

INTRODUCTION

The Grebo occupy a coastal strip some 50–70 miles deep between the Rivers Cavally and Cess in the extreme south-west of Liberia. To the west, along the coast, their neighbours are the Kru, and inland, the Kran.

Grebo belongs to the Kru group of languages, all spoken in Liberia, and whose most important member is Kru, which has given its name to the group. The Kru languages are classified by Westermann and Bryan¹ as an isolated unit, but Greenberg² includes them in his Kwa group, which includes several of the major languages of Ghana and Nigeria such as Twi, Ewe, Yoruba and Ibo.

Grebo was one of the earliest West African languages to be studied by European and, American scholars, and the following bibliography³ testifies to the considerable amount of grammatical and lexicographical work done on the language by early missionaries:

Wilson, J. L. A BRIEF GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GREBO LANGUAGE. Cape Palmas, 1838.

Wilson, J. L. DICTIONARY OF THE GREBO LANGUAGE. Cape Palmas, 1839.

Payne, J. GREBO GRAMMAR. New York, 1864.

Payne, J. A DICTIONARY OF THE GREBO LANGUAGE. Philadelphia, 1867.

Auer, J. G. ELEMENTS OF THE GEDEBO LANGUAGE. Stuttgart, 1870.

Müller, F. DIE SPRACHEN BASA, GREBO UND KRU. Vienna, 1877.

Since 1877 no further works on Grebo have appeared and interest in the language seems to have waned, though there has been some revival of interest in recent years, mainly associated with an adult literacy campaign. The material for the present dictionary was collected in the course of work which I did on Grebo in London with an informant, Mr. J. Y. Dennis, who was a Research Assistant at the School of Oriental and African Studies from 1955 to 1957. The dictionary is based entirely on Mr. Dennis's speech; all words listed are in current use, except those marked 'obsolescent', which are familiar to Mr. Dennis in the speech of people of an older generation, but which he himself and others of his generation do not use. The present work incorporates all those entries in Payne's dictionary which Mr. Dennis was able to identify.

I wish here to express my appreciation of the energy and enthusiasm which Mr. Dennis displayed in the collecting of material for this dictionary; to him I am greatly indebted, for without his co-operation this book could not have been written.

Orthography

Although it is over 100 years since the first dictionary of Grebo was published,⁴ the quantity of Grebo literature is slight, and there was a long period from the 1870's until after the last war when virtually nothing was written in Grebo. There is as yet no agreement among the Grebo on how their language should be written, but dispute centres on only a few points, mainly the use of ε and ς, which were introduced some years ago, but which have met with considerable opposition. I have followed the orthography of Bishop Auer, whose hymn-book of 1873 has been widely used and which in large measure

¹ HANDBOOK OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES, PART II. London, 1952.

² LANGUAGES OF AFRICA. The Hague, 1963.

³ R. Jones, AFRICA BIBLIOGRAPHY SERIES: WEST AFRICA. London, 1958.

⁴ J. L. Wilson, DICTIONARY OF THE GREBO LANGUAGE. Cape Palmas, 1839.

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established the written form of the language. The main points of difference from Auer are the use here of the three letters η , ϵ and υ .

The consonants are written with the following letters and digraphs:

p b t d k g kp gb ky gy hm m hn n ny η ηm hl lf s h hw ηw y .

Notes:

ky and gy are palatal plosives

ny is a velar nasal

hm , hn , hl , hw are the voiceless correlates of m , n , l , w respectively

ηm is a voiced labio-velar nasal

ηw is a voiced nasal semi-vowel

l has a nasal variant which occurs in syncopated forms (see p. 3) like:

$fl\bar{a}$ [$f\bar{l}\bar{a}$] < fona wood-boring insect

$kl\bar{e}$ [$k\bar{l}\bar{e}$] < kene wickerwork basket

h and hw have each a nasal variant which occurs before nasal vowels:

$h\bar{o}$ [$\bar{h}\bar{o}$] shark

$hw\bar{a}\bar{o}$ [$\bar{h}\bar{w}\bar{a}\bar{o}$] shoulder

The oral vowels are written with the following letters:

i e ϵ ϵ a υ o o u

Notes:

e and ϵ are both half-close front vowels, o and υ are both half-close back vowels. In the terminology used by Sapir⁵ to describe comparable pairs of vowels in Gweabo, ϵ and υ are 'muffled' vowels, e and o are 'bright' vowels.

