a continuous area extending from Ghana (Volta Region) to Nigeria (Ogun and Lagos States). Its numerous dialects have been grouped into five sections (see Capo 1980a) as Vhe, Gɛn, Ajá, Fɔn and Phla-Pherá. Some of the dialects have a written form, viz Eʋe (primarily based on Awlan [Anlo] but enlarged to other Vhe dialects), Gɛn, Ajá (primarily based on Dogboo), Fɔn (primarily based on Agbome and Kpas), Bun and Waci.[1] From an overall point of view, Gbe dialects have the following phonetic consonants and vowels (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1. Phonetic inventory of vowels
occurring in Gbe dialects

i ĩ			u ũ
e ẽ			o õ
	ə ə̃		
ɛ ɛ̃		ɔ ɔ̃	
	a ã		

As for tones, there are, at the phonetic level, three registers (High, Low and Mid) and two contours (Rising and Falling) as realizations of two phonemic tones, High and Low.[2]

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Table 2. Phonetic inventory of consonants
occurring in Gbe dialects

</div>

p b   t d ɖ   k ɡ   kp gb

  m   n   ɲ   ŋ   ŋw

      ts dz   c j

ɟ ʋ f v s z   ʃ ʒ   X R   X^w R^w

             ɾ

             r r̃

             l l̄

            y ỹ   Y   ɥ ɥ̃ w w̃

2. IDENTIFICATION OF GRAPHEMES

The alphabetic units (called graphemes here) are recommended on the tacit assumption that they should be easy to reproduce and to discriminate, and eventually easily convertible into dialect correspondents as far as their shapes are concerned. For their identification the following principles will serve as guides.

2.1. THE PHONEMIC PRINCIPLE (intradialectsl)

According to this principle, to a phoneme (a family of related speech sounds which are functionally identical) must be assigned a single grapheme, i.e., predictable and free variants of a phoneme may not have graphemic equivalents. Indeed a phoneme may be realized as one phone in one dialect, bot as two or three allophones in another dialect.

This principle may be applied to Gbe in the following instances:
a) In all Gbe dialects, /l/, /y/ and /w/ have nasalized variants ([l̃], [ɲ] or [ỹ] and [w̃] or [ŋ/ŋw]) before nasal vowels. It is recommended thet both [l] and [l̃] be represented in the orthography with 'l', both [y], [ỹ] and [ɲ] with 'y', and both [w], [w̃], [ŋ] and [ŋw] with 'w'. (Note that no

presently written form has a distinct grapheme for [ĩ]; however, [ɲ] is spelled as 'ny' in Eʋe, Fɔn and Ajá, [ŋ] as 'ŋ' in Eʋe and [ŋw] as 'ŋw' in Ajá.) (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Consonants with nasal/nasalized
variants in Gbe dialects

Vhe	Gen	Ajá	Fon	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gbe orthography	Gloss
1. àlò	àlò	àlò	àlò	àlò	alo	tooth-pick
2. lã̀	elã̀	elã̀	lã̀	lã̀	lan	meat
3. yì	yì	yì	yì	yì	yi	go
4. ɲã̀/ỹã̀	ɲã̀	ɲã̀	ɲã̀/ỹã̀	ɲã̀	yan	wash (clothes)
5. àwù	àwù	àwù	àwù	àwù	awu	shirt
6. ŋé̃/ŋã̀	ŋé̃	ŋwé̃	w̃é	w̃é	wén	break

b)   In all Gbe dialects, /l/ is realized as [r/r̃] when it occurs as a second member of a cluster the initial element of which is a dental, an alveolar, a postalveolar or a palatal. It is recommended that [r/r̃] should have the same grapheme as [l/l̃], viz 'l'. (At present [r/r̃] is spelled as 'r' in Eʋe, Fɔn and Ajá; but in Fɔn, since some individuals pronounce [l] in the environment specified, the same word is spelled now with 'r', now with 'l'; in Waci and Gɛn, only 'l' is used.) For example [Klɔ́] would remain Klɔ́ 'wash', but [era] would become ela 'have diarrhea' and [arɔ̃́] would be alɔ̃́ 'imitate, learn'.

c)   In some Vhe dialects such as Awlan, and in some Fɔn dialects such as Weme, /ɖ/ is realized as [ɽ] in intervocalic position. It is suggested that both [ɖ] and [ɽ] be represented with the same grapheme, viz 'r'. (See section 2.2 for the justification of this grapheme. No one is writing a distinct grapheme for [ɽ].) For example [du] would be ru 'eat' and [adí/arí] would be arí 'poison'.

d)   In some Vhe dialects (such as Awlan), /w/ is realized as [ɥ] before front vowels, whereas in other Vhe dialects (such as Kpándo), [w] is

maintained but the front vowel is realized as a back (rounded) one. It
is suggested that both [w] and [ɣ] (and their nasalized forms: see 2.1.a.
above) be represented with the same grapheme, viz 'w'. (At present [w]
and [ɣ] are spelled as 'w' and 'y' respectively in Eve.) For example, [wó]
would be written wó 'ten', but Awlan [ɣə] would be written in the
standard form, we 'dance'.

e) In some dialects (including Ajá dialects, and two Vhe dialects, Awlan
and Avéno, /s/ and /z/ are palatalized to [ʃ] and [ʒ] before front close
vowels, whereas in other dialects they are not; in addition in Ajá dia-
lects only, they are also optionally palatalized before back close
vowels. It is recommended that in the dialects concerned, [s] and [ʃ] on
the one hand, and [z] and [ʒ] on the other, be represented with the same
graphemes, viz 's' and 'z' respectively. (At present in Ajá we have 'sh'
and 'ʒ' as separate graphemes for [ʃ] and [ʒ]; although Eve is said to be
based on Awlan, it has no distinct graphemes for [ʃ] and [ʒ].) For
example, Ajá and Awlan [ʃî] would be written sí 'respect', and [ʒî] would
be zín 'push'.

f) The phonemes /t/ and /d/ are sibilantized[3] in some dialects and not
in others. Before front close vowels, they are realized as [c] and [ɟ]
in Ajá dialects, and also in Awlan and Avéno, and as [ts] and [dz] in
Kpándo, being non-modified in other dialects; in addition, they are also
sibilantized before back close vowels in Ajá dialects. It is suggested
that the [t]'s, [c]'s and [ts]'s concerned on the one hand, and the [d]'s,
[ɟ]'s and [dz]'s on the other, be represented with the same graphemes,
viz 't' and 'd' respectively. (At present in Ajá, the sibilantized /t/ and
/d/ are represented with 'c' and 'j', hence confused with /c/ and /j/; it
is only on the basis of comparison with other dialects that the two
[c]'s and [ɟ]'s can be distinguished. In Eve, these Awlan [c]'s and [ɟ]'s
are properly spelled as 't' and 'd' respectively.) (See Table 8.)

g) The phonemes /ts/ and /dz/, specific to many Vhe dialects, are pala-
talized to [c] and [ɟ] in Avéno before the front close vowels. It is sug-

gested that in this dialect, both [ts] and [c] on the one hand, and [dz] and [j] on the other have the same graphemes, viz 'ts' and 'dz'. See Table 9 in section 2.4.b. for examples.

