The setting

The ‘Volta Basin’ corresponds to the core area of the (New) Kwa and Gur language groups within Niger-Congo. Geographically, it extends from the Nigeria-Benin border until Côte d’Ivoire to the west and northwards into Burkina Faso. This area is known for its high multilingualism with large repertoires of languages for individuals and different histories of contact among the people who today inhabit the region (Dimmendaal 2001). We focus in this chapter on the Likpe community living in the hills along the Ghana–Togo border surrounded by different groups speaking languages distinct from theirs including Ewe, the dominant lingua franca, Akan, a majority language in the Lower Volta Basin, and smaller languages like Siwu (Lolobi) and LELEmi (Buem), their genetic relatives, on the left bank of the Volta River (see Map 1).

Different factors have promoted contact among the peoples of the Volta Basin over the centuries including migration, trade, and warfare. The oral traditions of many of the peoples in the region, the interpretation of some older written records, and the lower-level relationships among the languages suggest that there have been different waves of migration: from the east to the west, and later some other expansions from the west towards the east. As population movements continued, different processes of linguistic assimilation took place. For instance, Agotime, a town in Ghana’s Volta region, used to be Dangme-speaking but has now completely shifted to Ewe.
PLATE 10 Kwa languages

Map 1 The Volta Basin
Source: Bendor Samuel 1989: 216
Another driving force is trade. There were trade routes from the north and west and from the east and also from the sea, introducing the European element.

A further motive for contact and language shift, and even language death, is the wars for hegemony among various groups. In fact the Ghana–Togo–Mountain borderland seems to have been a melting pot for language shifts by whole groups as it ultimately served as refuge for populations fleeing from Asante invasions from the west in the nineteenth century and from Dahomean military operations from the later eighteenth century onwards (Nugent 1997, 2005). As Akyeampong (2002: 39) put it: ‘Wars of state formation amongst the Akan west of the Volta between 1670s and 1730s inundated the Ewe of south-eastern Ghana with refugees.’ As such movements and turbulence continued languages disappeared, or are—or were—only vaguely remembered. Debrunner (1962) found traces of languages once spoken in this hill area that by the mid-twentieth century were remembered by only a few people. The communities speaking these languages were apparently destroyed by local wars that scattered their populations (Dakubu 2006).

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the grammatical changes that have taken place in the Likpe, or, as they call themselves, the Bakpèlè, cultural linguistic group. I argue that two external factors are responsible for the changes: first the intense contact with Ewe, and, second, ‘pressure’ to adopt areal patterns. The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. §2 sketches the geographical and sociohistorical context of the contact between Ewe and Sekpelè, the auto-denomination for the Likpe language. §3 compares Ewe and Likpe typologically. §4 discusses grammatical constructions that Likpe may have borrowed from Ewe. The constructions discussed are the extension of a 3pl pronoun to mark plural on genderless noun (§4.1); the innovation of a gerund formation strategy involving permutation of noun complement order and the reduplication of the verb (§4.2) and of a periphrastic present progressive construction (§4.3); and complement constructions (§4.4). §5 surveys discourse patterns that have spread into Likpe from Ewe and other languages, such as verbal expressions for the notions of ‘believe’ and ‘hope’. §6 summarizes the outcomes, preferences, and attitudes towards the changes.1

1 A draft of this paper was written while I was a Visiting Fellow at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, La Trobe University, Australia (March–August 2005). I am very grateful to Sasha Aikhenvald, Bob Dixon, Birgit Hellwig, and Melanie Wilkinson for their comments and support. Fieldwork on Likpe has been supported by the MPI for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen. I am greatly indebted to my
2 The sociolinguistic and historical context of Likpe

Sekpelé is one of the fourteen ‘Central Togo’ (Dakubu and Ford 1988) or Ghana-Togo-Mountain (GTM) languages (Ring 1995). They were first recognized as a group and labelled Togorestsprachen ‘Togo remnant languages’ by Struck (1912). Westermann and Bryan (1952: 96) note that they have ‘some vocabulary resemblance to the KWA (sic) languages, but the Class system is reminiscent of BANTU (sic)’. Nevertheless, they are classified as Kwa and are divided into Na-Togo, to which Likpe belongs, and Ka-Togo subgroups (Heine 1968). The two groups are presumed to branch out from Proto-Kwa as in Figure 1 (Williamson and Blench 2000; Blench 2001).

Sekpelé has two major dialects, Sekwa and Sekpelé, and is spoken in twelve villages in the area east and north-east of Hohoe (the Ewe-speaking district capital) up to the Togo border in the northern part of the Volta region of Ghana (Map 2). The area has about 23,000 residents who speak the language (1998 figures) including a small percentage of second language speakers. If other native speakers in the diaspora are added, there may well be over 30,000 speakers of the language today. Table 1 shows the distribution of subdialects across the villages.

This dialect division concurs with the Likpe oral settlement history. The Bakwa and Todome, i.e. Sekwa speakers, are said to have been in the area before the rest came. It is likely that Sekwa was shifted to or learnt by the other people when they came. What language the newcomers spoke is not entirely clear. Some may have spoken some other Tano languages since they trace themselves to Atebubu in Brong Ahafo. The Likpe and the Nkonya, a Northern Guang group, also purportedly used to share a common border. Others may have spoken some Gbe variety given that the Bakwa have cultural ties with a group across the border in Yikpa who today speak only Ewe (Nugent 1997). The implication for the language, even before Ewe contact, is that it may have some Guang or more generally Tano substrate elements.

