

A grammar of Agholo [Ogbia]

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[draft only] Work in progress

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Editorial comments by Kay Williamson

CHAPTER 1

The Alphabet

1.0 A Brief Historical Account of Agholo/Oloibiri Orthography

The first reader to appear in Agholo was written in the fifties by the late Mr Sidi Olali, a Grade Two teacher and a native of the community. Probably using the English language and other indigenous languages as guidelines, he proposed a total of thirty-seven letters for writing Agholo, consisting of eight vowels and twenty-nine consonants.

Vowels:

/ a â e ɛ i o ɔ u

Consonants:

/ b ɓ d ɗ f g h j k l m n p r s t v w y z /

/ bh gb gh kp kw ny ch sh th /

Two vowel phonemes were omitted. These are /**i** and **u**/. Five consonants are non-occurring and therefore redundant. These are /**h j ch sh and th**/.

The orthography used by the present writer is based largely on Williamson's *Reading and Writing Ogbia*, first published in 1979. This orthography was based on the Oloibiri dialect. For Oloibiri, ten distinctive vowel phonemes and twenty-four consonant sounds are posited, giving a total of thirty-four letters.

Vowels:

/ a ɔ e ɛ i ɪ o ɔ u ʊ /

Consonants:

/ b ɓ bh d ɗ f g gb gh k kp l m n nw ny p r s t v w y z /

1.1 The Newly Proposed Alphabet of Agholo

1.2

The alphabet of Agholo can be divided into:

(A) single letters, (B) double letters or digraphs and (C) trigraph

1.2 (A) Single Letters:

a ǎ b ɓ d ɗ e ẹ f g i ì k l
m n o ọ p r s t u ụ v w y z

1.3 (B) Double Letters/Digraphs:

bh gb gh kp ny nw

1.4 (C) Trigraph:

ngh

Double letters and the trigraph represent a single sound.

1.5 Vowels

There are ten vowels in Agholo. These are illustrated in the following words:

a	ade	‘farm’
	arua	‘garment/clothing’
	amati	‘music’
ǎ	ǎlai	‘tooth’
	ǎguo	‘hand’
	ǎsighal	‘hair’
e	eru	‘juju’
	emugh	‘head’
	ekpóm	‘basket’
ẹ	ẹnur	‘chicken’
	ẹsúá	‘hoe’
	ẹghoi	‘snail’
i	izin	‘tears’
	izon	‘nose’
	idú	‘pepper’
ì	ìyo	‘him/her’
	ìgié	‘go!’
	ìkúe	‘pluck!’
o	otu	‘house’
	ogir	‘work’
	okolo	‘cocoyam’

o	o ba	‘story’
	o so	‘soap’
	o kpe	‘case’
u	o fugu	‘to throw away’
	o gugu	‘ditch’
	o puru	‘to ask’
u	o gum	‘frog’
	a mum	‘water’
	a munu	‘oil’

u and **u** do not begin a word in Agholo.

1.6. Vowel Sequences

It is common to have a sequence of two vowels, as in the following words:

o gbua	‘big’
a lai	‘tooth’
o gaun	‘grasshopper’
i diobh	‘ten’
o kiel	‘left’
o zuan	‘to meet’
o tu	‘to contribute’
e ghoi	‘hat’
a dio	‘flood’
e giazi	‘spoon’
a meun	‘honey’
o lei	‘to suffice’
e legien	‘tomorrow’
o titiom	‘advice’
a pipia	‘hornbill’

1.7 Vowel Harmony

Vowel harmony is prominent. Agholo vowels can be divided into two equal sets as follows:

(1) Wide:

i e o u a

(2) Narrow:

i e o u a

Group 1 (Wide)

i	iná iḍiobh igbogi	‘fish’ ‘ten’ ‘money’
e	éri ezogh egugh	‘thread’ ‘deer’ ‘door’
o	oyel obodo olobhírí	‘youngster’ ‘road’ ‘man’
u	iḃáku aluzu alukpógh	‘box’ ‘body’ ‘sugarcane’
a	awel abobh agugh	‘leg’ ‘salt’ ‘pot’

Group 2 (Narrow)

ì	ìyo ìmára ìrúágbo	‘him/her’ ‘stand!’ ‘did they say so?’
ẹ	ẹmar ẹghiri ẹrugian	‘births/families’ ‘time’ ‘divisions’
ọ	ọya ọḃal ọpiki	‘female’ ‘white’ ‘to lock’
ụ	ụnu ụgú ụruru	‘mouth’ ‘root’ ‘gunpowder’
ạ	ạsabi ạlikir ạnwaní	‘key’ ‘thin’ ‘girls’

In simple words, only vowels from one group can co-occur. Note that in the examples given above under group 1, only the vowels described as wide have been used in the formation of the words for ‘fish’, ‘door’, ‘youngster’, ‘box’, ‘leg’, etc.

Similarly, in the examples cited under group 2, the words for ‘him’, ‘her’, ‘births’, ‘female’, ‘mouth’, ‘key’, etc., have dotted vowels. To avoid writing too many dots in our spelling, only the first vowel in a word will be dotted. This is because all the other vowels will automatically agree or harmonize with the first vowel. There are, however, instances where the two sets of vowels are intermingled in the formation of complex words.

Examples:

igbigi-ḟari	‘file’
adiri-òso	‘bitterleaf’
eḍia-ànyu	‘moon’
àni-òbhom	‘woman’
okoko-pòlí	‘parrot’
òbuto-ònu	‘pig’
ikol-ḃàgu	‘hammer’
opel-àzo	‘boys’ game’
òḍe-òzo	‘oath’
odu-àmúm	‘a kind of snake’
oki-òni	‘old person’
opuru-ṁaomugh	‘a kind of snake’
àliga-maozu	‘body ailment’
ekpukul-àni	‘widow’
okoḍu-òra	‘to lie down’
oleghemaedí-òni	“cry cry baby”

Even here, we can still observe our spelling rule by dotting only one member of the dotted vowels, as the above examples illustrate. The use of the hyphen shows that these words are not simple but complex in their structure.

1.8 Consonants

In Agholo there are the following consonant sounds:

b bh ɓ d ɗ f g gb gh k kp kw l
m n ngh ny nw p r s t v w y z

They are used in words such as:

b	baá	‘nothing’	ɔba	‘story’	ʌsabi	‘key’
bh	bhíné!	‘take!’	epobh	‘hunger’	izubh	‘kernel’
ɸ	ɸáru!	‘bring!’	ɸetíná	‘get up!’	ɔbal	‘white’
d	díla!	‘sorry!’	adodón	‘today’	ade	‘farm’
ɖ	dé!	‘eat!’	imaɖió	‘rain’	aɖien	‘eye’
f	fúgú!	‘throw away!’	ɔfogh	‘to launder’	ofo	‘to peel’
g	gímé!	‘build!’	egugh	‘door’	ogugu	‘ditch’
gb	gbáramé!	‘repeat!’	ɔgbasuma	‘witch’	ɔgbua	‘big’
gh	ghílé!	‘run!’	ogho	‘to buy’	ɔghóghó	‘medicine’
k	kómé!	‘start!’	ake	‘rest day’	otirikóko	‘spider’
kp	kponé!	‘look!’	ikpé	‘cloth’	ikpélkpé	‘lizard’
l	léghé!	‘cry!’	ɛlɛl	‘yam’	egbolom	‘land’
m	márá!	‘stand!’	ʌmum	‘water’	ɔmite	‘to go out’
n	nágá!	‘listen!’	onón	‘this’	amin	‘liquor/drink’
ny	anyén?	‘who?’	ɔnyi	‘child’	egbéíny	‘far’
ngh	enghá ⁺ ná	‘forest’	ɔnghon	‘to snore’	onghen	‘to crack’
nw	onwení	‘mother’	anwunom	‘people’	ʌsunwer	‘sickness’
p	púrú!	‘ask!’	ɔpa	‘scraper’	ʌpipia	‘hornbill’
r	rúé!	‘say!’	ɔrim	‘a kind of fish’	órérén	‘tree’
s	sá!	‘cook!’	esí	‘place’	ɛsásár	‘sand’
t	túé!	‘come!’	ɔtara	‘to sit’	etiti	‘kitchen seat’
v	ava	‘gun’	ɔvununu	‘mud wasp’		
w	wélé!	‘leave!’	owil	‘doctor’	awasa	‘wrestling’
y	yélé!	‘go home!’	ayíga	‘baby’	ayobo	‘praying mantis’
z	zúé!	‘pour!’	ɛgiazi	‘spoon’	ɔzuzúá	‘black’

1.9 The Vowel and Consonant Charts of Agholo

Vowel Chart	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
High-Mid	ɪ		ʊ
Mid	e	ə	o
Low	ɛ	a	ɔ

Consonant Chart	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labial-velar
Stops	p b		t d		k g	kp gb
Implosives	ɸ		ɖ			
Nasals	m		n	ny	ngh	nw
Fricatives	bh	f v	s z		gh	
Roll			r			
Approximant (Central)				y		w
Approximant (Lateral)			l			

CHAPTER 2

Tones in Agholo

2.0 Level and Gliding Tones

Agholo is a tone language. A tone language is a language that makes use of contrasts of pitch to signal a meaning difference between two or more words that are identical in shape with respect to their vowel and consonant combinations. The contrasting tones are:

Level Tones:

Low [`] (unmarked in this work)

High [´] (marked)

Downstep [ˆ] (marked between syllables)

Gliding Tone:

Falling tone [^] (marked)

The low tone is the most common tone. For this reason, it is unmarked in this orthography I have proposed. Of the four tones, the falling tone has the most restricted distribution. It is found only word-finally.

