A Snapshot of "force dynamic" Expressions in Ewe: A Semantic Working Tool

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Résumé – Cet article est un outil sous forme de liste de termes Ewé concernant la catégorie ou le domaine sémantique appelé « **force dynamics** ». La catégorie « force dynamics » est définie par Talmy (2000), l'un des pères de la sémantique cognitive comme un domaine linguistique caractérisé par des entités dans une interaction de forces. L'œuvre a été produite pour répondre à un besoin: celui d'assister des étudiants/étudiantes ou encore des jeunes chercheurs en linguistique au niveau MA ou doctoral qui utilisent la sémantique cognitive et qui désirent rechercher « force dynamics » au sens approfondi. Il y a donc un besoin réel d'avoir cette liste qui serve comme un ensemble d'indicateurs du domaine. L'article définit ce domaine sémantique (qui, selon Talmy, a été négligé dans la linguistique contemporaine), et élabore toute une série de formes ou de termes en Ewé qui sont des indicateurs de force. Le travail illustre également des exemples d'emploi dans des phrases. L'outil peut aider des chercheurs en langue Ewé et en d'autres langues encore, à approfondir le domaine. L'Ewé est membre de la famille Niger Congo, spécifiquement Kwa et est aussi connu comme un dialecte de Gbe.

Mots clés : Ewé, « force dynamics », formes, liste descriptive.

Abstract – This article is a brief descriptive tool on Ewe **force dynamic** expressions. Force dynamics is defined by Talmy (2000), one of the leading voices on Cognitive Semantics, as a linguistic domain in which entities interact with respect to force. The work is intended for students, especially higher level, MA and doctoral students or young researchers who are currently working within the Cognitive Semantics framework and who seek to explore extensively Ewe force dynamics. There is therefore a need in Ewe to have this list which serves as pointers or indicators of the domain of force. This work defines the scope of the semantic field, which according to Talmy had been neglected in contemporary linguistics. The work additionally consists of a list of terminology or expressions that indicate force in Ewe. Examples of use are included which can assist Ewe linguists and other linguists who desire to explore the domain in details. Ewe is a Kwa branch of the bigger Niger Congo language family. It is also known as a Gbe dialect.

Key words: Ewe, force dynamics, forms, descriptive list.

1. Introduction

This article is on force dynamics in Ewe language. The dialect used is Aŋlɔ, spoken in the Volta region of Ghana, the southern parts of Togo and in some parts of Nigeria. Specifically, the work consists of a descriptive list of forms or expressions on force dynamics in Ewe. It is meant as a brief descriptive tool to assist researchers for detailed exploration of the semantic domain or category.

1.1. The question

Ewe is not English or the Indo-European languages on which Force dynamics has been worked. How do people recognize Ewe force dynamics in sentences when they interact with the language? In other words, what types of specific forms or expressions are used to talk about force dynamics in Ewe? This is the question I explore. This

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exploration or research led into a list of forms or specific expressions which are pointers or indicators of force in force dynamic sentences as opposed to force dynamically neutral sentences in Ewe. The list is a working tool.

1.2. Motivation and objective

The motivation for this descriptive tool comes from the fact that people or specifically new researchers (e.g. the ones we educate here at the University of Lomé, in Togo) look for working materials or tools to enable them do their researches. The materials or tools being scarce entails that someone has to create them. A concrete case was when the current author was involved in an MA proposal defense where the student struggled for expressions in this direction. It then dawned on me that a list might be needed to assist these students in the future. This is the motivation. The objective cannot be spelt out enough: few lexicons exist on Ewe language: this means that we need to keep writing and documenting the language in various domains. Thus, this work which is a specific lexicon (i.e. on a specific domain), namely, force dynamics, comes as a contribution to the literature on Aŋlɔ Ewe language besides being a working tool.

1.3. Data and methodology

A list as this one is difficult to elicit with an informant method, thus data come from searching through the patches of books on Ewe. The whole Ewe section of the novel *Nyɔnu d'afɔ gbe* 'an unfaithful wife' by Tchak (2011), was searched through. Gbekɔbu, (1984)'s textbook on Ewe grammar, which was entirely written in Ewe was also researched for data. Additionally, several sections of BIBLIA, a current 2004 version of the Ewe bible, were researched for relevant data. My native speaker intuitions were additionally helpful in collecting the data.

Methodology here consists of framing the list within a proposed semantic category or domain called force dynamics by Talmy 2000. Talmy's work (and thus the general investigation of this category) falls within Cognitive Semantics. Cognitive semantic theory accounts for language in an encyclopedic way and therefore meets the explanatory adequacy criterion established in linguistics in a much more effective way.

