# Likpe

Felix K. Ameka

This paper explores the ways in which participants involved in the realisation of events as labelled by verbs and licensed by constructions are expressed in Likpe (Sɛkpɛlé; lip), a Na-Togo, Kwa (Niger-Congo) language spoken in Ghana. A semantically based view of grammar is adopted. It is shown that the strategies deployed in the language are significant for theoretical and cross-linguistic understandings of the coding of participants in several respects: Participants with locative function are systematically linked to core, oblique and peripheral roles. There is linking underspecification with some experiential and spatial predicates such that their participants can be linked to either core grammatical relation with attendant semantic consequences. A complexification in this domain of Likpe is the combination of serial verb constructions, adpositions and verb derivational processes for fulfilling some of the participant coding functions.

## 1.    Events and participants

Language is about how people see scenes in the world (Garcia 1975), i.e. the perspective people take on the real world scenes. These scenes contain occurrences or happenings which are categorised into units as conceptual events (Grace 1987, Foley 2007). Languages provide various resources for its speakers to present different construals of such events either through their labels – verbs and/or through grammatical constructions. Verbs (and constructions) come with information entailing or implying ways in which entities can take part in the events they designate. These semantic participants, i.e. persons, things or places that are involved in an event, are usually represented by NPs and are packaged in a clause in a language linked to particular roles in a way that speakers can understand 'who does what to whom' in a particular event that is being talked about. The linguistic expression of conceptual events varies widely across languages and within one language as well. Consider, for instance, occurrences of separation of entities without material destruction, that is roughly speaking, a situation of someone doing something to another entity, because of that, two parts of the thing come apart. In English such a scenario can be categorised as an opening event and labelled as such with the verb 'open' as in (1).

(1)  a.  He opened the (hinged) box.
     b.  He opened the scissors.
     c.  He opened his eyes.

The verb 'open' in English focuses on the nature of the action. In other languages, the three instances of the conceptual event of 'opening', loosely speaking, may be designated with more than one verb. In Ewe (Kwa, Niger-Congo), for example, the three instances are categorised as opening events but are labelled with two distinct verbs (see Ameka 2006a), as in:

(2)  a.  *É-vu      aɖáká-á*
         3SG-open  box-DEF
         'He opened the (hinged) box'

     b.  *É-ke      kampé-á*
         3SG-open  scissors-DEF
         'He opened the scissors'

     c.  *É-ke      ŋkú*
         3SG-open  eye
         'He opened (his) eyes'

By contrast, Likpe (Na-Togo, Kwa, Niger-Congo) designates each of the three scenarios with a different lexical verb, as in:

(3)  a.  *ɔ-sini    le-láka   nɔ́-mɔ́*
         3SG-open  CM-box   AGR-DET
         'He opened the (hinged) box'

     b.  *u-fɔ́      kampé*
         3SG-open  scissors
         'He opened the scissors'

     c.  *u-minkili  ə-nəmí*
         3SG-open   CMPL-eye
         'He opened (his) eyes'

Thus each language presents the "opening" conceptual event differently, but each of the verbs that are used to categorise the event into units carries information that there are two entities (participants) involved – an opener and an opened entity. In addition, each of the languages has constructional possibilities for introducing further participants such as an instrument (English: *He opened the box with a key*), a beneficiary (English: *He opened the box for the child*) or even a deputee (English: *He opened the box on my behalf*) etc. In each of these examples, English uses prepositions to introduce the less central participants like the instrument. Moreover, one can also introduce the circumstances in which the particular instances of such an event were carried out. Thus one can introduce the place, the time, the manner and the degree. As we shall see

below languages provide various mechanisms for speakers to profile some of these circumstantial elements as central in the presentation of events. Thus places or locative entities can be coded as core participants in a situation (see also Dimmendaal 2003).

The goal of this chapter is to describe the way in which participants associated with particular events named by verbs or designated by constructions are coded in Likpe. The structure of the chapter is as follows: First, I present some information about the speakers and some relevant typological features of Likpe. Next, I examine the way the participatory roles opened up in the semantics of verbs that label events are coded in argument structure constructions, paying attention to single, and multiple participant events. In subsequent sections the strategies for adding participants to (or subtracting from) an event's frame and for signalling the roles of different kinds of participants are discussed. I focus on the use of prepositions, verb derivational morphology, serial verb constructions and an argument modulation structure. Dedicated constructions for describing experiential situations are then described paying attention to the way in which experiencers are coded in the language. The final section concludes the chapter.
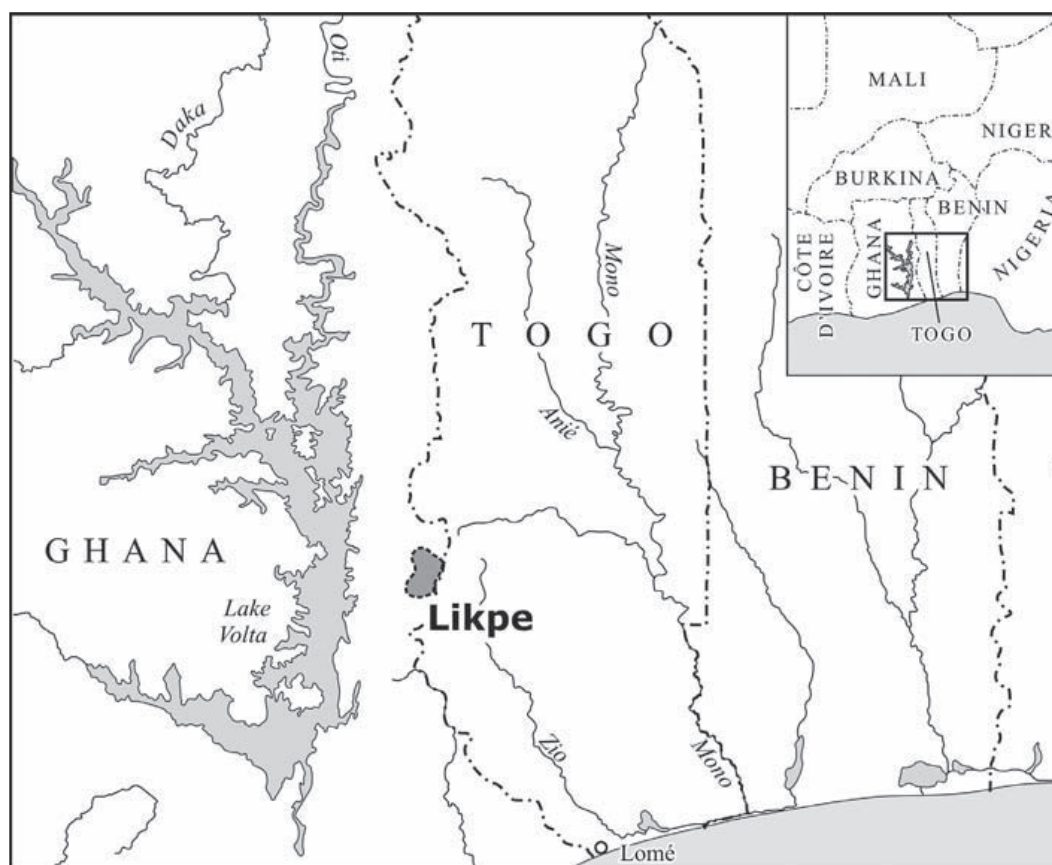
Likpe is interesting for issues of participant coding for several reasons. First, as pointed out by Dimmendaal in the Introduction, the language combines verb derivational processes, especially the causative and associative derivations, with serial verb constructions for "adding" elements to an event's participant structure (see also Dimmendaal 2001). Second, it employs fixed constituent order combined with cross-referencing of the Subject on the verb to discriminate grammatical relations. However, there is no agreement relation between the cross-reference marker and the Subject. Third, there is a an asymmetry between the Subjects and Objects not only in terms of cross-referencing on the verb, where the Object is not cross-referenced on the head of the clause, but also in terms of obligatoriness of realisation. Fourth, the language distinguishes between locative participants that are endpoints and those that are not in their coding. The former are seen as being more directly involved in the realisation of the event and are therefore coded as direct arguments while the latter are seen as being indirectly involved and are coded as obliques or adjuncts. These issues will be further explored in the ensuing sections and it is hoped that the significance of Likpe for any theoretical discourse on participant coding will be unveiled.

## 2.   The Likpe language and its speakers

Sɛkpɛlé is the auto-denomination of the language spoken in 12 villages in the area known as Likpe which is to the east and north-east of Hohoe (the district capital and an Ewe (Gbe) speaking town) as far as the Togo border in the northern part of the Volta Region of Ghana. Sɛkpɛlé belongs to the Na-Togo branch of Kwa (Williamson and Blench 2000, Blench forthcoming). Together with a sister branch Ka-Togo, they used to be thought of as one genetic group (Heine 1968) and referred to as *Togorest-sprachen* by Struck (1912) and, in English, as "Togo Remnant languages" e.g., by Westermann and Bryan (1952: 96) or Central Togo, e.g. Kropp Dakubu and Ford (1988). They have been most recently characterised as Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages (Ring 1995), a term adopted here.

Sɛkpɛlé or Likpe has two major dialect divisions, namely, Sɛkpɛlé and Sekwa. It is a tone language with three level tones, High, Mid and Low, as well as Falling and Rising. The latter is phonetically generated. Each syllable is a tone bearing unit. It has an eight vowel system with both oral and nasalized counterparts. It has a root-controlled Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) vowel harmony system, with height assimilation in some cases, where the first syllable of the stem determines the ATR value of the prefixes. For instance, the two syllables in the noun stem *-kpɛlé* 'Likpe' have opposite ATR values, but it is the ATR value of the first syllable that determines the ATR value of prefixes: *ɔ-kpɛlé* 'a Likpe person'; *ba-kpɛlé* 'Likpe people'; *sɛ-kpɛlé* 'Likpe language'. The value of the vowels in the verb root also determines the value of the verbal prefixes but not of the verbal suffixes.

Likpe is an SVO language. Grammatical relations are determined by constituent order supported by cross-referencing of the Subject on the verb and the forms of pronominal arguments in the clause. Objects are not cross-referenced on the verb. The Subject cross-reference markers do not signal agreement and are neutralised with respect to number of the Subject. They are distinct from the Subject pronominal clitics and other pronominal forms. The cross-referencing of Subjects can be seen as a covert characterisation of clause types with two sets of markers distinguished: one set (glossed SCR) occurs in pragmatically unmarked main clauses and another set (glossed DEP) occurs in dependent as well as pragmatically marked clause types such as relative clauses, term focus and content question constructions. The former (SCR) has two forms – a central vowel (/a/ or /ə/ whose choice depends on the cross height of the stem verb vowel, and Ø – which are used in "action" and "stative" clauses respectively.