2.1 Tones in Lexical Differentiation

Tone plays a role in lexical differentiation. Although the following words are spelt in the same way, they are pronounced with different tones. The difference in tone signals a difference in meaning.

Examples:

egi	‘house fly’	LL
egí	‘journey’	LH
esi	‘sore’	LL
esí	‘place’	LH
ewel	‘goat’	LL
ewél	‘beard’	LH
ilu	‘lie’	LL
ílu	‘proverb’	HL

The difference between a noun and a verb is sometimes indicated by tone only.

Verb		Noun	
osuan	‘to go north’	osúán	‘northwards’
otama	‘to go south’	otámá	‘southwards’
ogeni	‘to be big’	ogení	‘slave’
owal	‘to count’	owál	‘counting’
okunu	‘to mourn’	okúnú	‘sweetly spiced palm oil’
omogona	‘to change’	omógóna	‘trickster’

2.2 Tones in Grammatical Differentiation

The difference between a statement and a question is sometimes indicated by tone.

Statement		Question	
Abobh.	‘It is salt.’	Ábóbh?	‘Is it salt?’
Ewel.	‘It is a goat.’	Éwél?	‘Is it a goat?’
Agayi.	‘It is true.’	Agayí?	‘Is it true?’

Tone also distinguishes moods and aspectual meanings.

Imperative Mood		Hortative Mood	
gíé	‘go!’	gîê	‘go on now!’
túé	‘come!’	tuê	‘come now!’
yílé	‘run!’	yilê	‘run now!’
bhíné	‘take!’	bhinê	‘take now!’
Nááru	‘he/she is coming’		present progressive aspect
Naaru	‘he/she will come’		future aspect
Náaru	‘he/she has come’		present perfect aspect
Náá ⁺ ru	‘he/she came’		perfective aspect

2.3 Tone Classes of Nouns

Monosyllabic nouns do not occur. This is because all nouns begin with a vowel prefix. Disyllabic nouns can be grouped into four classes based on their tone patterns.

2.4	<p>Tone Class I LL</p> <p>iyi ‘creek’</p> <p>igo ‘eagle’</p> <p>esi ‘sore’</p> <p>emugh ‘head’</p> <p>enu ‘mouths’</p> <p>enam ‘meat/beast’</p> <p>otu ‘house’</p> <p>oya ‘female’</p> <p>ogum ‘frog’</p> <p>awel ‘foot’</p> <p>akpa ‘bag’</p> <p>atam ‘feather’</p> <p>owu ‘five’</p> <p>esar ‘three’</p> <p>ala ‘year’</p>	<p>Tone Class II LH</p> <p>idú ‘pepper’</p> <p>ibú ‘thing/load’</p> <p>ogú ‘root’</p> <p>eká ‘horn’</p> <p>asú ‘horse’</p> <p>oví ‘cow’</p> <p>edúm ‘bush’</p> <p>akpó ‘mushroom’</p> <p>ekpóm ‘basket’</p> <p>otír ‘pole for punting a canoe’</p> <p>iwóbh ‘climbing rope’</p> <p>adón ‘long flowing robe’</p> <p>esí ‘place’</p> <p>ikpé ‘cloth/clothing’</p> <p>egí ‘journey’</p>
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<p>Tone Class III HH</p> <p>éwú ‘pond’</p> <p>ípó ‘masquerade’</p> <p>órím ‘a kind of fish’</p> <p>énwén ‘kitchen rack’</p> <p>ádugh ‘death’</p> <p>oghábh ‘a kind of fish’</p> <p>ipé ‘fashion’</p>	<p>Tone Class IV HL</p> <p>akom ‘jaundice’</p> <p>ada ‘father’</p> <p>éri ‘thread’</p> <p>ako ‘brackish water crab’</p> <p>aka ‘support stick for masquerade’</p>
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2.5 Trisyllabic Nouns

Many more tone classes can be mapped out for trisyllabic nouns. The six most common combinations are:

Tone Class I LLL

igbogi	‘money’
egbolom	‘land’
egberḅa	‘story’
egaga	‘lobster’
eruru	‘ashes’
obodo	‘road’
asiga	‘worm’
aluzu	‘body’
aziḅa	‘god’
asido	‘proverb’
oḅiḅigh	‘rope’

Tone Class II LHH

iḅógú	‘fever’
ḅbúdú	‘mud’
obúrú	‘parlour’
ozígá	‘hanging mat’
olókó	‘law’
osókpó	‘banana’
aḅírí	‘book’
ḅsúá	‘hoe’
oghóghó	‘medicine’
ikpélkpé	‘lizard’
ibhówú	‘breath’

Tone Class III HHH

órérén	‘tree’
ákúḅú	‘fathom’
ípúpú	‘tattered’
ḅpúpú	‘rotten/ stinking’

Tone Class IV HLL

ḅkuru	‘okro’
ítíla	‘influenza’

Tone Class V LHL

okére	‘which’
iyíkpo	‘measles’
igbóma	‘bell’
iḅáku	‘box’
olótu	‘champion’
oyóba	‘cowife’
ayíga	‘baby’
awúre	‘pipe’
ḅkúru	‘porcupine’
ipési	‘falsehood’
abézin	‘basin’

Tone Class VI LLH

asadín	‘sardine’
ogení	‘slave’
ologbó	‘cat’
oḅuḅúl	‘legend/history’
anwaní	‘girls’
adodón	‘today’
okpukpú	‘owl’
ḅsasár	‘sand’
ikpakpú	‘bedbug’
alukpógh	‘sugar cane’
agayí	‘true?’

2.6 Tone in the Associative Construction of Nouns

In Agholo, two nouns may occur together in order to express the fact that the entity to which the first noun refers is somehow associated or possessed by the entity to which the second noun refers. This construction is commonly called the Associative Construction and is found in many

West African languages. When the second noun refers to a person, it is frequently preceded by the preposition **ta/ta**, which has the same tone as the next syllable.

Associative Constructions in Agholo

LL + LL \longrightarrow LLHL
 oya + ɛnur ‘female of chicken’ oya ɛnur
 ɔnu + ɛnam ‘mouth of beast’ ɔnu ɛnam

LL + LH \rightarrow LLLH

akpa + iná	‘bag of fish’	akpa iná
ɔnu + asú	‘mouth of horse’	ɔnu asú

LL + HH \rightarrow LLLH

ɔnu + ipó	‘mouth of masquerade’	ɔnu ipó
ɔnu + ewú	‘entrance of pond’	ɔnu ewú

LL + HL \rightarrow LLHL

awel + ako	‘leg of crab’	awel ako
awel + ada	‘father’s leg’	awel tá ada

LH + LL \rightarrow LHHL

eká + ɛnam	‘horn of beast’	eká ɛnam
ibú + ɔnyi	‘child’s things’	ibú tá ɔnyi

LH + LH \rightarrow LLHH

idú + edúm	‘bush- pepper’	idu edúm
eká + oví	‘horn of cow’	eka + óví

LH + HH \rightarrow LHHH

ikpé + adúgh	‘mourning dress’	ikpé adúgh
ikpé + ípé	‘fashionable clothes’	ikpé ípé

LH + HL → LHHL

ekpóm + áko	‘basket of crabs’	ekpóm áko
iwóbh + áda	‘father’s climbing- rope’	iwóbh tá áda

HH + LL → LLLH

ípó + ẹma	‘town masquerade’	ipo ẹmá
ádúgh + ọgum	‘death of frog’	adugh ọgúm

HH + LH → LLLH

ádúgh + oví	‘death of cow’	adugh oví
énwén + edúm	‘bush drying- rack’	enwen edúm

HH + HH → LLHL

ádúgh + oví	‘death of cow’	adugh oví
énwén + ọrím	‘rack for ọrim- fish’	enwen ọrim

HH + HL → LLHL

ádúgh + áda	‘death of father’	adugh tá áda
éwú + áda	‘rack for ọrim- fish’	ewu tá áda

HL + LL → LLHL

áko + ọnyi	‘child’s crab’	áko tá ọnyi
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HL + LH → LLLH

áko + edúm	‘bush crab’	áko edúm
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HL + HH → LLLH

áko + éwú	‘pond crab’	áko ewú
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HL + HL → LLHL

éri +	'father's	eri tá
áda	thread'	áda

2.7 Summary of Tone Rules in Associative Construction

There are no tone changes in the following combinations:

- (i) LL+LH
- (ii) HL+HL

For the other combinations, the changes are as follows: When a morpheme that is all low is followed by another low, the initial syllable morpheme of the second morpheme changes to high. When a morpheme that is low high is followed by a morpheme that is all low, the initial syllable of the second morpheme is raised to a high tone.

CHAPTER 3

Parts of Speech/Word Classes

3.0 Nouns

Nouns are words which refer to persons, places, things, ideas, etc. In linguistic terms, nouns are items which display certain types of inflection (e.g. of case or number), have a specific distribution (e.g. they may follow a preposition) and perform a specific syntactic function, such as that of subject or object of a sentence. Nouns are generally classified into common and proper types (Crystal 1997:264).

In Agholo, nouns inflect for number and case.

3.1 Proper Nouns

These refer to personal names or places as in:

Ódo	‘name of a male person’
Ogó	‘name of a female person’
Agholo	‘name of the community’.