1.4. Previous studies

Existing previous works on linguistic force are on Causation mainly. These works focus on what Talmy (ibid) calls the exertion of force. For example, kill, in the sentence 'The police killed the mad cow' is interpreted as 'cause to die'; and cut, in, 'John cut the bread' would be explained as a case of 'cause to be broken' or a causing event in which a change of state occurs to the bread's initial condition. Levin (1993)'s English verb classes

and alternations has a causative section. Other authors such as the following, in one way or the other, have worked on causation: Shibatani, (1976); Ameka (1991); Comrie & Polinsky, eds. (1993); Song, (1996); Van Valin & LaPolla (1997); Essegbey (1999); and Comrie, (2003). Each of these can be placed within traditional notions of Causation. Here, the typical pattern is exertion of force or impingement.

The essential contribution that Talmy makes to causative studies is to include, besides, exertion of force, resistance to force, overcoming of force, removal of force and a whole lot more (see section 2 below) which the author labels under an umbrella term, **force dynamics**.

2. Force dynamics: the scope

This section defines the scope of the category named as force dynamics and illustrates the domain with examples in English. In other words, a delineation of the scope of the concept is needed and this section serves this purpose. According to Talmy (2000:409-10), force dynamics is "how entities interact with respect to force." This force, unlike previous causation, consists of the following:

i. Exertion of force
ii. Resistance of such a force
iii. The overcoming of such a resistance
iv. Blockage of the expression of force
v. Removal of such blockage
vi. Letting, helping and others not typically seen in Causation

Previous causation predominantly dealt with (i) above, namely exertion of force. Therefore, expressions such as John cut the bread, or Mary killed the mad dog and further still Nancy trampled over the leaves etc. would be typical Causation expressions. The predicate 'kill' for example, was further semantically explained to mean "Cause to die" which involves a change of state. Analyzing "causing" into "finer primitives" or details such as the ones listed above, became the work of Talmy (ibid).

The author using English indicates that force expressions can be seen in grammatical representations such as: conjunctions, prepositions, other open or closed class elements and, especially modals. Force dynamics can apply to the following domains: physical, psychological, social, inferential, discourse, mental-model domains of reference and conception (Talmy, ibid, 410). Cognitive semantics is the broader approach or methodology in which force dynamics works best.

Some of the English examples the author provides to capture his category of force dynamics over force dynamically neutral expressions are as follows: I have left numbers out and highlighted particular expressions that suggest force.

➢ The ball was rolling along the green vs. the ball *kept (on)* rolling along the green.

> ➢ John doesn't go out of the house vs. John ***can't*** go out of the house
> ➢ He didn't close the door vs. He ***refrained from*** closing the door. (p. 412)

Expressions on the left side are all force dynamically neutral and do not express force. The ones on the right side, however, indicate force. The first expression shows resistance to force (the ball *kept on* rolling), while the second expression can be called exertion of force because the entity named John would have wanted to go out of the house but *can't*: John is therefore forced to stay by circumstances without his control. Again, the last expression 'of force' shows a willingness on the part of the entity indicated with the pronoun, he, to close the door however; circumstances make him refrain. This is also an exertion of force. Thus, expressions such as, 'can't', 'kept on', and refrained from all suggest force dynamics within the sentences. In an expression such as the following:

The ball was still rolling ***despite*** the stiff grass (p. 417)

There is resistance to force. The ball kept rolling despite the fact that the stiff grass was preventing it from doing so. Besides these, Talmy discusses also different kinds of impingements or oppositions and shifts in these (p. 417-20). Now, let us look at the force entities as described by the author.

According to Talmy (p. 413-16), each of the two opposing forces has an intrinsic force: they are both force entities with their own force. The one that impinges or exerts force is called **Antagonist** while the one whose intrinsic force is opposed is called the **Agonist**. Talmy borrowed these terms from physiology. In the force interaction expressed by language, the Agonist can resist, have its way or lose while the Antagonist can win, allow (and lose), or even help to achieve the goals of the Agonist. Different other elements such as the following are also discussed as part of the concept: Agency in force dynamic patterns; Asymmetry; force dynamic patterns with a weaker Antagonist; the Self divided in force dynamic patterns and others of the like.

3. Ewe force dynamic expressions

This section exemplifies the domain of Force dynamics in Ewe and additionally provides a working list in the same language which defines the domain. The first concern is addressed in the subsection 3.1 while the second concern is handled in 3.2.