Table 4. /t/ and /d/ and their sibilantized
variants in some Gbe dialects

	Ajá	Awlan (Vhe)	Kpándo (Vhe)	Wací (Vhe)	Gen	Fɔn	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1.	àtó	ètó	ètó	ètó	ètó	tó	-tó	tó	ear
2.	àcí	àcí	àtaí	àtí	àtí	àtĩ́	àtĩ́	stín	tree
3.	ècú	àtú	ètú	ètú	ètú	tú	-tú	tú	gun
4.	dó	dó	dó	dó	dó	dó	dó	dó	sow
5.	jìjì	jìjì	dzĩdzi	dĩdĩ	dĩdĩ	–	–	didi	be far
6.	jù	dù	dù	dù	dù	dũ̀	dũ̀	dun	fetch (water)

h)   The phonemes /Xʷ/ and /Rʷ/ (not occurring in Vhe dialects) are realized as [X] and [R] before back vowels. It is suggested that those allophonic [X]'s and [R]'s have the same graphemes as [Xʷ] and [Rʷ], viz 'ph' and 'vh' respectively. See section 2.3.a. and b. for the justification of the graphemes, and Table 6. for examples. (At present in Fɔn and Ajá the delabialized /Xʷ/ and /Rʷ/ are represented with 'x' and 'h', hence confused with /X/ and /R/. It is only on the basis of Vhe dialects that the two [X]'s and [R]'s can be distinguished.)

i)   In Alada, a Phla-Pherá dialect, and casually in other Gbe dialects, the phonemes /f/ and /v/ are realized as [ɸ] and [ʋ] before front close vowels, especially in intervocalic position. It is suggested that in the dialects concerned, both [f] and [ɸ] on the one hand, and [v] and [ʋ] on the other, be represented with the same graphemes, viz 'f' and 'v' respectively. For example, Alada [ɸí] would be written fí 'hers', [lìɸí] > linfín 'flour', and [ʋíʋí] > víví 'be sweet'.

j)   In all Gbe dialects, the phonemes /u/ and /ũ/ are realized as [ɥ] and [ɥ̃] when they occur between a consonant and /i/; when the vowel fol-

lowing them is a front vowel other than /i/, they are realized as [ɥ] and
[w̃] respectively. It is suggested that these [ɥ]'s and [w]'s on the one
hand, and [ɥ̃]'s and [w̃]'s on the other be assigned the same graphemes as
/u/ and /ũ/ respectively, viz 'u' and 'un'. For example, duî would be
written rui 'eat it' and sũî would be written súin 'detach it'.

2.2. THE STAPHONEMIC PRINCIPLE (interdialectal)

A staphoneme is defined as a phoneme occurring in all dialects with the
same description (with due regard to allophonic and free variants), and
in regular correspondence. According to the staphonemic principle, to a
staphoneme must be assigned a grapheme. (This seems obvious.)

In Gbe, we have the following staphonemes: /b/, /m/, /t/, /d/, /ɖ/, /n/, /s/,
/z/, /X/, /R/, /l/, /f/, /v/, /y/, /w/, /k/, /g/, /kp/, /gb/, /i/, /a/, /o/, /ɔ/, /u/,
/ĩ/, /ã/, /ɔ̃/ and /ũ/. To this inventory we should add the two tonemes
(statonemes), High and Low. (/m/ and /n/ only achieve ? status because of
recent French loans. Otherwise, [m] is an allophone of /b/ and [n] or /d/
as [ɲ] is of /y/. See 2.1.a. The neolanguage approach, however, takes
due consideration of the "borrowings" when they are genuine[4], and /b/,
/m/, /ɖ/, and /n/ are considered as distinct phonemes.) It is suggested`
that to these staphonemes be assigned the following graphemes respec-
tively: 'b', 'm', 't', 'd', 'r', 'n', 's', 'z', 'x', 'h', 'l', 'f', 'v', 'y', 'w', 'k', 'g', 'kp',
'gb', 'i', 'a', 'o', 'ɔ', 'u', 'in', 'an', 'on' and 'un'. The High toneme is
represented with 'V́' (acute accent) and and Low toneme with absence of
tone mark. Many words consisting of staphonemes could be shown to be
identical in all dialects.

As one may observe, most of the graphemes are taken from the alphabet
proposed by the International African Institute of London and known as
African, for obvious reasons: they were well thought of and are widely
accepted, and in fact, there is nothing very wrong in the present prac-
tice in the written forms of Gbe. However, 'r' replaces 'ɖ' because the
phoneme /r/ does not exist and more importantly because 'ɖ' is not dis-

criminative enough with regard to 'd' as in handwriting the two graph-
emes tend to be confused. In addition, the nasal vowels are represented
with digraphs (by adding a postponed '-n' to the oral vowel) in accor-
dance with a resolution adopted in 1975 for the Kwa languages by a
group of UNESCO experts (see Commission Nationale de Linguistique et
Commission Nationale pour l'UNESCO 1975). (Note that the present prac-
tice in Eve is to use the "tilde", hence 'ã' for /ã/, but the diacritic is
not consistently used; note also that we represent /ɔ/ with 'on' and not
the expected 'ɔn', the reason being that there is almost no contrast be-
tween /õ/ and /ɔ̃/, and preference is given to the easiest grapheme.)

2.3. THE EQUIPHONEMIC PRINCIPLE (interdialectal)

An equiphoneme is defined as a set of dialect specific phonemes in
regular correspondence. According to the equiphonemic principle, to all
members of an equiphoneme must be assigned the same grapheme.

There are six equiphonemes in Gbe as /f:p:X^W/, /ʊ:R^W/, /c:ts:ʃ/, /j:dz:ʒ/,
/e:ə:ɛ/, and /ẽ:ə̃:ɛ̃/.

a) For the /f:p:X^W/ equiphoneme, /f/ is peculiar to Vhe dialects, /p/ to
Gɛn dialects, and /X^W/ to Pɔn, Ajá and Phla–Pherá dialects. Because of
the delabialization rule mentioned earlier (see 2.1.h.), this equiphoneme
has two variants, [f:p:X^W] before nonback vowels, and [f:p:X] before back
vowels. It is suggested that /f/, /p/, and /X^W/ be represented with the
graphema 'ph'. (in present practice, 'f' is used in Eve, 'p' in Gɛn, and 'xw'
and 'x' in Pɔn and Ajá.) 'f' has been discarded because in handwriting it
is often confused with 'f'; 'p' too has been discarded because it is saved
to represent the adphoneme /p/ (see 2.5.); as for 'xw', it is too marked to
represent /f/ or /p/, since 'x' exists as a grapheme having certain pro-
nunciation. The choice of 'ph' ensures convertibility into the actual
dialecta in that it could be taught as /X^W/ (labial and postvelar) in Fɔn
and Ajá dialects, or as /f/ (lsbiality in 'p-' and fricativity in '-h') in
Vhe dialects, or as /p/ (we simply ignore '-h') in Vhe or Gɛn dialects.
See examples in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Equiphonemes / :p:X^W/ and /ʊːR^W/ in Gbe

Vhe	Gan	Ajá	Fon	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gba orth.	Glose
1. àʃá	àpá	àX^{W}á	àX^{W}á	àX^{W}á	aphá	outcry
2. ʃò	pò	Xò	Xò	Xò	pho	beat
3. và̠	R^{W}à̠	R^{W}à̠	R^{W}à̠	R^{W}à̠	vhan	mova
4. vù	Rù	Rù̠	Rù̠	Rù̠	vhun	open

b) For the /ʊːR^W/ equiphoneme, /ʊ/ is specific to Vhe dialects, and /R^W/ to all other dialects. Like the /ʃ:p:X^W/ equiphoneme it has two variants [ʊːR^W] before nonback vowels and [ʊːR] before back vowels. It is suggested that both /ʊ/ and /R^W/ be represented with 'vh' for reasons similar to those for 'ph'. (At present, 'ʊ' is used in Eve, and 'hw' and 'h' in Ajá and Fɔn.)

c) For the /c:ts:ʃ/ and the /j:dz:ʒ/ equiphonemes: /ts/ and /dz/ are specific to Kpándo and Avéno (two Vhe dialects), /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ to Alada (a Phla-Pherá dialect), and /c/ and /j/ to other dialects. It is suggested that the two equiphonemes be represented with 'c' and 'j' respectively. (Note that they are presently represented with 'c' and 'j' in all except Eve, which uses 'ts' and 'dz'.)