3.2 Common Nouns

These refer to entities or beings in the real world as in:

	Singular		Plural
obodo	‘road’	ibodo	‘roads’
oḍi	‘grave’	iḍi	‘graves’
ogibh	‘nerve’	igibh	‘nerves’
okóḅa	‘cowrie’	ikóḅa	‘cowries’
olótu	‘champion’	ilótu	‘champions’
onweni	‘mother’	inweni	‘mothers’
osókpó	‘banana’	isókpó	‘bananas’
oḅáku	‘chair’	eḅáku	‘chairs’
oḡum	‘frog’	eḡum	‘frogs’
oṣalaḅa	‘comb’	eṣalaḅa	‘combs’
oḡhóghó	‘medicine’	eḡhóghó	‘medicines’
oḡkarabhabhár	‘snake’	eḡkarabhabhár	‘snakes’
ekpóm	‘basket’	ekpóm	‘baskets’
eru	‘juju/evil spirit’	eru	‘juju/evil spirits’
esí	‘place’	esí	‘places’
ewu	‘pond’	ewu	‘ponds’

éri	‘thread’	éri	‘threads’
ẹ̀dúm	‘pestle’	ẹ̀dúm	‘pestles’
ẹ̀ghoi	‘snail’	ẹ̀ghoi	‘snails’
ẹ̀kol	‘sacrifice’	ẹ̀kol	‘sacrifices’
ẹ̀nyaní	‘girl’	ạ̀nwaní	‘girls’
abobh	‘salt’	abobh	‘salts’
aḍírí	‘book’	aḍírí	‘books’
agugh	‘pot’	agugh	‘pots’
amin	‘drink’	amin	‘drinks’
apolo	‘compound’	apolo	‘compounds’
ạ̀sabi	‘key’	ạ̀sabi	‘keys’
ạ̀mum	‘water’	ạ̀mum	‘waters’
ạ̀sighal	‘hair’	ạ̀sighal	‘hairs’
ạ̀tukpa	‘lamp’	ạ̀tukpa	‘lamps’
ạ̀sóghó	‘grass’	ạ̀sóghó	‘grasses’
ogbo	‘age group’	ogbo	‘age groups’
ogir	‘work’	ogir	‘works’
obenam	‘elephant’	obenam	‘elephants’
ọ̀bhíí	‘river’	ọ̀bhíí	‘rivers’
ọ̀ḍany	‘protective charm’	ọ̀ḍany	‘protective charms’
ọ̀kpe	‘lawsuit’	ọ̀kpe	‘lawsuits’
ibú	‘thing’	ibú	‘things’
ìgbína	‘bead’	ìgbína	‘beads’
ikuku	‘wind’	ikuku	‘winds’
ikpé	‘loincloth’	ikpé	‘loincloths’
ilom	‘marriage’	ilom	‘marriages’
ize	‘drum’	ize	‘drums’

3.3 Nominal Inflection

All nouns in Agholo begin with a vowel prefix. Many nouns that begin with **o-** or **ọ-** have plural forms of the shape **i-** or **ẹ-** (see the examples already listed above under Section 3.2, Common Nouns.) Many other nouns have the same form both in their singular and plural. Consider the examples cited under 3.2, which begin with the vowel prefixes **e-** **ẹ-** **a-** **ạ-** **o-** **ọ-** and **i-**. These nouns, which are invariable in form with respect to the grammatical feature of singularity or plurality, can be pluralized by using the prefix morpheme **ara-ạ̀ra**.

See the examples below:

esi	sg./pl.	araési	‘many places’
ekpóm	sg./pl.	araekpóm	‘many baskets’

agugh	sg./pl.	araágugh	‘many pots’
amin	sg./pl.	araámin	‘many drinks’
òkpe	sg./pl.	àràókpe	‘many law suits’
òso	sg./pl.	àràóso	‘many soaps’
ibú	sg./pl.	araibú	‘many things’
ìgbína	sg./pl.	araìgbína	‘many beads’
ogir	sg./pl.	araógir	‘many works’
ogbo	sg./pl.	araógbo	‘many age groups’
olokó	sg./pl.	araolokó	‘many laws’

3.4 Loan Words

Loan words from English which begin with a consonant are prefixed with the vowel **a-** or **à-**. Generally the same form is used for singular or plural, with the verb taking a singular or plural form, but if it is necessary to emphasize the plurality, **ara/àra** is used.

Examples:

àbói	‘boy/boys’
àbóli	‘bowl/bowls’
àgilási	‘glass/glasses’
apénsul	‘pencil/pencils’
àsónde	‘Sunday/Sundays’
àsósi	‘church/churches’
àwósi	‘watch/watches’
àkéndul	‘candle/candles’
àdóti	‘dirt/filth’
àbulóku	‘block/blocks’
abézin	‘basin/basins’
agôl	‘gold/golds’
akósi	‘coast/coasts’
amáketi	‘market/markets’
amóto	‘motor car/motor cars’
arédio	‘radio/radios’
asadín	‘sardine/sardines’
aséni	‘chain/chains’
azín	‘gin’
aPíta	‘Peter’
aRózi	‘Rose’

atísa	‘teacher/teachers’
abía	‘beer/beers’
abíki	‘biro pen/biro pens’
azínki	‘zinc/zincs’

3.5 Case Marking in the Noun

Nouns change their forms when they are used as objects of a sentence. Consider these examples:

Ódo nááyel.	‘Odo has gone home.’
Kábhelegi má Ódo!	‘Call Odo!’
Onón élel.	‘This is yam.’
Sa má élel!	‘Cook yam!’
Àmum olóbha.	‘There is water.’
Ẹ́aru má ámum!	‘Bring water!’

ma-/má is used with a noun that functions as an object. Since it has no independent meaning, it is advisable to write it together with the noun.

3.6 Deverbal Nominalisation

Deverbal nouns are formed by prefixing any of the following vowels to the verb stem: **o-** **o-** **e-** **ẹ-** **a-** **ạ-** **i-**. Infinitives constitute the bulk of deverbal nouns. They are formed by prefixing a low-toned **o-** or **o-** vowel prefix to the verb stem.

Examples:

Verb stem		Infinitives	
-wura	‘wash’	owura	‘to wash’
-kperen	‘open’	okperen	‘to open’
-puru	‘ask’	opuru	‘to ask’
-totol	‘wash’	ototol	‘to wash’
-men	‘fall’	omen	‘to fall’
-ru	‘come’	oru	‘to come’
-tara	‘sit’	otara	‘to sit’
-bhigi	‘roast’	obhigi	‘to roast’
-mịn	‘swallow’	omin	‘to swallow’

Abstract deverbal nouns with **e-** **ẹ-** **a-** **ạ-** and **i-** vowel prefixes:

Verb Stem	Deverbal Noun
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-tete	‘fear’	etete	‘fear/fright’
-men	‘fall’	emen	‘fall/falls’
-kpar	‘strong’	ekpar	‘energy/force’
-tughuna	‘teach’	etughuna	‘learning/knowledge’
-bigh	‘steal’	abigh	‘theft/thefts’
-mugh	‘die’	adugh	‘death/deaths’ ?
-mala	‘dream’	amala	‘dream/dreams’
-bala	‘hope’	abala	‘hope/hopes’
-puran	‘ask’	ipurán	‘consultation’
-titiom	‘advise’	ititiom	‘advice’
-bhulan	‘quarrel’	ibhúlán	‘quarrelling’
-bhowu	‘breathe’	ibhówú	‘breath/breathing’

One deverbal noun has singular and plural forms

-mar	‘bear’	omar	‘birth/family’
		emar	‘births/families’

Deverbal Nouns formed by the interfixation of -ma-. ??

3.7 Agentives in Agholo are formed by inserting the prefix **o-/o-** (singular) or **i-/e-** (plural) before the verb phrase consisting of the verb and its prefixed object.

Examples:

Verb Phrase		Agentives
okan okan	okan ma okan	‘carver/carpenter’
‘to carve carving’	ek anma ekan	‘carvers/carpenters’
okol okol	okol ma ekol	‘spirit worshipper’
‘to offer sacrifice’	ek olma ekol	‘spirit worshippers’
osa amin	os ama amin	‘wine brewer’
‘to brew wine’	es ama amin	‘wine brewers’
oson alepe	oson ma aalepe	‘firewood cutter’
‘to cut firewood’	eson ma aalepe	‘firewood cutters’
okpogh ibú	okpogh ma ibú	‘tailor’
‘to sew thing’	ikpogh ma ibú	‘tailors’
oti oze	oti ma oze	‘drummer’
‘to beat drum’	iti ma ize	‘drummers’
ogim otu	ogim ma otu	‘builder’
‘to build house’	igim ma itu	‘builders’

oghil oghil	oghil ma oghil	‘runner’
‘to run race’	ighil ma eghil	‘runners’
ogigh iná	ogigh ma iná	‘fisherman’
‘to kill fish’	igigh ma iná	‘fishermen’
ogba ipési	og ba maípesi	‘liar’
‘to tell lies’	eg ba maípesi	‘liars’
osi ade	os ma ade	‘farmer’
‘to clear bush’	es ma ade	‘farmers’
okue ekue	oku ma ekue	‘fisherman’
‘to trap fishing’	iku ma ekue	‘fishermen’
ogbal enam	ogbal ma enam	‘shepherd’
‘to rear animals’	egbal ma enam	‘shepherds’
oḅigh aḅigh	oḅigh ma aḅigh	‘thief’
‘to steal theft’	iḅigh ma aḅigh	‘thieves’
ogir ogir	ogir ma ogir	‘worker’
‘to do work’	igir ma ogir	‘workers’
oteny oteny	oteny ma oteny	‘hunter’
‘to fire shots’	iteny ma oteny	‘hunters’
oḍigh oḍigh	oḍigh ma oḍigh	‘farmer’
‘to do farmwork’	iḍigh ma oḍigh	‘farmers’
ogbo ade	og bo maade	‘palm cutter’
‘to cut palm’	ig bo maade	‘palm cutters’

3.8 Instrumentals

Deverbal nouns denoting instrumentals replace the infinitive prefix **o-/ḡ-** with the noun prefix **o-/ḡ-** (singular) or **i-/ẹ-** (plural), and take the suffixes **-ama**, **-oma**, **-ma** and **-an**.