3.1. Illustration

This section illustrates the domain of force dynamics in Ewe. The section is meant to assist in creating the appropriate force dynamic expressions and not getting off the scope of the domain. Thus in Ewe, one can say the following:

(1) a. Mɛ́   wɔ-e   o.
   3SG.NEG   do-3SG   not
   'He/she didn't do it.'

   b. Mɛ́   teŋu   wɔ-e   o.
   3SG.NEG   could   do-3SG   not
   'He/she couldn't do it.'

   c. E-wɔ-e   dokpo.
   3SG-do-3SG   in.vain
   'He/she   did it in vain.'

Example (1a) is force dynamically neutral. It simply tells us that the entity named didn't do something. Contrarily, example (1b) and (1c) have a different meaning. They each suggest that the entity named had an intrinsic desire to do something but something hindered this desire and therefore, the action wasn't accomplished. While example (1b) translates as 'X *couldn't* do something,' example (1c) translates as 'X did it in vain.' In both instances, the Agonist (who had the intrinsic desire to do something) fails and the Antagonist (understood as the opposing force entity) wins. The elements indicating force, as illustrated in the examples, are *teŋu* and *dokpo* as also shown in the table in section 3.2. Other examples are illustrated below.

(2) a. Kofi   ɖe mɔ na-m   be ma-yi.   Removal of blockage, Letting
   Kofi   remove path for-1SG   that 1SG-go
   'Kofi allowed me to go.'

   b. Kofi   kpe ɖe ŋu-nye be   ma-yi.   Helping
   Kofi   help me   that   1SG-go
   'Kofi helped me to go.'

   c. Kofi   do alɔ-m.   Helping
   Kofi   lend hand-1SG
   'Kofi lent me a hand.'

   d. Kofi be   ma-yi.   Neutral
   Kofi   say 1SG-go
   'Kofi said I should go.'

Example (2d) has no force indication: that Kofi tells someone to go, simply, has no apparent clue suggesting force. On the contrary, the underlined expressions in (2a, b, and c) all suggest force. This is where the Antagonist, Kofi, is seen as removing blockage (2a) and actually assisting or helping the Agonist (2b, c). Each of the examples in (2a, b, and c) are missing from previous descriptions of Causation. Thus although the Agonist wins in the removal of force and the helping instances, this could not be possible without the helping capacity of the Antagonist. Previous studies make the Antagonist the sole winner while Talmy's semantic account of force interaction sees the two force entities as complementary forces that can each win, lose or even complement or assist in the final result of the other. See further examples in (3).

(3) a. Tɔsisia tsòtso zu   dɔ   na-m.
     river   cross become work/task for-1SG
     'Crossing the river has become a burden to me.'

  b. Fefe-a   yi   ɖe-m
     game-DET   go.away from-1SG
     'I couldn't participate in the game

  c. Nunya   wɔ ɖeʃiaɖe gake me-yi   o.
     Nunya do everything but   NEG-go not
     'Nunya did everything (in her power), but she didn't go/she couldn't go.'

Each of the examples in (3) involves force. Particularly, sentence (3c) means that there are mitigating forces working against the named entity Nunya and that is why she couldn't go even though intrinsically, her own force had fought to resist the mitigating forces coming against her. A final example is provided below.

(4) a. Ne ɖee me-lé-m   o   la,   ne me-dze anyi kloe.
     if that 2SG.NEG-catch-1SG, not TOP would 1SG-fall down almost
     'If you hadn't caught me, I would have fallen down almost.'

  b. Nunya wɔ dɔ alea pɛ hafi, ga   kpɔkpɔ seŋu nɛ.
     Nunya do work much INT before money get.RED hard for.3SG
     'Ama worked that much, but getting money was still difficult for her.'

  c. E-de   se na-m   be nye me-gayi o.
     3SG-put law to-1SG that I   NEG-go not
     'He/she commanded me not to go.'

There is a helping sense in (4a): the Antagonist helps in order to fulfill the intrinsic desire of the Agonist not to fall. Contrarily, (4b) indicates that the Agonist fails and the understood Antagonist wins. Observe that in (4b), no Antagonist is named but is definitely understood and force is involved because of the combined expressions *alea pɛ hafi*, equivalent to 'this/that much.' These expressions suggest some force entity is coming against Ama's efforts and certainly, this force wins with the result that Ama finds it difficult to make money. Finally, (4c) shows that there is a force interaction in which the Agonist is required to comply. If there is no force indication, the sentence would simply be: *E-gblɔ na-m be nye me-ga-yi o* 'He/she told me not to go.'