The choice of 'ts' and 'dz' is discarded because these graphemes suit better the neophonemes /c:ts:s/ and /j:dz:z/ respectively; see 2.4. below. (See Table 6.)

Table 6. Equiphonemes /c:ts: / and /j:dz: / in Gbe

Alada (Phla-Pherá)	Phla Waci (Vhe)	Gan	Ajá	Fon	Kpándo (Vhe)	Neo-Gba orth.	Gloaa
1. ʃyá	cyá cá	cá	cá	cyá	tsá	cyán	selact
2. ʃí	cí cí	cí	cí	cí	taí	cí	quench
3. ʒá	já já	já	já	já	dzá	já	cut in piaces
4. ʒì	jì jì	jì	jì	jì	dzì	ji	give birth

d) For the /e:ǝ:ɛ/ equiphoneme: /ɛ/ is specific to Pecí (a Vhe dialect), /ǝ/ to some Vhe dialects (Wací, Awlan, and Adángbe), and /e/ to other dialects including all Fon, Phla-Pherá, Ajá, Gɛn dialects, and also a Vhe dialect, namely Kpándo. It is suggested that this equiphoneme be represented with 'e'. (Even in present practice, /e/ in Wací is represented with 'e'.) 'ɛ' is better saved for the neophoneme /ɛ:o:e/ (see 2.4.d. below). See Table 7 below for examples.

Table 7. Equiphonemes /e:ǝ:ɛ/ and /ẽ:ǝ̃:ɛ̃/ in Gbe

Pecí (Vhe)	Wací (Vhe)	Kpándo (Vhe)	Gɛn	Ajé	Fon	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1. sɛ̀	sà̰	sè	sè	aḛ̀	sè	ǝ̀è	sǝ	hear
2. gbɛ̀	gbà̰	gbè	gbè	gbè	gbè	gbè	gbe	voice, language
3. dɛ́	dǝ̃́	dé/dɛ́	dé/dɛ́	dɛ́	dɛ́	dɛ́	dén	become rare
4. sɛ̃̀	sǝ̃̀	sḛ̀/sɛ̃̀	sḛ̀/sɛ̃̀	sɛ̃̀	sɛ̃̀	sɛ̃̀	sen	worship

e) For the /ẽ:ǝ̃ :ɛ̃/ equiphoneme: /ẽ/ is specific to Gɛn and Ajá dialects, and also to Kpándo, but it is always realized as [ɛ̃]; /ɛ̃/ is specific to Fon and Phla-Pherá dialects, and also to Pecí; and /ǝ̃ / is specific to some Vhe dialects, namely Wací, Awlan, etc. It is suggested that this equiphoneme be represented with 'en'. (It is presently spelled as 'ẽ' or 'ɛ̃' in Eʋe, and as 'ɛn' in Fon and Ajá.) We have opted for 'an' and not for 'ɛn' because there is no contrast between /ẽ/ and /ɛ̃/, and because 'en' parallels 'e' chosen for /e:ǝ:ɛ/.

2.4. THE NEOPHONEMIC PRINCIPLE (interdialectal)

A neophoneme is defined as a set of different dialect phonemes in regular correspondence, in such a way that a dialect may have its corresponding phoneme as a member of another set of correspondences (a staphoneme, or an equiphoneme). According to the neophonemic principle, to all members of a neophoneme must be assigned a single grapheme, different from the already accepted ones (for staphonemes, equiphonemes, adphonemes and other neophonemes). The difference between an equiphoneme and a neophoneme is that members of an equiphoneme are dialect

specific (and mutually exclusive) whereas members of a neophoneme, although different phonemes from one dialect to the other, are not dialect specific.

There are seven neophonemes in Gbe as /c:ts:s/, /j:dz:z/, /t:s/, /d:z/, /R^W:w/, /ɛ:a:e/, and /ɔ̃:ɔ̃/.

a) For the /c:ts:s/ and /j:dz:z/ neophonemes: /c/ and /j/ occur in some Vhe dialects (Awlan, Waci, Peci), /ts/ and /dz/ in other Vhe dialects (Kpándo and Av no), and /s/ and /z/ occur in all Gɛn, Fon, Ajá and Phla-Pherá dialects, and also in Adángbe (a Vhe dialect). Due to synchronic sibilantization rules (see 2.1.e. and f. above), each of these neophonemes has two variants: [c:ts:a:] and [j:dz:z:ʒ] before front close vowels ([ʃ] and [ʒ] occurring in Ajá dialects, and [c] and [j] occurring also in Avéno, and [c:tə:ə] and [j:dz:z] elsewhere. It is suggested that the two neophonemes be represented with 'ts' and 'dz' respectively. (In present practice, we have 'c' and 'j' in the written form of Waci, 'ts' and 'dz' in Eυe,

and 's' and 'z' in Gɛn, Fon and Ajá; in addition, we have also 'sh' and 'ʒ' in Ajá for the palatalized variants.) 's' and 'z' are already adopted for the staphonemes /s/ and /z/ and 'c' and 'j' for equiphonemes /c:ts:ʃ/ and /j:dz:ʒ/ respectively. Moreover, 'ts' and 'dz' are easily convertible into /c/ and /j/, or into /s/ and /z/ as in the actual dialects. (See Table 8.)

Table 8. Neophonemes /c:ts:a/ and /j:dz:z/ in Gbe

	Wsci (Vhe)	Avéno (Vhe)	Kpándo (Vhe)	Ajá	Gɛn	Fɔn	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1.	ə̀cɔ̀	ə̀tsɔ̀	ètəɔ̀	èsɔ̀	ɛ̀sɔ̀	sɔ̀	-sɔ̀	tsɔ	yesterday, tomorrow
2.	ə̀cî	ə̀cî	ètsî	èʃî	èsî	sî̀	-sî̀	tsin	water
3.	ə̀cú	àtsú	àtsú	əʃú/àsú	àsú	ə̀ú	àsú	atsú	male
4.	ə̀jɔ̀	ə̀dzɔ̀	èdzɔ̀	èzɔ̀	èzɔ̀	zɔ̀	-zɔ̀	dzo	fire
5.	jù	dzù	dzù	ʒù/zû̀	zû̀	zû̀	zû̀	dzun	insult

b) For the /t:s/ and /d:z/ neophonemes: /t/ and /d/ occur
in all Vhe, Gen and Ajá dialects, whereas /s/ and /z/

b) For the /t:ə/ and /d:z/ neophonemes: /t/ and /d/ occur in all Vhe, Gɛn and Ajá dialects, whereas /ə/ and /z/ occur in all Fon and Phla-Phèrá dialects. Due to synchronic sibilantization rules (see 2.1.e. and f.), each of the two neophonemes has two variants: [t:c:ə] and [d:j:z] before (front) close vowels ([c] and [j] occurring in Ajá dialects and in Awlan), and [t:ə] and [d:z] elsewhere. It is suggested that the two neophonemes be represented with 'ət' and 'zd' respectively. (At present we have 't' and 'd' in the written forms of Eʋe, Wací and Gɛn, and 'ə' and 'z' in Fon.) 't' and 'd' and 'ə' and 'z' are already retained for the staphonemes /t/ and /d/, and /ə/ and /z/ respectively; also 'ts' and 'dz' are already adopted for the neophonemes /c:tə:ə/ and /j:dz:z/. Moreover, 'ət' and 'zd' are easily convertible into /ə/ and /z/ on the one hand (by ignoring the second componants of the digraphs), and into /t/ and /d/ on the other (by ignoring the first componants of the digraphs), as in actual dialects. (See Table 9.)