Deverbal Nouns		Instruments	
okpabh	‘to seize /to grip’	okpá há ma	‘scissors’ sg.
		ẹkpá há ma	‘scissors’ pl.
omobh	‘to bail water from a canoe’	omó bh óma	‘bowl or cup for bailing water from a canoe’
		imó bh óma	‘bowls/cups for bailing water’
oghor	‘to scrape’	oghó r óma	‘scraper’
		ighó r óma	‘scrapers’
odu	‘to fan’	odú o ma	‘fan’

		idúóma	‘fans’
owal	‘to count’	owalan	‘counting/calculator’
		ewalan	‘calculators’

Other verbal suffixes which occur in forming abstract nouns are: **-an -gha -agha -ya and -iku**. Each one has to be learnt separately.

Infinitive Verbs

owal ‘to marry’

orugi ‘to divide’

ozuan ‘to meet’

osorogi ‘to quarrel’

orogi ‘to abuse’

opelegi ‘to exceed’

oye ‘to suffer’

ogbal ‘to feed/nurture’

owe ‘to fight’

oyil ‘to run’

Derived Nominals

owalan ‘marriage’

ewalan ‘marriages’

orugian ‘division’

erugian ‘divisions’

ozuanan ‘visitation’

izuanan ‘visitations’

osorogian ‘conflict’

isorogian ‘conflicts’

orogian ‘abuse’

irogian ‘abuses’

opelegian ‘excess’

ipelegian ‘excesses’

eyegha ‘suffering/sufferings’

egbalágha ‘nurturing’

iwéya ‘contest/contests’

oyiliku ‘race’

iyiliku ‘races’

3.9 Personal Pronouns

The Agholo pronoun may be analysed as consisting of a prefix + root, the prefix being marked for the feature [+wide] or [-wide]. One of the primary functions of the pronoun is to serve as a substitute for a single noun or noun phrase (NP). Since pronouns can replace NPs they may be regarded as NPs. They can occur as subjects or objects as NPs do. The forms of the pronoun change depending on their function in the sentence. When used as the sentential object, the object marker **ma-/mą-** is prefixed to the pronoun. The independent possessive marker is **ta-**, while the dependent form has a prefix marker **da-**. There is concord with respect to number and function between the pronoun and its referent, either within a sentence or across sentence boundaries. The chart that follows gives the forms of the personal pronouns.

The pronouns of Agholo

Person	Independent			Dependent	Gloss			
	Subject	Object	Possessive	Possessive	Subj.	Obj.	Poss.	Poss.
1 st	ami	mami	sg. ótami pl. ítami	đámí	‘I’	‘me’	‘mine’	‘my’
2 nd	anwá	mānwá	sg. ótaiyom pl. ítaiyom	đáiyóm	‘you’	‘you’	‘yours’	‘your’
3 rd	ena	māena	sg. ótaiyo pl. ítaiyo	đáiyó	‘he’ ‘she’	‘him’ ‘her’	‘his’ ‘hers’	‘his’ ‘her’
Plural 1 st	iyar/iyar	maiya	sg. ótaiyar pl. ítaiyar	đáiyár	‘we’	‘us’	‘ours’	‘our’
	inyin	mainyin	sg. ótainyin pl. ítainyin	đáinyín	‘you’	‘you’	‘yours’	‘your’
	awa	maawa	sg. ótaawa pl. ítawa	đááwá	‘they’	‘them’	‘theirs’	‘their’
Emphatic								
Singular	Independent			Gloss				
1 st	aminááguo			‘I myself’				
2 nd	anwanááguo			‘you yourself’				
3 rd	enanaááguo			‘he himself’ ‘she herself’				
Plural 1 st	iyarnaááguo			‘we ourselves’				
	inyinnááguo			‘you yourselves’				
	awanááguo			‘they themselves’				

The pronouns on the chart have been written in full. In fast speech, where a lot of assimilation and contraction takes place, the following forms can be heard.

Singular	Independent	Gloss	Dependent	Gloss
1st	sg. ótami pl. ítami	‘mine’	đámí	‘my’
2nd	sg. ótiom pl. ítiom	‘yours’	đíóm	‘your’
3rd	sg. ótìo pl. ítìo	‘his/hers’	đìó	‘his/her’
Plural 1st	sg. ótiyar/ótiar pl. ítiyar/ítiar	‘ours’	đíár	‘our’
	sg. ótinyin pl. ítinyin	‘yours’	đínyín	‘your’
	sg. ótawa pl. ítawa	‘theirs’	đáwá	‘their’

These shortened forms may be adopted in place of the basic forms spelled out in the pronominal chart.

3.10 Interrogatives

There are many interrogatives:

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
okére?	‘which?’	ikére?	‘which?’
anyén?	‘who?’	owa anyén?	‘who?’
akára?	‘which?’		‘which?’
ení?	‘how many?’		‘how many?’
eré?	‘what?’		‘what?’
erê?	‘what?’		‘what?’
ekâ?	‘how/in what way?’		‘how/in what way?’
ìdíéka?	‘why?’		‘why?’
atugu?	‘why?’		‘why?’

Only two interrogatives, **okére** ‘which’ and **anyén** ‘who’, have overt plural markers. Interrogatives precede the nouns they co-occur with. They behave like nouns and pronouns in that they have object forms.

Examples:

Nwá	ìbhighi	máányen?
‘You	saw	who?’
Nwá	náádigh	máére?
‘You’re	doing	what?’
Nwá	ìlogh	màakárága?
‘You	put (it)	where?’
Nwá	ìgho	màníe?
‘You	bought	how many?’

okere òni? which person?	‘which person?’
ikere íyel? which youngsters?	‘which youngsters?’
akara áduma? which day?	‘which day?’
eni ànwani? how many girls?	‘how many girls?’

3.10 The question particle ka

The morpheme **ka** functions as a question particle and frequently co-occurs with interrogative pronouns, as illustrated below.

Ere what	ká QP	ásor happen (past)		‘What happened?’
Anyén who	ká QP	ágor beat (past)	maanwâ? you	‘Who beat you?’
Anwá you	ka QP	anyén? who		‘You are who?’ = ‘Who are you?’
Obhá that	ka QP	erê? what		‘That is what?’ = ‘What is that?’
Ẹni how many	ánwúnom people	ká QP	írue? pl-come (past)	‘How many people came?’

QP = Question Particle

3.11 Nominal Modifiers

The following are subsumed under the category of nominal modifiers: determiners, demonstratives, adjectives, quantifiers and numerals.

3.11.1 The Determiner -bha

Only one determiner occurs in Agholo. This determiner is invariable, i.e. it does not inflect for number. It is a suffixal morpheme and should be written together with the noun it modifies, thus:

olobhír bha man the	sg.	‘the man’
ilobhír bha men the	pl.	‘the men’
owub bha canoe the	sg.	‘the canoe’
iwub bha canoes the	pl.	‘the canoes’

3.13.2 Demonstratives

There are two demonstratives. They are:

onón	sg.	‘this’	inyen	pl.	‘these’
obhá	sg.	‘that’	iyé	pl.	‘those’

Demonstratives agree in number with the nouns they modify. Examples:

onón ótu	sg.	‘This is a house’.
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this house inyen ítu these houses	pl.	‘These are houses’.
obhá ólolo that bottle	sg.	‘That is a bottle’.
iyé ílolo those bottles	pl.	‘These are bottles’.

3.13.3 The demonstratives can combine with the determiner **-bha** as specifiers designating things which are nearer or farther off from the speaker. The demonstratives are of three types: ‘this’ (near demonstrative) , ‘that’ (far demonstrative), and ‘that one yonder/already referred to’ (referential demonstrative). Below is a paradigm of the three types.

Near

onónbha this-the	sg.	‘this one’
inyénbha these-the	pl.	‘these ones’
inyen ísenbha these here-the	pl.	‘these very ones here’

Far

obhá bha that-the	sg.	‘that one’
iyé bha those-the	pl.	‘those ones’
obhá ísen that here	sg.	‘that one there’
iyé ísen those here	pl.	‘those ones there’
obhá ísenbha that here-the	sg.	‘that very one there’
iyé ísenbha those here-the	pl.	‘those very ones there’

Referential

obhá úgba that there	sg.	‘that one over there’
-------------------------	-----	-----------------------

iyé ígba those there	pl.	‘those ones over there’
obhá úgbabha that there-the	sg.	‘that very one over there’/‘that one previously referred to’
iyé ígbabha those there-the	pl.	‘those very ones over there’, ‘those ones previously referred to’

3.13.5 Adjectives

Adjectives are words which describe or qualify nouns. There are two classes of adjectives, pure and derived. Pure adjectives include the following:

Type I: Pure Adjectives

Singular	Plural	Gloss
omom	imom	‘new’
okiel	ikiel	‘elderly’
opona	ipona	‘another’
oḃeḃí	iḃeḃí	‘good’
odí	idí	‘certain’
oḡbara	eḡbara	‘small’
oḡbua	eḡbua	‘big’
oḡlala	eḡlala	‘rich’
oḡḃal	eḡḃal	‘white/light coloured’
igbain	igbain	‘old/stale’

Type II: Derived Adjectives

There are many of these and they are usually formed by prefixation and reduplication from verbal bases. Examples:

Verb Root	Derived Adjectives	Gloss
-zụ	ọzuzúá	‘black’
-bál	ọbalábal	‘white’
-bám	ọbábám	‘ripe/red’
-mẹl	ọmẹmẹl	‘sweet’
-kpàr	ọkpàrkpàr	‘hard’
-wẹgh	ọwẹghwẹgh	‘tall’
-bọl	ọbọlọbọl	‘moulded’
-kper	ọkperokper	‘short’

Type III: Adjectives without verbal bases

There are just a few of these. They are listed below.

