

Abstract of thesis entitled

**ASPECTS OF AKAN GRAMMAR AND THE PHONOLOGY-SYNTAX INTERFACE**

submitted by

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This dissertation discusses aspects of the grammar of Akan, a Kwa language of West Africa, and the theoretical aspects of the relationship between phonology and syntax. Particularly, the study explores compound constructions, simple clauses, topic, focus and *wh*-question fronting constructions in Akan and the phrasal rules that obtain in them in the perspective of the phonology-syntax interface.

The theory of lexical phonology (Kiparsky 1982; Mohanan 1986; Pulleyblank 1986; etc.) distinguishes two sets of rules in the grammar; lexical rules and phrasal rules. The existence of phrasal rules in the grammar has stimulated research in the phonology-syntax interface. In the interface analyses of phrasal rules, linguists are faced with some theoretical questions. Some of these questions that this dissertation attempts to address in the course of discussing phrasal rules in the target constructions of Akan are i) what is the relationship between phonology and syntax? ii) how is the syntactic structure mapped to the phonological structure? iii) is the analysis of phrasal rules from the perspective of the interface desirable and iv) is information reference between syntax and phonology bidirectional (or not)?

With regards to the primary question of how the phonology-syntax interface should be conceived in particular, two main schools of thought – the Direct Reference

and the Indirect Reference hypotheses – have been at opposite sides of the argument. This study adopts the Indirect Reference hypothesis and advances the view that the phonology needs to make reference to the syntax, but only remotely through the prosodic structure (p-structure) of the phonology (Nespor and Vogel 1986; Zec and Inkelas 1990; etc.). Thus, a greater portion of the research is built around the argument that the prosodic structure provides the right platform for a comprehensive and consistent account of phrasal rule applications and that, through p-structure, phonological information may be referred to by some syntactic representations.

Syntactic analyses of some of the constructions explored in this study are done in the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (e.g., Bresnan 2001). It is claimed that the p-structure primarily relates to the categorial structure, one of the parallel structures postulated in Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG). But it is also claimed that other grammatical information need to be considered where necessary to contribute to the parsing of the p-structure. In this wise, the study crucially promotes the idea that syntax is not the sole input base of a well-defined p-structure and that phrasal rule applications that seem intractable could be explained where other grammatical information are adequately recognized in the p-structure. Accordingly, Compositional Mapping Theory (CMT), as developed in this thesis, which encompasses various mapping theories proposed in the literature, is proposed for the parsing of the p-structure in Akan and, for that matter, for conclusive explanation of phrasal rules occurring in Akan constructions.