Table 9.   Neophonemes /t:ə/ and /d:z/ in Gbe

	Vhe	Gɛn	Ajá	Fon	Phla- Phèrá	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1.	tɔ̀	tɔ̀	tɔ̀	sɔ̀	ǝɔ̀	stɔ	bake
2.	tú	tú	cú	sú	sú	stú	lock
3.	dɔ́	dɔ́	dɔ́	zɔ́	zɔ́	zdón	send
4.	dù	dù	jù	-zù	-zù	zdu	running

c)   For the /Rʷ:w/ neophoneme, /Rʷ/ occurs in Fon and Phla-Phèrá dialects (and also optionally in Gɛn) whereas /w/ occurs in Ajá and Vhe dialects (and also optionally in Gɛn). Due to the delabialization rules noted above (2.1.h. and 2.1.d.) this neophoneme has two variants: [R:w] before back vowels, and [Rʷ:w:ɣ] elsewhere. It is suggested that this neophoneme be represented with the graphema 'hw'. (At present Eʋe has both 'w' and 'ɣ', Fon has 'hw' and 'w', and Ajá has 'w'.) 'w' is already adopted for the staphoneme /w/. Moreover, 'hw' is easily convertible into /w/ (by ignoring the initial 'h-' of the digraph) in the appropriate dialects. (See Table 10.)

Table 10. Neophoneme /R^W:w/ in Gbe

Awlan (Vhe)	Kpándo (Vhe)	Ajá	Gɛn	Fɔn	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1. ɣlá	wlɔ́	wlá	wlá	R^{W}lá	R^{W}lá	hwlá	hide
2. ɣɔ̀	wɔ̀	wè	wè	R^{W}è	R^{W}è	hwe	sun
3. wù	wù	wù	wù Rù	Rù	Rù	hwu	kill

d) For the /ɛ:ə:e/ neophoneme: /ɛ/ occurs in Pɔn and Phla-Pherá dialects, and also in Peci (a Vhe dialect); /ə/ occurs in some Vhe dialects (Waci, Awlan, Adángbe); and /e/ occurs in Gɛn and Ajá dialects as well as in Kpándo (a Vhe dialect). It is suggested that this neophoneme be represented with the grapheme 'ɛ'. (It is presently spelled as 'e' in Gɛn, Ajá and Waci.) 'ɛ' is obviously the best choice since 'e' is used for the equiphoneme /e:ə:ɛ/. See examples in Table 11.

e) For the /ŏ:ɔ/ neophoneme, /ŏ/ occurs in Awlan only and /ɔ/ elsewhere. But since the functional load of /ŏ/ in Awlan is very low as compared to /ɔ/, it is suggested that 'on' be used as the grapheme for both the neophoneme /ŏ:ɔ/ and the staphoneme /ɔ/. (At present Eʋe has both 'ŏ' and 'ɔ', whereas Fɔn and Ajá have 'ɔn'.)

Table 11. Neophonemes /ɛ:ə:e/ and /ŏ:ɔ/ in Gbe

Awlan (Vhe)	Kpándo (Vhe)	Gɛn	Ajá	Peci (Vhe)	Fɔn	Phla-Pherá	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1. gbə́	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbɛ́	gbɛ́	gbɛ́	gbɛ́	refuse
2. kə̀	kè	kè	kè	kɛ̀	kɛ̀	kɛ̀	kɛ	open
3. ĩŏ	ĩɔ́	ĩɔ́	ĩɔ́	ĩɔ́	–	–	lón	remove from stove
4. ànŏ́	ànɔ́	ànɔ́	ànɔ́	ànɔ́	ànɔ́	ànɔ́	anó	breast

2.5. THE ADPHONEMIC PRINCIPLE (intradialectal and interdialectal)

An adphoneme is defined as a phoneme peculiar to a dialect or a group of dialects, and without correspondent in other dialects. It often

arises through "borrowings" and may be spread to other dialects. According to the adphonemic principle, to an adphoneme must be assigned a specific grapheme.

In Gbe, we have only one adphoneme: /p/ occurs at random in various dialects through ideophones and terms "borrowed" from Akan, English and French. It is suggested that this adphoneme be represented with the grapheme 'p'. (Note that it is the adphonemic principle which underlies our treating /b/, /m/, /ɗ/, and /n/ as distinct phonemes in 2.2). Examples are: <u>papá</u> 'dad', <u>pépí</u> 'harmattan', and <u>apaá</u> 'paid labor'.

2.6. SUMMARY

When the principles discussed above are judiciously applied, the number of alphabetic units (graphemes) corresponds to the number of different sets of correspondences. This way, the neolanguage has a richer inventory, from which one can easily "derive" the specific dialect inventories. It is implicitly stated that if reformation/standardization is undertaken in the individual dialects, none should have a grapheme which does not exist in the neolanguage orthography.

Coming back to our language of illustration, the neo-Gbe alphabet presents itself as follows: 'a', 'an', 'b', 'c', 'd', 'dz', 'e', 'en', 'ɛ', 'f', 'g', 'gb', 'h', 'hw', 'i', 'j', 'k', 'kp', 'l', 'm', 'n', 'o', 'on', 'ɔ', 'p', 'ph', 'r', 's', 'st', 't', 'ts', 'u', 'un', 'v', 'vh', 'w', 'x', 'y', 'z', 'zd'.[5] (Note that to reform present written forms individually, the graphemes corresponding to the neophonemes, viz 'ts', 'dz', 'st', 'zd', 'hw', may be ignored in most dialects, and all forms using 'r', 'ny', 'ŋ', 'ŋw', 'sh' and 'ʒ' will drop them and use 'l', 'y', 'w', 's' and 'z' respectively instead. All forms will replace 'ɗ' with 'r'. 'ph' and 'vh' will replace 'ƒ' and 'ʋ' in Eʋe and Waci, 'xw' and 'hw' in Fɔn and Ajá, and 'p' and 'hw' in Gɛn. Although Eʋe needs 'c' and 'j' in addition to the present 'ts' and 'dz' according to Adzomada (1975:44), one may not know instances where 'c' and 'j' are to be used and those where 'ts' and 'dz' are to be used, unless one resorts to other dialect(s), a situation which naturally opens avenues for the neophonemes.)

3. ON SPELLING CONVENTIONS

Adoption of the graphemes is certainly a great step, but it is not enough to arrive at an adequate orthography. A word is not a mere juxtaposition of graphemes, and so there is need for spelling conventions based on sound principles, some of which are as follows.