Verb Root	Adjectives	Gloss
?	ọpuru	‘first’
?	ovuravúra	‘rich/fertile (of soil)’
?	osusuwo sg.	‘left-over’
	isusuwo pl.	‘left-over’

All adjectives, both pure and derived, precede the noun when used attributively and participate in concord. Thus we have:

Singular	Plural
oḡbara oḡáku 'small chair'	eḡbara eḡáku 'small chairs'
oḡaḡam oḡkai 'ripe plantain'	eḡaḡam eḡkai 'ripe plantains'
oḡbua oḡni 'big/important person'	eḡbua ánwunom 'big/important persons'
omom óbodo 'new road'	imom ibodo 'new roads'
oḡeḡi ótu 'lovely house'	iḡeḡi ítu 'lovely houses'
owewegh órérén 'tall tree'	iwewegh írérén 'tall trees'

3.13.6 Quantifiers

These express contrasts in quantity. The following quantifiers occur in Agholo.

idí	'some'
iḡéla	'all'
ibaaḡútú	'many'
odóga	'a part of a whole'
ekakáram	'few/little'
emugh emugh	'each and every person'
ekpo ekpo	'one by one'
kaka	'each/every'

The last morpheme is prefixless.

Quantifiers, like adjectives, precede the nouns they modify. Examples:

idi ánwunom some people	‘some people’
kaka ọ̀ni each person	‘each person/everybody’
ìbẹ̀la éma all village	‘all the village’

LET’S DISCUSS THIS NEXT POINT.

A limited number of adjectives and quantifiers are derived from nominals by suffixing **-i**. This suffix occurs mainly with numerals ending in **-r** or **-l**.

Numerals		Adjectives/quantifiers	
ẹ̀wal	‘two’	ọ̀liemeni ẹ̀wali	‘second’
		ẹ̀wali éwá ^l li	‘two each/in twos’
ẹ̀sar	‘three’	ọ̀liemeni ẹ̀sá ^r ri	‘third’
		ẹ̀sari ẹ̀sá ^r ri	‘three each/in threes’

3.13.7 Numerals (the Traditional System)

There are various types of numerals:

- i) Simple units, as we have from 1-10; and the numerals for ‘twenty’, ‘four hundred’ and the highest numeral **ikpíma**. Ọ̀lali gave its English equivalent as 160,000, a hundred and sixty thousand. Other native speakers say it stands for 800.
- ii) Complex numerals as in ‘eleven’ to ‘nineteen’, ‘twenty-one’ to ‘thirty’, etc. These are purely additive involving the addition of lower numerals to **íḍiobh** ‘ten’, or **arusubh** ‘twenty’ to derive numbers higher than these.
- iii) Simple units from which lower numerals are subtracted, as in:

onín	baá	íḍiobh	‘nine’
one	out of	ten	
ẹ̀wal	baá	árusubh	‘eighteen’
two	out of	twenty	

iv) Compound units made up of lower numerals to which a multiplicative base **pógh** ‘score’ is added, as in:

ewal pógh 2 x 20	‘two score’ = ‘forty’
esar pógh 3 x 20	‘three score’ = ‘sixty’
inyin pógh 4 x 20	‘four score’ = ‘eighty’

v) A Reduplicative Base

There is only one example of this formation. The numeral for eight has two variants, first the simple unit **enya** and secondly, the reduplicative one **ebhibhiényá**.

Simple units

onín	1
ewal	2
esar	3
inya	4
owu	5
odin	6
ođuan	7
enya	8
ebhibhiényá	
ésuwó	9
iđiobh	10
arusubh	20
ode	400
ikpíma	800?

Complex Units (Additive)

iđiobh	na	ónín	10+1	11
iđiobh	na	éwál	10+2	12
iđiobh	na	ésár	10+3	13
iđiobh	na	ínyá	10+4	14
iđiobh	na	ówú	10+5	15
iđiobh	na	ódín	10+6	16

íḍiobh	na	óḍúán	10+7	17
íḍiobh	na	éḅnyá	10+8	18
íḍiobh	na	ésuwó	10+9	19

Compound Units: Multiplicative

ḗwal póggh	2 in 20 places or 2 x 20	40
ḗsar póggh	3 in 20 places or 3 x 20	60
inya póggh	4 x 20 or 4 x 20	80
ḡwu póggh	5 x 20	100
odin póggh	6 x 20	120
oḍuan póggh	7 x 20	140
ḗnya póggh	8 x 20	160
ésuwó póggh	9 x 20	180
íḍiobh póggh	10 x 20	200
ḗwal óḍe	2 x 400	800
ḗsar óḍe	3 x 400	1,200
inya óḍe	4 x 400	1,600
ḡwu óḍe	5 x 400	2,000
odin óḍe	6 x 400	2,400
oḍuan óḍe	7 x 400	2,800
ḗnya óḍe	8 x 400	3,200
ésuwó óḍe	9 x 400	3,600
íḍiobh óḍe	10 x 400	4,000
arusubh óḍe	20 x 400	8,000
ḗwal arusubh óḍe	8,000 x 2	16,000 etc.

*A separate booklet exists in which a modernized numeration system is proposed.

CHAPTER 4

The Verb: Some Aspects of Agholo Verb Morphology

4.0 A verb is a word that denotes an action or a state of being or becoming.

4.1 Roots

Every Agholo verb form contains a root, i.e. the central part of the verb which remains when the inflectional affixes are removed. Below are some illustrations:

kəomára!	(imperative neg)	‘Don’t stand!’
kə	(inflectional prefix/negative marker)	
o-	(infinitive prefix)	
mára	stem	‘stand’
arúe	(hortative)	‘Should he/she come?’
a-	(inflectional prefix)	
-rú	(stem)	‘come’
-e	(inflectional suffix)	
wəlekú!	(imperative)	‘Leave for the moment!’
-wəle	(stem)	‘leave’
-kú	(extensional suffix)	‘for the moment’
itotóla!	(imperative pl.)	‘Wash!’
i-	(inflectional pl. prefix)	
-totól	(stem)	‘wash’
-a	(extensional suffix)	

4.2 Roots can be further classified in terms of closed or open syllables. Closed syllables usually end in **m n ny bh gh r** and **l**. Glides??

Syllables closed by nasals

okom	‘to start’
ogim	‘to build’
obhin	‘to take’
omen	‘to fall’
oteny	‘to shoot’
ogoiny	‘to be poor’

Syllables closed by fricatives

osubh	‘to hold’
ogbebh	‘to plant’
ozogh	‘to play’
oḅigh	‘to steal’

Syllables closed by liquids and glides

ogir	‘to work’
osor	‘to climb down/descend’
owol	‘to sweep/sell’
oḟel	‘to want/desire’
oṭey	‘to reach’
oley	‘to suffice’

What of –w?

Open Syllables

All the ten phonemic vowels occur root-finally in verbs.

	(Wide)		(Narrow)
orogi	‘to abuse’	oḡi	‘to go’
omite	‘to go out’	oṅe	‘to endure’
owura	‘to wash’	oṛu	‘to say’
ogodo	‘to talk’	oḱpo	‘to tie’
okoḡu	‘to wait’	oḡa	‘to drink’

4.3 Tonal Classification of Infinitive Verb Stems

All infinitives are prefixed with a low-toned harmonizing vowel **O-**. The choice of **o-** or **oḡ-** is dependent on the rule of vowel harmony. Infinitive verbs fall into one single tone class, which is low. Examples:

Monosyllabic Roots

ofo	‘to peel’
ogor	‘to beat’
omen	‘to fall’
oḡi	‘to bury’

oḍe	‘to eat’
ozu	‘to pour’

Disyllabic Roots

oḍime	‘to extinguish’
ofugu	‘to throw away’
oḱoko	‘to demolish’
oṣuma	‘to wake’
oṛugi	‘to divide’
opuru	‘to ask’

Polysyllabic Roots

otibira	‘to turn’
osirigia	‘to rest’
okokoḍi	‘to gather in one place’
obhoronom	‘to accompany’
okikiligi	‘to rock aboard a canoe’
oṣumeni	‘to blacken’
okperegi	‘to make haste’
oṭughumeni	‘to teach’
omitioma	‘to appear’
oṭuruman	‘to repair’
ogbodogi	‘to cut into pieces’

4.4 Verbal Categories

Verb categories in Agholo include tense, aspect, mood, negation, and number concord.

Tense, which is not very prominent in Agholo, refers to time of action. Aspect covers notions such as whether the action or state denoted by the verb is viewed as completed or in progress, as instantaneous or enduring, as habitual or momentary, etc. Mood indicates the attitude of the speaker towards the factuality of the sentence. Negation expresses the opposite of what is affirmed by the verb. Number concord means that the verb agrees with its subject as to singular or plural.

4.5 Verbal Inflection

The kinds of verbal inflections which occur in Agholo to signal various tenses, aspects and moods, negation, and number concord are realised mainly through inflectional affixes, particles, auxiliaries, word reduplication, tone and full lexical verbs used as complements. The inflectional affixes are:

- i) the number agreement prefixes **na-** and **wa-**,
- ii) the vowel prefixes **i- i- e- e- o- o- a- a-**
- iii) the particles **ma, mụ, ta, ɔ, ka,**
- iv) the infix **kaka, ??**
- v) the auxiliaries **oru, ebera** and **otia,**
- vi) the verb complements **asíghé** and **awélé,**
- vii) tone.