(4)  a.  *Sáka  á-ya  bi-sī  lɔ́  a-si*
     Name  SCR-buy  CMPL-yam  LOC  CM-market
     'Saka bought yams in the market'

   b.  *Sáka  ɔ́-siə  ko-lá*
     Name  SCR-sit:PST  CM-dream
     'Saka dreamt'

   c.  *Sáka  kpé  lɔ́  a-si*
     Name  be.in  LOC  CM-market
     'Saka is in the market'

The dependent or relative cross-reference markers are *n-* and *lV-* where the V harmonises with the vowel in the verb stem. The choice of *n-* or *lV-* depends on temporality: the former is used with general present time hence it gets used in present stative constructions. The latter tends to be associated with past or non-present situations and hence more active situations. The focus counterpart of (4a) with a dependent cross reference marker on the verb, signalling that the Subject is in focus, is (5a). A Subject relative clause is instantiated in (5b) where the relativised Subject is cross-referenced by the dependent marker on the verb.

(5)  a.  *Sáka  lé-ya  bi-sī  lɔ́  a-si*
     Name  DEP-buy  CMPL-yam  LOC  market
     'SAKA bought yams in the market'

   b.  *o-saní  ɔ́  n-kpé  kɔ-nɔ́*
     CM-man  AGR  DEP-be.in  CM-goodness
     'The man who is good'

There are three double complement constructions. In one type of double object construction in the semantic frame of TRANSFER the DATIVE argument precedes the THEME. In another type the THEME precedes the LOCATIVE. This locative one is used for PLACEMENT events. While the order of the 'TRANSFER' construction is

fixed, in the PLACEMENT construction the Figure (theme) Ground (location) alignment can be reversed where the LOCATIVE precedes the THEME. A third structure with two complements is one in which the second complement is a situational argument, and typically coded as a nominalised verb. This structure is used to characterise various circumstantial aspects of states of affairs such as modality, attitudinal meanings and aspect.

In predicative possessive structures, the possessor and the possessed can be linked to either the Subject or Object function. That is to say the linking may involve Figure-Ground reversal as in the case of the THEME-LOCATIVE double object construction noted above (Kita 2007).

Likpe has three, more or less productive, verb derivational morphemes or suffixes: *-kó* 'ASSOC', *-fɔ́* 'TELIC' and *-sɔ́* 'CAUS'. There are other, arguably, fossilised verb extensions such as *-ka/-kə*, probably a position extension (see Ameka to appear). Likpe also makes use of serial verb constructions (SVCs) in which the verbs must share the same Subject. The Subject is expressed on subsequent verbs by a Subject pronominal concord marker. In example (5) the two verbs in the SVC are locative verbs and since the clause is a static locative construction, the first verb *si* 'sit' does not take an overt cross-reference marker. The second verb *fi* 'be.near' is, however, marked by a pronominal form that agrees with the Subject, 'the dog'.

(6)  *o-kpâ    ɔ́-mɔ́    sí  ɔ-fi      wɔ́ dí-yó*
     CM-dog  AGR-DET  sit 3SG-be near 3SG CM-room
     'The dog is sitting near its house'

Negation is marked on the verb by a nasal prefix which occurs immediately before the verb root and after any other verbal markers like tense markers or Subject proclitics.

Modifiers follow the head in a noun phrase and, except for the qualifiers, agree with the noun head in number and class. The possessor precedes the possessed in a possessive nominal phrase. Pronominal possessors are juxtaposed to the possessed while nominal possessors are linked by a possessive marker *(e)to* 'POSS'.

Likpe, like the surrounding languages, has two classes of adpositions – A class of two prepositions: a locative *lɔ́* and a comitative/instrumental *kú*; and a class of about a dozen postpositions grammaticalised from body parts and environment terms (Ameka 2007a). The way these features impact on participant coding will become evident in the ensuing sections.

## 3.   Semantic valence of predicates and participant coding

I assume that events can be heuristically characterised in terms of the number of participants that are critically involved in their realisation. That is, using the least number of participants involved, without which the event cannot be imagined. To return to the "open" event exemplified above, such an event can be said to be a two-participant

situation since it should involve at least an «opener» and an «opened» entity. These participants are articulated in the syntax as arguments. In addition, there are constructions which relate to argument structures which serve as vehicle for the expression of participants. When verbs occur in these constructions they may either saturate their argument structure possibilities or the construction may constrain the number of arguments that can be expressed (see Ameka 2002b, 2007b, Essegbey 1999, Goldberg 1995, 2006, Lüpke 2005 and Schultze-Berndt 2002 among others for ideas about this view of mapping semantic participants onto argument positions in constructions). In the description of a two-participant event such as the "open" one, only one argument may be encoded as in *The door opened*. What this means is that the two–participant event is now presented as a one-participant situation. This flexibility is what leads to multiple argument realisations (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2005). Moreover, an "open" two-participant event, as already indicated above, can be presented as a three-participant event with three arguments coded in the syntax, albeit the third usually surfacing as an oblique argument. As the examples given in Section 1 already show, this happens when elements implied in the participant structure or evoked in the semantic frame are made explicit. For instance, in Likpe one can make explicit an implied third participant – the part of the "opened" entity that comes apart, by coding it as a participant that is critically involved in the actualisation of the event, and relating it to the opened entity through an external part-whole construction, as illustrated in example (7). Notice that in this construction, the "Whole" argument is coded as a Prepositional Object while the "Part" term is coded as a direct clausal Object.

(7)  *ɔ-sini      le-sa       lɔ́    li-kplíbí*
3SG-open CM-thing LOC CM-pot
Lit: 'She opened the thing (lid) on the pot'

Thus the different semantic participants in a verb's frame are realised through different morpho-syntactic constructions (Goldberg 2006). In the rest of this Section, I describe the coding of one-participant (Section 3.1) two-participant (Section 3.2) and three-participant situations (Section 3.3) in Likpe paying attention to the verbs that name such situations and the constructions that are used to express them.

## 3.1    One-participant situations

One participant situations are represented by one argument clauses. They are of different kinds, but the common denominator is that the events characterised by the single argument constructions can be imagined as requiring at least one semantic participant for their realisation. Depending on the semantics of the verb the situation may be concerned with the condition, state, property, or movement of the single participant. Following Andrews (2007) the role associated with such a participant may be called a *Theme*. The exposition is structured around the different semantic classes of one-participant situations in Likpe. The semantic characterisation of these situations is inspired

by the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach to valency (see e.g. Wierz-bicka 2002).

Some property denoting verbs in Likpe are primarily monovalent and are used to describe one-participant situations. These verbs are change of state verbs (hence inchoative). As such the single participant is coded as the Subject argument and cross-referenced on the verb. The partial semantics of the one-place sub-construction in which they occur can be roughly characterised as:

NP/PostpP (= Subject) Verb
Something happened to (Verb) someone/something (Subject)

As property terms these verbs can be grouped according to their semantic types, as set up by Dixon (e.g. 2004), as I illustrate in the examples.

COLOUR

(8)  a.  *li-kpéfí*   *nə́-mə́*   *a-ná*
        CM-child   AGR-DET   SCR-become.black/dirty
        'The child is black'

DIMENSION

   b.  *Ku-yi*   *kó-mfó*   *ə-kulə́*
        CM-tree   AGR-DEM   SCR-become.tall
        'This tree is tall'

PHYSICAL PROPERTY

   c.  *ka-fia*   *ká-mə́*   *ə-bú*
        CM-cloth   AGR-DET   SCR-become.wet
        'The cloth is wet'

   d.  *kɔ-tíni*   kó-*mə́*   *a-táka*
        CM-mountain   AGR-DET   SCR-be.raised
        'The mountain is high'

One piece of morpho-syntactic behaviour, relevant for participant coding, that sets the PHYSICAL PROPERTY verbs apart from the others is that they can be morphologi-cally causativised with the causative verb extension. Thus both *bu* 'become wet' and *táka* 'be.raised' have causative counterparts which are used to describe two-participant situations, as illustrated below.

(9)  a.  *n-tu*   *ə-bu-sə́*                   *nya*
        CM-water   SCR-become.wet-CAUS   3SG
        'Water made it wet'

b.  *o-nanto    á-táka-sɔ́*              bo
CM-God    SCR-be.raised-CAUS    1PL
'God wake us up'

Another group of change of state verbs, achievement verbs, also label one-participant events They also fall into two groups: those that can be morphologically causativised such as *ló* 'fall', and those that cannot, such as kpɔ́ 'die'. Roughly speaking, this may be linked to whether the single participants are viewed as 'Actors' or 'Undergoers' (Van Valin and La Polla 1997), or whether the predicates are seen as "unergatives" vs. whether they are viewed as "unaccusatives". The sole participants in these situations are also coded as Subject and are cross-referenced on the verb, as shown in:

(10)  a.  *li-kpéfí    nɔ́-mɔ́      a-ló*
CM-child    AGR-DET    SCR-fall
'The child fell'

b.  *o-ninsɔ́      ə-kpɔ́      kə-nɔ́*
CM-old.man    SCR-die    CM-yesterday
'The old man died yesterday'

Thus far, the situations described have involved verbs that are primarily monovalent. Some, for example, the colour and dimension property terms and the Undergoer-achievement verbs can only be used to describe one-participant events. Others, the physical property verbs and Actor-achievement verbs, can be used to describe multiple participant situations, provided they undergo further measures by being morphologically causativised. We now turn to verbs which are primarily bivalent but which can be used to describe one-participant situations. These are static locative verbs and directional motion verbs.

Two static locative verbs *tɔ́* 'be.at some place' and *kpé* 'be.in some place', as the glosses suggest have at least two semantic participants; a theme, the entity that is located, and a place where the theme is located. These verbs are deployed in one argument constructions to describe situations whose semantics can be roughly characterised as: someone/something exists. The single participant in such situations is coded as the Subject argument of a be-locative verb without any further overt marking on the verb since it is a stative situation. Actually the two verbs tend to be differentiated according to the animacy of the single participant. The verb *tɔ́* 'be.at' is used for 'something exists' while *kpé* 'be.in' is used for 'someone exists' (although entities presented as being of interest to humans also occur with the latter verb, see (11c) below.

(11)  a.  *ú-mə        tɔ́*
CM-village  be.at
'The village is there'

> b. *o-nanto    kpé*
>    CM-God   be.in
>    'God exists'
>
> c. *ka-sɔ    kpé*
>    CM-land   be.in
>    'There is land'

The interpretation of these Likpe clauses is derived from the interaction of the single argument construction and the semantics of the verbs. There is a suppression of the second participant (the place) leading to the interpretation that an entity exists (the place where it exists is not relevant). It has sometimes been assumed that existential sentences entail a locational argument (e.g. Bolinger 1977, Clark 1978). This assumption has been disputed claiming that there is no locational argument entailed (see Davidse 1999, Wierzbicka 1996). It seems that the two views are reflected in individual languages. In Ewe, it has to be argued that there is a locational argument entailed in the existential construction. In Likpe, on the other hand, as the above data suggest, location is not entailed, if anything it is inferred from the construction.