There are no nasal correlates of ϵ and υ , but there are nasal correlates of the seven other oral vowels.

Nasality

Nasal vowels are marked where necessary by a tilde: $p\bar{i}$ 'cook'. Where the phonetic context permits only a nasal vowel, nasality of the vowel is not marked. There are two such contexts:

1. Following a nasal consonant (hm , m , hn , n , η , ηm , ηw , ny):

mu [$m\bar{u}$] go

2. In CVCV words where C_2 is nasal; V_1 and V_2 are both nasal:

$fona$ [$f\bar{o}n\bar{a}$] wood-boring insect

$pina$ [$p\bar{i}n\bar{a}$] cooked cf. $p\bar{i}$ cook

Vowel Sequences

Phonetically long vowels are regarded as sequences of like vowels and are written with a double letter:

muu door

In a sequence of two vowels, both are oral or both are nasal, except that ϵ and υ may follow a nasal vowel:

$h\bar{i}\epsilon$ paint for cf. $h\bar{i}$ paint

$p\bar{i}\epsilon$ cook for cf. $p\bar{i}$ cook

⁵ E. Sapir, 'Notes on the Gweabo Language of Liberia', LANGUAGE 7, 1931.

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Consonant Clusters

Consonant clusters are confined to those whose second consonant is *l* or *w*. Most consonant clusters whose second consonant is *l* occur in the syncopated forms of CVCV words whose *C*₂ is *d* or *n*. For example, *geda* 'divide' has a syncopated form *gla* which occurs in quick speech. In the dictionary the unsyncopated form is listed, but in the case of certain words whose syncopated form is very common, the latter is also listed, with cross-references. There are a few words like *fli* 'flea' where a consonant cluster occurs even in slow speech; these are mostly, if not all, loanwords.

The following consonant clusters are found in syncopated forms:

<i>pl</i>	<i>plɛ</i>	<	<i>pɛdɛ</i>	bald patch
	<i>plɛ̃</i>	<	<i>ponɛ</i>	rat
<i>bl</i>	<i>blɔ</i>	<	<i>bɔdɔ</i>	chalk
<i>kl</i>	<i>klɛ</i>	<	<i>kidɛ</i>	chest
	<i>klɛ̃</i>	<	<i>kɛnɛ</i>	wickerwork basket
<i>gl</i>	<i>gla</i>	<	<i>geda</i>	divide
<i>kpl</i>	<i>kplɑ</i>	<	<i>kpɔdɑ</i>	sew
	<i>kplɑ̃</i>	<	<i>kponɑ</i>	snore
<i>gbl</i>	<i>gblɔ</i>	<	<i>gbudɔ</i>	room
<i>fl</i>	<i>flo</i>	<	<i>fodo</i>	emptiness
	<i>flɑ̃</i>	<	<i>fɔnɑ</i>	wood-boring insect
<i>hml</i>	<i>hmlɑ̃</i>	<	<i>hmonɑ</i>	a fish
<i>ml</i>	<i>mlɛ̃</i>	<	<i>munɛ</i>	wild beast
<i>ŋl</i>	<i>ŋlɑ̃</i>	<	<i>ŋɛnɑ</i>	melt

Tone

Four tone levels are distinguished. The tone of each headword is shown immediately after it; the system of tone marking is by numerals, as follows:

High tone is marked by 1	<i>kɛ̃</i> 1	chief
High-mid tone is marked by 2	<i>bi</i> 2	beat
Low-mid tone is marked by 3	<i>ya</i> 3	bring
Low tone is marked by 4	<i>pũ</i> 4	swell

Gliding tones are marked by a combination of two (or, rarely, three) numerals: *hu* 3-2 throw.

Some examples of the tone marking of longer words are:

<i>yiba</i> 21	face	<i>pɔbɔ</i> 3-23	owl
<i>bɔdɛ</i> 22-1	swamp	<i>gbudɔmu</i> 333	box.

The numerals marking tone are usually written after the word or phrase to which they refer, but in the case of longer citations, they are written underneath, in order to make it easier for the reader to see with which vowel each numeral is associated.