The current dialect distribution also reflects the splits and migrations that have occurred since the first settlements. For instance, the people of Abrani used to live in Mate and a chieftaincy dispute led to their migration.

It is estimated that the Ewes settled in their present homeland in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century (Amenumey 1986). Since the Ewes

Likpe language consultants especially the late Mr A. K. Avadu, Mr. E. K. Okyerefo, Madam Stella Atsyor Ekudi, Madam Georgina Dzata, Ms Justina Owusu, Mr Tavor, and his daughter Betty for helping me to understand their language. The Ewe examples are drawn from my observations of Ewe language use and from drama and narrative creative writings of native speakers.
supposedly arrived later than the GTM groups, the contact between Likpe and the Ewes, especially the Gbis (the people of Hohoe, the district capital), must have started around this time. The name Likpe is derived from Ewe and literally means 'rub/file stone', and the Likpe oral tradition claims that they gave land to the Gbis.
The contact between the Likpe and Ewes has been ongoing for centuries, and since Ewe is the dominant lingua franca in the Likpe area, almost all Likpe are bilingual in Likpe and Ewe. Additionally, several Likpe also speak Akan.
Furthermore, a good proportion has some command of (Ghanaian) English. It is, however, unusual for a speaker of one of the GTM languages to have another GTM language in their repertoire. Children grow up bilingual in Likpe and Ewe such that communication in kindergarten is sometimes in Ewe. Church services are conducted mostly in Ewe including announcements, and Ewe hymn books and Bible are used. Ewe is taught as a subject in schools. Transactions at district offices and the district hospital for most people involve Ewe. Such domains of use reinforce the need to learn and use Ewe. There has thus been a long, intense, and ongoing contact between Ewe and Likpe with many more bilinguals in the two languages in the community than in any other pair of languages. Some of the older Likpe villages have Ewe names: Todome ‘bottom of the hill’ Avedzime ‘in the red forest’. The Ewe presence in Likpe is also reinforced by Ewe-speaking migrants into the area as settler farmers with Ewe-named settlements: Alavanyo ‘It will be good’ Wudome ‘under the Wu tree’. While Likpes marry from outside their ethnolinguistic group, the spouses do not necessarily learn Likpe since they can communicate in one of the ‘big’ languages: Ewe, Akan, or English.

3 Likpe and Ewe: typological profiles compared

Table 2 presents various typological features and their realization in Ewe and Likpe. Some of the more typical Likpe features are exemplified in the rest of this section.

Likpe has a root-controlled Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) vowel harmony system where the first syllable of the stem determines the ATR value of the

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2 Currently, there is a Bible translation project under way. The Letters of Paul have been translated and these texts are used side by side the Ewe ones in church.
Table 2. Ewe and Likpe typological features compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Ewe</th>
<th>Likpe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vowel system</td>
<td>7 with oral and nasal counterparts (e and schwa are allophones)</td>
<td>8 with oral and nasal counterparts (e and schwa are distinct phonemes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel harmony</td>
<td>No ATR but height assimilation</td>
<td>Root-controlled ATR and height assimilation, i and u are opaque vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonants</td>
<td>Contrast between labiodental and bilabial fricatives; voicing contrast in all places of articulation</td>
<td>[-anterior] consonants do not have voicing contrast; they are dialect variants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Two level tonemes High and Non-High plus Rising and Falling; lexical contrast plus derivational function</td>
<td>At least three level tonemes plus Rising and Falling; lexical contrast plus inflectional function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable types</td>
<td>V, CV, CGV, CLV, CVV plus nasal coda syllables (but not VN)</td>
<td>All of these plus VN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphological type</td>
<td>Isolating with agglutinative features (and limited fusion)</td>
<td>Agglutinative with some fusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking</td>
<td>Neither head nor dependent marking</td>
<td>Dependent marking in the NP; head marking at the clause level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun classes</td>
<td>Inherited nominal prefixes that have no classificatory function</td>
<td>Active noun classes marked by prefixes with concord markers for Noun modifiers and for subject cross-reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent order</td>
<td>SV/AVO</td>
<td>SV/AVO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical relations</td>
<td>Defined by constituent order, Subject and non-subject distinguished by distinct forms of pronoun plus behaviour in syntactic constructions, e.g. focus</td>
<td>Defined by constituent order, and subject is cross-referenced on the verb. Subject and non-subject distinguished by distinct forms of pronoun plus behaviour in syntactic constructions e.g. focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Ewe</th>
<th>Likpe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Head can be preceded by an identifier, other modifiers follow</td>
<td>Head initial, modifiers follow and are marked for agreement with the head (except the qualifiers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>Small closed class of 5 underived adjectives</td>
<td>No underived adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal possession</td>
<td>Possessor precedes possessum and are justaposed in the inalienable construction (The order is reversed for 1SG and 2SG.) Alienable construction involves the linker fe ‘POSS’</td>
<td>Possessor precedes possessum; Pronominal possessors justaposed, Nominal possessors linked to the possessum by (e)to ‘POSS’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb complex structure</td>
<td>Preverb markers (6 slots)-Verb-Habitual suffix</td>
<td>Prefixes/Proclitics (3 slots)-Verb-Suffixes (2 slots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAM expression</td>
<td>Preverb markers and dedicated grammatical constructions</td>
<td>Prefixes and dedicated grammatical constructions for present progressive (§4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>Marked by a bipartite structure, first part immediately before the verb complex and the other part at the end of the clause before any utterance final particles</td>
<td>Marked by a nasal prefix just before the verb root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adpositions (Both prepositions and postpositions)</td>
<td>A class of about 10 prepositions grammaticalized from verbs, and over two dozen postpositions, grammaticalized from body part and environment nouns</td>
<td>A class of two prepositions: a locative and a comitative–grammaticalized from the associative verb suffix; and a class of about a dozen postpositions grammaticalized from body parts and environment terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative predication</td>
<td>A single locative verb language; no preposition in the Basic Locative Construction (BLC)</td>
<td>A multiverb positional language with 15 verbs used in the BLC and the reference object obligatorily marked by the locative preposition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Argument structure constructions.