3.2. A descriptive list of force dynamic forms in Ewe

In this section, I provide a list of forms whose occurrence in any sentence in Ewe suggest or point to force dynamic interaction. There are single forms or words, combinations of forms or phrases and particular structures that point to force dynamic uses in Ewe. Therefore, in terms of what kinds of expressions are used to express force in Ewe sentences, the descriptive list below responds to the question. It is not exhaustive but is expansive enough to illustrate the category or domain. N<u>O</u> in the table refers to number.

Force Dynamic forms/expressions in Ewe

N°	FORM	COMMENT
1.	teŋu 'can, could'	Capability or ability. Could do X or was capable of X. X is a variable that can be replaced by real entities within the sentence.
2.	me teŋu not could 'couldn't'	Incapability or inability. Could not do X or was incapable of X.
3.	yi edzi go on 'keep, kept'	Kept doing something, or went on doing X.
4.	togbɔbe 'despite, although'	This expression calls for an opposition just as in English.
5..	ɖe mɔ na VERB way for 'allow, remove blockage'	Allow. The negation form *me* can be added at the beginning to express a negation sentence. Negation is a disjunction; *me…o*. The final *o* occurs in sentence final position.
6.	he mɔ̃ na 'block way for'	Prevent. Block way for X

7.	tu mɔ na 'shut door for'	Prevent. Shut opportunity from X
8.	hè̀ ame ɖe megbe pull person to back 'pull back'	Pulling one back from objectives.
9.	gbe 'refuse'	Refusal to do X.
	ɖu X dzi eat X top 'overcome X'	X can be both the Antagonist and the Agonist. This depends on the situation being expressed.
10.	ɖu ɖokui dzi eat self top 'overcome self/self control'	A divided self expression in which an entity and its self are at conflict.
11.	zĩ / ʒĩ ɖokui dzi press self down 'prevent self from doing something'	Dominate self/force oneself. Similar to (10).
12.	<u>dze agbagba</u> (yi) try (go) 'try or force to do something'	Try or force suggests an Antagonist is in the background, otherwise there would not be a need to try or force.
13.	wɔ <u>deʃiaɖe</u> do all/everything 'Do everything in one's power'	Suggests Antagonist in the background impinging or fighting against.
14.	na be give that 'Make or made X do something'	This means make or cause X to do something.
15.	wɔ be make that 'cause'	Sense of causing something: X's ability or inability to do something is the result of another entity (Antagonist making it). Thus the expression can be helping or causing something to happen in the negative sense.
16.	tsɔ ɖe (lame na) take put (body for) 'urge'	The sense is putting an urge into X (in one way or the other) to do something.
17.	ʋli (wɔ name) struggle (do something) 'struggled (to accomplish something)'	A struggle entails force.

18.	tsi dzodzodzoe (yi) 'remain anxious'	Anxiety is the result of something in the background (an Antagonist).
19.	X tsi nenema X remain same 'X remained like that'	The expression supposes that X would have wanted to be different. Thus there is impingement.
20.	le nu (na ɖokui) catch mouth (for self) 'refrained from talking/prevent ones mouth from saying something'	The expression suggests that there is something in the background which prevents X from talking.
21.	le ɖokui catch self 'hold oneself'	The sense is that X desires to do something but there is a holding back on that action.
22.	tekpɔ (wɔ X) force (do X)	This is forcing with a sense much more intense than *dze agbagba* 'try' above.
23.	kpɔ mɔ (wɔ na ne) get way/chance (do something) 'get a chance to do something'	This expression suggests that X was hindered in the past to do something.
24.	tsɔ ɖo ɖokui dzi take put self on 'to put on oneself (to do something)'	The expression suggests force, pressure: there is an understood impingement which is a driving force for this expression.
25.	wɔ.na ɖeke me li o deed none not.exist 'no way/nothing can be done'	This is helplessness with the sense that one would like to do something but cannot do anything.
26.	e-ɖo la (wɔ X) 3SG.must (do X) 'must'	The 'must' predicts force in the sense that there is a constraint. This is different from saying the following: *E-dze be woa- wɔ* X 'It is fitting to do X.'
27.	gake 'but, however…'	This takes a previous situation to bear on the current event.
28.	nane zu dɔ na X something become task for X 'something has become a burden for X'	This suggests that something which could be fun or an easy thing for X, has become a burden or a task. Thus there is an intrinsic desire to accomplish something which has become a burden.
29.	dokpo without success	This shows an attempt or intrinsic desire to do something which was not successful.