Directed motion verbs which denote movement anchored at a deictic centre are also used to characterise one-participant situations. One semantic component of these verbs is roughly speaking: Someone/Something moves to deictic centre. When this meaning component interacts with the semantics of one argument constructions it leaves the endpoint of the motion to be pragmatically inferred. In the one-argument sub-construction in which these verbs occur the moving entity is coded as the Subject and it is cross-referenced on the verb since it is a dynamic situation. The examples show the verbs with the two types of Subject cross-reference.

> (13) a. *bé      di-bɔ́*
>         what   DEP-come
>         Lit: 'What came?' i.e. 'What happened?'
>
> b. *Pius    li-bɔ́*
>    Name   DEP-come
>    'Pius came (in)'
>
> c. *Esi     ə-sú*
>    Name   SCR-go
>    'Esi went'

The interesting thing about these verbs is that they are used to designate two-participant events as well without any change in morphological form. Moreover, when they take the associative extension they can add an accompanying participant to their frame, as we shall see below, making it possible for them to be used to describe multi-participant events.

In sum, the verbs that label one-participant events fall into various semantic classes: static locative, change of state property, achievement and directional motion. Some of these verbs are only used to describe one-participant situations and therefore only occur in one-place constructions. This is true of the change of state and achievement verbs in their basic form. Others, the static locative and directional motion verbs, can occur in multi-participant structures without any further measures. By contrast, subsets of the property and achievement verbs have to be morphologically causativised for them to be used to describe multi-participant situations.

## 3.2  Two-participant situations

Two-place constructions are used to describe two-participant situations. Verbs that label such situations, that is, verbs that are primarily bivalent are of various kinds. The prototypical ones are those involving an effector and a patient. The interpretation of forms involving these semantic roles can be roughly paraphrased as:

Subject V Object

Someone/something (=Subject) does something (=V) to someone/something else (= Object)

Various types of verbs that belong to the semantic type of AFFECT à la Dixon (e.g. 2005) yield this interpretation since they tend to be highly transitive. Verbs like *la* 'cut', or *nyimi* 'chew' can be used to describe such minimally two-participant situations.

> (13) a. *o-té      a-nyimi    se-ko*
>        CM-goat  SCR-chew  CM-greens
>        'The goat ate vegetables'
>
>      b. *o-nyi                    carrot  kú    le-siabí*
>        3SG-chop.small.pieces  carrot  COM  CM-knife
>        'He chopped the carrot into small pieces'

As example (13b) shows, one can always add a further participant to such constructions using prepositions. In most cases this makes explicit an understood participant in the verb semantics.

Motion events may be described as involving two participants – a mover (theme) and a destination (endpoint) – using two-place constructions. This is one of the contexts in which a locative argument is coded as a direct argument as shown in (14).

> (14) a. *n-tɔ            dí-yó*
>        1SG-moving.to  CM-house
>        'I am going home'
>
>      b. *u-síó        ɔ́-mɔ́    ə-sú    Be-kpí*
>        CM-woman  AGR-DET  SCR-go  CMPL-Gbi
>        'The woman went to Hohoe (the Gbis)'

    c.   *u-síó*       *ɔ́-mɔ́*     *ə-sú-ko*     *wə*  *u-bí*    *Be-kpí*
         CM-woman  AGR-DET  SCR-go-ASSOC  3SG  CM-child  CMPL-Gbi
         'The woman went with her child to Hohoe (the Gbis)'

Recall that directed motion verbs like *su* 'go' are also used to describe one-participant situations in which a theme moves to a deictic centre. In fact the verb *sú* 'go' as example (14c) shows can take an associative derivational suffix and then it adds a third accompanying participant. In this case the three place construction that is used is the THEME LOCATIVE one with no Figure-Ground reversal possibilities (see below).

    Some situations that concern the secretion of bodily exuviae are construed as involving two participants and are standardly described with two argument constructions. Thus situations labelled with 'urinate' and 'shit' in English are described in structures in which the matter excreted is linked to the Object position and the effector of the excretion to the Subject position. In fact, in my corpus, there is only one bodily secretion verb that occurs in a single argument construction and it is the verb *la* 'to vomit'. Another bodily secretion verb *tufɔ́* 'spit' occurs in the cognate object construction. Consider the following examples.

    (15)  a.   *ú-nə*    *ke-sú*
           3G-pull  CM-urine
           'She urinated'

        b.   *n-tufɔ́*   *n-tufɔ́*
           1SG-spit  CM-sputum
           'I spat'

Another type of two participant situations are those involving perception, where the participants can be roughly said to have the roles of «perceiver» and «perceived». In the description of such situations, the «perceiver» is linked to the Subject position and the second argument to the Object position. One could say that such situations are based on semantic templates such as: someone sees something; someone hears something; someone feels something; someone wants something; someone knows something; and someone thinks something. More generally, the Subject argument in these structures can be assigned an Experiencer role, defined after Andrews (2007: 140) as a sentient participant having a sensory experience of a perceptual, cognitive, emotional or bodily event or state. We shall see later on that experiencers can be linked to other roles other than the Subject (Section 5). Some examples of two-place constructions involving such predicates are the following:

    (17)  a.   *n-klomá*     *fə*
           1SG-remember  2SG
           'I remember you' i.e., 'I miss you'

b. *u-síó*       *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *á-la*      *a-taabí*
CM-woman   AGR-DET   SCR-want   CMPL-cowry
'The woman likes money'

### 3.2.1. *Figure-Ground reversal in two-place constructions*

For some 'wanting' verbs the Figure-Ground gestalt can be reversed. Thus the sentences in (17) are alternatives of one another. Example (17b) has an added feature by virtue of the Experiencer being coded as the Object; signalling that the need came upon him/her.

(17)  a.  *o-hiǎ́*       *a-taabí*
3SG-need   CMPL-cowry
'He needs money'

b.  *a-taabí*       *hiǎ́*       *wə*
CMPL-cowry   need   3SG
Lit. 'money needs him'

A similar Figure–Ground reversal is possible with two-argument structures used to describe situations involving a HAVE relation, i.e., predicative possession. In Likpe, bivalent locative verbs *kpé* 'be.in', *tɔ́* 'be.at' and *tɔ́kɔ́* 'be.on' are deployed in expressing such meanings. They are used in two-place constructions with the Possessor as Figure mapped on to the Subject position and the Possessed as Ground linked to the Object position. This mapping can be reversed as illustrated below. One could argue that there is linking underspecification at work in these cases of gestalt reversal (Kita 2007).

(18)  a.  *o-saní*       *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *kpé*   *a-taabí*
CM-man   AGR-DET   be.in   CMPL-cowry
'The man has money'

b.  *a-taabí*       *kpé*   *o-saní*       *ɔ́-mɔ́*
CMPL-cowry   be.in   CM-man   AGR-DET
'The man has money'

(19)  a.  *kɔ́pu*   *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *tɔ́kɔ́*   *ku-tsyɔ́*
cup   AGR-DET   be.on   CM-crack
'The cup has a crack'

b.  *ku-tsyɔ́*       *tɔ́kɔ́*   *kɔ́pu*   *ɔ́-mɔ́*
CM-crack   be.on   cup   AGR-DET
'The cup has a crack'

In Ameka (2006b, 2007c) I have suggested that the Possessed V Possessor structures could have been induced by contact with Ewe, a language in which that is the only order possible for expressing predicative possession.

**3.2.2**   *Semantic frames and interpretation of events and participants*

A culturally significant event type, which is described using two-place constructions, is that of planting crops. I use this semantic frame to also show how frames and cultural practices impact on event description and participant coding. Roughly speaking, the event of planting a crop has at least three elements in its participant structure: an effector, who plants; a theme, the seed or seedling planted, and a location where the theme is caused to be placed for the purpose of growing out of the ground. There can be additional elements like the instrument used. The different perspectives or types of the situation can be named by verbs which may zoom in on specific aspects like the manner of placement. All these can be considered elements of the PLANTING semantic frame.

It is interesting that even though the Likpe are an agricultural group engaged in crop farming – the GTM groups are noted for rice cultivation – there are no specific verbs in the language that primarily name a planting activity. Rather more general verbs are recruited from other semantic classes of verbs such as static location – *kpé* 'be.in', *tɔ́kɔ́* 'be.on' – change of location or motion – *tó* 'throw' – or manner of action such as *klu* 'to hoe in'. A close look at the planting events described by these verbs reveals that the verbs chosen for particular types of planting pick out the manner in which the seeds or seedlings are placed in the ground. Thus seedlings such as plantain or cassava cuttings that are put in the ground by placing a part of the plant in the ground are described by the verb kpé 'be.in' typically in a two-place construction where the planter and the planted are coded as direct arguments of the verb. Since this construction is a transitive one, the static locative verb receives a kind of caused locative reading. The process of planting seeds by placing then just beneath a surface prepared for them is described using the verb *tɔ́kɔ́* 'be.on' using a two-place construction. Again the use of the verb in this structure also generates a causative reading.

(20)   *ú-tɔ́kɔ*      *a-kotoabí*
      3SG-be.on CMPL-groundnut
      'She planted groundnuts'

Rice grains and other grains or seeds that are planted by hoeing the particles into the ground after broadcasting them are described using the verb *klu* 'hoe in'. This verb is probably adapted from Ewe *glu* 'hoe in'. The consonant is voiceless in Sɛkpɛlé because in the Sɛkpɛlé dialect [–anterior] consonants can only be voiceless.

When seedlings are transplanted they are said to be "carried" using the verb *tsyí* 'carry' to describe such situations. The two-place construction is still used as illustrated in (21).

(21)   *u-sɩó*      *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *ə-tsyí a-bê̂*
      CM-woman AGR-DET  carry CMPL-oil.palm
      'The woman transplanted the oil-palm (seedlings)'

The proper interpretation of the utterance in (21) rests crucially on inferences to be drawn based on the understanding that it is instantiated within the semantic frame of crop planting. Thus the word for oil-palm is understood to refer to a seedling and not

to the fruit, for example. This also pre-empts an interpretation of carrying either the fruit or the tree of oil-palm.

Seeds that are planted by "throwing" them into holes are characterised using the verb *tó* 'throw' (see Section 3.3 for other uses of this verb). Thus the planting of maize, or beans is talked about with this verb used in a two place construction.

