

THE SYNTAX OF EMPHASIS IN KPELLE

WILLIAM E. WELMERS

Non-Africans acquiring a reasonably high level of competence in an African language, and analysts who have progressed beyond the first stages of their work, have frequently reported having difficulty with a little particle of some sort that seems to be used frequently and with no immediately obvious rationale. In cases representing a number of West African languages from Liberia to eastern Nigeria, I have heard such reports and ventured a guess that the particle is frequently used in questions, and that it has a form something like *le* or *ne*. Even without a prior acquaintance with the language, such a guess has frequently proven close enough to warrant further speculation that the particle indicates emphasis of some word or phrase in the sentence. While details of form and usage naturally differ widely, this has often proven to be the key to a satisfactory analysis. Perhaps a fuller discussion of such a problem for one language may be helpful to others who face comparable problems in other languages.

Kpelle, which is spoken in central Liberia and adjacent parts of Guinea by perhaps 400,000 people, is one of the Southwestern Mande group of languages. As such, its relationship to non-Mande languages in the Niger-Congo family is by no means close, and even among the Mande languages there are wide divergences. Yet the type of syntactic distinctions described here for Kpelle appear to be extremely widespread, so that this description is more representative than appears on the surface.

For a discussion of the phonology of Kpelle, with a fuller treatment than is appropriate here of the problems underlying the transcriptions used, see the *Journal of African Languages*, Vol. I, part 1, 1962, pp. 69-93. For purposes of the present treatment, a phonemic transcription is used, with the transcription used in Kpelle orthography for purposes of literature occasionally given in parentheses. The latter is used only where a prior acquaintance with the language and its writing system may make the phonemic transcription confusing.

Material of this sort is by no means easy to present in such a way that it will be readily decipherable and meaningful to the reader who has no acquaintance with the language. There would be no great merit in a treatment of this sort if it could be used only by those who already know Kpelle, or if strangers to the specific language would have to guess at much of the structure outside the particular scope of the subject at hand. At the same time, the problem treated here must of necessity involve, at least incidentally, the use of a variety of forms and constructions. This problem is recognized at the outset, and a careful and conscious effort has been made to avoid presupposing a knowledge of the material used. Section 1 below gives a brief outline of those aspects of Kpelle syntax that are essential to the problems of emphasis described in the remainder of the article. In giving illustrations throughout the article, the component parts of sentences are separately identified until they become self-evident. Thus the large amount of illustrative material should be viewed as intended for clarification, rather than too extensive for comprehension. In addition, the vocabulary employed has been kept relatively small; the point of this article is to illustrate a comparatively simple principle at an admittedly advanced level of analysis, but not to display lexical virtuosity.

Two preliminary comments are in order in regard to the reasons why syntactic constructions of the type described here should be difficult at all. One reason is certainly the inadequate degree of competence in English (or French) on the part of many informants; informants frequently and naturally find it difficult to explain that one sentence simply means 'He went to the market' while another means 'He went to the MARKET (and not to his home)', a distinction commonly made in English by differences in stress and intonation. To the extent that an informant understands such contrasts in our spoken language, the investigator is often at fault for not being aware that he is making the contrast. Perhaps an informant will, on one day, give one sentence as an equivalent for 'He went to the market', and on the next day give quite a different equivalent sentence. Perhaps the investigator is unaware that, on the first day, he had asked for 'He's going to the market . . . He will go to the market . . . He went to the market', and on the next day for 'He went to town . . . He went to his house . . . ("and now how do you say:") He went to the MARKET'. A good informant will of course give different equivalents, because the investigator – perhaps unconsciously – asked for them. A second reason for difficulty often lies in the investigator's or learner's first efforts to speak an African language. If he is not acutely aware that he is dealing with a tone language, and if he does not assiduously avoid attempting to speak with "expression", he will almost inevitably use his native language's devices for emphasis: stress and intonation. He will not only meet a blank wall of non-understanding (because he has distorted the tones of the sentence beyond hope of being understood), but he will also fail to observe that the language he is learning has its own neat techniques of emphasis that have nothing to do with stress and intonation. What is true of the material presented here, and of Kpelle in general, is true of many other African languages – no word singled out for emphasis is pronounced more loudly, at a higher pitch, more slowly, or more of anything else than it would be if not emphasized. It is simply used in a different construction when it is emphasized; it is for that reason that we are concerned specifically about the SYNTAX of emphasis.

1.0. In this section, some of the elements of Kpelle syntax are outlined as a basis for discussing the special constructions used for emphasis.

