

THE LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE OF AN ACCRA
HORN AND DRUM TEXT

by M.E. Kropp Dakubu*

I. Introduction

The text, actually a pair of complementary texts, that is discussed in this article was collected by the author at Adzorkor Okine We in the Atukpai district of Accra in August (during Homowo) 1967. An interpretation in the context of the historical tradition concerning their origin and meaning, with an evaluation of the tradition, is to appear elsewhere. This article attempts a description of the texts as a self-sufficient artistic specimen, rather than of their meaning and cultural function. In the final analysis perhaps the distinction is artificial. It has nevertheless been convenient to make it, because it coincides with a difference in analytic method.

The present study is incomplete on its own terms, because no comparison has been made either with other texts of the same type, to find out whether the analysis proposed has a general validity as a definition of a type, or with other varieties of texts that draw upon the same linguistic material. It is certain that similar texts exist, in Otublohum, in coastal Ga and Adangme towns with chieftaincies that were founded or heavily influenced by Akwamu, and presumably in Akwamu itself. These unfortunate omissions are due mainly to the fact that the subject of inquiry is somewhat outside the author's normal field. These texts were collected so to speak accidentally, a by-product of research on the Ga language, at the instigation of the performers rather than of the collector. The texts are presented and discussed here in the hope of stimulating related research by others more qualified to do it, so that a proper synthesis may be arrived at.

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2. The Texts

As a realized performance, the artistic specimen in question consists of a horn and drum duet. The horn (ble) appears to be made from a cow horn, with an ivory mouth piece with a transverse hole and an end hole. The player applies his mouth directly to the transverse hole, and stops or unstops the end hole with his thumb, thus producing two pitches slightly more than a tone apart. The drum is of the type called in Ga tweɔfin, with an open base. When played it is worn on a strap over the player's shoulder, and two hooked sticks are used. It seems that no significant pitch variation is produced.¹

These instruments are said to 'speak'. In this paper we are not concerned with the performance itself, but with the vocalized text which the performance is said to broadcast, by means of pitch change, duration, rhythm etc. In actuality the relationship between performance and vocalization is probably tenuous. This investigator has found it impossible to make more than a partial match between vocalization and performance, although certain parts of the horn text, particularly the invocation, are clearly recognizable in performance. This may be partly accounted for by the performers' statement that this music fell into disuse during the present century and has been revived.

Even if it does not strictly reflect performance, the vocalized text is not a haphazard recital. Instrumental performance and vocalized text are each structured, whether or not the two structures are in any sense 'the same'. The subject of this paper is the vocalized horn and drum texts, as given by the horn player, Dodoo Bleche, (ble-tse 'proprietor of the horn') of Adzorkor Okine We, a lineage belonging to the Otublohum division of traditional Accra.²

These texts are in the Akan language. They are presented below as Dodoo Bleche pronounced them, in a transcription that follows the Ga system of spelling, since his pronunciation of Akan carries over the phonological patterns of Ga in almost every respect. Below each line we give his own translation of his Akan text into Ga, and beside that a literal translation of his Ga into English. The purpose of this is to indicate what the texts mean to the player, and presumably to all the lineage members who

are knowledgeable about them. After this we give the text in normal Twi (Akwapim) with English translation. In a few instances the Akan version is also re-interpreted, where it appears that Dodoo Bleche's Akan version is either corrupt or archaic. Stylistic deletions from the spoken version are given in brackets in the normalized version. The player's version is not merely a Ga pronunciation of the Twi - if anything the normalized Twi version is a translation of the former. The letters in the left-hand margin indicate repetition-groups of units, in terms of which the structure of the texts will be discussed. The letters correspond for the two versions.³

Horn

Player's Version

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| | oto ée (4 times) | Oto (Tshuru, alias Adzorkor Okine) |
| A | menú wò kú sò dada | |
| | Mi hie ye ta no da nee. My face is on war always. | |
| | oto ée (2 times) | |
| B | úyè fraṅkwa | |
| | Ke o dzi fraṅkwa le | If you are cabbage palm |
| | híná bēfió | |
| | namo baanye ako bo? | who will be able to climb you? |
| | oto ée | |
| C | tʃirè sló | |
| | Dza ŋwei | except sky |
| | tʃirè asaasé | |
| | dza flikpɔɔ | except earth |
| | tʃirè boslobo | |
| | dza ŋfo | except sea |
| | tʃirè asaasé áblā | |
| | dza ŋfo | except sea. |