4.6 Verb Forms

4.6.1 The Present Progressive

This verb form, which indicates that an action is in progress, is signalled by two prefixes:

- i) the number agreement prefixes **na-** and **wa-** (Prefix₁).
- ii) the initial vowel **a-** or **a-** prefixed to the verb stem (Prefix₂) and
- iii) high tone throughout the verb

Example:

singular		plural	
Mị náárú	‘I’m coming’	Ịyár wáárú	‘We’re coming’
Nwá náárú	‘You’re coming’ (plural)	Inyín wáárú	‘You’re coming’
Ená náárú	‘He/she is coming’	Awá wáárú	‘They’re coming’

4.6.2 The Simple Future

This verb form expresses an action that is yet to take place. It is formed in the same way as the present progressive. The only difference is in the tone pattern; only the last vowel of the verb stem is high.

Mị naarú ‘I will come’ Ịyár waarú ‘We will come’

4.6.3 The Perfect

This verb form resembles the present progressive and the simple future in its structural formation. The only difference between them is tone. The last vowel of the verb stem is low-toned, as well as the pronominal subject.

Mì nááru ‘I have come.’ Ìyar wááru ‘We’ve come’

4.6.4 The Habitual Aspect

This verb form expresses an action which is habitual. It employs the verb **ebera** alongside a nominalised verb form preceded by the morpheme **ma-**. This shows that the nominalised verb form is treated as the object of the verb **ebera**.

Examples:

Éki	ebera	máóḍe	énám.	‘Eki loves eating meat.’
Eki	love(pres)	eat	meat	

Éki	ebera	máógo	ádíghan	‘Eki enjoys reading.’
Eki	love(pres)	read	books	

4.6.5 The Immediate Future

This verb form expresses an action that is on the point of taking place. The immediate future is formed by the use of the present progressive form of **oru** ‘to come’, which functions here as an auxiliary, and a nominalised verb form preceded by the particle **ma**.

Mì naarú máóyel.	Ìyár wáá ⁴ ru máóyel.
‘I’m about to go home.’	‘We’re about to go home.’

Not tone pattern given earlier

You should give examples with two, three and four syllables to confirm the tone patterns.

4.6.6 The Probable Future

This verb form predicts an action that has a high probability of occurrence. It is made up of the auxiliary verb **otia** meaning ‘it’s likely’ and another verb used in secondary construction. What is the prefix of the second verb?

Imáǵíó náátia álobh.	‘The rain is likely to fall/ The rain will probably fall.’
Ogó náátia áwal maÉki.	‘Ogo is likely to marry Eki/ Ogo will probably marry Eki.’

4.6.7 The Remote Past

This verb form describes an action that was completed a long time ago in the past. It is formed by using the impersonal verb **naaḥorá** meaning ‘It has been long since ...’ initially in the sentence. This impersonal construction is followed by a relativizer particle **ká**, and a subordinate noun clause.

Example:

Naaḥorá	ká	áwa	idé.
it’s been long	that	they	eat(past)
‘It’s been long since they ate./It’s a long time since they ate.’			

Naaḥorá	ká	éna	ayél.
it’s been long	that	he/she	go home(past)
‘It’s been long since he/she went home.’			

4.6.8 The Recent Past

This verb form describes an action that has just been completed. It is formed by employing the prefix **kaka** meaning ‘just’ as the secondary verb modifier.

Example:

Mì	nákakaarú.	‘I have just come.’
I	just come(past)	
Ìyar	wákakaadé.	‘We have just eaten.’
we	just eat(past)	

4.6.9 The Unfulfilled Aspect

This verb form denotes an action that is aborted and therefore fails to materialise. It is formed by using the particle **tá** as the initial verb prefix. The **tá-** aspectual marker replaces the **na-/wa-** number indicators. The initial stem vowel in this formation is **i-**.

Example:

Mi táí[↓]gho... 'I should have bought but for'
 I ought buy...

Iyar táí[↓]gho... 'We should have bought but for'
 we ought buy....

4.6.10 The Completed Perfect

This verb form expresses a completed action. It has a past tense reading. It is formed by using the lexical verbs **awé[↓]lé** 'leave' or **así[↓]ghé** 'finish' sentence-finally.

Examples:

Mi nááde awé[↓]lé.
 I eat(perfect) leave(past)
 'I have finished eating.'

Mi nááde así[↓]ghe.
 I eat(past) finish(past)
 'I have finished eating up everything, not leaving a morsel.'

4.6.11 The Durative Aspect

Verbs that express processes which take some time to accomplish can be reduplicated to emphasize the enduring or prolonged nature of the activity in question.

I suggest that this is not verb reduplication. Rather *cf.* Igbo $O\sigma\ p\grave{u}\sigma r\grave{u}\sigma\ \grave{a}pu\sigma$

Examples:

Nwá	náása	asâ?	'You're engaged in cooking?'
you	cook	cook(pres)	

Nwá	nááwura	áwúra?	'You're still bathing?'
you	bathe	bathe(pres)	You're in the process of bathing?'

4.6.12 The Imperative

Monosyllabic verbs which end in closed syllables form their singular imperative forms by:

- i) having no prefix
- ii) tonal changes
- iii) suffixation of a stem final vowel -E.

The tone of the verb stem is high in the singular imperative. The suffixed vowel -E copies the tone of the verb stem, i.e. the high tone.

If the imperative is in the plural form, a low toned I- is inserted before the verb stem. The first syllable of the verb stem remains high while the final syllable becomes low. The following examples will illustrate these points.

Infinitive		Imperative singular	Imperative plural	
obhin	‘to take’	bhíné!	ibhíne!	‘take!’
ogim	‘to build’	gímé!	igíme!	‘build!’
oghil	‘to run’	ghílé!	ighíle!	‘run!’
oteny	‘to shoot’	tényé!	iténye!	‘shoot!’
ofel	‘to desire’	félé!	iféle!	‘desire!’
omin	‘to swallow’	míné!	imíne!	‘swallow!’
okom	‘to start’	kómé!	ikóme!	‘start!’

In polysyllabic verbs the high and the low tone occur in free variation in the singular form of the imperative.

otibira	a. tíbírá	‘turn!’
	b. tibira	
ozumeni	a. zùméní	‘blacken!’
	b. zumeni	

Verbs Ending in Open Syllables

Monosyllabic verb stems which end in the high front and back vowels -I and -U take the inflectional vowel suffix -E in the singular and plural forms of the imperative. See the examples below:

		singular	plural	
ogi	‘to go’	gíé!	igíe!	‘go!’
oru	‘to speak’	rúé!	irúe!	‘speak!’
oku	‘to pluck’	kúé!	ikúe!	‘pluck!’

oḍi	‘to bury’	ḍíé!	idíé!	‘bury!’
oku	‘to chase’	kúé!	ikúé!	‘chase!’

4.6.13 The Inceptive Imperative

This imperative verb form, which urges or pleads with the hearer to commence an action, is composed of a verbal complex strung together without a connector or linker. The first verb is the imperative form of either **orere** ‘to go’ or **okom** ‘to start’, and the second is the present progressive. See the following illustrative examples:

What about the plural form?

Reré	náárú!	‘Start coming!’
go	come(pres)	
Komé	náárú!	‘Start coming!’
start	come(pres)	
Reré	náágí!	‘Start going!’
go	go(pres)	
Komé	náágí!	‘Begin to go!’
start	go(pres)	

4.6.14 The Hortative

The hortative expresses a wish, urge, desire or plea. It is made up of two verbs, **olei** meaning ‘to reach’, which is used in primary construction with another verb in the infinitive form. The infinitive is preceded by the particle **ma**.

The second of the 2 meanings you give is hortative. But the form of the verb does not appear to be hortative.

Examples:

Naá ⁺ léí	máógi.	‘It’s time to go./Let’s go!’
it reach(pres)	to go	
Naá ⁺ léí	máóḍe.	‘It’s time to eat./Let’s eat!’
it reach(pres)	to eat	
Naá ⁺ léí	máóḅetina.	‘It’s time to get up./Let’s get going!’
it reach(pres)	to get up	

4.6.15 The Negative Forms of Verbs

The negative is marked by prefixes and suffixes. The most widely-used ones are:

- i) the prefixes **ka-** and **ta-**
- ii) the suffixes **-ḍo** and **-mụ**.

ka- is used mainly to negate imperative sentences. Negative imperative sentences are formed by prefixing **ka-** to the infinitive form of a verb. Tone pattern?

Negative Imperative Sentence Singular

kaogí!	‘Don’t go!’
kaorú!	‘Don’t come!’
kaoghíl!	‘Don’t run!’
kaoté [↓] té!	‘Don’t fear/Be not afraid!’

Assimilated Form

kogí!
koorú!
kooghíl!
kooté [↓] té!

The plural of these forms given above is derived by inserting the morpheme **oni** meaning ‘person’ before the singular forms. Thus we have:

This is very strange. Are you sure these are plural forms?

Negative Imperative Sentence Plural

Oní kaogí!	‘Let no one go!’
Oní kaorú!	‘Let no one come!’
Oní kaoghíl!	‘Let no one run!’
Oní kaotét [↓] e!	‘Let no one be afraid!’

You have not yet treated questions!

Questions and statements are usually negated by employing the suffixal morphemes **-ḍo** meaning ‘not or **-mụ** ‘no more/no longer.’

Questions

you eat(pres) not

Awa ígí[↓]mu? ‘They’re not going any more/ Are they not going any longer?’

they go(pres) no more

Statements

These cannot all be treated together like this. Take each verb form separately.

Ena oḗn[↓]á[↓]ḍo máánwiny. ‘He/she is childless’

he/she has(pres) not

	children	
Iyar	írú [↓] ḍọ maadodón.	‘We’re not coming today.’
we	come(pres) not today	
Ọlóbh [↓] ḍọ	máéma elegien.	‘It did not rain in the village yesterday.’
it rain(past)	village yesterday	
not		

The Negation of the Hortative

To negate the hortative two morphemes are required. These are the prefix **ta-** and the suffix **-ḍọ**.