In both languages, transitivity is not an inherent feature of verbs.

- **Unmarked one-place construction** - *nya*
  - Undergoer voice construction

- **Two place constructions**
  - Theme-locative (e.g. BLC, Possessive)

- **Causal**
- **Aspectual**
  - constructions of various kinds

- **Three place constructions**
  - THEME-GOAL construction
  - GOAL-THEME construction

- **Modal-aspectual constructions of various kinds with nominalized verb as OBJ**

### Serial verb constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject marked only once, Negation marked only once, VPs can be marked for compatible aspect values, Predicate focus possible</th>
<th>Subject marked on each verb, Negation marked once on the first verb, Verbs can be marked for compatible aspect values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nominalization</strong></td>
<td>Nominalization, Overlapping clause; Complement clauses introduced by bé also a quotative marker, requires logophoric</td>
<td>Nominalization Complement clauses introduced by <em>ŋŋaَ</em> a complementizer, <em>bś</em>, a borrowing from Ewe with functional differentiation (§4.4), and reduced form of person marked <em>ŋŋaَ</em> for equi complementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pronoun for non-1st person coreference <em>né</em> an irrealis complement introducer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Complementation strategies

- **Kple—** (also comitative preposition) ‘and; with’
- **Kú—** (also comitative preposition) ‘and; with’

### Connectors

- **NP Addition**
  - *kple—* (also comitative preposition) ‘and; with’
  - *kú—* (also comitative preposition) ‘and; with’

- **Contrast (Clauses)**
  - *gaké—* ‘but’
prefixes. It does not affect suffixes. For instance, the ATR value of the first syllable in -kpelé ‘Likpe’ determines the ATR value of prefixes of its derivatives: ŋ-kpelé ‘a Likpe person’; ba-kpelé ‘Likpe people’; sɛ-kpelé ‘Likpe language’.
Subjects (A/S), but not Objects, are cross-referenced on the verb. The subject cross-reference prefixes are neutralized for number and are distinct from pronominals. Two sets of subject cross-reference markers are distinguished: the non-dependent and the dependent sets. The former is used in pragmatically unmarked main clauses while the latter is used in dependent and pragmatically marked clause types like relative, focus, and content question constructions. The non-dependent cross-reference is unmarked in stative constructions (example 3) and is realized as a vowel whose form depends on the features of the vowel of the verb root (1a, b).

(1) (a) Pius \( \text{á-bó mfo} \)
\[ \text{name scr-come here} \]
Pius came here.

(b) be-\( \text{síó bá-mó á-nő li-kpéfi ná-mó} \)
\[ \text{cmpl-woman agr-det scr-hear cm-child agr-det} \]
The women heard the child.

The dependent cross-reference markers are \( n \)- and \( lV \)- where the V harmonizes with the vowel in the verb stem. The former is used with general present time; the latter for non-present situations. The focus counterpart of (1a) with a dependent cross-reference marker on the verb is (2).

(2) Pius \( \text{li-bó mfo} \)
\[ \text{name scr-come here} \]
PIUS came here

In predicative possessive structures, the possessor and the possessed can be linked to either the subject or object function as in (3).

(3) (a) Saka \( \text{kpé a-taabi} \)
\[ \text{name be.in cm-money} \]
Saka has money

(b) a-taabi \( \text{kpé Saka} \)
\[ \text{cm-money be.in name} \]
Money is possessed by Saka

The reversed Possessed—Verb—Possessor order could have been influenced by Ewe where that order prevails in predicative possessive constructions (Ameka 1996).

Likpe, unlike Ewe, is an active noun class language with classes indicated by nominal prefixes. Modifiers follow the head in a noun phrase and, except for the qualifiers, agree with the noun head in number and class, marked by prefixes on the terms.
4 Constructions borrowed from Ewe

4.1 Plural number-marking strategy

A clear instance of the influence of Ewe on Likpe grammar is in suffixal plural number marking on a subset of kinship terms and proper nouns (for signalling associative plural). These nouns fall outside the singular/plural gender system. Throughout Niger-Congo gender systems, such nouns tend to be genderless and have other strategies for plural marking. In Bantu linguistics, they are assigned to class 1a (Katamba 2003). Arguably, genderless kinship terms and proper nouns are a retained feature in Likpe. How the plural is marked on these nouns has, however, been borrowed from Ewe. In Ewe plural is marked by a clitic =wó ‘PL’ which is attached to the last element in the NP before the intensifier. For example:

\[(4) \text{ame (eve má-)}wó \text{ ko} \]

Ewe person two dem-PL only

only (those two) people

The Ewe nominal plural marker =wó is in a heterosemic relation to the ‘3PL’ pronominal wó, as used in utterances of the kind in (5). That is to say, they are identical in form and are semantically related but belong to different grammatical categories. Some might use the term polysemy for this relation, but polysemy for me is a relation between semantically related forms where the senses belong to the same grammatical category.

\[(5) \text{ (a) wó-dzo (wó)} \]

Ewe 3pl-fly 3pl

They flew (them)

\[(5) \text{ (b) wó-фе aфе bi} \]

3pl-poss house burn

Their house burnt

One of the uses of the Ewe plural marker is as an associative plural, especially in collocation with proper nouns, i.e. N-wó means ‘N and co’, and not two or more instances of the same N. The two readings of the form are illustrated in (6).

\[\text{\footnote{In some dialects, the heterosemic network extends to the possessive linker in the alienable construction (Ameka 1996).}}\]
In Likpe, some kinterms, including borrowed ones, are gendered as shown in (7).