- B! úyà abese kaakla
 Ke o dzi tɛy bibio le If you are small palm tree
 mfié àbese kaakló
 kaatʃe o he tɛy wulu don't call yourself big palm tree.
- D. ŋklán àʃiédú kèteke
 Ga Afiedu Keteke Ga people (strong name)
 odóm ní àmanfú
 Me babao, ame be man Many people, they don't have an
 momo. old town.
 oto ée
- D. ŋklán àʃiédú kèteke
 odóm ní àmanfú.
- E. owúòní yè dɛy
 Gbele híe wá. The face of death is hard
 (unyielding).
- E. owúòní yè dɛy óo.
 oto ée.
- C! tʃírɛ mətʃiri òó
 Dza mí sɛɛ Except behind me
 tʃírɛ síó,
 tʃírɛ asaasé,
 tʃírɛ àboslobo.
 tʃírɛ àsaase ablā.
 oto ée.
- B' úyè abese kaklaa
 mfié àbese kaakló.
 oto ée

D' odóò ní àmáńfú.
 ńkíáń àńíèdú kèteke
 odóń ní àmáńfú.
 oto ée
 E owúòńí nē dēń lóo.

Normalized Version

	Oto ei (4)	Oto oh!
A	M'ani wo kó so daadaa.	I dwell on battle always.
	Oto ei (2)	Oto oh!
B	Woye frankwa (§)	If you are a cabbage palm
	hena beforo (wo)?	who will climb you?
	Oto ei	Oto oh!
C	Kyere soro	Not without the heavens
	kyere asaase	not without earth
	kyere Bosōrōpo.	not without the sea (god).
	Kyere Asase Abena.	Not without Abena the Earth.
B'	Woye abebrese kakra-	If you are a small palm tree
	wa (§)	
	mmfre (wo ho) abebrese	don't call yourself a big palm
	kaakro.	tree.
D	Nkran Asiedu Ketekre.	Great people of Accra
	Dám nni amanfo.	Many do not have an old town.
	Oto ei	Oto oh!
D	Nkran Asiedu Ketekre.	Great people of Accra.
	Dám nni amanfo.	Many do not have an old town.
E	Owu ani ye den.	Death is Inescapable.
E	Owu ani ye den o.	Death is Inescapable.
	Oto ei.	Oto oh!
C'	Kyere m'akyiri o.	Not without (those) behind me.

	Kyere soro, kyere asase, kyere Bosōrōpo Kyere Asase Abena. Oto ei.	Not without the heavens, not without the earth, not without the sea (god) Not without Abena of the earth. Oto oh!
B'	Woye abebrese kakra- wa (ā) mmfrɛ (wo ho) abebrese kaakro. Oto ei.	If you are a small palm tree don't call yourself a big palm tree. Oto oh!
D'	Dɔm nni amanfo. Nkran Asledu Ketekre. dɔm nni amanfo. Oto ei	Many do not have an old town. Great people of Accra, many do not have an old town. Oto oh!
E	Owu ani ye den o.	Death is inescapable.

DrumHorn Player's Version

	dɔn dɔn dɔn	"knocking"
A	mika ntā Ke mi ka kitā le mintop mi tōō.	If I swear an oath I don't go against it.
B	o plé nso Ke o ple he hū mimpé bì. mi sumóo.	If you struggle for it too I don't want it.

ARTICLES

34.

- C múntʃe, muntʃe
 Nye dzaa, nye dzaa Share it, share it
 mǐmpé bǐ.

 mǐ sumóó. I don't want any.
- C' múntʃe, mundi
 Nye dzaa, nye yea Share it, eat it,
 mǐmpé bǐ.

 mǐ sumóó. I don't want any.
- B oplé nso
 mǐmpé bǐ.
- C'' múntʃe, muntʃe,
 mǐmpé bǐ,
 mǐmpé bǐ.

Normalized Version (translation as above)

- A Meka ntam (ǎ)
 mentō.
- B Wopere nso (ǎ)
 mempe bǐ.
- C Monkye, monkye,
 mempe bǐ.
- C' Monkye, monni,
 mempe bǐ.
- B Wopere nso (ǎ)
 mempe bǐ.
- C'' Monkye, monkye,
 mempe bǐ,
 mempe bǐ.