3.1. THE PRINCIPLE OF MINIMAL ALTERNATION (intradialectal)

According to this principle, a "morpheme" (as consisting of a number of phonemes) must remain as stable as possible (in its graphic or visual image or shape), i.e., morphophonemic alternates or phonologically conditioned morphs may not have parallels in the orthography. In general, this principle solves a lot of discrepancies due to dialect specific rules in certain areas of morphology.

In Gbe this principle applies particularly whenever we have a vowel sequence (each of the vowels belonging to a different morpheme, and the two influencing each other in terms of nasality and aperture). In fact

a) The sequences /ai/ and /ɔi/ are realized as [ɛɛ] and [ɔɛ] or [wɛ] in most dialects, but as [ee] and [oe] or [wa] in Awlan: it is suggested that they be spelled as 'ai' and 'ɔi'. (In Eʋe they are presently spelled as 'aε' or 'ε' and 'ɔe', whereas in Fɔn they are spelled as 'ɛɛ' and 'ɔɛ', and in Ajá as 'ɛɛ' and 'wɛ'.)

b) The sequences /ai/ or /ai/ and /oi/ are realized as [ee] and [oe] or [we] in Fɔn and Gɛn dialects as well as in some Vhe dialects (viz Adángbe), but as [ii] and [ui] or [wi] or [ɥi] in others, including Ajá dialects and some Vhe dialects (Waci and Awlan): it is suggested that they be spelled as 'ai' and 'oi' respectively; (They are presently spelled as 'ee' or 'ii', and 'oe' and 'ui'.)

c) The sequences /ãi/ and /ɔ̃i/ are realized as [ɛ̃ɛ̃] and [ɔ̃ɛ̃] in most dialects, but as [ĩĩ] and [ũĩ] or [ɥ̃ĩ] in Ajá dialects: it is suggested

that they be spelled as 'ain' and 'oin' respectively. (They are presently
spelled as 'áe' and 'ɔe' in Eʋe, as 'ɛn-ɛn' and 'ɔn-ɛn' in Fon, and as 'in-in'
and 'un-in' in Ajá.) The mark of nasality '-n' is placed after the second
vowel instead of the first vowel for a matter of convenience. The
second vowel always acts as a suffix and it is never a nasal vowel al-
though it is always nasalized if the first vowel is a nasal one. This
convention minimizes the use of hyphen in Gbe orthography, as argued
for in Lokossa and Capo (1978). (See Table 12.)

Table 12. Some vowel sequences in Gbe

	Fon	Phla-Phera	Gen	Ajá	Waci (Vhe)	Awlan (Vhe)	Adángbe (Vhe)	Neo-Gbe orth.
1.	ɖɛ̀ɛ̀	ɖɛ̀ɛ̀	ɖɛ̀ɛ̀	ɖɛ̀ɛ̀	ɖɛ̀ɛ̀	ɖɛ̀è	ɖɛ̀ɛ̀	ɖai
2.	véglɛ̀	véglɛ̀	véglɛ̀ɛ	véglɛ̀	váglɛ̀	vágláé	váglɛ̀	véglái
3.	Xɔ̀ɛ̀	Xɔ̀ɛ̀	Xɔ̀ɛ̀	Xɔ̀ɛ̀	Xɔ̀ɛ̀	Xɔ̀è	Xɔ̀ɛ̀	xɔi
4.	-	-	kɔ̀kɔ̀ɛ̀	kɔ̀kɔ̀ɛ̀	kɔ̀kɔ̀ɛ̀	kɔ̀kɔ̀è	kɔ̀kɔ̀ɛ̀	kɔkɔi
5.	sèè	sèè	ɘèè	ɘìì	sìî	sìî	aèè	sei
6.	-	-	tàbázé	tàbází	tàbází	-	-	tabázéi
7.	kòè	kòè	kòè	kùî	kùî	kùî	kòà	koi
8.	dǎgbóé	dǎgbóé	dǎgbé	dàgbì	dàgbì	dǎgbúí	dǎgbó	dangbói
9.	zɛ́ɛ̃́	zɛ́ɛ̃́	zɛ́ɛ̃́	zíí	zɛ́ɛ̃́	zɛ́ɛ̃́	zɛ̀ɛ́	záin
10.	é dɛ́ɛ̃́	é dɛ́ɛ̃́	é dɛ́ɛ̃́	é díî	á dɛ́ɛ̃́	á dɛ́ɛ̃́	á dɛ́é	é dáin
11.	ĩ̀ɔ̃̀ɛ̃̀	ĩ̀ɔ̃̀ɛ̃̀	ĩ̀ɔ̃̀ɛ̃̀	ĩ̀ùì	ĩ̀ɔ̃̀ɛ̃̀	ĩ̀ɔ̃̀ɛ̃̀	ĩɔ̀ɛ̀	loin
12.	-	-	nṹvɔ̃́ɛ̃́	nṹvṹì	nṹvɔ̃́ɛ̃́	nṹvɔ̃́ɛ̃́	-	núvóin

(The glosses are: 'cook it', 'necklace', 'take it' or 'buy it', 'saint',
'hear it', 'pipi', 'laugh at him', 'python', 'use it', 'he ignored him',
'love him' and 'sin' respectively.

3.2. THE PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMY (intradialectal and interdialectal)
According to this principle (i) if certain elements enter into a two-
term opposition, only one of them may be marked graphically; and (ii) if

a certain "feature" is always predictable, it may not be marked graphically.

In Gbe, this principle applies in the domains of notation of tones, nasal vowels after nasal consonants and the nominal prefixes.

a) As said earlier (see 2.2.), there are two tonemes in any Gbe dialect, High and Low. It is suggsated that only the High toneme should be marked graphically, with 'V́' (acute accent), and that it should be consistently marked. (At prasent we have both 'V̀' and 'V́' in Eυe used in an inconsistent manner, and although there are provisions for 'V̂' and 'V̌', they are never used; in Fon, tones are marksd as perceived by any particular writer.)

b) After nasal consonants ('m' and 'n'), we always hava nasal vowels. It is suggeated that the nasal vowels be written as oral vowels (i.e., without the postposed '-n') in this sequence. (Note that this principle is adhered to in all the presently written forms, except in few cases in Eυe.) For example, [mĩ̀] > mi 'swallow'.

c) Most Gbe dialects have only two nominal prefixes, viz /à-/ and /è-/ or /a-/ or /ɔ̀-/ or/ɛ́/, or /ò-/. For those who have more than two (e.g., in Phla-Pherá dialects), only /à-/ seems stable. It is auggestad that only the /à-/ nominal prefix be written as the othera need not feature in the orthography. For example, Vhe [əga/ɛga] Gɛn and Ajá [ega] and Fon [gã̀/ogã̀] would all be spelled gan 'iron'. (Eυe does not normally write its 'e-' nominal prefix except in few cases, whereas Ajá does.)

3.3 THE PRINCIPLE OF MAXIMAL DIFFERENTIATION (interdialactal)

According to thia principle, if for two different "aemantic complexea", we have two differant, though aimilar, phonological forma in ona dielect, but only one phonological shape in another dialect, the neolanguage orthography will be moulded on the dialact with two phonological shapes.

In Gbe, instances requiring the application of this principle are taken care of by the neophonemic and equiphonemic principles. (See Table 13.)