1.1. A construction indicating identification is composed of a noun (rarely a pronoun), the copula *ká*, and a demonstrative. This is the only construction in which *ká* is used. It is not a verb, and Kpelle has no verb in any way corresponding to English 'be'. Description and location are expressed by other types of verbal constructions, and will be introduced in a later section. Examples of the identification construction are:

wúru tree	wúru <i>ká</i> <i>tí</i> that's a tree
pére house	pére <i>ká</i> <i>tí</i> that's a house
káli hoe	káli <i>ká</i> <i>tí</i> that's a hoe
leyi pot	leyi <i>ká</i> <i>ńí</i> this is a pot
ḡóá knife	ḡóá <i>ká</i> <i>ńí</i> this is a knife

1.2. Verbal constructions may consist of a verb stem alone. As a full utterance, a verb stem alone is a singular imperative. Only some verbs can be so used, because others require an object. Examples of verb stem alone are:

lí Go.	kula Go out.
pá Come.	píli Jump.

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1.3. Verbal constructions may be expanded by the use of a subject pronoun before the verb. The second person plural pronoun form *ka* with the verb stem is a plural imperative; in this and several other constructions, most verbs with mid stem tone have high tone when high or mid precedes. Other verbal constructions (past, customary, progressive, completive, hortative, etc.) use three forms of the verb itself – the stem, the stem with low tone (high-low after mid) replacing stem tone, and the stem with a suffix *i* – with a variety of pronoun forms. A few samples, all essentially composed of a subject pronoun and a verb, are:

<i>ka lí</i>	Go. (pl.)	<i>ka pá</i>	Come. (pl.)
<i>kú lí</i>	Let's go.	<i>`tí pá</i>	Have them come.
<i>kú lì</i>	We went.	<i>`tí pà</i>	They came.
<i>kwa líi</i>	We're going.	<i>`ta pái</i>	They're coming.
<i>`taâ lí</i>	They have gone.	<i>kwaâ pá</i>	We have come.
<i>é kúla</i>	He should go out.	<i>`tí píli</i>	They should jump.
<i>è kùla</i>	He went out.	<i>ḡá píli</i>	I jumped.
<i>a kulâi</i>	He is going out.	<i>ḡã pílii</i>	I'm jumping.
<i>aâ kula</i>	He has gone out.	<i>ḡââ píli</i>	I have jumped.

1.4. An object – pronoun or noun – immediately precedes the verb form; a subject pronoun precedes the object. Note that the third person singular object pronoun ('him, her, it') consists of low tone before the verb stem; this involves a series of phonetic variations in the initial consonant of the verb which are suggested by the orthographic forms in parentheses. The object for the first person singular consists of a nasal with high tone, which is followed by similar consonant variations. Other objects can be identified as separate words. For example:

<i>wúru</i>	tree, wood, sticks
<i>wúru téé</i>	Cut sticks.
<i>ka wúru téé</i>	Cut sticks. (pl.)
<i>è wúru tèè</i>	He cut sticks.
<i>`téé (déé)</i>	Cut it.
<i>è `tèè (è dèè)</i>	He cut it.
<i>è `tí tèè (è dí tèè)</i>	He cut them.
<i>`tí `tèè (dí dèè)</i>	They cut it.

<i>koni</i>	stone
<i>koni píli</i>	Throw a stone.
<i>è koni píli (è koni píli)</i>	He threw a stone.
<i>`píli (bíli)</i>	Throw it.
<i>è `píli (è bíli)</i>	He threw it.
<i>aâ `píli (aâ bíli)</i>	He has thrown it.

<i>pére</i>	house
<i>è pére kàa</i>	He saw a house.
<i>`káa (gáa)</i>	See it.
<i>kú `kàa (kú gàa)</i>	We saw it.
<i>è kú kàa (è kúkàa)</i>	He saw us.

Since the subject and object forms of some pronouns may be identical, it is natural to wonder whether they can ever be confused. The possibilities of confusion are extremely limited, first because a subject pronoun is required in every construction except the singular imperative. However, for a verb that may be used either with or without an object, there is theoretically the possibility of confusing an imperative preceded by object pronoun with the verb stem preceded by a subject pronoun. The latter construction would be hortative. Thus 'tí kùla could be given as an equivalent of either 'put them out' or 'they should go out'. Actually, it is precisely here that the two constructions merge also in meaning; a speaker of Kpelle hearing the utterance 'tí kùla would undoubtedly give 'them' a little while to get out of their own accord, and if that failed he would put them out.

1.5. Linguistic formulae consisting of arrays of capital letters and mathematical symbols often defeat their own purpose by being too complicated to follow. However, a simple set of abbreviations may be helpful. In the preceding subsections three items have been introduced. We will call them S (subject pronoun), O (object, noun or pronoun), and V (verb). So far, four possible combinations have been described:

V:	lí	go	kula	go out
SV:	kú lí	let's go	è kùla	he went out
OV:	wúru tée	cut sticks	'kàa (gàa)	see it
SOV:	è wúru tée	he cut sticks	kú 'kàa (kú gàa)	we saw it

It will be noted that S is defined only as subject pronoun, while O is defined as object, noun or pronoun. Noun subjects are not included under S. A noun subject, which will be designated by the abbreviation N, may precede the subject pronoun, but cannot be used without a subject pronoun. Thus only the second and the fourth of the above constructions can be preceded by a noun subject, to give the additional constructions NSV and NSOV. In the following examples, the first group illustrates NSV (without object), and the second group illustrates NSOV (with object):

sumo	PROPER NAME	sumo è kùla	Sumo went out.
'kàloŋ	the chief	'kàloŋ a pài	The chief is coming.
'molii	the goat	'molii aà saa	The goat has died.
'móai	the knife	'móai è tòò	The knife fell.
sumo è wúru tée		Sumo cut sticks.	
'kàloŋ è pére kàa		The chief saw a house.	
'molii è 'kàa (mólíi è gàa)		The goat saw it.	
'móai a 'téèl (móai a déèl)		The knife is cutting it.	