(7) ṣ-nyimi ‘sibling’ ba-nyimi ‘siblings’
    u-títábo ‘nephew/niece’ be-títábo ‘nephews/nieces’
    o-tási ‘paternal aunt’ ba-tási ‘paternal aunts’ (from Ewe tási)
    o-fá ‘maternal uncle’ ba-fá ‘maternal uncles’ (from Akan via Ewe)

Kin terms belonging to ego’s parents’ generation and above are genderless and are suffixed with mò ‘PL’ to signal plurality, as in (8).

(8) antó ‘father’ antó-mò ‘father-PL’
    ambe ‘mother’ ambe-mò ‘mother-PL’
    éwú ‘grandmother’ éwú-mò ‘grandmother-PL’
    nna ‘grandfather’ nna-mò ‘grandfather-PL’

Furthermore, the term for ‘great-grandparents’, borrowed from Ewe, also forms its plural by -mò suffixation, as in (9).

(9) así-mà-ká-tó-é-mò
    hand-PRIV-touch-ear-DIM-PL
    great-grandparents

The form -mò ‘PL’ is identical in form and is semantically related to the 3pl pronoun form mò, a pattern that is parallel to the situation in Ewe noted earlier. While one cannot completely rule out internal developments in Likpe grammar in accounting for this situation, it seems more plausible that the pattern of the relationship between a 3pl and a PL marker came into Likpe via the copying of a similar Ewe heterosemic pattern. The use of the Ewe PL marker with proper nouns with an associative reading provides a good motivation for the copying. Heine and Kuteva (2005: 92) might prefer to call it ‘replica grammaticalization’, since it involves the transfer of a grammaticalization process rather than a grammatical concept.

4.2 The so-called O-V-V nominalization strategy

Ewe abounds in nominalized structures of the form N(P)-REDUP-V, also described as O-V-V structures (Aboh 2004). The structure involves preposing...
the internal argument of a verb to its reduplicated form. Gerunds are formed this way, as illustrated in (10).

(10) (a) fa te > te-fa- fa
Ewe plant yam yam-redup-plant
plant yams yam planting

(b) fiá nú > nú-fiá-fiá
teach thing thing-redup-teach
teaching

Likpe, by contrast, being an active noun class language, predominantly uses noun class markers as nominalizers. Thus an agentive nominal can be derived from the verb yu ‘steal’ by prefixing it with the class marker for animates, namely, u-yu ‘thief’, and a gerund by prefixing bu- to it, i.e. bu-yu ‘stealing’. Actually, a gerund can be formed from any verb by affixing the prefix bV- to it. (The noun class marked by this prefix is equivalent to the class called infinitive in Bantu languages.) We see in §4.3 that the nominalized event complement in the present progressive is formed in this way.

Likpe uses other strategies for deverbal nominalization which do not seem to be due to influence from Ewe. These are:

(i) reduplication of the verb to form a nominal stem and assigning the derived stem to an appropriate noun class. For instance, the verb sa ‘jump’ is reduplicated and then assigned to the le-a gender to form le-sa-sa ‘frog’.

(ii) conjoining a verb to its noun complement and then assigning it to a class. There are two subtypes: (a) the complement is a direct argument of the verb, functioning either as its object (12a), or as its subject (12b); (b) the nominal is a peripheral constituent of the verb as in (11).

(11) ye tsyúð > se-ye- tsyúð
Likpe walk some(one) cm-walk-some(one)
companion

(12) (a) di sá > di-di-sá
Likpe eat thing cm-thing-eat
eat something food

(b) tí sá > e-tí-n-sá
be.covered thing cm-covered-LIG-thing
cover thing lid

---

4 Ewe has both bilabial and labiodental fricatives. They are written as ‘f’ and ‘t’ for the voiceless and ‘v’ and ‘v’ for the voiced respectively.
(iii) compounding of a noun stem plus a verb stem in reversed N-V order and then adding the appropriate class prefix.

(13) \( \text{ke } a\text{-taabi } \rightarrow \text{se-tabi-ke} \)

Likpe acquire CM-money CM-money-acquire
to get money richness

(iv) Gerund formation of the OV type by preposing the O to a nominalized verb using the bV- prefix, as in the saying in (14).

(14) \( \text{di-ku-bi } \rightarrow \text{bu-lókọ } \rightarrow \text{ló } \rightarrow \text{di-námí } \)

Likpe CM-tree-DIM CM-remove LOC CM-eye

e-so be-tidi i-nuọ laa-ye

IMPERSON-because CMPL-person AGR-two SCR:HAB-walk

Removing mote from the eye, that is why two people walk together

However, another gerund formation is modelled on the Ewe pattern in (10), involving verb reduplication with the nominal complement preposed. The same meaning, such as ‘yam planting’ (15), can be expressed using the two different strategies.