Table 13. The principle of maximal differentiation in Gbe
through other alphabetical principles

	Vhe	Gen	Ajá	Fɔn	Phla-Phera	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1.	-tó	ètó	ètó	tó	-tó	tó	ear
2.	tó	tó	tó	só	só	stó	pound
3.	tó	tó	tó	tɔ̃́	tɔ̃́	tón	go out
4.	jə̀/dzè	jè	jè	jɛ̀	jɛ̀	jɛ̀	land, v.
5.	jə̀/dzè	zɛ̃̀	zè	zɛ̀	zɛ̃̀	dzen	split

3.4. THE PRINCIPLE OF MAXIMAL SIMPLICITY (interdialectal)

This principle applies to morphological processes. According to it, if, for a given morphological process, we have dialect specific versions of a given rule, the neolanguage form will be based on the dialect in which the resulting form is the simplest (and the most regular). This principle may combine with the one of economy.

In Gbe, this principle applies mainly in the areas of reduplication.
a) For the /CV/ stems, we have four versions of the reduplication rule (see versions I-IV below). It is suggested that the neo-Gbe forms be equated with those resulting from version II (i.e. Peci and Kpándo). That way, the reduplicative (which is prefixed to the stem) is a true copy of the stem, except that tone and vowel nasality, being predictable, are not marked. (See Table 14.)

b) For the /CyV/ stems, we have three versions of the reduplication as in Table 15: it is suggested that the neo-Gbe forms be based on version II (Peci). Thus '-y-', as well as tone and nasality, need not appear in the reduplicative (because predictable).

Table 14. The principle of maximal simplicity and the
reduplication of the /CV/ eteme in Gbe

$$
\text{REDUP.} \quad
\begin{cases}
\text{I} & C\ V\ /\!\!-\!\!-\ C\ V \quad \text{(Ajá and Gen dialects)} \\[4pt]
\text{II} & C\begin{bmatrix} V \\ -nas. \end{bmatrix}/\!\!-\!\!-\ C\ V \quad \text{(Peci and Kpándo)} \\[6pt]
\text{III} & C\begin{bmatrix} V \\ +high \\ +front \\ \alpha nas. \end{bmatrix}/\!\!-\!\!-\ C\begin{bmatrix} V \\ \alpha nas. \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{(Kpase and Gun)} \\[10pt]
\text{IV} & C\begin{bmatrix} V \\ +high \\ \alpha round. \\ \beta nas. \end{bmatrix}/\!\!-\!\!-\ C\begin{bmatrix} V \\ \alpha back \\ \beta nas. \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{(Agbóme and Maxi)}
\end{cases}
$$

Stem	Gen	Peci	Gun	Agbóme	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1. gbɔ̀	gbɔ̀gbɔ̀	gbɔ̀gbɔ̀	gbîgbɔ̀	gbùgbɔ̀	gbɔgbɔ	breathing
2. ɖà	ɖàɖà	ɖàɖà	ɖîɖà	ɖîɖà	rara	cooking
3. zã̀	zã́zã̀	zázằ	zĩ́zã̀	zĩ́zã̀	zazán	using

Table 15. Maximel eimplicity and /CyV/ etems in Gbe

$$
\text{REDUP.} \xrightarrow{}
\begin{cases}
\text{I} & CyV/\!\!-\!\!-\ C\ V \quad \text{(Ajá, Gɛn, Fɔn and Phla-Pherá d.)} \\[4pt]
\text{II} & C\begin{bmatrix} V \\ -nas. \end{bmatrix}/\!\!-\!\!-\ CyV \quad \text{(Peci)} \\[6pt]
\text{III} & C\,y\begin{bmatrix} V \\ -nas. \end{bmatrix}/\!\!-\!\!-\ CyV \quad \text{(Awlan and Kpándo)}
\end{cases}
$$

c) For the /ClV/ etems, we have five vereions of the reduplication rule
as in Table 16: it is euggeeted that the neo-Gbe forme be based on
vereion III (as in Kpándo), making it neceeeary to mark '-l' as well ae
tone and nasality. Otherwise the reduplicative ie a true copy of the
etem.

Table 16. Maximal simplicity and the /ClV/ stems in Gbe

I ⎧ C 1 V / — C 1 V (Ajá d., Wací and Agbóme)

II ⎪ C V / — C 1 V (Gan)

III⎪ C $\begin{bmatrix} V \\ -naa. \end{bmatrix}$ / — ClV (Kpándo, Pecí and Awlan)

REDUP. ⟶ ⎨

IV ⎪ C $\begin{bmatrix} V \\ +high \\ +front \\ \alpha naa. \end{bmatrix}$ / — Cl $\begin{bmatrix} V \\ \alpha nas. \end{bmatrix}$ (Phla-Pherá dialects, Gun and Kpasɛ)

V ⎩ C $\begin{bmatrix} V \\ +high \\ \alpha nas. \\ \beta round. \end{bmatrix}$ / — Cl $\begin{bmatrix} V \\ \alpha nas. \\ \beta round. \end{bmatrix}$ (Maxí)

Stem	Ajá	Gen	Kpándo (Vhe)	Gun (Fon)	Maxí (Fon)	Neo-Gbe orth.
1. klɔ́	klɔ́klɔ́	kɔ́klɔ́	kɔ́klɔ́	kíklɔ́	kúklɔ́	kɔklɔ́
2. klã̌	klã́klã̌	kã́klã̌	kã́klã̌	kíklã̌	kíklã̌	kaklã́n

(The glosses are: 'wash (plates)' and 'disunite'.)

d) The principle of maximal simplicity may also apply with regard to the "definite article". In the Vhe dialects, /-a/ and /-lá/ occur inter-changeably in the singular; but in the plural, only /-a/ occurs, giving /-awo/: it is suggested that either both the singular and the plural use /-a/, or both use the /-lá/ form. Given the present tendency and existence of an "agentive" morpheme /-lá/, the /-a/ form is preferred in accordance with the principle of maximal differentiation. For example, Awlan [vílá], Wací [víá], Pecí [viɛ́] and Eʋe [víá/vílá] would be written viá, 'the child'. [Víáwó] and [víɛ́wó] (Pecí) would be written viáwo, 'the children'.

3.5. THE PRINCIPLE OF FULLEST FORM OR INTEGRALITY
     (intradialectal and interdialectal)

If, in peculiar circumstances (which are not always predictable), a pho-neme is deleted in a given morpheme, this phoneme will be restituted in the orthography; and (ii) if, from the comparison of cognate items, it

appeers thst some dialectal forms hsve more phonemes than others, the
neolanguage form will be based on those dialects with the "fullest"
form.

This principle msy spply to Gbe in the following cases:

a) In the Vhe dialects, the habitual marker is normally /-ns/, suffixed
to the stem in some dialects (Awlan, Peci); however, when the verb is
followed by an object othsr than a pronoun, the initial /n-/ is deleted:
it is suggested that 'na' be retained in the orthogrsphy in all cases.
(At present, Eve writes both 'na' and 'a'. E.g., Waci [ə́ɖùnà̰ nṹ], Awlan [ə́
ɖùè nṹ], and Peci [ɛ́ ɖùɔ̀ nṹ] would all be written é runa nú, 'he eats'.

b) In some Vhe dialects, the "agentive morpheme' is a suffixed /-lá/,
wherass in Awlan it is usually /-á/: it is suggested thst the
orthography consistently use '-lá'.

c) In some Gbe dialects, the postconsonantsl /y/ is deleted in some
steme (particularly after /c:te:ʃ/, whereas it is maintained in others:
it is suggested that the '-y-' be consistently written in the ortho-
graphy. For exasple, Waci [ca᷄] would be written cyá 'select', as in Awlan
and Peci.