The order in which the entries are listed is strictly alphabetical and calls for little comment; the following points are, however, to be noticed: the order of the three E-vowels is *e*, *ɛ*, *ɛ̃*, and the order of the three O-vowels is *o*, *ɔ*, *ɔ̃*; the tilde is disregarded in determining word order; where two or more words have the same spelling they are listed according to tone, with the higher tone words preceding the lower tone words, e.g.

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pã 2-1 <i>adv.</i>	outright
pa 2 <i>v.</i>	enter
pa 3-1 <i>n.</i>	defiance
pã 3-2 <i>n.</i>	large crayfish
pa 3 <i>id.</i>	with the sound of a sharp blow
pa 4 <i>n.</i>	good natured irony, banter

For verbs, the citation form is the 2nd singular, imperative mood.

Nominal and Verbal Affixes

The word class to which each headword belongs is indicated after the numeral (or numerals) marking tone. The word classes recognised here are those distinguished in my *AN INTRODUCTION TO GREBO*,⁶ where a brief morphological and syntactical description of the main word classes will be found. It may be useful for reference purposes to list here the affixes which occur with nominal and verbal stems.

The following suffixes occur with nominal stems:

1. -a ~ -ã 'plural':
di spear dia.
2. {-i} 'plural'; {-i} has realizations -i ~ -ĩ ~ -ẽ ~ -ε:
ku devil kui.
3. -no 'plural':
buo father buono.
Only four examples found.
4. -bo ~ -bo 'plural'. Only with stems denoting persons:
kẽ chief kẽbo.
5. -du 'plural':
yu child yudu.
Only one example found.
6. -yo ~ -yo 'several individuals'. With stems having collective meaning:
hne stars (collectively) hneyo several (individual) stars.
7. -ye, -ẽ 'one individual'. With stems having collective meaning:
hne stars hneye a star.
8. -e ~ -e ~ -ε 'one individual':
ti halves tiẽ half.
Only nine examples found.
9. -a ~ -ã 'one individual':
kebe slices kebea slice.
Only five examples found.
10. -be 'person':
gebebe a Grebo
11. -pee 'person'. With names of towns and countries, and with beε 'up country':
pãpee a Pan.
12. -we 'persons'. With names of towns:
monroviawe citizens of Monrovia.

It is not possible to predict the plural form from the singular, and therefore in the case of all words where there is a singular/plural opposition, the plural form is also given in

⁶ London, 1966.

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the dictionary. In the case of words with collective meaning like *hne* 'stars', the singulative form is also given; by 'singulative' is meant a form consisting of stem + suffix 7, 8 or 9.

The following affixes occur with verbal stems:

1. {-e} 'secondary stem'; {-e} has realizations -i ~ -ī ~ -e ~ -ē ~ -ē ~ -ε ~ -ē:
dui be pounding cf. *du* pound
2. -e ~ -ē ~ -ē ~ -ε ~ -ē 'dative, causative, passive':
duiɛ dɔ bla pound rice for Do
dui is secondary stem of *du* 'pound'; *bla* 'rice'.
luiɛ dɔ make Do swim
lui is secondary stem of *lu* 'swim'.
ɔ wɛɛda ne it was broken (by someone)
wɛ is secondary stem of *wa* 'break'; -*da* 'past tense'; *ne* is a particle.
3. -di ~ -de ~ -ni ~ -ne 'instrumental':
dudi bla sū pound rice with a pestle
du 'pound'; *bla* 'rice'; *sū* 'pestle'.
- 4 and 5. CV- and -de ~ -ne 'reciprocal':
a fofode ne we have awaited each other
a 'we'; *fofode* consists of *fo-* 'CV prefix' + *fo* 'await' + -*de* 'reciprocal';
ne is a particle.
 The values of C and V are:
 C is the same as the stem-initial consonant.
 V is:
 - (i) the same as the first vowel of the stem, except where this *ɛ*, *a*, *ɔ* (or their nasal correlates);
 - (ii) *o/ɔ* where the first vowel of the stem is *ɛ/ē* or *a/ā*, and the stem-initial consonant is *kp*, *gb*, *ŋm*, *f*, *w*, *ŋw*;
 - (iii) *e/ē* where the first vowel of the stem is *ɛ/ē* or *a/ā* and the stem-initial consonant is any consonant other than those listed in (ii);
 - (iv) *o/ɔ* where the first vowel of the stem is *ɔ/ɔ̄*.
6. -de ɪ 'here':
o nedɛ they are here
o 'they'; *ne* 'be'.
7. -de ~ -dē 'there' (of a wide or unspecified area):
o mudɛ they have gone there.
8. -o ~ -ō 'there' (of a particular place):
o muɔ they have gone there.
9. -de ɛ. This occurs after -de ɪ, -de and -o, and specifies the location more exactly:
mudɛɛ go *there* (to that precise spot)
 cf. *mudɛ* go there.
10. -da ~ -na 'before yesterday tense':
ne dudu bla ne ɪ ɪ 2 4 3 I pounded rice before yesterday
ne 'I'; *du* 'pound'; *bla* 'rice'; *ne* is a particle.