(15) (a) \( \text{bi-si } \rightarrow \text{bu-tákọ } \rightarrow \text{[NP bV-Verb]} \)

Likpe CMPL-yam CM-be.on

yam planting

(b) \( \text{bi-si } \rightarrow \text{tákọ-tákọ } \rightarrow \text{[NP REDUP-VERB]} \)

Likpe CMPL-yams REDUP-be.on

yam planting

One source of the [NP REDUP-VERB] strategy for gerund formation in Likpe might be translation of Ewe texts into Likpe. For instance the Likpe word for lesson is probably a calque modelled on the Ewe term. Compare (16a) and (16b).

(16) (a) \( \text{nú-sọ-sọ } \rightarrow \text{srū } \)

Ewe thing-REDUP-learn

(b) \( \text{a-sa-kasé-kasé } \)

Likpe CMPL-thing-REDUP-learn

lesson, learning

Similarly, in the song in (17), translated from the Ewe liturgy, the expression for prayer/praying uses the [NP REDUP-VERB] strategy derived from the VP to\_a-la ‘throw CM-want’.

(17) \( \text{o bo-anto } \rightarrow \text{nọ bo lá-tọ-to } \)

Likpe INTERJ 1PL-father hear:IMP 1PL want-REDUP-throw

O Our Father hear our praying
In addition to the affirmative pattern, Ewe has a privative nominalization which involves the prefixation of the privative marker ma- to a verb root and then reduplicating the resulting stem. If the verb has an internal argument, it is preposed to this form. Likpe seems to have adopted this structure as well, as in (18b), which is calqued on the Ewe form in (18a). This is added to an existing strategy for privative nominalization which uses the negative verb prefix, as illustrated in (18c).

(18)  
(a) nu´-gome-ma-se-ma-se  
Ewe thing-under-priv -hear-priv -hear misunderstanding  
(b) kasö-ma-nö-ma-nö  
Likpe under-priv-hear-priv-hear SCR-VENT-leave-DIR 3pl LOC midst Misunderstanding emerged among them  
(c) u-łidi-mön-bú  
Likpe CM-person-NEG-respect disrespect

The use of O-V-V structures in nominalization, both gerund and privative, in Likpe is due to Ewe influence. Their spread into Likpe may have been facilitated by the existence of a permutation strategy for nominalizing V-O sequences in Likpe. The translation of Christian and educational texts from Ewe into Likpe appear to be the channel for the transfer of the pattern. Moreover, reduplication in Likpe in nominalizations appears to have been adapted to Ewe modes.

4.3 Present progressive aspect construction

Likpe typically marks tense-aspect by verb prefixes. Sometimes they are fused with pronominal or subject cross-reference forms, as illustrated for the habitual in (19) and (20).

(19)  
Atta aś-siö kò-lá  
Likpe NAME agr:hab dream CM-dream  
Atta dreams (habitually)  
(20)  
ọ-la ọka wọa-te bo bakpelé eto ke-tyi-kọ  
3sg-like quot 3sg:hab-know 1pl CMPL-Likpe poss CM-origin-place  
He wants to learn about the history of we the Likpe people

There are paradigms for future, present and past perfects, past habitual, and the past. However, the present progressive is expressed periphrastically. The operator verb in this construction is lẹ ‘hold' which takes a single or double
complement. One of its complements is a nominalized verb formed by Italic NOT ALLOWEDbV- prefixation representing the event whose temporal development is being characterized (Ameka 2002). For example,

(21) li-kpefı nɔ-mɔ lɛ wó ambe bɔ-kpɔ-n-kó
Likpe cm-child cm-det hold 3sg mother cm-fight-LIG-ASSOC
The child is fighting with his/her mother

Two features suggest that this construction is borrowed from Ewe. First, the operator verb looks like the operator verb in the analogous Ewe construction. The Ewe form is le ‘be.at:PRES’. In the inland dialects surrounding Likpe, the form is pronounced lɛ (Capo 1991). Second, the order of the elements, especially of the nominalized verb and its internal argument, is parallel to the Ewe one. Heine (1976) characterized this ‘quirky’ constituent order (Gensler 1997) as Type B–S–Aux–O–V. I would argue that the operators in these constructions are not auxiliaries, nor is the nominalized verb a Verb in clause structure. Likpe provides good evidence for this position, since the nominalization of the verb is achieved through the prefixation of a noun class marker, and the derived form has distributional properties of nominals (see Ameka and Dakubu to appear for further arguments). Compare an instantiation of the Ewe construction in (22).

(22) Kofi le mɔli dũ
Ewe name be.at:PRES rice eat:prog
Kofi is eating rice

There is an overt marker of the progressive in Ewe, a floating high tone in (22) (and in some dialects a high toned WSTR). In Likpe, however, it is the whole construction that generates the present progressive interpretation. The entrenchment of this construction in Likpe could have been aided by similar double complement structures that are employed for other “secondary concept” predicates (e.g. Dixon 2005) that translate as ‘can’ (23a), ‘begin’ (23b), or ‘start’.

(23) (a) m-oo-fo ʃɔ bɔ-sɔ nɛ lɔ
Likpe 1sg-POT-can 2sg cm-hit infer UFP
I could spank you, you know.

(b) u-tsyiko nwɔ kɔsɔ-kɔsɔ bɔ-lɛ
3sg-begin ones down-down cm-hold
He started picking those (pears) at the lowest end.

The effect of this Ewe influence on Likpe grammar is that the present progressive is the only situational aspect expressed periphrastically; all others, including the past progressive, are marked by verbal prefixes. This
construction appears to be innovated following the similarity in form of the operator verbs in Ewe and Likpe. As the verb ‘hold’ provides an event schema related to the Location schema underlying the Ewe progressive construction, there could have been analogical mapping as well (cf. Heine 1997). Above all, two internal factors may have promoted the development: the fact that the verb *k* ‘hold’ in Likpe can occur in three-place constructions independent of the progressive construction, and the availability of double complement constructions.

