LOCATIVE EXPRESSION IN TUTRUGBU: LOSING TYPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS DUE TO CONTACT

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This paper discusses the Basic Locative Construction in Tutrugbu (Nyagbo), a Ghana-Togo-Mountain language spoken in Ghana. The BLC involves the neutral way in which languages localize objects. According to a proposal by Levinson and Wilkins (2006), modified in Ameka and Levinson (2007), languages fall into four types based on the number of verbs that they use in the BLC. One type of languages does not use any verb at all in the BLC while another type uses a single verb. Of the remaining two types, one uses 3 to 6 verbs while the other uses more than 6 verbs. In this paper I show that while Tutrugbu currently uses 5 verbs, it does not possess the characteristics of languages belonging to this group. Moreover, other GTM languages appear to belong to the type that uses multiple verbs in the BLC. I propose that Tutrugbu has undergone a typological shift from multiple verb use, and suggest that this is due to the influence of Ewe.

Cet article examine la construction locative de base (BLC) dans le tutrugbu (nyagbo), une langue Ghana-Togo-Mountain (GTM) parlée au Ghana. Le BLC rapporte la façon neutre dont les langues localisent des objets. Selon une proposition de Levinson et Wilkins (2006), modifiée par Ameka et Levinson (2007), les langues peuvent être catégorisées en 4 groupes, en tenant en compte le nombre des verbes qu'elles utilisent dans le BLC. Le premier groupe de langues n'utilise aucun verbe. Le deuxième groupe de langues utilise un seul verbe. Le troisième groupe de langues utilise entre 3 et 6 verbes tandis que le quatrième groupe utilise plus de 6. Dans cet article, nous montrons qu'en dépit du fait que le tutrugbu ait 5 verbes, il ne possède pas les caractéristiques des langues appartenant à ce groupe. D'ailleurs, d'autres langues GTM semblent appartenir au groupe multiverbe (c-a-d le quartrième groupe). Nous concluons que le tutrugbu a subi un changement typologigue, partant d'une langue a verbes multiples pour devenir une langue qui utilize seulement 4 verbes. Nous suggérons que ce changement est le résultat de l'influence de l'ewe sur le tutrugbu.

0. INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the basic locative function in Tutrugbu a Ghana-Togo-Mountain (GTM) language, based on the typology of locative predication discussed by, among others, Levinson (2003), Levinson and Wilkins (2006), and Ameka and Levinson (2007).[1] I propose that Tutrugbu has undergone a shift in the expression of topological relations due to the influence of Ewe. To do this, I show that in the Basic Locative Construction (BLC), Tutrugbu uses verbs to express relational meanings such as containment and support which are expressed by prepositions in English (i.e. **in** and **on** respectively). In this respect, Tutrugbu is similar to other GTM languages like Likpe (Ameka 2007) and Tafi (Bobuafor 2008). However, compared to these two languages, which have verbs expressing relational meaning, and Logba another GTM language, which does not, Tutrugbu uses much fewer verbs. Where these languages use posture and positional verbs in the BLC, Tutrugbu mainly uses the general locative verb **lɛ** 'be.at'. Interestingly, this is the same verb used to describe topological relations in Ewe (Essegbey 2005, Ameka and Essegbey 2006). I conclude that the fewer number of verbs used in

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Tutrugbu, in comparison to the other languages, and especially the choice of **lɛ** 'be at', is due to influence from Ewe.

The paper is organized as follows: in section 1 I undertake a detailed discussion of the BLC. Although widely investigated (cf. Levinson and Wilkins 2006, Ameka and Levinson 2007, and references cited there), inroads into African languages are fairly small (cf. Hellwig 2003, Essegbey 2005, Ameka and Essegbey 2006, Dorvlo 2008). I provide some elicitation pictures to show the types of localizations that the BLC seeks to account for. In section 2 I discuss briefly relevant typological properties of Tutrugbu as well as an asymmetrical contact between Tutrugbu and Ewe which, I propose, provides the avenue for the latter to influence the former. I also discuss the elicitation method. Section 3 discusses the BLC in Tutrugbu. I compare the few verbs that Tutrugbu uses with equivalents in Likpe and show that Tutrugbu speakers use their specific relational verbs less and the general locative verb **lɛ** 'be at' more. In section 4, I take a brief look at the BLC in Likpe, Tafi and Logba. I show that these languages use more verbs in the BLC than Tutrugbu does. I also show that Tutrugbu has only one preposition, which is a property of languages possessing many verbs in the BLC. Section 5 concludes the paper.