3.6. THE PRINCIPLE OF ANALOGICAL CONSISTENCY
(intradialectal and interdialactsl)

All grammatical morphemes belonging to the same paradigm must be
clearly defined as bound or free morphemee, i.e., written as words on
their own, or as suffixea, or prefixea, or infixes, etc., depending on
internal criteria. Lexical itees must be defined as atems or roots as
the case may be, provided that whatever criterion is used is con-
sistently used.

In Gbe, this principle mey apply in eeveral forms. Regarding suf-
fixation, it is euggested thet two morphemes should be written as a
single word if the heed (the lexicel morphems) comes before the
modifier (grammetical morpheme).

For example:

a) All noun determiners (except adjectives and numerals considered as lexical morphemes) are suffixed to the noun or adjective preceding them, e.g. Vhe [ví + ɲɔ] > and Gɛn [ví + ɲɛ̀] > <u>víyen</u> 'my child', or Phla-Phera [nṹ + ye] > <u>núyé</u> 'things'.

b) All verbal morphemes occurring after the verb itself are suffixed to it, e.g., Vhe and Gɛn [wó kú + ná] > <u>wó kúna</u> 'one dies', or Fɔn [é ɖò nṹ sà + wɛ̀] 'he is ailing'.

c) According to the principle of analogical consistency it is suggested that any Gbe noun normally be written as a single word without regard to its formation (compounds, serial verbs, rankshifted phrases or clauses, etc.). (See Table 17.)

Table 17. The principle of analogical consistency
as applied to the notion of noun in Gbe

	Gen	Ajá	Fɔn	Neo-Gbe orth.	Gloss
1.	àRʷà wɔ+tɔ́	àRʷà wa+tɔ́	àRʷà wa+tɔ́	avhanwatɔ́	warrier
2.	nṹ ɖù pé	nṹ ɖù Xʷé		núruphé	cafeteria
3.	sè ɲlɔ̃̀	sè w̃lɛ̀	sè w̃lã̀	sewlan	dictation
4.	zò kèké	zò kèké	zò kɛ̀kɛ́	dzokeké	motorcycle

3.7 SUMMARY

The principles relating to spelling conventions discussed above are in their majority intradialectal, although some of them are also inter-dialectal, centering around the morpho-phonemic principle. In this way, the neolanguage orthography is resistant to frequent changes and acquires e character of relative permanence while performing its unifying function vis-a-vis the local dialects.

The spelling conventions of neo-Gbe ought to apply in the individual dialects too. Thus, if the present day written forms were to be reformed individually, these principles must be taken into consideration. For instance, the Eve practice of suffixing single letter pronouns but writing longer pronouns as distinct words should be abandoned in favor of a consistent suffixation principle.

4. LEXIS AND WORD ORDER

The domains of syntax (word order) and lexis must not be left out as they too may be crucial in the process of standardization. In these two domains, the main principle that applies is the principle of internal dynamism or flexibility. As far as the lexicon is concerned, all stems must be accepted as terms of neolanguage, whether they begin with staphonemes, equiphonemes, neophonemes or adphonemes. In addition, dialect-specific terms (dialect specific both in phonological form and semantic content) must be incorporated into the neo-Gbe lexicon, e.g. *atsu* 'husband' and *asi* 'wife' found mostly in Fɔn and Ajá dialects, and *slon* 'spouse' found mostly in Vhe and Gɛn dialects. For those terms that are dialectal only in phonological forms, it is suggested that they be incorporated into the neo-Gbe lexicon with the possibility of one being the main entry and the others being specialized, e.g. *abá* in Vhe and Gɛn dialects and *zan* in Fɔn and Phla-Pherá dialects. For lexical expansion, the exercises should be undertaken by pan-Gbe teams so that the new terms are identical from one dialect to the other. That way corpus planning is a dynamic process.

As for word order, we usually have the same syntactic structures from one dialect to the other. However, there are a few cases where constructions are different from one dialect to the other. In such cases both constructions should be incorporated in the neo-language, one being given preference and the others being specialized. A few examples are given in Table 18.

It is through the above principles that the neolanguage acquires flexibility and intellecualization. They epply, however, only in a comparative perspective: in this sense, the neolanguage is richer than the individual dialects.

Table 18. The principle of flexibility as
it applies to Gbe syntax

Vhe	Ajá	Fɔn	Neo-Gbe	Gloss
Kòfi dùnǎ nú	Kòfi dùnɔ̌ nú	Kòfí ŋɔ̌ dù nú	Kofi runa nú, Kofi no ru nú	Kofi eats
Kòfi yi vɔ̀	Kòfi yi vɔ̀	Kòfi kò yì	Kofi yi vɔ, Kofi ko yi	Kofi has gone
mé gbà kpɔ́ ò	ɖè gbè kpɔ́ ò	é sɔ́ kpɔ́ ǎ	mé gba kpón o re gbe kpón o é sɔ kpón sá	be did not see again

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. NEOLANGUAGE AND PROTOLANGUAGE

Since a protolanguage is a reconstruction based on present day dialects and a neolanguage is a construction based on the same dialscts, they may have a one-to-one correspondence between the phonemes of the former and the graphemes of the latter (correspondent ests in both cases). But at the lexical, morphological and syntactic levels, the neolanguage is much richer than the protolanguage as new experiences are encountered, and any dialect specific innovation (absent from the protolanguage) ia part and parcel of the neolanguage.

5.2. NEOLANGUAGE AND PRESENT DAY DIALECTS

There is a total convertibility of the neolanguage into the dialectal forms, i.e., any text written in the neolangusge orthography can be easily read by speakers of various dialects (with ths necessary adjustments), but the reverse ia not necessarily the case. Indeed, the neolangusge has certain phonological contrasts ignored by the present local dialects. Moreover, by fusing all the forms common to the various dialects, and by incorporating dislect specific characteristics, the

neolangusge scquires greater flexibility than any single local dialect, and it is dynamic enough to attain intellectualization. As for the present speakers of local dialects writing in the neolanguage orthogrsphy, their mein problem is only with the neophonemic principle and certein aspects of the principle of integrality, but they may find a relisf in their sociolinguistic environment.

Coming back to Gbe as our language of reference, one can say that Fon speakers for instance will find difficulty in spelling 'st' and 'zd' at the right place (without asmorization) in nso–Gbe, because the sounds represented by these graphemes are not different from those represented by 's' and /z/ in their dialect. One aay point out, however, that only very few Fon speakers do not come across Gɛn speakers. This being the case, Fon epeakers could be informed (taught) that only those /s/s and /z/s of theirs corresponding to. /t/ and /d/ in Gɛn are spelled with 'st' and 'zd'.

5.3. NEOLANGUAGE AS A SPOKEN FORM

Since the present paper is mainly concerned with orthography, one aight have the impreesion that the neolanguage is a writing formula, and hence only e written form. It wss, however, unambiguously stated earlier (see 1.1) that the spplied side of the neolanguage approach to linguistic investigations is "to provide a basis for the development of e comprehensive orthogrsphic system for dialects of ths same language, and the gredual evolution of a superposed variety for individual dialect clusters" (emphasis mine). The neolanguage has therefore a spoken fors (as well as a written one). Since, however, it eeems easier to provide the neolanguage with an orthography first, its epoken form will be mainly a spelling pronunciation, at least at the initial stage. It is obvious that ths staphonemes will be pronounced as they are in the local dialects and the adphonemes as they are in the dialects from which they are taken. Ae for the equiphonemee and the neophonemes, their pronunciation will be based on the graphemes (either a local dialect pronunciation, or an introduced one)[6]. With regsrd to

assimilations, those common to all dialects will be automatically incorporated into the neolanguage; where there are divergences, the assimilation rule may be ignored altogether (spelling pronunciation), or the most widespread tendency may be adopted.