4.4 Complementation strategies

Likpe has borrowed the quotative/complementizer *bé* from Ewe and added it to an indigenous quotative/complementizer *ŋkə*, which probably evolved from a verb of saying. This form *ŋkə* can be followed by direct, as in (25), or indirect speech, as in (24). It can be the only predicator in the report frame construction, just like the Ewe *bé*. In both languages, there is almost always a prosodic break after the quotative/complementizer. Such a prosodic break is signalled in Likpe by final vowel lengthening, hence in the examples the forms are written with double vowels whenever there is such a break.

(24)  
Betty  *ŋkə* ú-tęyı̀ fọ  *ŋkə* ú-su school  
Likpe name quot 1sg-tell 2sg quot 3sg-go school  
Betty says I should tell you that she was going to school

(25)  
u-sı́o  ọ̀-mọ̀  *ŋkə*  oo  lọ̀  *ŋkə*  e-kpé  we  
Likpe cm-woman agr-det quot interj loc quot 3sg-be.in 3sg  
ọ̀-kwe-ẹ̀  alee  faa  ku-su  kpé  
cm-neck-top then freely cm-way be.in  
The woman said ooh if he says that it interests him then freely there is permission

The form *ŋkə* ‘QUOT’ is used to introduce complements of speech (24), cognition (26), and perception verbs as well.

(26)  
sé  Ofu  kàdzò  ọ̀-mọ̀  le-te  *ŋkə*  mọ̀-tsyá  
Likpe when name name agr-det scr-know quot 3pl-too  
a-sọ́ẹ̀  eto  bẹ́-tidi  be-ní  ko  *ŋkə*  oo,  atúu  
cm-church poss cmpl-person 3pl-cop intens quot interj welcome  
When Ofu Kwadzo got to know that they too were church people, he said oo welcome (he and they will work together)

The Likpe quotative-complementizer is also used to introduce an adjunct purpose clause, especially after a matrix clause headed by a motion predicate, as in (27).
(27) ú-su totoninto ṅkɔɔ wɔ-ɔ-sú u-tyi n-tu
Likpe 3SG-go NAME QUOT 3SG:HAB-go 3SG-carry CM-water

She went to the Tontoninto Mountain (saying she wanted) to go and fetch water.

The form ṅkɔɔ 'QUOT' still functions as a verb in many contexts where it gets marked for person and TAM features. This happens especially when it follows a desiderative complement-taking predicate. For example,

(28) n-la mí-ŋkɔ maa-te
Likpe 1SG-want 1SG:QUOT 1SG:QUOT-know
I want to know

(29) sé be-kpí bá-mó lé-nɔ bɔɔ bo-la buɔ
Likpe when CMPL-Gbi AGR-DET SCR:HAB-QUOT 1PL-want 1PL:QUOT
boa-taka mɔ le-ma-a ba-teyí mɔ bɔ-ɔ-syua bɔ-ŋkɔ
1PL:HAB-rise 3PL CM:PART 1PL-tell 3PL CMPL:PART 3PL:QUOT
bɔ-ɔ-lɛ a-ba bu-uluɔ
1PL-hold CMPL:STONE CM-sharpen

When the Gbis heard that we wanted to wage war against them, they told their neighbours that we were sharpening stones [Hence the name Likpe which is Ewe for sharpening stones]

The person-marked QUOT forms have apparently given rise to a reduced version such as buɔ '1PL:QUOT' in (29) which is used as a complementizer after any complement-taking predicate and even on its own as a reporting form (30b). These reduced QUOT forms developed in equi-type constructions signalling coreference between the matrix and complement clause subject, as illustrated in (30).

(30) (a) n-te míɔ kɔ-ɔ-tɔ mfɔ
Likpe 1SG-know 1SG:QUOT ANAPH-be.at there
I knew that it was there

(b) nyã míɔ oo e-ni kú le-sa en-si-bɔ
and 1SG:QUOT no IMPERS-COP COMIT CM-THING SCR:NEG-ITER-COME
and I said no, nothing else came up again

The Ewe form be 'QUOT' is assumed to have developed from a 'say' verb into a quotative/complementizer (Westermann 1907, 1930; Heine and Reh 1984; Lord 1993; but see Güldemann 2001 for an alternative suggestion). The Ewe be 'QUOT' form like the Likpe form ṅkɔɔ 'QUOT' introduces direct quotes (31a), indirect speech (31b), and complement clauses of verbs of saying, thinking, wanting, etc. (32) It can also be the only predicator in the quote frame (31a, b).
A logophoric pronoun is used in a bé clause to signal coreference between participants in the domain of bé and those in the matrix clause other than the first person (Clements 1979; Ameka 2004). Consider the contrast between (32a) and (32b).

(32) (a) Kofi i gblÓ ná-m bé é-,j-gbó-na
Ewe name say dat-1sg quot 3sg-come.back-hab
Kofi told me that he (not Kofi) was coming

(b) Kofi i yó Ami j bé ye i-j-gbó-na
name call name quot log-come.back-hab
Kofi called Ami to say that he was coming

Ewe bé also introduces the complement clauses of impersonal subject verbs like psychological and ‘secondary concept’ predicates, and like Likpe Œk ‘QUOT’ also introduces adjunct clauses of purpose/result. In (33), the first bé clause is an emotive predicate complement and the second is an adjunct /purpose clause.