Two of these verbs can be used to describe situations involving the planting of the same seed reflecting construals of the manner of planting. For example, the planting of onions can be described using either *tə́kə́* 'be.on' or *tó* 'throw' as illustrated in the near minimal pair of sentences in (22).

(22) a. *tó*        *a-búla*      *lí*     *é-sí-tó*
        throw:IMP CMPL-onion  LOC   CMPL-yam-mound
        'Plant onions on yam mounds'

    b. *tə́kə́*      *a-búla*      *lí*     *ka-kpókpó*
        be.on:IMP CMPL-onion  LOC   CM-bed
        'Plant onions on beds'

In (22a) it is understood that the onions are inter-planted among yams on yam mounds, as if thrown among yams. In (22b), the onions are planted on beds specifically prepared for them by placing them in holes. This illustrates, I hope, the way in which different verbs can be used to present different aspects of a semantic frame. More importantly, it shows how cultural practices, in this case, modes of planting, constrain the encoding and interpretation of events and their participants.

### 3.2.3   *Stative locative constructions with oblique arguments*

Situations that involve localising entities in space also involve two participants, a Figure (or theme) that is located and a Ground. In this context we might refer to it as a locus. In Likpe both participants must be expressed in locative descriptions. The figure is linked to the Subject function and the Ground or locus to an oblique locative function. The three static locative verbs we have seen so far, *tə́* 'be.at, *tə́kə́* 'be.on' and *kpé* 'be.in' all participate in this construction, but there are a dozen or so other verbs that also occur in the locative construction including posture verbs, adhesive verbs and distributional verbs. I illustrate this kind of construction for a two participant situation using a posture verb and a spatial distribution verb (see Ameka 2007a for further details).

(23) a. *a-wu*        *nyə̃́-mə́*  *fáka*  *lí*    *u-kúə́*
        CM-garment AGR-DET  hang   LOC   CM-rope
        'The garment hangs on the drying line'

    b. *a-gbeli*        *nyə̃́-mə́*  *kpó*    *lə́*   *ká-sɔ́*
        CMPL-cassava AGR-DET  be.heaped LOC   CM-ground
        'The tubers of cassava are (heaped) on the ground'

Many of the verbs that are used to describe two-participant situations are also used to describe three-participant situations albeit in three argument constructions. In the next section we turn to these and other verbs that are primarily trivalent.

## 3.3    Three-participant situations

Three participant events are coded in many different ways cross-linguistically (Margetts and Austin 2007). In Likpe, apart from the lexical ditransitives that name three participant events, other verbs which are primarily bivalent are also used in three-place constructions. Thus the static locative verbs, such as *kpé* 'be.in', that we have seen, used in one-place and two-place constructions can occur also in three place-structures. In this case it is the construction that licenses the third argument. One can distinguish three broad types of three-place constructions in Likpe on the basis of the semantic frame which they instantiate and the semantic roles, especially, of the Objects. They are:

> The Dative Double Object Construction (TRANSFER)
> The Locative Double Object Construction (PLACEMENT)
> The Double Complement Construction (VIEWPOINT, ATTITUDE)
> Each of these is described in turn.

### 3.3.1    *The Dative Double Object Construction*
The linear order of the constituents in the Dative Double Object construction, with their grammatical functions, is as follows:

| Subject | Predicate | Object1 | Object2 | Other |
|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-------|
| Actor   | Verb      | DATIVE  | THEME   |       |

The order of the Dative and the Theme arguments cannot be reversed. Roughly speaking, the message of such a construction can be paraphrased as follows:

> Someone (Actor) does something (Verb) to something else (Theme)
> Because this person (Actor) wants someone else (Dative) to have this thing (Theme)

There are several readings of this construction that are generated depending on the verb that is used. Of course, the prototypical transfer verbs such as *tá* 'give' or *té* 'show, teach, sell' when used to describe three participant events are straightforwardly interpreted in the manner outlined. For other trivalent verbs, the roles of Theme and Dative need to be more specifically interpreted. For instance, the verb *tá* 'handle an instrument with a long dimension to do something to something else', glossed as 'shoot, kick, sling', when used in this construction, the Theme argument is interpreted as instrument. Notice from the examples below that either of the Object arguments can be suppressed.

(24)  a.  *Sáka   à-tà       u-kiti    ko-tá*
          Name  scr-shoot  cm-wolf  cm-gun
          'Saka shot (the gun) the wolf'

      b.  *áka    à-tà       u-kiti*
          Name  scr-shoot  cm-wolf
          'Saka shot the wolf'

      c.  *Sáka   à-tà       ko-tá*
          Name  scr-shoot  cm-gun
          'Saka shot the gun'

Furthermore, a verb like *di* 'eat, experience' can be used in the Dative Double Object construction to describe a speaking event which involves minimally three participants. Consider the following example.

(25)  *o-sani   ɔ́-mɔ́     ə-dí    wə  u-síɔ́   li-tikí   mínímíní*
      cm-man  agr-det  scr-eat  3sg  cm-wife  cm-word  sweet
      'The man said something sweet to his wife'

Some bivalent verbs can be used in the three-place construction to describe three-participant events. A case in point is the verb *sé* 'be.contacted' which has at least two semantic participants, a theme that makes contact and a place that is locus of the contact. Thus the verb is used to describe a kneeling event, see (26a). However, the same verb is used in a three-place construction to describe a stabbing event where it is presented as an Actor moves a theme (instrument), e.g. a knife, and makes contact with a dative Object, see (26b). There is thus no lexical verb that can be glossed as 'stab'. Like in the other languages in the area, such an idea is expressed with a construction. In this context too, the theme is interpreted as an instrument.

(26)  a.  *o-sé          a-koŋkí*
          3sg-contacted  cmpl-knee
          'He knelt down'

      b.  *li-kpéfí   nɔ́-mɔ́    a-sé              wɔ       ɔ-xɔ̃     le-síábí*
          cm-child  agr-det  scr-be.contacted  3sg:poss  cm-friend  cm-knife
          'The child stabbed his friend'

Other bivalent verbs such as *yifó* 'do' or *sɔ* 'strike' are also used to describe three participant events.

(27)  *u-yifo  mɛ  u-tídi      yí-yí*
      3sg-do  1sg  cm-person  red-know
      'He is a known person to me'

This is a feature also of the neighbouring languages such as Ewe and Akan (cf. Ameka 2002b).

Conversely, some three participant situations can be presented as two-participant situations in two-place constructions. Such a structure may alternate with the Dative Double Object construction. Compare the following synonymous utterances, which differ in construction types used to ask an attendant to fill one's petrol tank.

(28)  a.  *yi-sɔ́*          *mɔ*        *tánki*
          full-CAUS:IMP  1SG:poss  tank
          'Fill my tank'

      b.  *yi-sɔ́*          *mɛ*    *tánki*
          full-CAUS:IMP  1SG  tank
          'Fill the tank for me'

In (28a), an instantiation of a two-place construction, the possessive phrase codes two participants, where one is dependent on the other. In (28b), an instantiation of a three-place construction on the other hand, these participants are coded as independent arguments. In fact, implicit in this 'filling' situation is a further participant, what is put into the tank. This can be added using a prepositional phrase. An external possessor construction alternating with an internal possessive phrase is one strategy for augmenting or making explicit the number of participants involved in a situation cross-linguistically.

### 3.3.2   *The Locative Double Object construction*

The second three-place construction is used in the description of three-participant situations involving change of location or placement of entities. It has the following linear order of constituents described in terms of semantic roles and grammatical relations:

| Subject | Predicate | Object1 | Object2 | Other |
|---------|-----------|---------|----------|-------|
| Actor   | Verb      | THEME   | LOCATIVE |       |

In a sense this structure is more iconic. Locative verbs used to express caused change of location such as *kpé* 'be.in', *tákɔ́* 'be.on', *tó* 'throw' etc. occur in this construction. Thus an event of putting medicine in a wound can be described as shown in (29b) using the locative verb *tákɔ́* 'be.on'. Similarly, the lexicalised derived verb *bóko* 'bring' (from *bɔ́* 'come' *-ko* 'ASSOC') also occurs in this construction as the sentence in (29a) taken from a settlement history narrative text illustrates. Notice that the verb *bóko* 'bring' is a directional motion verb which opens up three argument positions in its frame: the mover, the place moved to and then the accompanying entity, which as we shall see below is introduced by the associative suffix. In fact the Locative constituent can be suppressed in some instantiations of the construction involving this verb. In such cases, the Location is interpreted as the deictic centre.

(29)  a.  *ɔ-fu   Kɔdzó ɔ́-mɔ́ le-bokó a-sɔ́le kú    sikuu  ka-kpɛlé-sɔ́*
          Name Name AGR- DEP-   CM-  LINK school CM-Likpe-
                     DET  bring  church            land
          'Ɔfu Kɔdzo brought church and school to Likpe land'

b. *u-tə́kə́*      *ko-fâ*         *le-fabé*
3SG-be.on  CM-medicine  CM-wound
'He put medicine on the wound/sore'

Even a verb like *lə́kə* 'remove' can occur in this construction where the Location argument is interpreted as the place where something is removed to, an endpoint, coded in much the same way as the endpoint of a 'throwing' event. Compare the following examples:

(30)  a. *ó-to*      *a-kpá*      *ka-sɔ́*
3SG-throw  CMPL-foot  CM-ground
'He stamped the ground (with his feet)'

b. *ú-lə́kə*         *o-diákamí*  *ú-tsyuə́*
3SG-remove  CM-tongue  CM-outside
'He stack his tongue out'

A sub-construction of this structure is that the order of the Theme and the Locative Objects can be reversed yielding a different gestalt relation between Figure and Ground. Thus a variant of (29b) with Locative-Theme order is shown in (31).

(31)  *u-tə́kə́*      *le-fabé*       *ko-fâ*
3SG-be.on  CM-wound  CM-medicine
'He put medicine on the wound/sore'

An alternative structure to the Double Object Theme-Locative construction is one in which the participant that has the Locative role fills an oblique function and is marked by the locative preposition *lə́* 'LOC'. Some change of location verbs occur in this structure. I illustrate this with sentences containing kpó 'be.heaped' and *tsyí* 'carry'.

(32)  a. *ú-tsyi*      *bi-kə*      *lə́*    *di-sí*
3SG-carry  CM-load   LOC  CM-head
'He carried luggage on his head'

b. *Sáka*  *a-kpó*          *ń-tu*      *lə́*    *tánki*
Name  SCR-be.heaped  CM-water  LOC  tank
'Saka poured water into the tank'

The question arises as to what the difference is between a locative argument coded as an oblique and one coded as a second Object or a direct argument. I suggest that the difference lies in the construal of the locative participant in the situation. In events where the locative participant is construed as an 'endpoint', as in the examples above, it is coded as a direct argument. Thus the locative participant that is the goal of motion verbs like *su* 'go' *tɔ* 'move to' *bə́* 'come' or the destination or source of transport and removal verbs such as *bóko* 'bring', *lə́kə* 'remove' etc. are coded as direct arguments. Locative participants which are construed as the loci of events rather than as endpoints are coded as oblique arguments or as adjuncts when they are not essential for the realisation of the event. Thus we have seen that the Ground phrase in static locative

constructions is coded as an oblique. We will see below that a possessed item that is presented as an external locative argument to its possessor is coded as an oblique, while we have seen above in example (28b), repeated below as (33), that such an external possessed entity can also be coded as a direct argument (a second Object). I claim that this is so because in the example the tank is construed as an endpoint and not just as the locus of the event.