1. THE BASIC LOCATIVE CONSTRUCTION (BLC)

The components of a spatial description are the Figure (i.e. the entity that is located), and the Ground (i.e. the entity with respect to which the Figure is located) (cf. Talmy 1985, 2000). Also included are the Search Domain (i.e. the space anchored to the Ground where the Figure is located), and the (spatial topological) Relation between the Figure and the Ground (Ameka 1999, Levinson 1992). Research shows that contrary to earlier assumptions, spatial information is not restricted to adpositions. Instead it is spread across word classes such that while some languages do indeed use plain adpositions, others include spatial information in the verb. Levinson (1992:29) writes:

> In English relative location information is almost entirely packaged in the prepositional phrase with a vacuous locative verb be fulfilling the need for a (tense-bearing) predicate. But many languages have a set of contrasting locative verbs. Thus whereas in English we indiscriminately use locative **be** in **The book/cup is on the table** or **The key is in the lock**, or **The picture is on the wall**, in German we must say **Das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch**, **Die Tasse steht auf dem Tisch**, **Das Bild hängt an der Wand** and **Der Schlüssel steckt in dem Schloss**, the distinctions encoding geometric properties of the Figure (whether the object is flat or has a canonical base etc.) or the Ground (whether it is a container, a vertical surface, etc.) or of the relation between them. Some languages carry such distinctions to the extreme: thus Tzeltal forces a choice between over one hundred commonly used locative predicates, each of which encodes especially properties of the Figure object (shape, disposition, angle etc.) or occasionally of the Ground or the relation between Figure and Ground. This then takes the burden of locative description off the adpositional phrase — in Tzeltal there is a vacuous preposition corresponding to the English vacuous locative verb.

The Basic Locative Construction (BLC) is a short hand for the construction which is used in the basic locative function (cf. Levinson and Wilkins 2006). That is to say it is the most neutral answer to where-questions (e.g. **where is the cup**?). This neutral answer localizes a Figure in relation to a Ground. As shown in Levinson's quote, languages like English prefer to use a vacuous copula, which has the sole function of expressing tense, while all the spatial information is contained in the preposition. And while German has different prepositions to express the location of the Figure, it also uses verbs which provide classificatory information about it.

Based on a comparative study of a number of languages, Levinson and Wilkins (2006) establish a typology for the verbal component of the BLC across languages. This is modified in Ameka and Levinson (2007:863-864) thus:

Type 0: No verb in basic locative construction (Saliba, Austronesian, Papua New Guinea

Type I: Single locative verb (or suppletion under grammatical conditioning)

- Type 1a: copula (i.e. dummy verb used in many other constructions; English, Tamil, Chukchi, Tiriyó)
- Type 1b: locative (+Existential) verb (Japanese, Ewe, Yukatek, …)

Type II: A small contrastive set of locative verbs (3-7 verbs)

- Type IIa: Postural verbs (Arrente, Dutch, Goemai)
- Type IIb: Ground space indicating verbs

Type III: Multiverb Positional verbs (a large set of dispositional verbs, 9-100) (Tzeltal, Zapotek, German Laz, Likpe)

A type 0 language like Saliba which is an Austronesian language spoken in Papua New Guinea has no verbal component in the BLC. A Type Ia language uses a copula in the BLC as well as in several other constructions. English which, as noted above, belongs to this type uses the copula in the BLC (e.g. **the book is on the table**), in nominal predication (e.g. **John is a farmer**), and in equative predication (e.g. **John is the perpetrator**), among others. In all the examples, the copula simply satisfies the need for a tense-bearing predicate (Levinson 1992). A type Ib language uses a locative/existential verb for the BLC. For example Ewe, a Kwa language, uses the locative verb **le** 'be.at' for the BLC and existential constructions, but **nyé** 'be' for equative predication. Consider the sentences below:

(1) a. **Kofi** **le** **xɔ-a** **me** Ewe
Kofi be.at room-DEF inside
Kofi is in the room.

b. **Máwú li-i (le+i)** Ewe
God be.at-3SG
God exists.

c. **Kofi nyé ŋútsu** Ewe
Kofi be male
Kofi is male.

While **le** in (1a) is locative, it combines with an invariant third person pronoun –**i** to give rise to an existential interpretation in (1b). In the Anlo dialect of Ewe where assimilation is regressive, the pronoun assimilates the vowel of the pronoun to yield **lii** 'exist' while in the Inland dialects where assimilation is progressive, the vowel of the verb rather assimilates the pronoun to give rise to **lee** 'exist'. In this paper I will be concerned with examples like (1a) where **le** occurs in a locative construction. Type II languages use a small set of verbs while Type III languages use a large class of verbs.