Naá [↓] lei máọḍe!	Taóléi [↓] ḍọ máọḍe
‘It’s time to eat/ Let’s eat!’	‘It’s not time to eat/ Let’s not eat!’
Naá [↓] lei máọgi	Taóléi [↓] ḍọ máọgi
‘It’s time to go./ Let’s go!’	‘It’s not time to go./ Let’s not go!’

The Negation of the Present Progressive

To negate the present progressive, the singular and plural number markers of the verb **na-** and **wa-** are deleted. If the sentence has a singular reading the vowel prefix **O-** is added to the verb stem and if the sentence is plural in number the vowel prefix **I-** is added to the verb stem.

Examples:

Ẹna náárú	‘He’s/she’s coming.’	Ẹna orú [↓] ḍọ	‘He/she is not coming.’
he/she come(pres)		he/she come(pres) not	
Iyar wáárú.	‘We are coming.’	Iyar írú [↓] ḍọ.	‘We are not coming.’
we come(pres)		we come(pres) not	
Nwá nàásá m̄abhár.	‘You are cooking something.’	Nwá ọsá [↓] ḍọ m̄abhár.	‘You are not cooking anything.’
you cook(pres) something		you cook(pres) not something	
Iyar wáásá m̄abhár.	‘We are cooking something.’	Iyar ísá [↓] ḍọ m̄abhár.	‘We are not cooking anything.’
we cook(pres) something		we cook(pres) not something	

CHAPTER 5

Conjunctions, Prepositions and Particles

5.0 Conjunctions are grammatical words that conjoin two or more constituents of a sentence. Conjunctions in Agholo, as in many other languages of the world, exhibit neither inflectional nor derivational characteristics typical of the major class words like nouns and verbs. Most of the conjunctions which occur start with a consonant. This is an important distinguishing feature, particularly when we recall that all nouns and verbs in this language start with a vowel prefix.

5.1	Monosyllabic	Disyllabic/Polysyllabic
	ḃé ‘that’	ḃaka ‘because’
	bhé ‘then’	bḃádó ‘or’
	ḃé ‘while/yet/but’	kḃítá/kḃíná ‘before’
	ká ‘so that/that’	ekísé ‘since’
	na ‘and’	ẹgheri ‘when’
	tá ‘and’	tḃútḃú ‘until’
	sá ‘then’	ạguo ‘if/the way or manner’
		mạaguo ‘so that/in this manner’
		sakina ‘and/with’
		oka ‘when’
		esadió ‘between’
		ifiébhá ‘when’
		kpélemúnú ‘instead’
		ka...ka ‘whether or’
		nobo ‘if it were not for’, ‘if it had not been for’

5.2 Sentence Examples Illustrating their Use

Tue	tá	áḃe!	‘Come and eat!’
come	and	eat	
{Tue	kḃítá	áḃe!	‘Come before eating!’
{Tue	kḃíná	áḃe!	
come	before	eat	
Nááléghe	tḃútḃú	adíle.	‘He/she cried until evening.’
he/she cry(past)	till	evening	

Ḃetíná	na	reré!	‘Get up and walk!’
get up	and	walk	
Ẹnaági	sakina	ọwede ẹíó.	‘He/she went and his/her father too/ He/she went with his/her father.’
he/she go(past)	and	father his/her	
AziḂa náálem máénainy	na	ade.	
god create(past) heaven	and	earth	‘God created heaven and earth.’
Onón aḂuo waagir	ká	íyar wááḂena maowu wááḂhabha	
this way we work	so that	we have canoe we sail the	‘This is the way we work so as to obtain a canoe for sailing.’

5.3 Prepositions

Prepositions are grammatical words which precede a pronoun, a noun or a noun phrase and forms a single constituent structure with it. They belong to a closed set of lexical items and do not accept inflectional or derivational markings. Agholo does not have many prepositions. Listed below are the most frequently used ones.

dá	‘at/on’
má	‘in, from, at, to, towards etc.’
tá	‘of’
akaka	‘beside’
gbá	‘in/on/at’
gbá ányu	‘on top/at top’
gbá áde	‘on the floor/down below’
gbá ólogi	‘inside’
gbá égbetíre	‘outside’
gbá éma	‘in the village’
amin ózu gbá áde	‘wine for libation’

5.4 Many prepositional notions are, however, expressed by employing two verbs strung together in serial constructions.

Examples:

oghil	óḍua	
to run	to go out	‘to run away’
opel	ósor	
to jump	to descend	‘to jump down’
omen	óḍigh	
to fall	to enter	‘to fall into’
oḍigh	olegírom	
to tell	to give	‘to inform/give information to’
owor	óbhin	
to snatch	to take	‘to snatch from’
oḍigh	óru	
to enter	to come	‘to come in/inside’

This set of examples do not agree with the later ones.

5.5 Here are some examples illustrating the use of the most commonly used prepositions.

Mí	nááḍúmóm		má	áziḅa.		‘I believe in God.’
I	believe(pres)		in	god		
Éso	okéi	onyi	tá	Áda		‘Éso is Ada’s older child.’
eso	older	child	of	ada		
Kaotibirá	ákpon		dá	áman		‘Don’t look backwards!’
not to turn	look		at	back		
Awá	waaghó	máibu	ma	ḅguo	ḍíár	‘They will buy things from us.’
they	buy(fut)	things	from	hands	our	
Ẹwal	akiógbo	wáára	má	Ẹméyal.		‘Two friends lived in Ẹmeyal.’
two	friends	live(past)	in	Ẹméyal.		

5.6 Serial Verbs Expressing Prepositional Notions

Inábha	ápel	áḍigh	maowubha.	
fish the	jump(past)	enter	canoe the	
‘The fish jumped into the canoe.’				

Ọnyibhá	ághil	aḍúá.		
child the	run(past)	go out		
‘The child has run away.’				
Ịyar	wáábhín	máélol	aḍigh	óḍigh.
we	take(pres) matchet	do	farm work	
‘We use a matchet for farming.’				
Gbá	ninghá	íyo	igbogi	baá!
go	tell	him/her be(pres) not	money	
‘Go and tell him/her there is no money!’				

5.7 The particles **kpa** ‘as well as/too’, **ka** ‘a lot more/more thanks to’, **ma** ‘in/at/to/’, and **emi** ‘very much’, may be written separately as suggested below.

Amí	náági	kpá.	
I	go(past)	‘too/as well’	
‘I went as well/I went too.’			
Anwá	ká	ígir!	
you	more	do(pres)	
‘More thanks are due to you!’			
Epobh	ásúbh	ami	emí
hunger	hold(pres)	me	much
‘I am very hungry.’			
Yele	má	ógu	ḍíóm
go	to	house	your
‘Go to your house!’			

CHAPTER 6

Guide to Word Division

6.1 Word division is not a particularly thorny issue in Agholo. The major reasons are as follows:

- i) its morphology is agglutinating and yields to easy segmentation,
- ii) it is an overwhelmingly prefixing language,
- iii) it has a pervasive phonological phenomenon that we identified as the vowel harmony rule treated in 1.7.

In the course of this study we have considered the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic features of the major class words such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, as well as function or grammatical words., conjunctions, prepositions and particles.

6.2 As a rule of thumb, grammatical morphemes signalling definiteness, plurality, objecthood, negation, aspect, the agentive and relativisation are written together with the word classes to which they are attached.

Examples:

Definiteness in the Noun:	emabha	‘the village’
	village	the
	iwubha	‘the canoes’
	canoes	the

Plurality in the Noun:	itu	‘houses’
	araitu	‘many houses’

Plurality in the Verb:	waagí	‘they will go’
	iruḍo	‘they didn’t come.’

Plurality in the Adjective:

iḽebíbhá	‘the good ones’
good the	
inyen	‘these’
inyenbha	‘these ones’
these the	

Relativisation

This grammatical feature is marked in Agholo by the use of the suffix **-bha**. When this suffix is attached to a verb as in the examples given below, its meaning equivalent is ‘who’ or ‘which.’

Ọníbhá	ámúgh [↓] bhá
person-the	die(past)-the
‘the person who died’	
írérénbhá	ímén [↓] bhá
trees-the	fall-the
‘the trees which fell’	
anwúnómbha	káóru [↓] bhá
people-the	not come(past)-the
‘the people who didn’t come’	

6.3 A major problem one encounters in studying Agholo is the large class of homophonous morphemes which occur. Many grammatical words of the shape **-ma-**, **-ka-**, **-ta-**, etc., though spelt alike and pronounced alike, have different grammatical functions. Let us consider **-ma-** and **-ka-** below.

In some cases **-ma-** is written alone and in other cases as a prefix. Where **-ma-** is functioning as a preposition with the following meanings, ‘in, at, on, from, towards’, it is written separately.

Íkpoki	baá	má	ótu.	‘Ikpoki is not in the house/
Ikpoki	be not	at/in house		Ikpoki is not at home.’
Nwá	naayél	ma	akara adúma?	‘You’re going on which day?’
you	go(fut)	on	which day	
Túé		má	ígan!	‘Come here!’
come		towards	here	

In other contexts where **-ma-** signals the agentive formation or is serving as a complement marker, it is written together with other morphemes, thus:

The Agentive:

o k an ma o k an	‘carpenter/carver’
okpogh ma ibu	‘tailor’
o s ima a de	‘farmer’

Complement marker:

M i	nááru	má óyel.
I	go(fut)	to leave
‘I’m about to leave/I’m about leaving.’		
	Náá ⁺ lei	máó ḍ e
	it reach(pres)	to eat
‘It’s time to eat.’		

The morpheme **-ka-** can stand for the following grammatical features:

(i) **Question particle as in:**

Anwá	ka	anyén?	‘Who are you?’
you	(ques past)	who	

(ii) **Intensifier:**

Anwá	ká	ígir!	‘More thanks to you!’
you	(intens)	work	

(iii) **Conjunction:**

Náá ḥ ora	ká	ánwa	irúe?
It’s been long	that	you	came/
It’s been long since you came?’			