(33)   *yi-sɔ́*       *mɛ  tánki*
       full-CAUS:IMP  1SG  tank
       'Fill the tank for me'

Thus while locative constituents can be core arguments in Sɛkpɛlé, they may be linked to different argument positions in the clause depending on their construal. It remains to be seen whether this kind of differentiation is widespread cross-linguistically.

### 3.3.3   *The double complement construction*

A third sub-construction of the three-place construction is the double complement construction. This is one manifestation of structures in which one of the post verbal constituents is formally a nominalised verb. Verbs can be nominalised, and gerund forms are derived by prefixing the class marker *bV-* to verb roots.[1] Such forms behave like any other nouns and can fill argument positions in a clause. Where the nominalisation involves a verb and its internal argument the [V – NP] order is permuted. In the three place structure the main verb has two complements the second of which is a nominalised verb. There is a close relationship between the two complements in the sense that the immediate post verbal complement tends to be an internal argument of the nominalised verb constituent. In terms of roles, the first complement is like a GOAL more broadly construed and the second complement is a theme. One class of verbs that occur in this double complement structure is the verbs of wanting as exemplified below.

(34)   a.   *li-kpéfí*   *nɔ́-mɔ́*   *a-ni*    *le-sa*    *bú-di*
            CM-child   AGR-DET   SCR-refuse   CM-thing   CM-eat
            'The child refused to eat the food'

       b.   *má-la*       *ɔ-kwɛ*    *bú-su*
            1SG:POT-like   CM-farm   CM-go
            'I like going to the farm'

Constructions involving the modelling of states of affairs with respect to aspect or modality tend to involve such nominalised structures functioning as the situational THEME argument to the operator verb either in two-place or three-place constructions (Ameka 2002a). Examples in (35a) and (35b) show the ability modal operator *fo*

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1.   The V in bV- stands for a back vowel that agrees in ATR and /or height with the vowel in the first syllable of the verb, e.g. *bó-be* 'looking', *bú-di* 'eating', *bɔ́-sɔ* 'hitting' etc.

'can', which takes a nominalised verb as a THEME complement, as head in a two-place and a three-place construction respectively.

(35)  a.  *moo-fo*      *bu-tsyetsyí*
         1SG:POT-can  CM-run
         'I can run'

      b.  *moo-fo*      *fə*  *bɔ́-sɔ*  *nɛ́*    *ló*
         1SG:POT-can  2SG  CM-hit  INFER  UFP
         'I can hit you, you know' [A mother threatening a child]

Example (35) also illustrates in a sense the phenomenon of multiple argument realisation to which we now turn by way of summarising the various argument structure constructions we have encountered so far.

## 3.4    Multiple argument realisation

As pointed out all along, verbs can surface with a different number of arguments in different constructions. This phenomenon is referred to as multiple argument realisation. As Levin and Rappaport Hovav (2005: 120) indicate:

> Some instances of multiple realisation can be construed as "alternations" involving an alternate realisation of a single set of arguments, others involve event composition with an added argument taking predicate and possibly additional arguments. … It is necessary to determine for each alternation whether it involves a change in semantics or not and how best to characterise the change in semantics.

I want to illustrate this phenomenon with the different realisations of the locative verb *kpé* 'be.in' showing that in some cases it is involved in "alternations" and in others it is a case of event composition where other arguments are added. In addition, I want to address the desideratum of how to account for the semantics of the "alternations". As should be evident from the discussion, the position taken is that the different realisations do not involve a change in the lexical semantics of the verb with its specified primary valency. Thus a verb like *kpé* 'be.in' roughly speaking is specified for at least two participants: something (theme /figure) is in something else (locus/ground). When this verb surfaces in a structure, the understanding of such a form results from the interaction of the verb semantics with the semantics of the construction interpreted against the background of presumptive meanings (Levinson 2000), cultural scripts (e.g. Goddard and Wierzbicka 2007) and semantic frames (e.g. Fillmore and Atkins 1992). For instance, when the verb *kpé* 'be.in' occurs in a one-place construction with the semantics of something happened, then it is interpreted in the existence frame as 'something/someone exists'. Table 1 provides an overview of the various constructions in which this verb occurs together with the participant roles associated with the various argument positions in the different constructions, as well as the semantic frames to which the interpretations belong.

**Table 1.** Multiple argument realisation of the verb *kpé* 'be.in'

| Template | Construction | Interpretation | Semantic frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| I X*kpé* | One-place<br>Theme V | There is X | Existence |
| II X*kpé lá* Y | Basic locative<br>Figure V LOC Ground | X is in place Y | Static Location |
| III X*kpé* Y | Two-place<br>Theme V locus | X belongs to Y | Possession |
| IV Y*kpé* X | Two-place<br>Locus V Theme | Y has X<br>(Figure ground reversal) | Possession |
| V Y*kpé* X | Two-place<br>Effector V Theme | Y planted X | Caused location;<br>agriculture |
| VI X*kpé* Z *lá* Y | External possessor<br>Theme V Possessor<br>LOC locus (part) | X is in place Y<br>Y is a part of Z | Static location,<br>part-whole |
| VII Z*kpé* X Y | Three-place<br>Effector V Theme Locus | Z put X in place Y | Caused location,<br>placement |

Patterns III and IV are clearly alternations involving the same arguments and differ only in perspectivisation. Patterns VI and VII, however, involve argument addition, and in terms of Levin and Rappaport Hovav are instances of event composition. Nevertheless, I would argue that they do not involve a difference in verb meaning. Rather, the added arguments are licensed by the constructions in which the verb is used, namely the static locative (part-whole) external possessor construction and the theme-locative double object construction.

## 4.   Other devices for coding participants

So far we have concentrated on constituent order and grammatical relations of constructions as a strategy for coding roles of participants in Sɛkpɛlé. In this section we focus on other devices that signal the relation of participants to the events in which they are involved as expressed in clauses. We explore the use of verb derivational morphology to add participants to an event frame (Section 4.1), the marking of different roles of participants through the use of the two prepositions – locative and instrumental – in the language (Section 4.2). The deployment of specific constructions such as serial verb constructions, Undergoer Voice Constructions, and experiential constructions for signalling or introducing specific types of participants is discussed in Section 5.

## 4.1    Verb extensions and participant marking

Likpe has two rather productive verb extensions – the causative and the associative – which when used to form new verb stems tend to lead to an increase in the valency of the verbs and thereby adding participants to the situation.

### 4.1.1    *The causative*

As noted in Section 3.1 a class of monovalent inchoative verbs can be causativised with the morpheme *-sɔ́* 'CAUS' thereby introducing a Causer participant. This Causer participant tends to be linked to the Subject position in clauses. For instance, the verb *nyā* 'become.lost' is specified for at least one central participant, the thing that is lost. In its one-place usage, this participant is expressed as the single argument of the verb and linked to the Subject position. However, when it is causativised the participant who is responsible for losing the item is introduced and, being an Actor, is linked to the Subject position in a two place construction.

(36)  a.  *mɔ  sáfui  á-nyā*
          1SG  key    SCR-become.lost
          'My key is lost'

      b.  *n-nyā-n-sɔ́*                *mɔ  sáfui*
          1SG-become.lost-LIG-CAUS  1SG  key
          'I lost my keys'

Similarly, positional and change of location verbs can also be causativised as is illustrated with the verb *fáka* 'hang' below.

(37)  a.  *awu      nyā-mɔ́    fáka  lí    peg*
          garment  AGR-DET  hang  LOC  peg
          'The garment hangs on the peg'

      b.  *fi          kótu  ɔ́-mɔ́      a-fáka-sɔ́      li    peg*
          take:IMP  coat  AGR-DET  2SG-hang-CAUS  LOC  peg
          'Hang the coat on the peg'

In example (37b) the causativised positional verb is used as a second verb in a SVC where the two arguments associated with it are present and shared with the other handling verb *fi* 'take'. The effect of adding a causative extension to a verb root is one of transitivisation, although there are cases where a causativised stem has only one participant specified in its frame. For example, the verb *fəsɔ́* 'break' includes the morphological causative but it can be used in both one-place (38a) and two-place constructions (38b).

(38)  a.  *u-yibi      ɔ́-mɔ́      ə-fə.sɔ́*
          CM-stick  AGR-DET  SCR-break
          'The stick broke'

b. *ú-fə.sə́*      *u-yibi*      *ə́-mə́*
3SG-break   CM-stick   AGR-DET
'He broke the stick'

Arguably, in cases like this the morphological causative is lexicalised with the verb stems (see Ameka to appear).

### 4.1.2   *The associative*

Verbs derived using the associative verb extension -*ko* 'ASSOC', as the name suggests, tend to include in their frame a participant who is "associated" with another participant in the situation. The nature of the association relation may be one in which one participant does the same kind of thing together with another participant (reciprocal situations, see example 39); or one participant accompanies another participant (comitative, see example 41), or one participant makes 'contact' with another (a relation that tends to be described as "contactive" in the Africanist literature, see Hyman 2007). Thus verbs which have 'joint-action" or 'do together' as part of their semantics can occur in one of two patterns at least: either the participants are conjoined, or form a plural entity and together function as a single argument in a one-place construction (see 39a, 40a) or they are presented as independent participants doing something together. In that case the verb is extended with the associative morpheme and the participant viewed as initiating or controlling the joint action linked to the Subject position in a two-place (or three-place) construction as in (39b) and (40b).

(39)  a. *boo-tsyá*      *ka-ma*
1PL:POT-join   CM-back
'We shall meet later, i.e. see you later'

b. *n-tsyá-ko*      *mbá*  *n-tsyí*      *ɔ-kɔ*      *ə́-mə́*
1SG-join-ASSOC   those   DEP-carry   CM-ghost   AGR-DET
'I met those who carried the corpse'

(40)  a. *li-kpéfí*      *nə́-mə́*      *kú*   *wo*  *ambe*   *á-kpɔ*
CM-child   AGR-DET   LINK   3SG   mother   SCR-fight
'The child and his mother fought'

b. *li-kpéfí*      *nə́-mə́*      *á-kpɔ-n-ko*            *wó*   *ambe*
CM-child   AGR-DET   SCR-fight-LIG-ASSOC   3SG   mother
'The child fought (with) his mother'

A person followed, i.e. the target of a movement with the aim of being in the same place as the other is introduced as the Object of a derived associative verb based on the verb *tə́kə́* 'be.on'. One could say this is a "contactive" use of the associative extension.

