

## Newspapers in the African language, Ewe



**[Dr Kate Skinner \(/staff/profiles/dasa/skinner-kate.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/dasa/skinner-kate.aspx)** on her work:

I am currently working with Ghanaian colleagues on some newspapers that were published in an African language (Ewe), which is spoken in the Ghana-Togo border area of West Africa. Historians and political scientists often use newspapers as sources, but they usually focus on newspapers that were published in either English or French, in the major cities of West Africa.

Ablode Safui ('The Key to Freedom') was a much smaller publication, initiated in the late 1950s by a cobbler called Holiday Komedja, who came from a small village on Mount Agu. Komedja targeted an Ewe-speaking readership across the Ghana-Togo border area, but his concerns were more far-reaching.

In addition to articles on local scandals and chieftaincy disputes, name-and-shame stories and lifestyle advice, Komedja also wrote about Cold War politics and pan-African liberation in the decade that followed decolonisation. His newspaper gives a unique insight into the ways in which political issues were discussed and debated, not just by diplomats and politicians in capital cities, but by farmers, traders, school teachers and a wide range of other people living in small towns and villages. These newspapers therefore connect with my longer-term interest in the nature of political activism and mobilisation in rural West Africa.

I am fortunate to have met several Ghanaian colleagues whose mastery of the Ewe language is invaluable in making sense of this newspaper, which we regard as an unusual and important primary source for the history of the Ewe-speaking peoples.

My DASA colleague, **[Professor Karin Barber \(/staff/profiles/dasa/barber-karin.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/dasa/barber-karin.aspx)**, has also worked extensively with African newspapers, particularly those in the Yoruba language.