Neo-Gbe (or Standard Gbe) may have the following pronunciations attached to its graphemes (Tables 19. and 20.).

Table 19. Phonemic value of neo-Gbe graphemes
representing the consonants

		bila-bial	labio-dent.	laminal dent.	alv.	api-cal	pala-tal	velar	uvu-lar	lab.-velar	lab.-uvul.
STOPS	vless	p		t				k		kp	
	voiced	b		d		r		g		gb	
	nasal	m				n					
FRICA-TIVES	vless	ph	f		s			x			
	voiced	vh	v		z			h			hw
AFFRI-CATES	vless				ts		c				
	voiced				dz		j				
PLOSI-VATES	vless				st						
	voiced				zd						
Liquid						l					
Approxim.							y			w	

(Note that the equiphonemes 'ph' and 'vh' have the pronunciation of their correspondents in Vhe dialects, i.e., /ʃ/ and /v/, whereas the pronunciation of 'c' and 'j' is based on Waci, Gɛn and Fon, the one of 'e' on Fon and Phla-Pherá, and the one of 'en' and 'on' on the majority of dialects, i.e., /ɛ̃/ and /ɔ̃/. As for the neophonemes, 'ts' and 'dz' have the same pronunciation as in Kpándo and Avéno, 'hw' the same as Fon and Ajá, and 'ɛ' the same as in Fon and Phla-Pherá dialects; 'st' and 'zd' introduce new articulations based on those of 's', 'z', 't' and 'd'.[7]

Table 20. Phonemic value of neo-Gbe graphemes
representing the vowels

a) Oral vowels

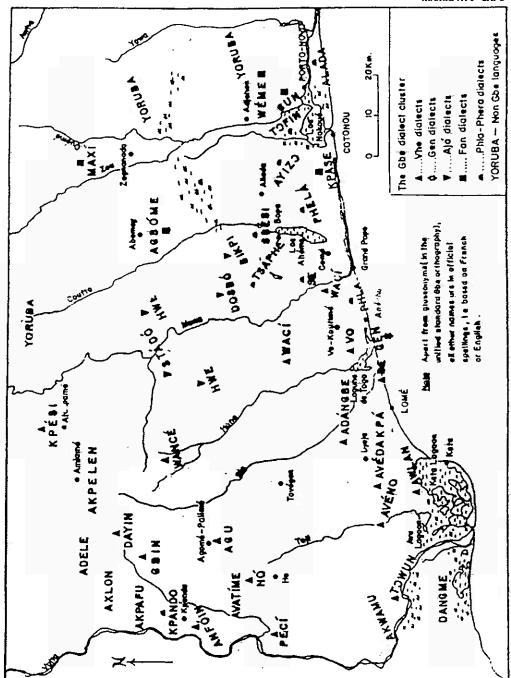|	front	central	back
close	i		u
half-close	e		o
open	ε	a	ɔ

b) Nasal vowels

front	central	back	
in		un	close
en	an	on	open

Given the phonemic values of the graphemes above, the following "reading rules" are part of the phonological grammar of neo-Gbe.

(i) The graphemes 'l', 'y' and 'w' are pronounced as [ĩ], [ɲ] and [w̃] when followed by a nasal vowel;

(ii) the grapheme 'l' is pronounced as [r/r̃] when immediately following 't', 'd', 'a', 'z', 'ts', 'dz', 'et', 'zd', 'c', 'j' and 'y', i.e., the laminals and the palatals;

(iii) the grapheme 'hw' is pronounced as [R] before a back vowel, i.e., 'u', 'o', 'ɔ', 'un' and 'on';

(iv) the vowel sequences 'ai', 'oi', 'εi', 'ɔi', 'ai', 'ein', 'oin', and 'ein' are pronounced as [se], [oe], [εε], [ɔε], [εε], [ε̃ε̃], [ɔε], and [ε̃ε̃] respectively.

5.4. EVALUATION

The neolanguage approach to linguistic investigations stems from historical conditions, viz the present confused and unresolved state of West African languages, but it could have wider implications. By exploring its contribution to orthography and by illustrating it with an actual language, our aim is to give other researchers an opportunity to test it in order to make significant contributions to orthographic theory and linguistic sciences in general.

Notes

The present paper is the outcome of a number of seminar papers presented between 1975 and 1991 in various universities. It intends to make explicit the theoretical basis and the nature of linguistic materials that underly my proposals for a Standard Gbe orthography (Capo in press). While the language data are drawn from Capo (1981b) and other research notes, and also from Pazzi (1972, 1974, and 1976), some of the orthographic principles are based on Stewart (1966) and Crabb (1965). In the examples used to illustrate one principle, other principles may also apply, orthography being a global issue. Any spelling which seems clumsy initially is clarified elsewhere.

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1. Other dialects spoken in the Republic of Bénin (formerly Dahomey) have been recently provided with their own orthographic systems: these include Taiph , Kotafon and Ayizo. Note the spellings 'Vhe', 'Gɛa', 'Aja', 'Fɔn', and 'Phla-Pheri' referring to the dialect groups, and 'Eʋe', 'Gɛn', 'Aja', 'Fɔn' and 'Waci' (instead of 'Waci') referring to the presently written forms. For the current Eʋe orthography, see the latest grammar (Fiaga 1976). For Gɛn, Fɔn, Aja and Waci, see *Commission Nationale de Linguistique* (1976): note, however, that amendments (ignored here) have since been proposed in Lokossa and Capo (1979) for Waci and Gɛn, Guedou (1977) for Fɔn, and Togbi (1977) for Aja, but they have not been officially approved by the "Commission Nationale de Linguistique" which was the language agency of Bénin Republic.   The responsibilities of the Commission are transferred to the Centre National de Linguistique Appliquee (CENALA).

2. The five tones mentioned have other variants.   It has been seen more convenient, therefore, to adopt a tonemic representation throughout this paper: the lexical High and Low tonemes are represented with V́' and V̀' respectively.

As for the segments, we use mainly the symbols of the International African Institute (I.A.I.) of London (1930). The equivalents between our notation and the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.)and our notations are as follows: tʃ:c, dʒ:j, ɛ:ƒ, β:ɓ, χ:X, ʁ:R, j:y.

3. For the concept of sibilantization, see Capo (1981a).   Briefly, it is a process by which a given consonant acquires sibilance, either through palatalization, or alveolarization, or fricativization/affrication, etc.

4. Not all "borrowings", indeed are genuine.   In Gbe for instance, the majority of the native speakers, no matter their local dialects, render /r/ in "borrowed terms? as /l/ or /Rl/, whereas some "intellectuals" insist on the correct (?) pronunciation of the /r/ in the said terms.   In fact, /r/ is not likely to be acquired as a phoneme in Gbe.

5. I have uncritically followed the arrangement of European languages.   Note, however, that it is my contention that digraphs need to appear on their own in the alphabet and the arrangement of dictionary entries.

6. One faces a problem in both cases, the one of making sure that the articulations may be easily acquired by the speakers of all the local dialects, or those of the dialects presently ignoring them. Thus, any decision in this regard must be preceded by sociolinguistic as well as psycholinguistic investigations.

7. The sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic investigations suggested in note 6 have not been conducted in Gbe. The phonemic values of the proposed neophonemes and equiphonemes are therefore subject to revision.

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