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11. -dɔ̄ ~ -nɔ̄ 'yesterday tense':
 ne dudɔ̄ bla ne ɪ ɪɪ 4 3 I pounded rice yesterday.
12. -ɛ ~ -ē 'today tense':
 ne duɛ bla ne ɪ ɪ2 4 3 I pounded rice today; I shall pound rice today.
13. -a ~ -ā 'tomorrow tense':
 ne dua bla ne ɪ ɪ2 4 3 I shall pound rice tomorrow.
14. -dɔ̄ ~ -nɔ̄ 'after tomorrow tense':
 ne dudɔ̄ bla ne ɪ ɪ2 4 3 I shall pound rice after tomorrow.
15. -RCV ~ -V 'verbal noun', corresponding roughly in meaning to the English verbal noun in -ing:
 duɛ pounding cf. du pound
 duɛ yakla ne pounding is difficult.
 The values of R, C and V are:
 R: For R read:
 (i) o/ō replaces ɔ̄/5 after all consonants; it replaces ɛ/ē and a/ā after b, f, kp, gb, ŋm, w, ŋw. (Exception: e replaces ɛ after b).
 (ii) e/ē replaces ɛ/ē and a/ā after all other consonants.
 C is:
 (i) the same as the stem consonant where this is b, d, l, m, n
 (ii) the voiced correlate of the stem consonant where this is (1) hm, hn, or (2) p, t, hl and the stem vowel is oral;
 (iii) the voiced nasal correlate of the stem consonant where this is p or t and the stem vowel is nasal;
 (iv) zero where the stem consonant is other than p, b, hm, m, t, d, hl, l, hn, n.
 V is:
 (i) a/ā where the stem-final is a/ā;
 (ii) ɛ/ē where the stem-final is other than a/ā.
16. -da ~ -na 2-1 'verbal noun denoting place':
 duda 22-1 a place where pounding is done.
17. -da 3 ~ -na 3 ~ -3 'verbal noun denoting act':
 duda 23 the act of pounding.
18. -ɔ̄ ~ -5 (pl. -o ~ -ō) 'verbal noun denoting performer':
 duɔ̄ a person who is pounding.
19. -RCV ~ -V 'verbal adjective':
 duu bla pounded rice cf. du pound
 pema kē a rich chief cf. pā be rich.
 The values of R and C are the same as those of R and C in suffix unit 15; V is the same as the stem-final vowel.
20. -Vbɔ̄ ~ -bɔ̄ 'verbal adjective':
 bla duubɔ̄ pounded rice cf. du pound.

Since derivative verbs, verbal nouns and verbal adjectives have such a high degree of regularity both of form and meaning, for the sake of brevity none is listed in the dictionary, except for a few cases where the meaning is somewhat different from what might have been expected.