"Oto", invoked between almost every group of the horn text, refers to one Oto Tshuru, alias Adzorkor Okine, the founder of Adzorkor Okine We. According to Adzorkor Okine We the text expresses the bitter defiance of Oto Tshuru and his people directed against his half-brother Oto Din, and commemorates a quarrel between the two over chieftaincy, which Oto Tshuru lost. A breach ensued. The quarrel is said to have taken place in Accra at a time when the protagonists still considered themselves Akwamus, that is, Akans. The descendants of Oto Tshuru, namely the Adzorkor Okine Webi, are now Ga-speaking and associated with Otublohum. There is evidence to indicate that the relevant period was probably the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

3. Discussion

The most obvious point to make concerning the language of these texts is also in a sense the least significant, namely, that the texts are in Akan but that the performers and traditional "owners" are Gas. The historical reason for this is obvious: that at the time of composition the composers and performers were essentially Akans and Akan-speaking, although it may be that the naturalization of the Akwamus in Accra was by this time sufficiently advanced that Akan was not the first language of most individuals. At any rate the assimilation of Akwamus into Ga is well established, so that the existence of Ga-speaking lineages that profess an Akwamu origin which they traditionally celebrate in the Akan language is not startling. The fact that Adzorkor Okine We's two other traditional musical types, Akadza (songs) and Obonu, are also in Akan, and that they give their children Akwapim names, reinforces our opinion that they really do have an Akan-speaking origin, and have not simply borrowed an Akan 'talking horn' from elsewhere.

It should be noted also that the Adzorkor Okine Webi are truly Ga-speaking. There is fairly widespread low-level bilingualism in Akan, and there may well have been more in the past. At present it would seem that their

familiarity with Akan is no greater than among Ga generally. Dodoo Bleche in particular has sufficient facility in Twi to conduct essential business with non-Ga speakers when necessary, as indeed he can in Ewe, Hausa and "Zabrama" as well. Nevertheless, as his pronunciation of Akan shows and as he himself would insist, Ga is the only language he 'really knows'. It is highly unlikely therefore that the texts were composed by this generation, or any earlier generation that was equally assimilated from a linguistic point of view. When Dodoo Bleche repeats these texts he is speaking a foreign language, which he understands in general but not in its subtler detail. It is not likely that he has heard the texts delivered by anyone with a native command of Akan.

If the texts were originally composed by Akans one may try to deduce what dialect they originally represented. Since traditionally these people were Akwamus, we would expect the language to be similar to Akwapim. It is difficult to find positive evidence that it was indeed Akwapim, but at least there is none that it was not. Since Dodoo Bleche's pronunciation shows a very strong "Ga accent" it would not be justifiable to try to relate it to dialectal variations in Akan pronunciation. In a case like this, items of vocabulary are a more reliable guide. There is at least one word here that among the Akan dialects occurs only in Akwapim. ɔ-frankwa 'cabbage palm' (anthocleista) is listed by Irvine for Akwapim and Ga only, although he lists other names for the same tree in several dialects of Akan.⁴

A number of other words and expressions in the horn text are somewhat obscure. It is hard to tell whether this is because the words themselves are archaic or because they have been corrupted in a tradition handed down through individuals with a decreased comprehension of the language.

In a few instances the Ga translation given by Dodoo Bleche does not quite match the normalized Akan. In a minor way this is apparently true of (ɔ-)kõ in A of the horn text, which was translated as Ga ta 'war', but might be more literally translated into Ga as nõmõ 'fighting', the Akan equivalent of Ga ta being ɔsa.

Translation of Asase Abena in C of the horn text as ɲɔ 'sea' is probably a mistake, since asase is certainly 'earth', but this is complicated by associations. The earth as a deity is more often called in Akan Asase Yaa. The transfer to Abena, that is, a connection with Tuesday instead of Thursday, may have something to do with the fact that on the coast fishermen are forbidden to go to sea on Tuesdays, so that Tuesday has a special relationship with the sea on one hand and the earth on the other.

There are several peculiarities in the vocabulary of B'. abese is probably either an archaic (unreduplicated) form or a corruption of abebrese. This word is itself not common, and is not listed by Irvine, but apparently in the Brong area at least it refers to a type of palm tree which grows very tall.