An accompanying participant in a situation may be added through the marking of the verb with the associative extension. Thus a participant that accompanies a Theme participant in a directional motion event can be introduced in this way. The verb *sú* 'go'

which has a Theme and an endpoint participants specified can have a third participant, who accompanies the Theme participant, introduced when the verb is extended with the associative morpheme. In this case it is used in the THEME-LOCATIVE three-place construction (see example 14c repeated here as 41a). In fact, such an extended verb can be further causativised leading to a situation involving more than three participants, as illustrated in (41b) (see Kittillä 2007 for crosslinguistic strategies for tritransitives).

(41)  a.  *u-sió       ó-mó        ə-sú-ko         wó  u-bí       Bekpí*
          CM-woman   AGR-DET   SCR-go-ASSOC   3SG  CM-child   Hohoe
          'The woman went with her child to Hohoe'

     b.  *ú-nə      le-kpomó  u-su-ko-só       ká.ma séké  ló  ɔpunu eflɔ*
          3SG-pull  CM-       3SG-go-ASSOC-  back  a.little  LOC  table  near
                    chair     CAUS
          'She pulled the chair and went with it backwards a little from the table'

The associative extension is lexicalised with the verb *bó* 'come' to form the verb *bó-ko* 'come with, bring', as noted earlier, which can be used in two place or three place constructions as illustrated in (42).

(42)  a.  *u-síó       ó-mó        a-bo-kó          ń-tu        n-tsyuó*
          CM-woman   AGR-DET   SCR-come-ASSOC   CM-water   AGR-some
          'The woman brought some water'

     b.  *ɔfu   Kɔdzó ó-mó  le-bo-kó       a-sóle  kú     sikuu  ka-kpɛlé-sɔ*
          Name  Name  AGR-  DEP-come-   CM-     LINK   school  CM-Likpe-
                      DET   ASSOC      church                 land
          'Ɔfu Kɔdzo brought church and school to Likpe land'

The associative extension is also used to derive inclusive pronouns. Such structures open up a participant role and indicate that the referent(s) of the pronouns together with the participants represented by the juxtaposed NP are involved in carrying out the states of affairs being characterised in the clause, as is evident from the following examples.

(43)  a.  *wo-n-ko          wə  ɔ-nyimi     li-bó       mfo*
          3SG-LIG-ASSOC   3SG  CM-sibling  DEP-come   here
          'HE WITH HIS SIBLINGS came here'

     b.  *bo-n-ko          mɔ  ba-yɛtsyuə  be-tsyuó    e-sú      Klatsyi*
          1PL-LIG-ASSOC   1SG  CMPL-mate  AGR-some   SCR-go   Name
          'I and some of my mates went to Krachi'

The associative extension then is used to derive verb stems that introduce and mark a co-participant, an accompanying participant or a 'contacted' participant in an event frame. It is also used to mark inclusive participation in an NP. However, the associative is not used to introduce accompanying instrumental participants. This function is

reserved for the preposition *kú* 'COM' to which we return in the next section. To close this section on verb extensions, we introduce a minor form that appears to be a transitivising extension.

There is an extension *-ə* which is very restricted but which seems to be used to transitivise the verb *si* 'be seated'. Typically this verb is used intransitively in its specific posture sense, although it may take an oblique representing the locus, as in (44a). However in examples (44b, c) in which the locus of the posture is expressed as a direct argument of the verb, the verb is extended with the form *-ə*, which I gloss for now as 'VE' (see Ameka to appear for other interpretations of this extension).

(44)  a.  *o-kpâ    ɔ́-mɔ́    sí  lí   wə  dí-yó     e.flɔ*
          CM-dog  AGR-DET  sit  LOC  3SG  CM-house  place
          'The dog sits near its house'

     b.  *si-ə       ká-sɔ́*
          sit-VE:IMP  CM-ground
          'Sit down'

     c.  *si-ə       le-kpomé*
          sit-VE:IMP  CM-chair
          'Sit on the chair'

Grammatically speaking, the Objects introduced into an event's frame as a consequence of the application of verb derivational morphology do not behave any differently from other Objects. They are not marked on the verb and they occur in the appropriate postverbal position in the clause in the different construction types. Thus the Subject-Object asymmetry in terms of head marking on the verb is still maintained.

## 4.2   Prepositions

Sɛkpɛlé has two prepositions – a general locative *lɔ́ ~ lí* 'LOC' and a comitative/instrumental *kú* 'COM'. They are used to mark different kinds of relations of participants' involvement in a situation.

### 4.2.1   *The comitative preposition*
The comitative/instrumental preposition, as the functional label suggests, is used to mark participants that accompany other participants in actualising events. It is different from the associative in two respects (although there might be some cognate relations between them, see Ameka to appear for some speculations). First, the associative does not introduce instruments into an event frame. The comitative preposition does. Second, the associative extension introduces central participants as direct arguments, the comitative preposition on the other hand, adds oblique or peripheral arguments.

The constituents marked by the comitative preposition may represent participants in different roles: instrument as in (45a), an included or added participant as in (45c),

an accompanying condition or state of one of the participants while the event is being carried out, as in (45b, 45d) and other participants in other circumstantial roles, for instance, temporal as in (45e, 45f).

(45) a. *o-siabe   u-yi-lɛ          kú      klanle*
       3SG-cut CM-tree-branch COM   cutlass
       'He cut the tree branch with a cutlass'

   b. *o-siabe   nyama nyama nyama kú      lɛ-blɔfi*
      3SG-cut IDEO                 COM   CM-anger
      'He cut it haphazardly in anger'

   c. *kaké  as at a time  lá    buu-yifo      about  a-wós*i
      but                  TP    1PL:HAB-do           CMPL-ten
      *a-kúā     kú     be-kpéfí      tsyá*
      CMPL-six   COM   CMPL-child   also
      'but at a time we would be about sixty with the children also'

   d. *ka-kpó        wə  lə́   əsúə́  kú    bɔ-nyī    kūū   bó-mə́*
      ANAPH-heap 3SG LOC body COM  CM-smell  IDEO  AGR-DET
      'It poured on his body with the horrible stench'

   e. *u-bə́     kú     o-lésiə       ə́-mə́*
      3SG-come COM   CM-morning   AGR-DET
      'He came in the morning (that he wanted to greet us)'

   f. *bo-tsyá   kú     li-tsyitsyó*
      1PL-join COM   CM-afternoon
      'We will meet in the afternoon'

Like in many languages in the region, the comitative/instrumental preposition is in a heterosemic relation with the NP linker *kú*. In this context, the comitative linker marks a joint or co-participant together with which another participant is involved in an event. The participant in this case is not realised as an independent argument rather the participants joined together are linked to the one argument position in the clause.

(46) a. *bo  kú    mə́ li-tsyə   ku-mə́*
      1PL COM  3PL DEP-set CM-boundary
      'THEY and US share/have a boundary'

   b. *kə-nə          kú     kə-tsyə́*
      CM-yesterday COM   CM-evening
      'Yesterday evening'

As example (46b) shows the relation between the linked elements can be one of part-whole where evening is a part of the day. Part whole relations are also involved in some uses of the locative preposition to which we now turn.

**4.2.2** *The locative preposition*

As already noted, locative arguments that are endpoints are coded as direct arguments and are not marked by the locative preposition. We have also seen that the Ground phrase in a basic locative construction is obligatorily marked by the locative preposition. Moreover, the constituent representing the part in an external possessor construction is also marked by the locative preposition as shown in (47).

(47) *le-kpakpa kpé   wə   lɔ́   li-sí*
CM-hat    be.in 3SG LOC CM-head
Lit. 'A hat is on him at head'

The locative preposition has a general semantics and the specific interpretation of the role that it attributes to a participant that it marks is contextually dependent. It is inferred from the type of event and the semantics of the verb used to label it. Thus the locative preposition marks a source participant in situations involving removal, lending, borrowing, stealing etc. In these cases the locative source participant is not necessarily a central participant in the event. For example,

(48) *o-teasá     a-hayí   dí-yó    lɔ́   Sáka e.flɔ*
CM-teacher SCR-rent CM-room LOC Name place
'The teacher rented a room from Saka'

The locative preposition is also used to mark the TOPIC of a speaking event, that is, the constituent that represents the entity talked about, as (49) shows.

(49) *wəə-dí      ə-tikí     kpɛ   lɔ́   li-kpéfí   nɔ́-mɔ́   əsúɔ́*
3SG:HAB-eat CMPL-word plenty LOC CM-child AGR-DET surface
'S/He says a lot of things (words) about that child'

Similarly, the locative preposition is also used to mark the 'deputee' participant, the entity on whose behalf a state of affairs is carried out, as illustrated in the following example where money is given to a child on behalf of or instead of someone else.

(50) *mɔ anto   ə-tɔ́    li-kpéfí   nɔ́-mɔ́   a-taabí     lɔ́   mɔ kə-nyɔ̄*
1SG father SCR-give CM-child AGR-DET CMPL-cowry LOC 1SG CM-mouth
'My father gave the child money on my behalf'

Another use of the locative preposition is to mark the result of an action. Thus in (51) the effect of the action of tearing the piece of cloth is that in the end there are two pieces. The constituent representing this result is marked by the locative preposition.

(51) *o-fúadí   ka-fiá    lɔ́   akpá ənúə*
3SG-tear CM-cloth LOC part two
'She tore the cloth into two parts'

In sum, we could say that the locative preposition is used to mark participants in various locative roles except endpoint or destination. However, the specific roles are

interpretations rather than being semantically embodied in the locative preposition. Another way of generalising this distinction is in terms of traditional case markers in case marking languages where we could say that the locative preposition covers the local case functions associated with the 'ablative' while the other non-direct cases the dative and allative are coded as direct arguments. We turn to more specific constructions used for other participant roles like experiencer and also instrument and causer in the next section.

## 5. Participant structure in dedicated grammatical constructions

The strategies for participant coding discussed so far have centred on linear order and position in argument structure constructions, and the use of morpho-lexical devices such as prepositions and verb derivational morphology. In this section, we turn to specific families of grammatical constructions which, depending on the specific fillers, open up positions for coding different types of participants. We begin with serial verb constructions (SVCs) or more generally, multiverb constructions followed by a voice construction for coding the Undergoer participant of bi- or tri-valent verbs as the primary participant and therefore linked to the Subject position. We then look at some encoding idiomatic structures for expressing experiences, and discuss how experiencer participants are coded in these and other constructions.