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- a 1 2nd pl. possessive pr.** your: a kae 1 14 your house; adūī 133 yourselves (*reflexive*); a nyibetu 1 132 you yourselves.
- a 2 2nd pl. subject pr.** you; a duda bla ne you pounded rice.
- a 2 genitival link:** kē a kae 1 2 14 the chief's house; kēbo a kla 12 2 14 the chiefs' houses.
- a 3 1st pl. possessive pr.** our: a kae 3 14 our house; adūī 333 ourselves (*reflexive*); a nyibetu 3 233 ourselves, we ourselves.
- a 3/4 1st pl. subject pr.** we: a duda bla ne we pounded rice.
- aa 33 interj.** all right! Expression of agreement with what has been said: na hone nede ɔ. aa, Don't be long. All right. *Also* aa ke 33 2.
- amo 12 2nd pl. object pr.** you.
- amo 13 2nd pl. emphatic subject pr.** you.
- amo 14 2nd pl. pr. (antecedent of a relative clause)** you.
- amo 32 1st pl. object pr.** us.
- amo 33 1st pl. emphatic subject pr.** we.
- amo 44 1st pl. pr. (antecedent of a relative clause)** we.
- ato 32-1 n.** husband of a female relative, *pl.* atoɔbo 321: commonly used as a term of address.
- awɛ 32 interj.** yes (with the connotation that the speaker is impatient with the question, or is in some way displeased): ple ɔ wode nee? awɛ has he been here? Yes (with the connotation that the speaker was displeased with the visitor).
- ba 1, only with ɔ 1 'their' as in:** ɔ ba 1 1 their beloved;
 ɔ ba yu 1 1 2-1 their beloved child.
- ba 2 2nd pl. subject pr. (subjunctive mood)** you: ba nu ne 2 2 4 do it.
- ba 3 1st pl. subject pr. (subjunctive mood)** we: ba nu ne 3 2 4 let's do it.
- ba 2-1 n.** tail; dependents, *pl.* be 2-1.
- ba 2-1 v.** hook, hang up, lift up (the leg); (of soldiers) drill; exempt: bao 21 go to one side, give way, stand aside; ba no 2 1 skulk, keep out of sight, lurk in corners; ba ye 2 1 stand aside, conceal oneself, set aside; na bada ye ke kē mo I stood aside for the chief; ba yuu 2 21 hang up; bebaka 221 fiercely, daringly, boldly; beba kē 22 1 an arrogant, headstrong chief.
- ba 2 v.** be maimed, be blind.
- baa 14 n.** namesake: na baa'no 2 14 4 he is my namesake; baa is used as a term of address by people having the same name.
- baa 41 adv.** perhaps, probably: baa nu mi hla mo 41 2-1 1 2 3 perhaps it will rain, it may rain. *cf.* bla 1, blane 41.
- baa 44 conj.** even though, even if, whether or not: a mi hwɔ mo baa kē yi ŋwe we shall fight even though the chief does not agree, we shall fight whether or not the chief agrees. *cf.* baahmo 443-2, banehmo 443-2.
- baadɛ 142-1 n.** a relative's wife. Used as a term of address.
- baahmo 443-2 conj.** even though, even if, whether or not. *cf.* baa 44, banehmo 443-2.
- bablɔ 13 n.** Holy Bible, *pl.* babli 13.
- babo 21 n.** branch, bough, *pl.* babe 21: ni gba a babo branch of a river; tu babo branch of a tree.
- bada 41 n.** enlarged gland in the groin, *pl.* bade 41.
- bade 23 v.** beg, beseech, pray: ne badeda kē ne 1 132 1 2 I begged the chief; ne badeda kē ne ke wudi a ta 1 1 3 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 4-1 I begged the chief for money; ne bade mo ne 1 13 2 2 I beg your pardon; bade ŋwi 23 3 prayer, petition for forgiveness. *cf.* tedaa 412 pardon me.