1.6. Any of the above constructions may be followed by a word or phrase which will be called a complement, abbreviated as C. There are two types of complements, "unmarked" and "marked"; the significance of these terms will become clear when marked complements are discussed. Meanwhile, unmarked complements consist of either a single word (nāa 'there' and bē 'here' are by far the commonest), or a special type of noun phrase. Such a noun phrase has as its final member a "dependent noun" (generally an inalienable possession) referring to a body part or place relationship. Although such dependent nouns are genuinely nouns, and can be used (with an expressed possessor required) as subject or object of a verb, many of them are most commonly used in unmarked complements such as we are concerned with here – a phenomenon which has led some people to refer to them inaccurately as "postpositions" or even "prepositions".

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A few typical phrases of this type, with more or less literal equivalents and with translations commonly required when they are used as unmarked complements, are as follows:

'taai sũ (daai sũ)	the inside of town; in town
'pérei mũ (bérei mũ)	the under part of the house; in the house
'kpínii sũ (gbínii sũ)	the inside of the night; at night
'kɔnii mã (gɔnii mã)	the surface of the rock; on the rock
'pérei lá (bérei lá)	the opening of the house; at the house
'ɣáloŋ ɣí sũ	(within) this month
'pôlu (bôlu)	his (its) back; behind it, beyond it
ɣéi	my eyes; from my point of view

Illustrations of unmarked complements with the verbal constructions already introduced are as follows:

VC:	pá bɛ	Come here.
	lí 'taai sũ	Go into town.
SVC:	kú lí nãa	Let's go there.
	è kùla 'pérei mũ	He went out of the house.
	a toôí 'kɔnii mã	It's falling on the rock.
	kú pá 'ɣáloŋ ɣí sũ	We came this month.
OVC:	'kɔnii píli 'pérei pôlu	Throw the stone behind the house.
	'píli 'pérei pôlu	Throw it behind the house.
	'píli nãa	Throw it there.
	wúru téé 'nɔɔi sũ	Cut sticks in the forest.
SOVC:	è káli kaa 'pérei mũ	He saw a hoe in the house.
	a wúru téé 'nɔɔi sũ	He's cutting sticks in the forest.
	ɣá 'kaa bɛ	I saw it here.
	kú 'tí téé nãa	Let's cut them there.
NSVC:	'káloŋ è lí 'taai sũ	The chief went into town.
	sumo a pái 'pérei mũ	Sumo is coming into the house.
	nãŋ è sàa 'kpínii sũ	My father died during the night.
	'molii aá píli 'kɔnii mã	The goat has jumped onto the rock.
NSOVC:	'káloŋ è nãŋ kaa 'pérei mũ	The chief saw my father in the house.
	sumo a wúru téé 'nɔɔi sũ	Sumo is cutting sticks in the forest.
	nãŋ è 'kaa bɛ	My father saw it here.
	sumo é 'tí téé nãa	Sumo should cut them there.

The use of the verb stem kaa 'see' in the construction OVC is perfectly normal as far as Kpelle syntax is concerned, but is a special case from the viewpoint of a contrastive study of Kpelle and English. It is used to express location, as follows:

'kaa nãa (gaa naa)	See it there = It is there.
sumo kaa 'taai sũ	See Sumo in town = Sumo is in town.
'káloŋ kaa 'pérei mũ	The chief is in the house.
kú kaa bɛ	We are here.

1.7. Marked complements are composed of a particle à, the "complement marker", plus a noun or a type of adjective form. A marked complement may express a variety of ideas: accompaniment, manner, instrument, time, and others. A few examples are:

VC:	pá à kâli	Bring (Come with) a hoe.
SVC:	è pà à kâli	He brought a hoe.
OVC:	'ké à kâli	Do it with a hoe.
	'ké à 'nélɛɛ	Do it well.
SOVC:	è wúru tèè à yuɔ	He cut sticks with an axe.
	è 'tèè à bóa	He cut it with a knife.

To indicate time, either unmarked or marked complements can be used with little if any difference in meaning. sù 'the inside of' is used with unmarked complements, but not with marked. For example:

a pâi 'ḡálon ḡí sù	He's coming this month.
a pâi à 'ḡálon ḡí	
sumo è 'pérei tòò 'kóran tí sù	Sumo built the house last year.
sumo è 'pérei tòò à 'kóran tí	

There is a special marked complement form là which fulfills the function of à plus a third person singular pronoun, usually impersonal. For example:

pá là	Bring it.
è wúru tèè là	He cut sticks with it.