### 5.1 Serial verb constructions

It is usually said that serial verb constructions (SVCs) have case-marking functions or are used to add participants to an event's frame (e.g. Lord 1983, Durie 1997, Aikhenvald 2006). In my view, such functions are epiphenomenal to SVCs. They are dependent on which verbs occur in the instantiations of SVCs rather than being the functions of the constructions per se. I show in the ensuing discussion that depending on the semantics of the verbs involved in SVCs certain types of participants may be profiled. In the case of Likpe, the SVC strategy is not the only means of presenting such participants.

SVCs involving handling verbs in V1 position such as *fi* 'take, use' can be used to express caused locative or placement events in which the causer or agent or the mover is introduced as an external argument of the handling verb. This argument is linked to the Subject position in the SVC and is cross-referenced on V1. The causer is the shared Subject argument of both verbs and is thus also indexed on the second verb by an agreeing pronoun as illustrated in (52). The theme argument in the placement event functions as an internal argument to the handling verb and is realised as Object1 in the SVC. The theme is also the shared Object of both verbs in the specific example but is expressed only once with the first verb. The locative participant (the third participant) in the situation is coded as an oblique marked by the locative preposition.

(52)  a.  *fi*        *tomatos*  *á-kpé*      *lí*   *ɔ-kpé*    *kəmíə*
          take:IMP  tomatoes  2SG-be.in  LOC  CM-plate  inside
          'Put the tomatoes in the bowl'

   b.  *be-fí*     *stamp*  *bá-má*   *lí*   *envelop*  *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *əsúə*
       3PL-take  stamp   AGR-fix  LOC  envelope  AGR-DET  top
       'A stamp has been fixed on the envelope'
       Lit: 'They fixed/pasted a stamp on the envelope'

Notice that in (52b), in fact, the causer is an impersonal agent represented by the 3PL pronoun.

In other instantiations of such SVCs in which the first verb has handling semantics, the function might be to introduce a theme participant rather than the causer (which we saw above). Here also the theme argument functions as the internal argument of the first verb. In the examples given below, the introduced theme argument has an instrumental role. But for the use of the SVC such expressions of the instrumental participant will be presented as peripheral or oblique arguments. In the SVC however, they are expressed as core arguments. It should be remarked, however, that in these situations that are characterised in the examples a theme-instrument participant is at least implied if not entailed in the frames of the events. For instance, one has to tie things with something else, and a cutting event entails an instrument.

(53)  a.  *ú-fi*  *o-fia*                 *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *o-k(e)lé*  *lí-si*
          3SG  CM-handkerchief  AGR-DET  3SG-tie  CM-head
          'She used a handkerchief to tie (her) head'

   b.  *ú-fi*       *háma*    *ɔ́-sɔ*      *li-kplibi*  *nɔ́-mɔ́*     *o-ba*
       3SG-take  hammer  3SG-hit  CM-pot     AGR-DET  3SG-break
       'He used a hammer to hit the pot and broke it'

   c.  *ú-fi*       *háma*    *ɔ́-sɔ*      *li-kplibi*  *nɔ́-mɔ́*     *le-ba*
       3SG-take  hammer  3SG-hit  CM-pot     AGR-DET  3SG-break
       'He used a hammer to hit the pot and it broke'

The difference between (53b) and (53c), which I have tried to capture in the English glosses, is that the former is an instantiation of a same Subject SVC while the latter is an instantiation of a pivotal or switch function SVC in which the Object of a preceding verb in the series switches function and is linked to the Subject function of the subsequent verb (cf Ameka 2005a, Aikhenvald 2006). In the example, the distinction is manifested through the pronominal forms on the verb *ba* 'break'. However, when the referents of the participants belong to the same class and therefore trigger the same pronominal form, there is ambiguity and it has to be resolved in context.

Locative participants of different kinds, as we have seen already, can also be introduced as core arguments using SVCs. Thus an endpoint participant as in example (54a) taken from the settlement history narrative, can be coded in SVCs. But here

again the crucial factor is that the verbs which fill the final slot in the SVC create the context for this interpretation since they are directional or motion verbs in general.

(54)  … *be-tsyí a-sɔ́le*  *kú*  *sikuu siá-mə́*  *be-sú-ko*  *Máté*
      3PL-carry CM-church COM school AGR-DET 3PL-go-ASSOC Name
      'They carried the church and the school with them to Mate'

The topic of a speech event can also be introduced using an SVC. In this case the constituent realising the participant is coded as a complement of the source verb *tsyi* 'come.from'. The sentence in (55) is synonymous with the one in (49).

(55)  *wəə-dí*   *ə-tikí*  *kpɛ*  *í-tsyi*    *li-kpéfí nə́-mə́ əsúə́*
      3SG:HAB-  CMPL-  LOC  IMPERS-  CM-    AGR-  surface
      eat        word   plenty come.from child   DET
      'S/He says a lot of things (words) about that child'

Notice that the Subject of the source verb in this example is represented by an impersonal pronoun which refers to the situation represented in the rest of the clause. This is another manifestation of a switch function SVC. Note also that since the nominal 'the child' does not have locative semantics, it is coded as a dependent of a postposition which supplies the locative feature for the phrase to function as an argument of the locative verb 'come.from'.

Participants in situations which broadly speaking can be said to have a DATIVE role can be coded in SVCs as complements of the verb *tə́* 'give' in final position. In particular instances, the roles involved can be more specifically interpreted. Thus in (56a) the dative argument is a recipient while in (56b), it is a benefactive. In (56c), the dative argument is a deputee while in (56d), as we shall see, it is an experiencer.

(56)  a.  *moo-ya*     *ka-mɔ́*  *n-tə́*   *be-kpéfí*  *bá-mə́*
         1SG:POT-buy CM-rice 1SG-give CMPL-child AGR-DET
         'I will buy rice for the children'

     b.  *u-síó*    *ə́-mə́ á-ba*  *a-taabí u-tə́*  *wə*  *u-sə́*
         CM-     AGR-  SCR-  CMPL- 3SG- 3SG CM-
         woman DET  loan cowry give       husband
         'The woman loaned money to her husband'

     c.  *siə-sə́*         *fə*  *u-sə́*       *ə-tə́*     *mɛ*
         greet:IMP-CAUS 2SG CM-husband 2SG-give 1SG
         'Greet your husband for me'

     d.  *n-tə́*        *á-nɔ*   *bú-nə*   *i-tə́*        *be-tsyúə́*
         CM-alcohol SCR-hear CM-drink IMPERS-give CM-some
         Lit: 'Alcohol hears drinking give some'
         i.e. 'Alcohol drinking is enjoyable to some'

e.  *ú-fi*        *kə-fiə́bí*  *o-siabe*     *u-yi*      *ə́-mə́*    *i-tə́*        *ɔ́-kɔ*
    3SG-take  CM-axe  3SG-slash  CM-tree  AGR-DET  IMPERS-give  3SG-cut.off
    'He used an axe to slash the tree (because of which) it cut off'

f.  *ú-fi*        *kə-fiə́bí*  *o-siabe*     *u-yi*      *ə́-mə́*    *ɔ́-kɔ*
    3SG-take  CM-axe  3SG-slash  CM-tree  AGR-DET  3SG-cut.off
    'He used an axe to slash the tree (because of which) it cut off'

The SVC in (56e) involves a switch function where the sub-event of slashing the tree functions as the Subject of the verb 'give' to give the reason why the piece of tree got severed. Thus the pronoun on the verb *kɔ* 'cut.off' refers to the tree and not to the Subject of the handling verb. I should add that another description of the same event using an SVC, albeit a switch function one, can be achieved by leaving out the verb 'give' and its Subject marker as shown in the sentence in (56f). This suggests that the dative (of reason) participant is rather optional and the SVC integrates it into the core roles of the clause. The SVCs discussed here have sometimes been referred to as dative serialisation whose function is to introduce dative participants into the clause.

For expressing situations or events of comparison, Likpe, like many serialising languages uses an SVC in which the V2 position is filled by a verb that has a semantics which can be roughly characterised as 'move beyond a point'. The complement of this verb in the SVC is the Standard of the Comparison. Likpe uses the verbs *so* 'surpass' and *fe* 'pass' in this function as illustrated in (57).

(57)  a.  *Kofí*   *ə-kulə́*              *o-so*         *Áma*
          Name  SCR-become.tall  3SG-exceed  Name
          'Kofi is taller than Ama'

      b.  *Áma*   *mə́n-kulə́*            *fe*     *Kofí*
          Name  NEG-become.tall  pass  Name
          'Ama is not taller than Kofi'

Typically in such SVCs the V1 slot is filled by quality verbs. In SVCs involving negation as in (57b) only the first verb is marked for verb features. This explains the bare form of the V2.

Serial verb constructions of different types are thus deployed to code different kinds of participants. We have illustrated in this section the coding of agents or causers in caused locative SVCs, theme-instruments, a variety of dative-like participants, and standard of comparison. SVCs are not privileged to be used for this function, as we have seen that the same participant roles can also be coded in various argument structure constructions and by using morpho-lexical means. In the next section we look at a multiverb structure which is used to code Undergoers as Subjects and also to present Actor-like experiencers as Objects in monoverbal argument structure constructions or in serial verb constructions.

## 5.2    The Undergoer Voice Construction

The Undergoer Voice Construction in Likpe is a mono-clausal two-place or three-place construction headed by an operator verb *nɔ* 'hear, perceive'. A nominalised verb constituent functions as a THEME argument to the operator verb. The participants in the state of affairs in the nominalised verb are unified with those of the operator verb into one argument structure. For instance, in example (58), the verb *bé* 'see look' has two central participants the «perceiver» and «perceived». Similarly, the operator verb *nɔ* 'hear' also has two central participants with the same roles. These are then unified into one argument structure and are linked to argument positions as follows: 'the perceived' participant (Likpe land) which is the Undergoer-like argument is linked to the Subject function of the construction and 'the perceiver', the Actor-like argument, is coded as the DATIVE argument. The constituent order of this instantiation of the construction follows that of the dative double Object constructions.

(58)   *ka-kpɛle-sɔ́     a-nɔ      wə   bó-be*
      CM-Likpe-land  SCR-hear  3SG  CM-look
      'Likpe country is beautiful to him/her'
      i.e. 'S/He finds Likpe land beautiful'

The Actor-like argument need not be expressed. In that case we are dealing with a two-place construction. The Actor-like argument can also be realised using the strategy of adding dative arguments to a clause in a serial verb construction using the verb *tɔ́* 'give', as we saw in the previous section in example (56d), repeated here as (59).