Let me reiterate that the BLC is about the way in which languages localize a Figure in relation to a Ground. A simple way to establish this is to show speakers pictures of objects located in specific places and ask them to tell where the said objects (the Figure) are located. Answering such questions necessarily involve mention of the location (the Ground) and the Relation between the Figure and the Ground. The elicitation method which I used is discussed in section 2.3 where I explain abbreviations like TRPS and PSPV. Suffice it to say for now that they are picture books which depict such locative relations, and using them enables one to determine that English belongs to Type Ia, Ewe to Type Ib, Dutch to Type II and Akan to Type III. The relations depicted in the following four pictures from TRPS explain why the languages are placed in these groups (note that in all the pictures an arrow points to an object (the Figure) which is located at a place (the Ground)):

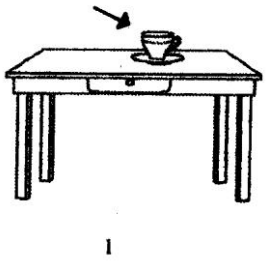

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Figure 1. TPRS 1, Cup on Table

(2) a. The cup is on the table. English (Type Ia)
b. **Kɔ́pu-á le kplɔ̃-a dzí** Ewe (Type Ib)
Cup-DEF be.at table-DEF top
The cup is on the table.

c. **Het kopje staat op de tafel** Dutch (type II)
DEF cup stand on DEF table
The cup is (standing) on the table.

d. **Kɔ́pu nó si pónó nó só** Akan (Type III)
Cup DEF be.on.base table DEF top
The cup is (sitting) on the table.

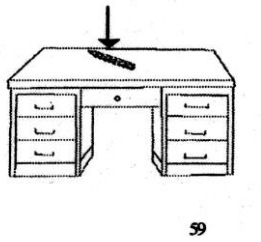

Fig. 2, TPRS 59: pen on table

(3) a. The pen is on the table. English (Type 1a)

b. **Núŋlɔtí-á le kplɔ̃-a dzí** Ewe (Type 1b)
Pen-DEF be.at table-DEF top
The pen is on the table.

c. **De pen ligt op het tafel** Dutch (Type II)
DEF pen lie on DEF table
The pen is (lying) on the table.

d. **Pen nó da pónó nó só** Akan (Type III)
Pen DEF lie table DEF top
The pen is (lying) on the table.

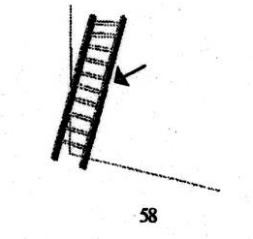

Fig. 3 TRPS 58 Ladder against a wall

(4) a. The ladder is against the wall. English (Type 1a)

b. **Aŋutsrɔ́é-á le gli-a ŋú** Ewe (Type 1b)
Ladder-DEF be.at wall-DEF skin
The ladder is against the wall.

c. **De ladder staat tegen de muur** Dutch (Type II)
DEF ladder stand against DEF wall
The ladder is (standing) against the wall.

d. **Atweréé nó twere báń nó hó** Akan (Type III)
Ladder DEF lean wall DEF skin
The ladder is (leaning) against the wall.

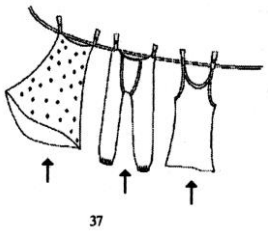

Figure 4 TRPS 37 Clothing on a line

(5) a. The clothes are on the drying line.
awu-a wó le ka-a dzí Ewe
cloth-DEF PL be.at rope-DEF top
The cloths are on the line.

b. **De kleren hangen aan de lijn** Dutch
DEF cloths hang on DEF line
The cloths are (hanging) on the line.