1.8. Although complements, both unmarked and marked, often have an "adverbial" meaning, not even the one-word complements as naa 'there' must be confused with what are syntactically adverbs in Kpelle. There are a few adverbs, mostly words like sâa 'today' and wée 'yesterday', which function quite differently from complements. These may come after the subject pronoun or after the verb or complement. For example:

sumo è wée wúru tèè	Sumo cut sticks yesterday.
sumo è wúru tèè wée	

There are also a few other types of adverbs, but none of these are relevant to this discussion at this point.

1.9. In the illustrations given above, each element in the construction has generally been kept as short as possible, so that it is relatively easy to identify N - S - O - V - C or any permissible combination of these elements. Of course, many of these elements could be made considerably longer; a subject pronoun is never more than a single word, but a noun - as N, O, or in C - may be a lengthy phrase, and a type of split verbal form occurs which need not be discussed here. However, no matter how long a sentence is, the vast majority of non-emphatic Kpelle sentences may be analysed as composed of these simple elements or a few developments of them. One example will suffice to show how these components may be put together into a long sentence without disturbing the inherent simplicity of the construction; the only thing new about this sentence is that it uses a permissible string of three complements. The ingredients of the sentence are listed first, and the sentence is written with indications of the boundaries between syntactic components:

tíi ké-bɛla	labourers
puu feere kâu lólu mēi saaɓa	twenty-eight
'tí pà	they came

kpîri	load
puu kâu lólu mēi feere	seventeen
'kâlōŋ ŋɔ̌ pérei	the chief's house
'ŋálonɔ̌ tí	that (last, next) month

| (N) 'tíi ké-ḡela puu feere kâu lólu mēi saaḡai ŋí | (S) 'tí | (V) pà |
 (C) à kpîri puu kâu lólu mēi feere | (C) 'kâlōŋ ŋɔ̌ pérei lá | (C) 'ŋálonɔ̌ tí sù |
 'These twenty-eight labourers brought seventeen loads to the chief's house last month.'

2.0. Questions containing question words (who?, what?, when?, where?, etc.) do not often have the same constructions as those outlined above. It will be shown in the following subsections that question words usually take the syntax of emphasis.

2.1. A few short, common questions do use question words in the syntax already outlined. For example:

lé what?; a 'kēi he is doing it; a lé kēi What is he doing? (SOV)
 mí where?; ḡa lli you are going; ḡa lli mí Where are you going? (SVC)

2.2. In most cases, however, question words come at the beginning of a sentence, and are followed by a particle ḡé, which has not appeared in this discussion before. The form of this particle is ḡe (with mid tone) before the demonstratives tí and ŋí, and when no other word follows; it has the form ḡé (with high tone) in all other circumstances. A few illustrations will introduce the problem:

lé ḡe tí What is that? (cf. wúru ká tí That's a tree).

lé ḡé a 'kēi What is he doing? (note that a 'kēi 'he is doing it' includes an object).

'kpēḡ ḡé í 'kàa Whom did you see? (cf. í 'kàa 'you saw him', which includes an object)

ḡeḡu ḡe How much is it?

mḡlonɔ̌ ḡeḡu ḡé 'kàa nāa How much rice is there there? (cf. 'kàa nāa 'see it there, it is there'), which includes an object).

mí ḡé sumo a lli nāa Where is Sumo going? (cf. a lli nāa 'he is going there', which includes a complement).

2.3. It may seem at this point – and a learner of the language may well get the impression at first – that ḡé has something to do with questions as such. It is not ordinarily used in the answers to these very questions; the answers are usually sentences of the type already discussed. But ḡé is definitely not restricted to questions. It frequently occurs in statements as well, but with the specific function of pointing out or emphasizing the word that precedes it. For example:

tíi ḡé a 'kēi It's work that he's doing (not loafing).

sumo ḡé ḡá 'kàa It was Sumo that I saw (not Yakpawolo).

'taai sù ḡé sumo a lli nāa It's into town that Sumo is going (not to his farm).

2.4. From this it may be concluded that ḡé fundamentally signals emphasis or contrast applied to the preceding word or phrase. Question words simply occur in constructions with ḡé most of the time, though they may sometimes be used in non-emphatic constructions. With question words, there is no striking difference in meaning. This is not surprising; in English also there is a difference in emphasis, even apart from stress, between the statements 'John did it' and 'It was John who did it', but no appreciable difference between the questions 'Where did he go?' and 'Where was it that he went?' In Kpelle statements, similarly, the emphatic function of ḡé is clear.

2.5. *ǂé* is used only after a noun or noun phrase, a question word, or a special type of pronoun form (not the usual subject or object pronouns) at the beginning of a sentence. It may be used after a noun that might otherwise appear in a marked complement, but not after an adjective that can be used in a marked complement. It is not used after a full marked complement (with the marker *ʼ*), and it is not used after a verb.