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- bae** 21 *n.* companion, comrade, *pl.* bino 13. *cf.* bahēā 2-133.
- bae** 31 *n.* burial, funeral:
 kē a bae kpana ne 1 2 31 12 2 the funeral of the chief was not up to expectations; bi bae woda 2 31 33 play funeral songs.
- bae** 33 *n.* bar, *pl.* baea 333: pini bae 21 33 a bar of lead; seme bae 44 33 a bar of soap.
- bagyē** 2-14 *n.* kick, stamp of the foot, heavy footstep, *pl.* bagyī 2-14:
 hla bagyē 2 2-14 to kick; po bagyē 2 2-14 walk heavily, aim a kick.
- bahēā** 2-133 *n.* companion, comrade, *pl.* bino 13. *cf.* bae 21.
- baka** 21 *adv.* exceedingly, greatly, very much: ne noene ne ne baka 1 113 4 1 21 I like it very much; kye di no baka 2 2 3 21 it is very cold.
- banana** 313 *n.* smallest variety of banana, *sing.* bananaye 3133.
- banehmō** 443-2 *conj.* even though, even if, whether or not:
 a mi hwō mō banehmō kē yi ŋwe 3 3-2 3-2 3 4 4 3-2 1 4 3 we shall fight even though the chief does not agree. *cf.* baa 44, baahmō 443-2.
- bāō** 44 *n.* big drum (of European manufacture), *pl.* bāē 44: bāē 44 band, orchestra; bāō tutu 44 33 drumstick for a big drum.
- baplē** 23 *n.* a reddish coloured rat, *pl.* baplē 23.
- bati** 44 *interj.*, as in: bati o! 44 2 oyez!
 Expression used by a person addressing an audience when he wishes to claim their attention; the audience replies bati.
Also a bati 2 44.
- baya** 21 *n.* clay mould in which metal is cast; crucible: kō baya kudi 2 22 11, kye baya 2 21 have a protruding abdomen.
- bayiwa** 333 *interj.* Expression used to mark the end or climax of a speech; also used by the audience as an expression of agreement (< ba yi wa 3 3 3 may we see favour).
- bebaka** 221, *see* ba 2-1 *v.*
- beblē** no 23 2 *v.* grope, run one's hands over: o bebleda no o pena woda no they groped their way out;
 o bebleda no o tu a te he groped for his walking-stick; ne bebleda no fe no 1 132 4 2 1 I ran my hands over him.
- beo** 23 *n.* toes, *sing.* bee 23:
 bee kpōdō 23 44 big toe, *pl.* bee kpōdi 23 44; bee kyīē 23 12-1 heel, *pl.* bee kyī 23 12-1; bee kō 23 3 toenail, *pl.* bee kōē 23 33.
- beo** 21 *n.* male; leader in war, leader of a group taking strong action, *pl.* bee 21. Commonly added to the names of animals to denote the male: bli beo 2 33 bull; beo no it is a male (animal); he is a warrior, he is a leader of a gang; ba beo 3 21 distinguish oneself; ya beo 3 21 be barren, sterile; beo yao 21 33 a barren woman, a sterile plant.
- bē** 2 *v.* spring like a monkey from tree to tree; o bēda ti lo no 2 22 2 2 3 he sprang from tree to tree; o bē ti lo no 2 2 2 2 3, o bē teble lo no 2 2 3-23-2 2 3 he pokes his nose into everything, he wants to have a hand in everything; o bē ŋwa lo no he is a wanderer, he 2 2 2 1 1 goes from doctor to doctor.
- bē** 3 *conj.* whether:
 ne yi ne yibō bē o dido ne 1 2-1 4 2 3 3 2 2 2 1
 I don't know whether he came;
 ple 4 . . . bē 3, bē 3 . . . oō bē 2-1-2 3, bē 3 . . . bē oō 3 2-1-3,
 bē 3 . . . bē 3, bē 3 . . . oō 2-1-3,
 bē 3 . . . oō kē, whether . . . or whether.
- bē** 2 *adj.* other: ε bē 3 2 something else, *pl.* e bē 3 2; dō/dē bē another one; (*in specific questions*) which?, what kind?: kae bē ne? which house is it?, what sort of house is it?
- bē** 2 *v.* knock, rap, pester (somebody for something); take honey out of a hive:

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- ɔ bɛda muu 2 22 14 he knocked at the door; ɔ bɛda do 2 22 2 he took honey from the hive; ɔ bɛda mo ne wudi (a) te 2 2 2 2 1 2 1 2 3-2 he pestered me for money; bɛ yɛ 2 2 collide with, knock against;
- ɔ bɛda mo yɛ 2 22 2 1 he collided with me, knocked into me; ɛ bɛda mo yɛ 2 22 2 1 it happened to me too;
- bɛ tade 2 12-1 cluck in contempt or defiance (with tongue slowly sucked from roof of mouth);
- ne bɛdeda nɔ tade nɔ I clucked at him; 1 1 3 2 4 1 2 1
- bɛ kle 2 2 tap one's chest to emphasize the 'I' in an utterance; bɛ kpɔkpɔ 2 22 knock (at a door), say kpɔkpɔ at a door to make one's presence known;
- bɛbɛ yɛ 23 2 strike against each other, collide with each other;
- ne bɛbɛda na kwe yɛ I clapped my hands; bɛbɛ 23 gesture to someone to stop doing something; ɔ bɛbɛda mo ŋwie he gestured to me to stop talking;
- ɔ bɛbɛda mo kwa yɛ he gestured to me to stop.
- bɛbɛ 33 *n.* doubt: po bɛbɛ 2 33 be doubtful; te ne no e ne yeda bɛbɛ 3-2 1 2 2 2 2 1 3 3 this matter does not call for doubt.
- bɛbɛ yɛ 23 2, *see* bɛ 2 knock.
- bɛdɛ 23 *v.* swear, take an oath: bɛdɛ mɔ curse; na dɛ bɛdɛda mo mɔ my mother cursed me.
- bɛdɛbɛ 323, *obsolete*; bɛbɛ 33 *is now used*.
- bɛdɔ 22, *as in* bɛdɔ yɛ 22 1 up country.
- bɛɛ 44 *n.* beetle in the grub or larva state, *sing.* bɛɛyɛ 443: bɛɛ ŋmakɔ 44 33 insect found in excreta and rubbish dumps. *Also* bɛɛyɔ 443 (*obsolescent*).
- bɛɛ 2-13 *n.* one of the tribes of the Liberian hinterland, Bewe tribe.
- bɛɛ 2-13 *n.* up country, the interior of the country.
- bɛhɛbɛhɛ 23-223-2 *n.* eight.
- bɛ 2-1 *v.* be of a certain size: hã ne ɔ bɛɛ? how big is it?; ke ɔ bɛ it is this size; tene bɛ ke ne ɔ bɛ 41 4 1 4 2 2-1 he is as big as you; bɛ kpe 2 2-1 be big enough, old enough; ke kɛ bɛda kpe this is how big the chief was, this is how powerful the chief was.
- bɛ 2-1 *v.* cut down, fell; be alight, be ignited, catch fire: bɛde kɛ 21 2 make a detour to avoid someone or something, take a short cut; bɛde nya 21 2 go to meet; bɛ mɔ 2 1 be alone, be isolated; be distinguished (by name etc.); ne bɛda mɔ ke na bino nye I was separated from my companions;
- ɔ nyene bɛda mɔ nɔ his name distinguished him; diɛ bɛ nyene 22 2 11, mɔ nɔ bɛ nyene 2 2 2 11 a distinguished name; bɛ kpla 2 2-1, bɛ kpoda 2 21 be bald; bɛ tiɛ 2-1 41 pass through, cut through.
- bɛ 2-1 *n.* boldness, fearlessness, courage: bɛ noe 2 11 very keen ears; bɛ yi 2 1 very sharp eyes; di bɛ 2 2-1 be bold, fearless.
- bɛ 2 *v.* lick, suck, eat (soup, palm butter etc.); wear out (*trans.*), become worn out: bɛ nɔ 2 2 lick.
- bɛ 2 *n.* a white clay used in pottery: bɛ temaya 2 333 clay pipe; bɛ moa 2 33 potter, *pl.* bɛ moao 2 333.
- bɛ 4 *n.* an edible plant.
- bɛdekã 212-1 *n.* a shrub or herb used in witchcraft and believed to cause sudden death.
- bɛdɛ 43 *n.* bed, *pl.* bɛde 43: po bɛdɛ nɔ 2 43 2 make a bed.
- bɛdo 21 *n.* load, burden; wooden and wickerwork hamper in which loads are carried, *pl.* bɛde 21: ɔ nu bɛdo ke mo mɔ he is a burden on me; klɔ bɛdo 4 21 a hamper of one klɔ (half bushel) capacity.
- bɛdo 33 *n.* unfinished state, *pl.* bɛde 33: ka bɛdo 2-1 33 an unfinished building; nu bɛdo 2 33 be unfinished.
- bɛtɛɛ 1333 *n.* belt, *pl.* bɛtɛta 1333.
- bɛkpɔ 22-1 *n.* a large red ant, *sing.* bɛkpɔyɛ 22-13.