(59)   *n-tɔ́        á-nɔ      bú-nə     i-tɔ́        be-tsyúɔ́*
      CM-alcohol  SCR-hear  CM-drink  IMPERS-give  CM-some
      Lit: 'Alcohol hears drinking give some'
      i.e. 'Alcohol drinking is enjoyable to some'

Evidence for the claim that the Undergoer-like argument is the Subject comes from its occurrence in Subject position in the clause and its control of the cross-referencing on the operator verb. When Subjects are in focus they select the dependent form of the cross-reference marker. In example (60) below the Undergoer Subject in the construction is in focus hence it is cross referenced with the dependent form. The non-focused counterpart also selects the unmarked Subject cross reference. Compare (60a) and (60b).

(60)   a.   *fə   lá-nɔ      mɛ   bó-be*
          2SG  DEP-hear  1SG  CM-look
          'YOU are beautiful to me'

      b.   *fə   á-nɔ      mɛ   bó-be*
          2SG  SCR-hear  1SG  CM-look
          'You are beautiful to me'

The Undergoer Voice Construction involves, first, the identification of the participants in the state of affairs characterised by the nominalised verb and those of the operator verb, and the unification of the arguments into one argument structure for the construction. Second, there is a modulation or reversal of the linking of the arguments: the Undergoer-like argument is linked to the Subject function and the Actor-like argument is either not expressed or realised as a DATIVE argument in a three place construction or in a dative SVC.

The function of the construction seems to be to present the Undergoer in the syntactically most privileged position and to predicate a perceptible quality or property about its referent. That is, the speaker wants to say something about the Undergoer Subject and assumes that one can know this thing about the referent of the Undergoer Subject. If the Actor-like argument is not expressed then the interpretation is that the speaker assumes that the property that is being predicated of the Undergoer Subject referent can be objectively evaluated. That is to say everybody can know it and will agree with it. When the Actor-like argument is expressed then the interpretation is that the attribution of the property to the referent and the situation is being subjectively presented from the experiential viewpoint of the Actor-like argument.

The question that this construction raises from a cross-linguistic perspective is whether given its similarity to passive constructions in terms of argument modulations, it is appropriate to think of it as a passive construction. This issue is more fully addressed in Ameka (2005b) but it would appear that the readings we have just outlined for the construction are not typically associated with passives cross-linguistically. Furthermore, a passive is typically associated with a detransitivisation process, the Likpe construction does not involve such a process. It is not a one-place construction which is what is typically expected of passive constructions (cf. Keenan 1985). Moreover, the Actor-like argument in a passive construction, if it is reversed, tends to be coded in an oblique phrase. In Likpe, the Actor-like argument is coded as a core argument – a DATIVE argument in a double Object construction or a complement of a dative SVC. For these reasons it seems better to think of the construction as an argument reversal or modulation construction which allows speakers to code Undergoer arguments as Subjects. In fact the coding of the Actor-like argument as a DATIVE participant suggests that it is also presented as an experiencer from whose perspective a subjective 'experience' is being presented.

## 5.3 Experiential constructions

We have seen that the Actor-like participant in situations involving emotive, perception and cognitive predicates can be viewed as Experiencers. Such participants are

linked to the Subject position when they are profiled as the central participants. Consider the following examples

(61)  a.  *u-sió*         *ɔ́-mɔ́*      *á-nɔ*        *e-tiki*       *ɔ́-mɔ́*
          CM-woman   AGR-DET   SCR-hear   CM-shout   AGR-DET
          'The woman heard the shout'

      b.  *ma-la*            *ɔ́-kɔɛ*        *bú-su*
          1SG:POT-want   CM-farm   CM-go
          'I like farm going'

We have also seen that some experiential predicates such as *hiã* 'need' are underspecified for which semantic participants should be linked to which grammatical roles. Thus the experiencer argument of such predicates can be coded as Subject or as Object, as illustrated in example (17) repeated as (62).

(62)  a.  *o-hiɑ̃́*        *a-taabí*
          3SG-need   CMPL-cowry
          'He needs money'

      b.  *a-taabí*        *hiɑ̃́*    *wə*
          CMPL-cowry   need   3SG
          Lit. 'money needs him'

Presenting the experiencer in different grammatical roles in some experiential situations involves not the kind of argument switch illustrated in (62) above, but the choice of a different predicate to label the situation. Thus an experiential situation involving a child falling sick can be described using the contact verbs *lɛ́* 'catch' or *sɔ* 'strike'. With the former verb the experiencer is linked to the Subject, while for the latter it is linked to the Object, as illustrated in (63).

(63)  a.  *li-kpefí*      *nɔ́-mɔ́*      *lɛ́*      *bo-fi*
          CM-child   AGR-DET   hold   CM-sickness
          'The child has fallen sick'

      b.  *bo-fi*            *a-sɔ́*        *li-kpéfí*      *nɔ́-mɔ́*
          CM-sickness   SCR-hit   CM-child   AGR-DET
          'Sickness has befallen the child'

The different grammatical coding reflects different construals of how affected or dominated the Experiencer is.

In addition, to the possibilities of different grammatical coding of experiencers in such constructions, Likpe has several encoding idioms for talking about various emotional states of experiencers. In some of these the experiencer is presented as the Subject. Thus, to say that someone is happy, the expression used is literally 'see happiness', as in (64) below. This expression may well be a calque of a similar Ewe expression *kpɔ́ dzidzɔ* 'see happiness'.

(64) *ɔ-lɛ́*    *li-suəyuə*    *bu-nyɔ̃*
    3SG-hold CM-happiness CM-see
    'He is happy'; Lit: 'He is seeing happiness'

In this example, the experiencer is coded as Subject in a double complement progressive construction.

    Similarly, the experiencer involved in some cognitive or emotional situations is said to be displaying or showing the particular cognitive or emotional state. For instance, to express the idea of someone being afraid, the experiencer participant linked to the subject position is predicated of as showing fear as in (65) below.

(65) *li-kpéfí*    *nə́-mə́*    *lɛ́*    *si-kpi*    *bo-té*
    CM-child AGR-DET hold CM-fear CM-show
    'The child is afraid'; Lit: 'The child is showing fear'

An experiencer argument can also be linked to the Object in some body-image expressions for emotions. For instance one of the ways of expressing that someone is angry is to say literally that stomach smells to that person. It is understood that the experiencer linked to the Object is the possessor of the body part stomach linked to the Subject function as in (66).

(66) *ka-fo*    *a-nyî́*    *mɛ*
    CM-stomach SCR-smell 1SG
    'I am angry'

Another body-image expression for anger makes use of an experiential verb *fi* 'pain' in a double object structure. In this instantiation, the experiencer (and possessor of the body part) is linked to the first object position while the body part construed as the locus of the emotion is linked to the second object function as in the following example taken from settlement history narrative.

(67) *i-fi*    *ba-kpɛlé*    *ka-fo*    *tíntín*
    3SG-pain CMPL-Likpe CM-stomach very.much
    'It angered the Likpe very much'

This structure may well be a calque or an areal semantic pattern similar to the Ewe *vé dɔme ná X* 'pain stomach to X' also used to express anger.

    A Double Object Construction is also used to express some caused emotional situations where the verb *tə́* 'give' is the predicate. For instance, to express the idea of 'frighten', i.e. do something because of which someone else feels fear, the experiencer of the fear is coded as the DATIVE object and the nominal expressing the emotional state of fear is coded as the THEME object as in (68).

(68) *fə*  *tə́*  *mɛ si-kpi*
    2SG give 1SG CM-fear
    'You frighten me'

There is a grammaticalised instantiation of the double Object Construction dedicated to expressing 'desire' or 'craving' situations to which we now turn.

### 5.3.1  The craving/longing for construction

A grammatical construction which has become entrenched for expressing the desire or craving for or longing for something has a double Object structure. The form of the construction is as follows:

| STIMULUS | VERB | EXPERIENCER | LOCUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| NP | *lɛ́* 'hold'/*kpé* 'be.in' | NP | *ɔ́-kɔɛ* 'neck' |

As schematised above the Stimulus in the construction can be filled by any NP such as the name for a food item or even an activity coded in a nominalised verb structure (see 69). In my corpus the two verbs that occur in the structure are the contact verb *lɛ́* 'hold' and the locative verb *kpé* 'be.in', which by virtue of the construction in which it is used, has a caused locative reading. The experiencer surfaces as the DATIVE object while the part of the body that is scripted as the seat of the emotion is coded as the THEME object. Consider the following examples.

(69)  a.  … *ŋkəə  oo      siku    eto   a-sa        nyá̋-mɔ́   kú    asɔlé*
        3SG:QT  INTER  school  POSS  CMPL-thing  AGR-DET  COM  church
        *nyā   bé-yifo  e-kpé       wə   ɔ́-kɔɛ*
        AGR  3PL-do  3SG-be.in  3SG  CM-neck
        '…he said the school and church things which they do, appeals to him'

   b.  *fufu  lɛ́     mɛ   ɔ́-kɔɛ*
       fufu  hold  1SG  CM-neck
       'I have cravings for fufu'

   c.  *ɔ-kuɛ́     bú-su  kpé   mɛ   ɔ́-kɔɛ*
       CM-farm  CM-go  be.in  1SG  CM-neck
       'I long to go to the farm'

In the instances of the construction which I have in my corpus, some of which are given in (69), the experiencer slot in the construction is always filled by a pronoun. I need to further investigate whether this is a restriction on the construction, and if so, then the experiencer has to be specified in the schema as such. It is probably useful to point out that when something is physically lodged in the throat, the same body part is marked with the locative preposition with the possessor occuring as the patient object in an external possessor construction as shown in example (70).

(70)  *le-sa       a-si       me le  ɔ́-kɔɛ*
      CM-thing  SCR-choke  1SG LOC  CM-neck
      'Something is lodged in my throat'

An experiencer participant can thus surface as a Subject, a patient Object or a Dative object in a monoverbal or serial verb constructions. In the body-mage expressions the experiencer is understood as the possessor of the part but both the experiencer and the body part are coded as independent arguments in the clause.

## 6.    Conclusion

In the foregoing, I have explored the ways in which participants with different roles and different types of involvement in various events are coded in Sɛkpɛlé. A participant can be presented from different perspectives by employing specific constructions or coding devices. For instance, we have seen that an Experiencer can be coded as Subject, or as Object, as Dative Object in a double object construction or in a serial verb construction.

Apart from constituent order in grammatical constructions as a cue to interpreting participant roles, we have also seen how Likpe uses specific morpho-lexical means to describe a participant's involvement in a situation. These involve prepositions and verb derivational morphology. Moreover, various kinds of argument switch and figure-ground reversals are also deployed to effect alternative construals of both participants and situations. Perhaps a significant situation in Likpe from a cross-linguistic point of view is the use of dedicated constructions – Undergoer voice construction, serial verb constructions – in combination with verb derivational morphological devices in coding participants.

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