

## NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHIES AND CHARACTERS

African languages have been and are written and printed in varying orthographies. The African-language items below are presented in the orthographies favoured by the individual scholars and sources providing them, and are accordingly not consistent as between the languages. The scholars who supplied the identifications have employed the orthographies currently in use for that language in scholarship or in the relevant country. M. Becker, for instance, has used the orthography for Wolof latterly set out in a table of orthographies for the languages of Senegal by the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée de Dakar.<sup>24</sup> For Akan/Twi, Christaller in the nineteenth century employed an elaborate orthographic system, with frequent diacriticals, whereas the modern Ghanaian and Ewe scholars employ a much simpler system. The tables below set out the Dakar and Christaller orthographies.

Non-linguists using the list below should be aware that a particular character does not necessarily represent the same sound in different African languages, and for precision a linguist specialising in the relevant languages may have to be consulted.

All the modern orthographies used in the list include characters not found in the English alphabet as standardly printed, or even in fonts for west-European languages. While there has been no problem with characters created by adding diacriticals to standard characters, I have been unable to reproduce, on the equipment available to me for the production of camera-ready copy, those few additional characters that vary wholly from the standard ones, generally by adding a hook or a tail. But to stand in for them I have produced distinct, albeit very inelegant, characters, as follows.

In **Fula**, the distinction between *b* and *ḅ*, *d* and *ḍ*, *n* and *ɲ*, *y* and *ʏ*, is represented by a distinction between *b* and *ḅ*, *d* and *ḍ*, *n* and *ɲ*, *y* and *ʏ*.

In **Akan/Twi** and **Ewe/Fon**, the distinction between *e* and *ɛ*, *o* and *ɔ*, *n* and *ɲ*, is represented by a distinction between *e* and *ɛ*, *o* and *ɔ*, *n* and *ɲ*.

In **Ewe/Fon**, the distinction between *d* and *ḍ* is represented by a distinction between *d* and *ḍ*.

Note that a diacritical, as in *é* or *ó*, when combined with a slashed character, as in *ɛ̄* or *ɔ̄*, may at times be difficult to distinguish. In Akan/Twi, Christaller frequently used two diacriticals on a word, as in *ɛ̄-nám*, but on the equipment that printed the list I could regrettably only reproduce one (the nasal indicator *˜*), and had to add the second (the tone markers, *`* or *˘*) in hand.

Note also the distinction between the three diacriticals, *ē*, *ē*, and *ě*.

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<sup>24</sup> To be found in the *Lexique wolof-français*, vol. 1.