(33) Ê-vé-m [bé me-dē asi le vi-nye ñú]COMP
Ewe 3sg-pain-1sg quot 1sg-remove hand loc child-1sg surface
[bé wò-wò funyáfunyá-e]PURP
quot 3sg-do torture-3sg

It pains me that I released my child for him to torture as a criminal

The Ewe bé ‘QUOT’ is lexicalized with some adverbial clause introducers namely:

(34) (a) álé-bé
Ewe thus-quot
so that

Ewe (b) tô-gbó bé
pass-place quot
even though

I suggest that Ewe bé ‘QUOT’ has been borrowed into Likpe and used in similar contexts to the Likpe form Œk ‘QUOT’. The adopted Ewe complementizer into Likpe is used to introduce direct speech (35b) and complement
clauses of verbs of saying, cognition, and perception etc. (35a) and also complements of clefts (35c).

(35) (a) bó-nya bóó be-tídi bó-tdyódá sì lá ká-tíní
Likpe 3pl-see QUOT CMPL-PERSON AGR-some sit LOC CM-mountain káło
under
They saw that some people were at the bottom of the mountain
(b) nyá bóó oo ka-só kpé
and QUOT INTERJ CM-land be.in
And they said oh there is land
(c) kasé mi-nc nyá ni bóó bó ba-kpele lá ...
how 1sg-hear 3sg COP QUOT 1pl CMPL-Likpe TOP
How I heard it is that we the Likpe people, . . . (our last place of settlement where we stayed was Atebubu)

The Ewe complementizer bé probably entered Likpe through the borrowing of the connector alébé ‘so that’ (36b) and the obligation expressing phrase éle bé ‘IMPERS-be.at:PRES QUOT’, i.e. it must be that (36a) as well as the necessity expression hiè bò ‘need QUOT’ (36c) from Ewe.

(36) (a) áá ... nya-so é-le-bó ó-te
Likpe INTERJ 3sg-because 3sg-be.at-QUOT 3sg-know
Aa, . . . therefore he must know
(b) alé-bé ńko ni kasé min-yi ba-kpelé eto
thus-QUOT this COP how 1sg-know CMPL-Likpe POSS
akokosa ne history INFER
So this is how I know the history of Likpe
(c) é-hié bó u-tdyí wó ú-su u-bìkà
IMPERS-need QUOT 3sg-carry 3sg 3sg-go 3sg-bury
It was necessary that he (Skunk) should take her (his mother) to go and bury

The use of the Ewe borrowed form in such modal contexts has been extended to other impersonal-subject contexts leading to impersonal framing constructions such as i-tó bó ‘IMPERS-give QUOT’, i.e. ‘it caused it that’ or i-bó bó ‘IMPERS-come QUOT’, i.e. ‘it happened that’, as in (37).

(37) i-bó bóó ke-ni e-yifo ataabi-nya wó di-sió
Likpe IMPERS-come QUOT CM-skunk SCR-do money-one 3sg SCR-sit
It happened that the skunk was a rich man who lived
The form bó ‘QUOT’ in Likpe is a direct borrowing from Ewe. Its introduction has led to two complementizers in Likpe with overlapping functions. Both forms are used to introduce direct and indirect speech as well as complement clauses, but the borrowed term is specialized for ‘secondary concept’ predicates that take sentential complements. The Ewe complementizer may have entered Likpe through the borrowing of constructions in which it is a filler.

4.5 Summary

There is unilateral influence of Ewe on Likpe grammar through direct borrowing or the diffusion of patterns. There are different motivations for these effects. Some are due to gaps in Likpe grammar such as the plural for kinship terms. Others reinforce existing Likpe structures. The consequences of the Ewe contact-induced changes in Likpe grammar discussed in §§4.1–4.5 are summarized in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical construction</th>
<th>Structuration process</th>
<th>Effect on the system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plural marking on kinterms (§4.1)</td>
<td>Heterosemy copying</td>
<td>Fills a gap for genderless kin nouns. Introduces a suffixation process for the marking of nominal number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerund formation (§4.2)</td>
<td>Pattern borrowing, exploiting the existing verb-noun reversal strategy</td>
<td>Adding a pattern to existing means of nominalization; expansion of the function of reduplication; might lead to less use of the nominal prefixing strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present progressive (§4.3)</td>
<td>Innovated on the basis of existing structures and of phonological matching of operator verbs</td>
<td>Introduces a periphrastic structure for the marking of situational aspect (instead of a prefixal system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementation strategies (§4.4)</td>
<td>Form borrowing</td>
<td>Borrowed form overlaps with indigenous term but has additional functions, seems to fill the gap for modal sentential complementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Areal patterns

In this section, I examine some Likpe structures that articulate underlying semantic and cultural scripts common to the languages in the Lower Volta Basin. Likpe expressions of several meanings align more closely with the Ewe one, indicating that Ewe served as the conduit for the spread of such meanings into Likpe. Hence we focus more on Ewe–Likpe parallels.

The concept of ‘believe’ construed as ‘receiving something and imbibing it’ is lexicalized in the area in two-verb component SVCs. The specific verbs used for the ‘imbibe’ part vary across the languages; see Table 4. Except for Tuwuli, V₂ is invariably ‘eat’ or ‘hear’. Akan uses both while Ewe and Likpe use ‘hear’.

Ewe and Likpe SVCs differ in one respect: the shared subject is expressed in Ewe only with the first VP. In Likpe by contrast, it is expressed on subsequent VPs by a concordial marker as in (38). Akan and Ga have both single expression, like Ewe, and agreeing subject expression SVCs, like Likpe (Ameka 2005).