The adjectives that modify abese, given by the horn player as kaakla or keklaa and kaaklɔ, are also somewhat unusual. The form kakrawa was suggested by Dr. L. Boadi as the word phonologically most similar to kaakla that is also syntactically possible and semantically suitable. According to Professor J.H.K. Nketia kaakro occurs in modern Akan, at least in Kwahu, but it seems that in Akyem and perhaps Akwapim, kokuroko, also suggested by Dr. Boadi, is the acceptable form. In Dodoo Bleche's pronunciation the phonological balance between the two adjectives, standing as they do at the end of their respective clauses in superficially identical syntactic contexts, is remarkably neat. As kaakla and kaaklɔ they are exactly the same except for a tone and vowel change at the end of the second, which is the semantic opposite of the first. It is possible that as the grasp of the language of the text has declined the sounds of these adjectives have been modified slightly to reinforce the syntactic and semantic relations between them.

The other unusual lexical feature to be dealt with is odom in D. Apparently in modern Akan this word, meaning 'host', sometimes 'army', occurs in Fante with the prefix e as edom, but elsewhere (including in Akwapim) with no prefix at all. The Ga translation does not reflect any significant modification of dom. Probably this is a genuine archaism, and a prefix o- that once existed at least in some dialects is preserved here.

With the possible exception of the opening statement A in the horn text it seems that none of the units that compose this pair of texts can be said to be original. The composer has constructed his poems by drawing upon an inherited stock of suitable units. His own contribution might lie in the order in which they have been put together, and perhaps in the pattern in which they are repeated.

The expressions of which the poems are constructed are of a type that might be called "proverbial" or "proverb-like". This seems to mean two things: that reference to actual events, persons, ideas and opinions is oblique, through generalizations, and that from a linguistic point of view the expressions are highly restricted in form. A study of meaning and the meaning of meaning in such texts would be interesting, but it is beyond the scope of this paper. Here we will rather try to characterize the second feature, which is easier.

Each text is constructed from a rather small set of what will be called "linguistic units", each one corresponding to a definable syntactic unit.⁵ These units are repeated in groups, and it is the units grouped according to their behaviour in the repetition patterns that have been marked A, B etc. There are five "basic" repetition groups in the horn text, A, B, C, D and E. A and E consist of just one unit each. B and D have two units each, and C has four. B', C' and D' are regarded as variations of B, C and D respectively.

Not only do units recur in groups, but the groups themselves recur in sections, which are partial repetitions of each other. The horn poem, which dominates the drum poem, is in three sections, which may be termed the Introduction, Development and Coda.

The Introduction begins with the only group (A m'ani wo kō so daadaa) that is not repeated later. It is also the only group to make what can be interpreted as a relatively direct reference to the subject of the text, namely Oto Tshuru's quarrel with his brother. It can therefore be singled out as the Opening Statement. It is followed by B (woye frankwa...), a rhetorical question celebrating Oto Tshuru, and ends with C (kyare soro...). The linguistic units of A and B coincide with

clauses having subject, predicate and complement, but in C they coincide with what at least in normal language can be considered adverbial phrases consisting of verbid (kyere) plus nominal phrase. C consists of four such phrases, with identical verbid and different nominal phrases denoting the culturally related concepts of sky, sea and earth as natural forces.

The development begins in B' (woye abese kaakla...), a formal parallel to B. B and B' each consist of a two-clause conditional sentence. The first clauses are identical, except that each names a different kind of tree. The characteristics of each tree provide a metaphor for human behaviour. Whereas the second clause of B is formally a question, in B' it is a command. Two new groups (D Nkran Asiedu Keteke... and E Owu ani ye den) are introduced and each is repeated once. The development is closed by C', which is simply a repetition of C except that it begins with a new version of the same phrase (kyere N), introducing a reference to ancestors and linking them with the essential forces of nature. The number of units in C' is thus increased to five.

C/C' is not repeated again, and is evidently a transition passage between the sections. The Coda consists of repetition of the other material of the Development, with no internal repetitions, except that in D' the first linguistic unit of D, which occurs once, is sandwiched between two occurrences of the second.

We may summarize the unit-group structure as follows (1u means linguistic unit):

	Introduction	Development	Coda
opening statement	A 1 1u		
	B 2 1u	B' 2 1u	B' 2 1u
		D(2) 2 1u	D' 3 1u
		E(2) 1 1u	E 1 1u
transition passage	C 4 1u	C' 5 1u	

In addition, the structure is punctuated by the invocation "Oto ei". This opens the recital, being repeated four times. It is repeated twice after A and once after B - thus decreasing by half each time. After that it occurs once with each repetition. In the development it occurs between the two occurrences of D, and before C'. It thus marks off sets of four linguistic units in the development. It then occurs before each of the repetition groups of the coda. Overall it seems that the invocation is given before every repetition group, except that between the third and fourth and again between the fourth and fifth of the eight times it is introduced, there is a succession of three repetition groups with no interruption. Thus the central development section has only two rhythmically balanced invocations.