2.6. It follows from this that *ǂé* can be used to signal emphasis for the subject of a sentence, the object of a sentence, or in many cases the complement of a sentence (complements with adjectives are excluded). It should now be pointed out once more that in a sentence like *sumo ǂé ǂǎ 'kàa* 'It was Sumo that I saw', the last part of the sentence, *ǂǎ 'kàa* itself means 'I saw him'; the entire sentence is something like 'Sumo it is; I saw him'. Somewhat similar phenomena may be observed in other sentences. To explain these, it will be necessary to make separate statements about emphasized subjects, objects, and complements.

3.0. An emphasized subject may be a noun or an independent pronoun form. After *ǂé*, a subject pronoun must precede the verb in all constructions with the important exception of the past and progressive. Before third person subject pronoun forms beginning with *a*, *ǂé* is reduced to *ǂ*; i.e., the forms *ǂǎǎ*, *ǂǎ*, *ǂǎ* stand for *ǂé* plus *ǎǎ*, *ǎ*, *ǎ* respectively. The use of a subject pronoun after *ǂé* may be called 'recapitulation'; for other emphasized components as well as subjects, what is emphasized by being placed before *ǂé* is ordinarily recapitulated later in the sentence.

3.1. Emphasized subjects with recapitulating subject pronouns (including the contractions listed above) are illustrated in the following:

<i>ńyá ǂé ǂǎǎ pá</i>	I'm the one who has come.
<i>'tia ǂé 'taǎ lí</i>	They're the ones who are gone.
<i>'tia ǂé 'tí lí</i>	They're the ones who should go.
<i>'nya ǂé é lí</i>	He's the one who should go.
<i>sumo ǂé é 'ké</i>	It is Sumo who should do it.
<i>sumo ǂǎǎ lí</i>	It is Sumo who has gone.
<i>'tia ǂé 'ta 'kè</i>	They're the ones who do it.
<i>sumo ǂǎ 'kè</i>	It is Sumo who does it.
<i>sumo ǂǎ 'ké à yele támaa</i>	It is Sumo who has often done it.
<i>kúá ǂé kwà 'ké à yele támaa</i>	It is we who have often done it.
<i>ǂíá ǂé ǂǎǎ 'kpete</i>	You're the one who has fixed it.

In the last of these illustrations, *ǂǎǎ* is a form of the second person singular subject pronoun, and has nothing to do with *ǂé*, which occurs before it in its full form. In all of these illustrations, the last part of the sentence – after *ǂé* or its contraction *ǂ* – is a complete sentence in itself, with the structure SV, SOV, etc.

3.2. In the past and progressive constructions, an emphasized subject is not ordinarily recapitulated by a subject pronoun after *ǂé*. The next component, object or verb, follows directly after *ǂé*. It is significant that it is these two constructions in particular which can stand without a subject pronoun. In the past, the form of the verb stem with low tone is used, and the forms of the subject pronouns are the bare stems of those pronouns; all other subject pronoun forms have a special ending or a special tone. In the constructions above, therefore, the recapitulating pronoun signals not only person, but also an important part of the verbal construction itself. In the past, the pronoun in its stem form serves only to indicate person, and it is this indication which can be omitted

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after an emphasized subject. In the progressive, a form of the verb stem with a suffix *l* is used; the subject pronouns used with it all have an ending *a*, but this form of the verb is not used in any other simple constructions (though it is used, without subject pronoun, in some complex phrasal constructions). Thus the verb stem with its suffix is sufficient to signal the progressive construction.

In contrast with the past and progressive constructions, all other verbal constructions use pronoun forms which consist of more than the pronoun stem, and which serve to contrast one construction with another. What is recapitulated in the illustrations above, therefore, is essentially the verbal construction marker, which is merged with the pronominal indicator of person. In the past and progressive, no such construction marker need be indicated to identify the construction; there is therefore no recapitulation. Illustrations of emphasized subject with past and progressive are:

lé ɓé kè	What happened? (è kè It happened.)
'kpɛɛ ɓé 'kè	Who did it? (è 'kè He did it.)
sumo ɓé lɪ	It is Sumo who went. (sumo è lɪ Sumo went.)
'tia ɓé 'kè	They're the ones who did it. ('tɪ 'kè They did it.)
'nya ɓé wúru tèe	He's the one who cut sticks. (è wúru tèe He cut sticks.)
nyá ɓé 'pɛrei ɲí tɔɔ	I'm the one who built this house. (ɲá 'pɛrei ɲí tɔɔ I built this house.)
lé ɓé kɛi	What's happening? (a kɛi It is happening.)
'kpɛɛ ɓé 'kɛi	Who's doing it? (a 'kɛi He's doing it.)
sumo ɓé lɪi	It's Sumo who's going. (a lɪi He's going.)
'nya ɓé wúru téel	He's the one who is cutting sticks. (a wúru téel He's cutting sticks.)
nyá ɓé 'pɛrei ɲí tɔɔi	I'm the one who's building this house. (ɲá 'pɛrei ɲí tɔɔi I'm building this house.)