(iv) **Negative imperative marker:**

In this context, it functions as a prefix and is therefore attached to the verb it is used with.

ka owéleta	âmi!	‘Don’t forget me!’
(neg)not forget	me	
ka osá!		‘Don’t cook!’

(neg)not cook

6.4 Modal and Aspectual Features

Modal and aspectual features of verbal inflection are written with the verb thus:

Ena	təogido.		‘He/she has not yet gone.’
he/she	yet go(neg) not		
Anwa	táí ↓men...		‘You could have fallen
you	could fall		but...’
Ókpeti	nákakaá đá	máámin.	‘Okpeti has just drunk
Okpeti	just drink(past)	wine	some wine.’

kaka meaning ‘each’ is written separately.

Kaka	áwel	ḍáámí	náágam	emí.
each	leg	my	hurts(pres)	much

‘Each of my legs is hurting much.’

Three auxiliaries are written separately: **otia**, **ebera** and **oru**. (See sections 4.6.4, 4.6.5 and 4.6.6).

6.5 Prepositions, conjunctions, particles and pronouns both dependent and independent are written separately (See section 5.1-5.7).

6.6 The hyphen was introduced as a device for writing complex words which derive from compounds containing the two sets of vowels identified as wide and narrow (See section 1.7).

APPENDIX

Common Fixed Expressions of Everyday Use

Greetings/Wishes/Advice

Álúa!	‘Welcome!/Thank you!/Hello!/Hi!’
Wááḅali!	‘Good morning!’
Oḅeḅi ápiobh!	‘Good morning!’
Wáágule!	‘Good day!’
Wáádile!	‘Good evening!’
Edi áḅá ⁴ lu	‘Good night!’
Díla!	‘Sorry!/It’s a pity!’
Duméó!	‘Get well!’
Márá reré!	‘Farewell!’
Ágí ḅolobolo arú ḅolobolo!	‘Safe journey!’
Bhiné ka ḅhár ka ḅhár maḷugburu ísísi!	‘Take it easy!’

Commands/Exclamations/Statements

Wẹle máíye!	‘Leave those alone!’
Kọme má ísen!	‘Start now!’
Ḍié ma arú!	‘Come in!’
Tibira na arú!	‘Come back!’
Kạogí ma égbain!	‘Don’t go far!’
Kaolé ⁴ ghé!	‘Don’t cry!’
Merenie mááḅien ḍíóm!	‘Mind yourself!’
Aziḅa kaoḍúra	‘Heaven forbid!’
Opú ⁴ ḍo!	‘Perhaps!’
Ókubháí!	‘Is it so?’
Ogbua ókpe!	‘It’s a big problem!’
Agayi.	‘It is true.’
Ipési.	‘It is false.’
Oḅeḅí.	‘It’s okay./It’s good./It’s nice!’
Aḅí ⁴ ghé. [ngh?]	‘It’s fine./It’s lovely.’
Oníngheḍó	‘It’s bad./It’s not good.’
Náámizogh.	‘It’s full.’
Náálóbh.	‘It’s raining.’

Náámunie.	‘It’s finished.’
Náákpar.	‘It’s hard.’
Náágurom.	‘It’s bad./rotten/spoilt/etc.’
Aziḅa olóbha.	‘God exists./There is God.’
Igbogi baá.	‘There’s no money.’
Náá ⁺ lei mǎógi.	‘Let’s go!’
Adio náá ⁺ kpo.	‘The day is far gone.’
Epobh náásubh ḅmi.	‘I am hungry.’
Onón ótami.	‘This is mine.’
Ḷmelmel.	‘It’s sweet.’
Ḷghereden.	‘It’s bitter.’
Anyén ká álegiri?	‘Who knows?’
Mì náádúm! [VH?]	‘What a surprise!’
Otubha ará ma iḷímé.	‘The house is in darkness.’

Questions:

Ere kǐná ámite?	‘What happened?’
Akara éghiri?	‘When?’
Obhá ká ére?	‘What’s that?’
Aḱnwá ka anyén? [subdots?]	‘Who are you?’
Ótáányen?	‘Whose is it?’
Erê?	‘What?’
Ḷníe?	‘How many?’
Akára ága?	‘Where?’
Aléi éka?	‘How much?’
Atéi maanwá ára?	‘Is it your business?’
Nwá í ⁺ rú ma akara adúma?	‘On which day did you come?’
Nwá náágí ma akára ága?	‘Where are you going to?’

Illustrative Texts Using the Newly-proposed Orthography

These illustrated texts appear in Sidi’s primer.

(i) **Ḷwede Ḷḷar**

Ḷwede ḷar, obha olo da ḷnainy,

Anughumeni maadien ḷiom.

Ḷḷighe ma ade ema ḷiom aru ma isen ade, mḷaguo olo da ḷnainy.

Eḍien kaka aduma nigha ìyar maobha adodon.
Tenemene ìyar ma ẹkarabh ɗìar, maaguo ìyar watenemene maogbowàapiom maìyarbha.
Kaoḍumom ìyar aḍigh ma ologi itumugiom.
Subhe ka ìyar naamitiom ma ologi ẹkarabh.
Ade emabha àra ma otiom kee.
Ẹkparbha na otutumeni ɗiombha àratei, ka ẹghiri ka ẹghiri.

(ii) **Ade**

Ade oḗḗi oreren. Kpone esi àmi nàaru ḗe oḗḗibha.
Ìyar ìḗena maamunu na izubh maaluzu ta ade.
Qzanghani na ide kpa, ẹdua ma aluzu ta ade amite.
Abekei igho maizubh na àmunu ma àguo ɗìar, sa ìyar ìḗena maigbogi.
Idi ẹma ibhin maegumbha agim maotu.
Mì ìteìḍo owal maekaka ibubha àsighe.
Puru maokei ọni, sa ẹna ẹagba maisusuwo anigha ma anwa.

(iii) **Àwuḗo Na Okokogh ɗìo**

Àwuḗo àbhigh maakpokpom ẹnam ma ẹghiri ẹna nàaru maḗḗe oghololo, sa àbhigh okoko ɗìo da àmumbha.
Ẹna taakpon da àmumbha bhe obha olo da àmumbha naageni apu maotio.
Qbhigh okubha kùkum sa àwele maobha olo da ọnu ɗìobha apel asor maokoowor obhaugba obhin.
Ẹna asor àgi bhe obha aḍigh ìyo maaguo baa.
Sa ẹna abhun maekpopu àguo.
Onon abhin maokunon àtughumeni ìyar:
“Otiom àkir eka, kaomur da ka ọni, maabhar opona ọni!”

(iv) **Ọgum Na Anwiny ɗìo**

Odi ẹghiri, ànwiny ta ọgum ẹgi maodu àmum ologi ewu.
Ise ewubha bhe awa wàabhigh maobenam kina azuanan àḍa maamum.
Awa ẹbhigh kina ageni apu maonweni ɗawabha, sa awa ighil ẹdua àkaagba inigha maonweni ɗawa.
Wàaru ḗe:
“Ìyar kaabhigh maoni ageni apu maanwa.”
Sa onweni ḗe “Agayi, ọni ageni apu maami kpa olo ma isen edumbha, onon maagayi?”
Sa ẹna akedemen maenwun ɗìo fàgarainy sa apurom “Aleì maokunon?”
Sa awa ìru ḗe.
“Oleiḍo kpa maodi awel ɗìo. Kaogaga àtom!”
Àguo ẹna nàatutugia bhe ọni olei ìyo baa sa ẹna taakperemeni? maemi àguo ẹna àtom ànwiny ɗìo idumom? ba tùtu sa ena àra apola; sa ọgum àra àkir àra ḗo.
Onon abhin maokunon àtughumeni ìyar:

“Kaobhin maozu ñiom aguri ðe anwa ipu ka òni ka òni.”

The English translations of the texts numbered (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

(i) Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and glory, forever and ever Amen.

(ii) The Palm Tree

The palm tree is a useful tree. Here are the reasons I say that it is a good tree.

We obtain oil and kernels from the palm tree.

Brooms and palm wine are also got from its trunk.

Europeans buy kernels and oil from us and then we make some money as a result.

Some communities use palm fronds in building houses.

I cannot fully list out all its various uses.

Ask an older person so he can tell you all the manifold usages to which it is put.

(iii) The Dog and Its Shadow

A dog saw a meat bone when it was crossing a bridge; it also saw its own shadow in the water. As it looked into the water, what it saw in there looked bigger than what it had in its mouth. Seeing this, it dropped the bone in its mouth and jumped into the water to seize what was there. Having jumped into the water, it lost what it had and found itself empty-handed. The lesson we must learn from this is: What you have might look smaller than another's, yes, 'Never you be envious of that which belongs to another!'

(iv) The Frog and Its Children

Once upon a time the children of the frog went to fetch water from a pond. There in the pond, they saw an elephant drinking water. They remarked how much bigger this beast was compared with their mother; so they ran away and narrated to their mother. “We have just seen some creature much bigger than you.” Then their mother answered: “True? You mean some creature much bigger than I resides in the bush? Is this true?”

Then it distended its belly and asked:

“Is it as big as this?” They replied, “Even as you have so distended yourself, still you are not as big as one of its thighs”. It kept inflating its belly with a view to getting an estimate of the size of this creature until its belly burst. Ever since, the frog has remained a slim creature. The moral is: “Do not compare yourself with another person!”

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About the Author

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Before her present employment in the University of Port Harcourt as lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities, she served as a lecturer in the Rivers State College of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. She is currently on study leave in Florida.