If the grammatical structure of the units composing the repetition groups is examined, it appears that in several respects textual structure is reflected in linguistic structure. The units coincide with grammatical units at two levels of the structural hierarchy: clauses and phrases. Several classes of each are present. Phrases are adverbial - C kyere soro - and nominal - D Nkran Asiedu Keteke. Clauses are conditional - B woye frankwa - indicative - E owu ani ye den - imperative - B' mmfre abese kaakro - and interrogative - B hena beforo. However, it seems that a basic feature of the style of the text is the equating of all types of structures, so that in a sense all linguistic units are presented in a relation of apposition, each to every other, whatever their grammatical characteristics. The net effect is one of balance and symmetry.

This appositional relationship is characterizable grammatically. B and B' are sentences, each consisting of two clauses:

	S(subject)	P(predicate)	C(omplement)
B	<u>wo</u>	<u>ye</u>	<u>frankwa</u>
	<u>hena</u>	<u>beforo</u>	—
B'	<u>wo</u>	<u>ye</u>	<u>abese kakraa</u>
	—	<u>mmfre</u>	<u>abese kaakro</u>

Normally the particle ā would mark the first clause in each as conditional. Allowing for the non-native pronunciation of the delivery, it seems that this particle is deleted, with the result that the two clauses are simply juxtaposed to each other. The interrogative/imperative distinction is maintained by the presence or absence of the grammatical subject in the second clause and the choice of pronoun (i.e. hena interrogative pronoun in B; no grammatical subject in the corresponding unit of B'), but the conditional meaning of the first clause is not overtly expounded.

In B', but not in B, the tree name (abese) is repeated in the second clause, and the adjective in the first is balanced phonetically and semantically by the adjective in the second (kakraa - kaakro). These are the only adjectives in the text.

Clauses are predominantly of the SPC type. A's unique occurrence is mirrored in the fact that it is the only occurrence in the text of a clause expanded to SPCAd, to include an Adjunct (daadaa). The second clause of B', being imperative singular, has no grammatical subject. In normal speech it would have a reflexive complement referring to the semantic subject (wo hō) as well as the normal complement, but in the text this is deleted.

The phrases in horn repetition group C are not subordinated to or included in any larger construction or group, but presented as they stand on a par with the groups consisting of complete clauses. The same is true of the name Nkran Asledu Keteke, the first unit in D, and the other unit corresponding to what is linguistically less than a clause. The second unit in D (odom nni amanfo) is formally a clause, but it is presented in apposition to the first, and as far as the performers are concerned the whole of D is one extended strong name for Accra.

There is thus a striking lack of linking items, such as conjunctions, subordinating particles (such as ā) and relative pronouns. No unit or group of units is formally subordinated to any other, but all are presented in simple succession, so that the intensity of the text is achieved through the cumulative effect of the piling up of units.

Everything except A is repeated, but by means of continual subtle changes of order, of implicit syntactic relations and of words nothing except E is ever repeated exactly. Of the five basic component groups, the first and the last (A and E) have only one form, while changes are rung on the intermediate three. A and E, it will be recalled, are also the only repetition groups to consist of just one linguistic unit.

The drum text acts as a sort of chorus to the horn text. Its structure is comparable, but simpler, and its reference to historical events and attitudes apparently more explicit. Only two sections need be distinguished: the Statement, corresponding to the Introduction and Development of the horn text, in which all the material of the text is introduced, and the Coda. There are basically only three groups: A (meka ntam mentō), the Opening Statement, B and C. As in the horn text, the opening statement is not repeated. It is said to refer to the oath sworn by Oto Tshuru to have nothing more to do with Oto Din. The rest of the text emphasizes this statement. In this text every group is a sentence consisting of two clauses, in which the first may be repeated, each clause representing one linguistic unit. In this text every repetition group seems to correspond to a linear unit.