4.0. An emphasized object may similarly be a noun or an independent pronoun form. After ɓé, the verbal construction has its obligatory subject pronoun, and may have a noun subject; in addition, the verb must have an object pronoun recapitulating the emphasized object.

4.1. In the following illustrations of an emphasized object, only the past construction of the verb is used in order to keep the construction of emphasis highlighted:

lé ɓé è 'kè	What did he do? (è 'kè He did it.)
'kpɛɛ ɓé í 'kàa	Whom did you see?
sumo ɓé ɲá 'kàa	It is Sumo that I saw.
wúru ɓé kú 'tee	It is sticks that we cut.
'pɛrei ɲí ɓé 'tí 'tɔɔ	This is the house that they built.
'tée feerei ɲí ɓé ɲá 'tí kàa	It is these two chickens that I saw. (ɲá 'tí kàa I saw them.)
nyá ɓé è ɲkàa	I'm the one whom he saw (è ɲkàa He saw me.)
kúa ɓé 'tí kú kàa	We're the ones that they saw. ('tí kú kàa They saw us.)

4.2. Because an emphasized object is recapitulated by an object pronoun, the part of the sentence after ɓé is always a complete sentence in its own right, with an object pronoun, of the construction SOV, NSOV, etc. Thus the last part of the above illustrations means 'He did it, You saw him, I saw him, We cut it', and so on. The object pronoun is, of course, always third person if the emphasized object is a noun; it is singular unless the object is specifically a numerical plural. Now, with some other verbal constructions,

and with noun subjects in some cases, further illustrations can be given without calling further attention to the recapitulating object pronoun:

lé ɓé ɓa 'kêi	What are you doing?
'pérei ɲí ɓé kwa 'tɔɔi	This is the house we're building.
'tíi ɲí ɓé ɲā 'kpɛɛ	This is the work I have finished.
'tíi ɲí ɓé ɲā 'kè	This is the work I do.
'tíi ɲí ɓé sumo a 'kè	This is the work Sumo does.
'káloŋ ɓé ɲāŋ è 'kàa	It is the chief whom my father saw.
ɲāŋ ɓé 'káloŋ è 'kàa	It is my father whom the chief saw.
'tia ɓé 'káloŋ è 'tí kàa	They're the ones whom the chief saw.

4.3. In cases where the subject and object pronouns are both third person singular, one might wonder which of the two recapitulates what is before ɓé – that is, can there not be ambiguity between emphasized subject and emphasized object? No ambiguity is possible in most constructions. In the past and progressive, as note in 3.2 above, an emphasized subject is not recapitulated; if there is a subject pronoun, therefore, it must be the object that is emphasized. For example:

'nya ɓé 'kàa	It is he who saw him.
'nya ɓé è 'kàa	It is he whom he saw.

In most other verbal constructions, as noted in 3.0–1 above, ɓé after an emphasized subject is contracted with the subject pronoun. Such contractions do not occur after an emphasized object. Thus there is a contrast between constructions like the following:

'nya ɓaâ 'kàa	It is he who has seen him.
'nya ɓé aâ 'kàa	It is he whom he has seen.

There is, however, one possibility of ambiguity. This involves the hortative construction of the verb. Here, after an emphasized subject, the subject pronoun is required, and does not contract with ɓé; thus either the subject or the object pronoun could be taken as recapitulating the independent pronoun preceding ɓé. The ambiguity is illustrated in the following:

'nya ɓé é 'kàa	It is he who should see him.
OR	It is he whom he should see.

Since 'seeing' tends to be a reciprocal action, there may not appear to be any grave issue involved in such an ambiguity. However, one can imagine situations in which it would make a significant difference if the speaker were understood as saying 'He's the one who should beat him' or 'He's the one whom he should beat'. Grammatically, the same utterance can be used to emphasize either subject or object; for practical purposes, of course, the individuals in question would undoubtedly be identified more specifically than by mere pronouns. A noun before the subject pronoun would indicate that the object is emphasized; a noun rather than pronoun object would indicate that the subject is emphasized.

5.0. An emphasized complement may consist of one of three things: (1) a word or entire phrase that can be used as an unmarked complement, (2) a noun or noun phrase that can be used in an unmarked complement, but without the final dependent noun, or (3) a noun or noun phrase (but not adjective) that can be used after à to form a marked complement. After ɓé, the rest of the sentence has normal syntax up to the complement position; in the complement position, a recapitulating word is required with reference

back to that which is emphasized before *ḡé*. The nature of this recapitulating word depends on which of the three possibilities listed above is selected; these three possibilities will be described in the following three subsections.