	'unsuccessful; in vain'	
30.	wɔ dɔ ɖe ame dzi do work on person top 'act upon a person/action with effect'	This is influence, acting upon someone. Whether the influence is negative or positive, the initiator (Antagonist) still wins unless specified otherwise. This is because there is impact or effect.
31.	Ma-wɔ dɔ ɖe ame dzi o NEG-do work on person top NEG 'action without effect'	This involves an action upon someone with no effect. The Agonist wins.
32.	gblẽ nu le ame ŋuti spoil thing on person flesh 'tarnish a person or hurt a person in one way or the other'	This is also like in example (30). An Antagonist action on the Agonist with concrete effect. The Antagonist wins.
33.	Ma- gblẽ nu le ame NEG-spoil thing on person ŋuti o flesh NEG 'An action without effect on a person.	The negation of (32). Agonist wins. Similar to (31).
34.	yi ɖe ame go.way.from person 'to miss or fail to have/one couldn't benefit from something'	Agonist here would like to participate in something or do something which went by or is past. This makes the Agonist a loser. The Antagonist being the other force entity designated as past or the thing missed, wins.
35.	kloe 'almost, practically'	The expression suggests a strong chance of X doing something or something happening if another entity had not prevented it.
36.	pɛ hafi this.much 'this or that much'	Used contrastively. See example sentence (4b) under 3.1.
37.	de se na put law to 'to command'	This sense is stronger than simply *gblɔ na be* which is simply telling someone something. The command suggests that the Agonist intends to do something but was warned against it.
38.	ɖo afɔ afɔ-dzi na	To forewarn with the sense that one

	put foot foot-top to 'forewarn'	(Antagonist) apprehends a possible danger by inactivity or action on the part of the Agonist. The forewarning thus may change the Agonist's position.
39.	gblɔ-e na <u>do ŋgɔ</u> say-3SG to up.front 'forewarn'	This expression is also like (38).
40.	me sia-wò 1SG inform-2SG 'I have warned you.'	Again, this warning may change the direction of the Agonist whose intrinsic force may want to be exercised differently.
41.	me na-wò to-klã̀ 1SG give-2SG ear-inform 'I have warned you'	The sense here can be slightly stronger than in (38) or (39). A force neutral expression will not involve warning.
42.	ku ɖe ame ŋu hang on person on 'hang onto a person; like a disturbing child unto a parent or a needy person holding onto a savior.'	The expression supposes that the entity being hanged on disproves this action or sees it as exaggerated; otherwise it will not be used.
43.	lé ɖe ame ŋu stick on person on 'stick onto a person'	The expression suggests a constraint …the entity that is sticking to another is impinged on in one way or the other which causes the 'sticking to' expression. The expression can also have the sense in (42).
44.	ta ɖe ame ŋu marked on person on 'stick onto a person like a mark'	Similar to (43).
45.	<u>kpe ɖe X ŋu</u> 'help, assist X'	A helping force: the Antagonist is helping the Agonist.
46.	<u>do alɔ X</u> 'lend a hand to X'	Similar to (45); the Antagonist lends a hand in order to fulfill the desire of the Agonist.
47.	do ŋusẽ X Verb strength X 'strengthen X'	Another helping expression similar to (45) and (46).
48.	nye ŋusẽ na X be strength for X 'be X's strength'	A helping expression
49.	tu vɔ ɖe ame ŋu close door on person flesh	Blockage.

	'no chance, no opportunity/hindrance'	
50.	<u>tsi megbe</u> le ame ŋu be late about person flesh 'be late on someone/draw or pull someone back'	The entity that is drawn back is understood to have an intrinsic desire to move on. Thus, an Antagonist is involved who is the source of the draw back.

4. Conclusion

This snapshot or short article illustrates Force dynamics in Ewe based on Talmy's (2000) semantic framework. Within this conceptualization, entities interact with respect to force linguistically. It was shown that entities such as Agonist and Antagonist interact where the Agonist (the sufferer entity) receives opposition or impingement from the Antagonist. However, since the Agonist has its own intrinsic force, it can resist, overcome, or even be assisted by the Antagonist. This article has illustrated Talmy's framework in terms of a descriptive list in Ewe: this serves as a collection of pointers/indicators to force expression. Talmy's own work makes a huge contribution to previous works on Causation in that it includes elements such as resistance of force, the overcoming of such a resistance, blockage of force, removal of blockage, and letting, helping and other such force meanings that are not typically seen in Causation. The descriptive list in Ewe contributes to the lexicon in the domain in that it facilitates the work for any researcher interested in either working in-depth on Ewe or even simply comparing Ewe with another language or languages.

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