	Statement	Coda
opening statement	A	
	B	B
	C	C'
transition	C'	

A is a conditional statement - recalling the conditional sentences of the trumpet text, but with a difference, because those were not statements but a question and a command. As in the horn text, the two SP(C) clauses are simply juxtaposed, with no formal linguistic exponent of conditional meaning linking them. B (wopere nso, mempe bi) is also a conditional sentence of the same kind, except that whereas in A only the first clause has an overt Complement (ntam), in B only the second clause has one (bi). B also introduces variety by means of the adverbial

Item nso, and a singular second person pronoun subject, all in the first clause. The other three clauses of A and B all have first person singular subjects (me). This might seem a trivial point, but it is notable that except for the first unit wopere nso in B, every unit of the drum text begins in m, as the consonant of the first singular or the second plural pronoun. If we consider subject pronoun + verb to be phonologically (as they are orthographically) one word, we find that every word in this text begins with a voiced bilabial consonant, m, w or b, except for two words, ntam and nso, which both begin in a syllabic nasal followed by a voiceless alveolar obstruent and neatly balance each other as the second word of the first units of A and B respectively. In addition, there are sound echoes in the appearance of t in each unit of A (in ntam, mentō), and of p in the verb stem of each unit in B and then again in the second unit of C (pere, pe).

C consists of three units: a one-word plural imperative clause (monkye) which is repeated, followed by a statement which is merely a repetition of the second unit of B (mempe bi). In C' and C'' the first C unit recurs, except that in C' in the repetition a different verb stem (di) is introduced. C' occupies a position intermediate between the statement which introduces the matter of the text and the coda which repeats it, and can be regarded as a bridge between the two. In C'', the second unit (mempe bi) is repeated as well as the first. C is essentially an echo of B, except that the grammatical tie between the first two units and the third unit of C (imperative clauses-indicative clause) is not as close as the relationship between the first and second units of B (conditional clause-indicative clause),

In conclusion, it seems that an important aspect of the style of the texts is the suppression of as many grammatical linkers and subordinators as is necessary, and semantically possible, in order to achieve a singular SPC structure in clauses, unadorned except for occasional and deliberate introduction of an Ad element (daadaa in horn text A, nso in drum text B') or deletion of S (B' horn), or introduction of a modifier to one of the nouns (as kaakra

and kaakro in B' of the horn text). Not only syntactic distinctions between clause types are suppressed in this way, but also distinctions between clauses and any other syntactic units that the linguistic units may coincide with. In these texts they only coincide with clauses and phrases. The result is a construct that has the simplest possible appearance, that of a mere series of formally equivalent announcements, most of which, moreover, are repeated several times. This apparent simplicity and repetitiveness hides a very considerable variety. Structures of two or more units that are on the surface virtually the same are in fact questions, statements or commands, which may be conditional or unconditional. Although almost everything is repeated, almost every repetition introduces variety.

NOTES

1. Further detail concerning historical background is contained in M.E. Kropp Dakubu, History and Music and Verbal Art in a Ga Lineage: The Adzorkor Okine We Trumpet and Drum, with comments by Ivor Wilks. Forthcoming in Africa.

I am indebted to Mr. Duncan Conner for authoritative information that the instrument is a horn, not a trumpet, and that the interval used is about 1 1/8 tones.

2. This study could not have been made without the kindness, co-operation and interest of Akuete Dodoo Kwabia Bleche, for which I am more than grateful.
3. The transcription and much of the discussion were greatly aided by discussion with Dr. Lawrence Boadi, with Professor J.H. Kwabena Nketia, and with Dr. M. Dakubu, who suggested the form abebrese. The author is of course responsible for any errors.
4. In F.R. Irvine, Woody Plants of Ghana, London 1961.

5. "Linguistic units" are distinguished here without reference to musical structure, and are not identical with linear units as defined in J.H. Kwabena Nketia, Surrogate Languages of Africa, forthcoming in Current Trends in Linguistics (Africa). Linear units are the verbal interpretation of rhythmic groups, and hence derived from musical structure. Linguistic units, however, are derived from grammatical patterns in the verbal text. Horn group B (woye frankwa, hena beforo) consists of two linguistic units, because it consists grammatically of two occurrences of one structure i.e. the clause. Drum repetition group C (monkye, monkye, mempe bi) has three linguistic units. But horn group B and drum group C each probably constitute just one linear unit. Repetition groups (linguistically defined) and linear units (musically defined) each contain one or more complete linguistic units, but it is possible that repetition groups (e.g. horn groups C and C' - kyere soro etc., and D') can include more than one linear unit.

It seems that the basic grammatical units of which these texts are structured are the clause and the phrase or group - less than the sentence but larger than the word.