5.1. Unmarked complements, as indicated in 1.6 above, are constructed with words generally involving location; some of the combinations, however, refer to time. An unmarked complement referring to time is emphasized as if it were a marked complement; see 5.3 below. With reference to location, a word or entire phrase may be used at the beginning of a sentence followed by *ḡé*. When this is done, the emphasized complement is recapitulated later in the sentence, in the normal complement position, by the word *nāa* 'there'. *nāa* is used even if *nāa* is also the emphasized complement, and even if the emphasized complement means 'here'. The following illustrations consist of pairs of sentences. In the first of each pair, the non-emphatic construction is illustrated with an unmarked complement; in the second, the complement from the first is used in emphatic syntax:

<i>ḡá lì nāa</i>	I went there.
<i>nāa ḡé ḡá lì nāa</i>	There is where I went.
<i>ḡá lì 'taai sũ</i>	I went into town.
<i>'taai sũ ḡé ḡá lì nāa</i>	It was into town that I went.
<i>'kâloṅ è pà 'pérei mũ</i>	The chief came into the house.
<i>'pérei mũ ḡé 'kâloṅ è pà nāa</i>	It was into the house that the chief came.
<i>sumo a wúru téel 'ncoi sũ</i>	Sumo is cutting sticks in the forest.
<i>'ncoi sũ ḡé sumo a wúru téel nāa</i>	It's in the forest that Sumo is cutting sticks.

5.2. That part of an unmarked complement which precedes the final dependent noun may be emphasized by itself. When this is done, the recapitulating word in complement position later in the sentence is the appropriate dependent noun, with third person possessive pronoun. This construction may be used to give contrastive emphasis to a noun, when the locative relationship to the noun is not in question. Compare the first three of the following illustrations with the pairs above:

<i>'taai ḡé ḡá lì 'sũ</i>	It is the town that I went into. Cf. <i>'sũ (zũ)</i> 'its inside'
<i>'pérei ḡé 'kâloṅ è pà 'mũ</i>	It is the house that the chief came into. Cf. <i>'mũ</i> 'its under part'
<i>'ncoi ḡé sumo a wúru téel 'sũ</i>	It's the forest that Sumo is cutting sticks in.
<i>'pérei tí ḡé nāṅ è kè 'ná</i>	That's the house that my father was at. Cf. <i>'ná</i> 'its opening'
<i>'kɔnii ḡé è sèè 'mă</i>	This is the stone that he sat on. Cf. <i>'mă</i> 'its surface'

Instances like the last two, in which a noun with a demonstrative is emphasized, are particularly common. It could be assumed that there was no argument about 'my father' being 'at' some house, or about 'he' sitting 'on' some stone; the emphasized noun plus demonstrative simply specify which house and which stone were involved. By comparing these with the sentences in 5.1 above, it will be noted that, with absolutely none of the contrastive stress that we almost intuitively feel is essential to "expression", there is just as much opportunity in Kpelle as in English for subtleties of emphasis and contrast.

5.3. A noun or noun phrase (but not an adjective) may be emphasized in initial position before *bé* if it may otherwise be used after *à* in a marked complement. In complement position later in the sentence, the recapitulating word *là* is required. As has been noted in 1.7 above, *là* is itself a marked complement, which fulfills the function of *à* plus a third person singular pronoun, usually with impersonal force. Thus, as in most other instances, that which recapitulates something emphasized is a pronoun – subject, object, possessive (5.2 above), and now in a complement form; the one exception is the locative recapitulation *nāa* 'there'. The marked complements with which we are concerned here, however, cover a variety of meanings, including even time; they are nevertheless all recapitulated by *là*. In the following illustrations, non-emphatic and emphatic constructions are again contrasted in pairs:

<i>í pà là</i>	You brought it.
<i>lé bé í pà là</i>	What did you bring?
<i>è pà à kâli</i>	He brought a hoe.
<i>kâli bé è pà là</i>	It is a hoe that he brought.
<i>è `tèè à yuſ</i>	He cut it with an axe.
<i>yuſ bé è `tèè là</i>	It is an axe that he cut it with.
<i>è konâ kpète à wúru</i>	He made a mortar out of wood.
<i>wúru bé `ta konâ kpète là</i>	Wood is what they make mortars of.
<i>è wúru kpète à konâ</i>	He fashioned wood into a mortar.
<i>konâ bé è wúru kpète là</i>	A mortar is what he made wood into.

Included in this construction are marked complements that indicate time. As indicated in 1.7 above, both unmarked and marked complement constructions can indicate time. When emphasized, however, these parallel only marked complements, as indicated by the recapitulating *là*. For example:

<i>kú pà à `ḡálonj tí</i>	We came last month.
<i>`ḡálonj tí bé kú pà là</i>	It was last month that we came.
<i>sumo è `pérei tòò à `kóranj tí</i>	Sumo built the house last year.
<i>`kóranj tí bé sumo è `pérei tòò là</i>	It was last year that Sumo built the house.

Note that in the following, an unmarked complement seems to be preferred in the non-emphatic construction, to avoid two marked complements when there is no necessity for two; but in emphatic syntax, *là* nevertheless recapitulates the complement indicating time, and precedes the marked complement from the original sentence:

<i>è pà à mſlonj `ḡálonj tí sù</i>	He brought rice last month.
<i>`ḡálonj tí bé è pà là à mſlonj</i>	It was last month that he brought rice.