(38) n-fo n-no mío yóo-léke
Likpe 1sg:receive 1sg:hear 1sg:QUOT 3sg:FUT:be.good
I believe it will be good

Significantly, the concept for ‘expect’ interpreted as ‘see/look (on the) way’ can be matched in the four languages, as in (39).

(39) (a) é-kpó mó bé...
Ewe 3sg:see way QUOT
Likpe (b) ó-be ku-sú nkó...
3sg:look cm-way QUOT

Table 4. Lexicalization of ‘believe’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>V₁</th>
<th>V₂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ga</td>
<td>Ga-Dangme</td>
<td>he ‘receive’</td>
<td>ye ‘eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawuri</td>
<td>Northern Guang</td>
<td>koolu ‘receive’</td>
<td>dżi ‘eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuwuli</td>
<td>GTM-Ka</td>
<td>te ‘receive’</td>
<td>do ‘put in’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Gbe</td>
<td>xo ‘receive’</td>
<td>se ‘hear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likpe</td>
<td>GTM-Na</td>
<td>fo ‘receive’</td>
<td>nọ ‘hear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akan</td>
<td>Tano</td>
<td>gye ‘receive’</td>
<td>tie ‘hear’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gye ‘receive’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emotional experiences also tend to be expressed with similar body-image collocations. Consider (40) and (41).

(40) Ewe (a) é- kpó dzikú
    Likpe (b) ó-nyo ó-bló
      3sg-see anger
      She/he is angry

(41) (a) é-vé dôme ná likpe-á-wó
    Ewe 3sg-pain stomach dat Likpe-det-pl
    Likpe (b) í-fi ba-kpelé ka-fó tintí
      3sg-pain cm-Likpe cm-stomach intens
      It angered the Likpes

The difference between Ewe and Likpe in (41) is in the coding of the experiencer: Ewe codes it as a dative prepositional object while Likpe codes it as the Goal Object in a double object construction.

Euphemisms for bodily actions are also parallel in the two languages. For example:

(42) (a) má-dé asi gò-me
    Ewe 1sg:pot-put hand pants-containing.region
    Likpe (b) ma-kpé kà-ní
      1sg:pot-be.in cm-hand
      ‘I want to urinate’

Furthermore, interactional routines including proverbs have spread in the area. Some have similar underlying scripts, others appear to be direct translations of one another. Leave-taking expressions are an example (Ameka 1999).

(43) Pre-closing request
    Likpe (a) ń-tó ku-sú López
      1sg-ask cm-way upp
    Akan (b) ye-srè kwan
      1pl-beg road
Ewe (c) ma-biá mlò
1sg:pot-ask way
I ask permission to leave

(44) (a) labe kpóó
Likpe lie:imp quietly
Akan (b) da yie
lie:imp well
Ewe (c) mlò anyí nyuie
lie:imp ground well
Sleep well

One goodnight expression, which reflects the belief that things that happen to
people are due to God, is calqued in Likpe from Ewe as in (45).

(45) (a) Máwu né-tò mí
Ewe God juss-rise 1pl
Likpe (b) bo anto taka-sò bo
1pl father raise-caus 1pl
May God wake us up

6 Conclusion

In this concluding section, I draw attention to attitudes of the Likpes towards
the areal and Ewe influences on their language, both grammatical and semantic,
described in this chapter. Likpe speakers are acutely aware of the various
languages on offer in their community. They are however, not always con-
scious of the loans that have been integrated in the language. When some
feature is identified as foreign, there are two stances that are taken. One is to
accept it and nativize it by adapting it to Likpe norms. The other is to ‘purify’
the language by keeping foreign elements out.

One strategy of nativization is to reanalyse and reinterpret forms in Likpe
grammatical ways. For instance, an areal attention-getting routine agoo,
which is used to gain access to a place or to a group of people, has been
reanalysed as consisting of a 2sg pronominal prefix a- and a stem -goo so that
it is used for singular addressees. For plural addressees, the form be-goo ‘2pl-
root’ is used. This reinterpretation makes agoo, which has spread across
languages along the West African littoral, look more Likpe-like, hence it is
not seen as foreign (Ameka 1994).
The recognizable foreign elements are ‘banned’, at least in public. For example, the Ewe particle lá ‘TOP’ is frequently used in spontaneous discourse to mark background information instead of lengthening the vowel at the end of phrases, which is the Likpe way of marking such units.

Compare (46a) [=35c] containing the Ewe particle and (46b) with vowel lengthening.

(46) (a) kase mi-no nya ni bo ho ba-kpele la...
    how 1sg-hear 3sg cop quot 1pl cmpl-Likpe top
How I heard it is that we the Likpe people...

(b) se ke-kw eto di-yi no-mo le-yo-o...
    when cm-funeral poss cm-day agr-det scr-reach-top
When the day of the funeral arrived...

When speakers are reflective, for instance during transcription sessions of recorded texts, they ask for lá to be replaced by vowel length.

Similarly, an areal routine for gratitude adase ‘thanks’ which spread from Akan via Ewe and was adapted into Likpe as lasio specialized for expressing thanks at the end of social gatherings involving alcohol, has been officially ‘banned’ because it is identified as being Akan. Paradoxically, in another domain, an authentic Likpe title for chief o-te has been replaced by the Akan title nana ‘grandfather, chief’. This was done in a sociopolitical climate of asserting a more Guang or Akan affiliation.

The contact-induced changes surveyed in this chapter come from multiple sources and have varied motivations (see Chapter 1). A holistic understanding of grammatical change requires multiple perspectives.

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