A GREBO-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

- bekye** 43 *n.* bench, *pl.* bekyea 433.
bene 41 *n.* a plant whose leaves are used by women for hair washing.
benēbete 4133 *n.* a material similar to velvet.
beṅwa 21 *n.* a small animal slightly larger than a guinea-pig, *pl.* beṅwe 21.
betee 144 *conj.* if.
beṅɔ 21 *n.* a grey animal with white spots, larger than a cat, *pl.* bewē 21.
bi 2-1 *n.* hold of a ship; interior of anything hollow: mu bi go into the hold.
bi 2 *v.* beat, play (a musical instrument); start: bi occurs as a colourless verb with a great variety of objects, e.g. bi gbɔ 2 2-1 be well defined, clear; bi ke 2 1 follow on, join, support; bi kya 2 2-1 become jealous; *phrases consisting of bi + noun object are listed under the noun*:
biɔ 22 begin, start; **biɔ** 21 be included; a pepe kē biɔ amo muna
 3 2 2 1 21 3 3 3 2
 all of us, including the chief, went;
mɔ biɔ 1 21 including me.
biabo 143 *n. pl.* relatives.
biabo 221 *n. pl.* friends.
bidɛ 21 *n.* cave, pit, hole, well, abyss, *pl.* bidi 21: ni bidɛ 2-1 33 a well; a stretch of water almost surrounded by land: (bidɛ is a hole which does not penetrate the thickness of the material; a hole which goes right through something is fɔ 2-1).
bidi 44 *n.* controversy, argument, misunderstanding: hla bidi 2 44 give judgment, decide a case; **bidi hlao** 44 33 a judge, *pl.* bidi hlao 44 33; **po bidi** 2 44, **tu bidi** 4 44 hear a case and give judgment, take part in a case (as plaintiff, defendant, witness or judge); **bidi poɔ** 44 33 judge, barrister, juror; **bidi kae** 44 44 'palaver house', meeting house.
bino 13, *plural of* bae 21.
biɔ 21, *see* bi 2 beat.
biɔ 22 *pp.* under, underneath: ka biɔ 1 44 in the house; kae biɔ 14 33 under the house; pa biɔ 2 22 support, help, back someone up; pa biɔ nɔ 2 22 2 probe a person's character, undermine a person's position; **pode ne biɔ** 21 4 33 put it underneath.
biɛ 23 *v.* thank, congratulate, salute or bow as an expression of thanks: ne bisɛda kē ne I thanked the chief; **bisɛda** 233 thanksgiving, gratitude, appreciation; hī bisɛda show gratitude, give thanks.
biyu, **biu** 21 *n.* friend, *pl.* biabo 221: **biyu de** 22 1 friendship.
bla 1 *adv.* perhaps, probably, maybe: bla ne ṅwe ne ne perhaps I shall do it. *cf.* blane 41.
bla 2 *v.* work in metal: **blao** 23 metal-worker, blacksmith, goldsmith, silversmith; **bla na** 2 2 put more wood on the fire; **blasea** 233 anvil.
bla 2 *v.*, *as in* bla nɔ 2 2 chase, drive, run after: **blade** 23 make a grab at; **blade mɔ** 22 2 spring at, spring upon, leap upon; **bladeo mɔ** 222 2 limp.
bla 2-1 *n.* a flashing past, momentary appearance: nu bla 2 2-1 appear momentarily, flash past; **po bla** 2 2-1 dodge quickly out of sight; **kyini bla** 22 2-1 turn over.
bla 4 *n.* rice: **bla du** 4 3 a heap of unhusked rice; **bla fae** 4 33 unhusked rice; **bla gɔbɔ** 4 33 stale rice; **bla ha** 4 3 nine bundles of rice, *pl.* bla he 4 3; **bla ka** 4 3 handful of cooked rice, *pl.* bla ke 4 3; **bla kōē** 4 21 crust of burnt rice left in the pot; **bla kɔne** 4 21 shoots of rice; **bla kyē nyenē** 4 2-1 33 time of rice harvest; **bla ŋa** 4 3 clump of rice, *pl.* bla ŋe 4 3; **bla sē** 4 3 broken grains of rice; **bla tane** 4 44 second crop of rice. (The stubble is left and new heads grow, or else stalks left at harvest because they were unripe are harvested later); **bla wudɔ** 4 33 stalk of rice; a fresh-water fish, *pl.* bla wudi 4 33; **bla yibli** 4 33 pounded rice; **bla pūū**