Finally, it is possible to use *là* twice in a row: once as a regular marked complement, and once as a recapitulation for another:

<i>è pà là `ḡálonj tí sù</i>	He brought it last month.
<i>`ḡálonj tí bé è pà là là</i>	It was last month that he brought it.
	Cf. <i>`ḡálonj tí bé è pà là</i> 'It was last month that he came'.

5.4. By analogy with the above, *là* is used also to recapitulate the interrogative *yele* 'when?'. For example:

<i>yele bé í pà là</i>	When did you come?
<i>ḡá pà à `ḡálonj ḡí</i>	I came this month.

THE SYNTAX OF EMPHASIS IN KPELLE

6.0. Adverbs of time are used before **ḡé** for emphasis without recapitulation.

6.1. Adverbs of time (cf. 1.8 above) with emphatic syntax are used as follows:

wée ḡé è pà	It was yesterday that he came.
sâa ḡé kwa lîi nâa	It's today that we're going there.

6.2. The other types of adverbs alluded to in 1.8 are not used with emphatic syntax. In fact, some of them are themselves emphatic in meaning. For example:

è wûru tèè nḡ	He merely cut sticks.
è wûru tèè kpḡ	He really cut sticks, man.

7.0. By way of apocopated expressions derivable from any or all of the above, **ḡé** can be used after an independent pronoun, noun, or noun phrase as a complete utterance.

7.1. Many of the following would occur most commonly as answers to questions, but some may also be heard in other contexts as isolated sentences:

ńyá ḡe	It is I.
sumo ḡe	It is Sumo.
kâli ḡe	It's a hoe.
`kóraj tí ḡe	It was last year.
wée ḡe	It was yesterday.

7.2. The above are quite obviously a form of identification. Indeed, they give the key to the entire nature of the syntax of emphasis in Kpelle. Emphasis is simply **SEPARATE IDENTIFICATION** of some element in the sentence. In every case except for emphasized subject in the past or progressive, what follows **ḡé** is a full sentence in its own right. What precedes **ḡé**, with **ḡé** itself, is now shown also to be a complete sentence. The only reason this emphatic syntax cannot be analysed as parataxis – the setting of one sentence after another in simple sequence – is that there is nothing, in terms of pause or terminal intonation, to signal the end of a clause after **ḡé**.

8.0. The limitations and scope of the syntax of emphasis may now be briefly summarized.

8.1. Verbs and adjectives – the morphology and syntax of which are in many respects interrelated in Kpelle – are strikingly absent from the above discussion. They are never emphasized by the use of **ḡé**; **ḡé** is basically an identifier for a substantive. Verbs and adjectives are ordinarily identified by adverbs such as those briefly illustrated in 6.2 above. They may also be emphasized by a marked complement, or lexical items may be selected which in themselves have an emphatic or intensive meaning. In any case, there is no special syntax for emphasizing verbs or adjectives; neither is there any special use of stress or pitch.

8.2. The elements that may be emphasized with **ḡé** may be summed up in comparison with each other by starting with a fairly long non-emphatic sentence and then giving a comparable sentence with each element in turn emphasized. Admittedly, sentences as long and complex as this are not as frequent as shorter sentences in Kpelle, but they definitely are used from time to time. First a non-emphatic sentence is given below with its elements separately identified. It is then given again, undivided, with a freer translation. Thereafter, the element emphasized is indicated at the beginning of each sentence.

(N) sumo	(S) è	(A) wée	(O) wûru	(V) tèè	(C) à yuḡ	(C) `ncḡi sũ	
Sumo	he	yesterday	sticks	cut	with an axe	in the forest.	

sumo è wée wûru tèè à yuḡ `ncḡi sũ Yesterday Sumo cut sticks in the forest with an axe.

- (Noun) subject: sumo bé wée wúru tèe à yuṣ `ncci sũ It was Sumo . . .
 Adverb: wée bé sumo è wúru tèe à yuṣ `ncci sũ It was yesterday . . .
 Object: wúru bé sumo è wée `tee à yuṣ `ncci sũ It was sticks . . .
 Marked comp.: yuṣ bé sumo è wée wúru tèe là `ncci sũ It was an axe . . .
 Unmarked comp.: `ncci sũ bé sumo è wée wúru tèe nãa à yuṣ It was in the forest . . .
 „ „ : `ncci bé sumo è wée wúru tèe `sù à yuṣ It was the forest in which . . .

8.3. From the examples above, it may be noted that this description has omitted some details. One may be added now: when there is an emphasized and a non-emphasized complement, the recapitulating word for the emphasized complement precedes the non-emphasized complement (as in the last three sentences above), no matter what the order of complements is when neither is emphasized. Of more importance for our immediate purposes, however, is the general statement that – with a few entirely reasonable exceptions as noted – what is emphasized with *bé* at the beginning of the sentence is recapitulated in its appropriate position later by the nearest possible thing to a pronoun form.