The four pictures express support (i.e. Figures 1, 2, 3) and "suspend/support" (Figure 4) relations. I refer to the relation in Figure 4 as suspend/support because the rope on which the clothes are suspended can be conceptualized as supporting the clothes. English uses **to be** in all the sentences describing the locative relations depicted in the 4 pictures. The quote from Levinson (1992), which I have provided above, shows that this verb merely serves a tense-bearing function. The preposition **on** expresses the Relation and Search Domain for sentences (2a, 3a and 5a) while **against** expresses these meanings in (4a). In all the sentences, the information about the reference object is provided by the complement of the preposition, i.e. **table** in (2a and 3a), **wall** in (4a) and **line** in (5a). Like English, Ewe uses a single verb **le** 'be at' in all the four sentences. However, unlike English, **le** does not serve a mere tense-assigning function. Instead, it expresses a general Relation between the Figure and the Ground. This is what I have tried to capture by

glossing the verb as 'be at' (see also Ameka 1995). The postpositional phrases then provide information about the reference object and the Search Domain. More specifically, the postpositions provide information about the Search Domain while their complements provide information about the reference object, with the two combining to yield the Ground information in Ewe. Thus **kplɔ̃** 'table' expresses the Ground in (2b and 3b), **gli** 'wall' is the Ground in (4b), and **ka** 'rope' represents similar function in (5b). **Dzî** 'top' then expresses the Search Domain in (2b, 3b, and 5b) while **ŋú** 'skin' performs a similar function in (4b). Thus far, in all the instances where English uses the preposition **on**, Ewe uses the postposition **dzî** 'top'. This might give the erroneous impression that the two have the same strategy and that I am merely trying to create an artificial difference between them. The description of the relation depicted in the next picture brings the difference in focus:

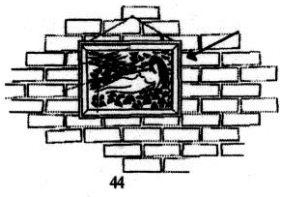

Figure 5 TRPS 44 Picture on a wall

(6) a. The picture is on the wall

Fóto-a	**le**	**gli**	**ŋú**	Ewe
Photo-DEF	be.at	wall	skin	

The photograph is on a wall (literally located on the wall skin)

Herkovits (1986:140) notes that support relations do not necessarily involve upper surfaces. In this picture, the photograph is supported by the wall even though it is not located on its upper surface. As such, English uses the preposition **on** to describe the Relation and Search Domain. Since the postposition in Ewe merely captures the Search Domain, Ewe uses **ŋú** 'skin'.

The Dutch and Akan sentences illustrate the two remaining types of BLC. Dutch uses three verbs **staan** 'to stand', **liggen** 'to lie' and **hangen '**to hang'. The choice of the verbs depends on the posture of the Figure: **staan** 'to stand' is used to describe the cup and ladder located on their base in Figs. 2 and 4, **liggen** 'to lie' is used to describe the pen that is lying on a table (Figure 3) and **hangen** 'to hang' is for clothes suspended on a line (Figure 4). This shows that unlike English and Ewe, the posture of the Figure determines the choice of predicate. Although the verbal strategy in Dutch is different from that in English, the construction in Dutch shares a characteristic with that of English: it uses prepositions to express the Relation and Support Domain. Thus **op** is used to describe the support relations in Figures 1 and 2 while **tegen** expresses the one in Figure 3 and **aan** describes the one in (Figure 4). Akan's choice of verbs for BLC is also dependent on the Figure. However, unlike Dutch, Akan also expresses the disposition of the Figure. This explains why it has 4 verbs to describe the relations depicted in the four different pictures

where Dutch uses three: **si** expresses location on base Figure 1, **da** 'lie' describes the lying position of the pen in Figure 2, **twere** describes the ladder leaning against the wall in Figure 3, and **sɛn** 'hang' describes the clothing hanging in Figure 4. Although not marked, all the verbs in Akan carry the low tone of the stative Aspect. The construction in Akan shares a property with its equivalent in Ewe: it uses postpositions to express the Search Domain. Thus it uses **so** for upper surface of the Ground in Figures 1, 3 and 4, and **mú** for the inside of the Ground in Figure 2.

Although Akan and Dutch differ in that Akan chooses verbs based on their disposition while Dutch chooses them based on their posture, they all choose a specific verb when the focus is on containment as the Relation between the Figure and the Ground. In Dutch **zitten** 'to sit' is used to express an object contained in a Ground while Akan uses **hyɛ** 'to fit'. Both languages would use their respective verbs to describe a bottle in a fridge without consideration for whether it is located on its base or in a lying posture. This means that to a less extent, the relation of the Figure to the Ground also determines the choice of verb in the two languages. Van Staden et al (2006) have shown that the verbs in Dutch can be used presuppositionally. That is to say the verbs can be chosen depending on inherent properties of the Figure instead of its posture at the moment of speech. Ameka and Levinson (2007) that the tendency to choose verbs for classificatory purposes of the complement is a property of Type II languages.

From the preceding discussion, it can be seen that, on the one hand, English and Ewe share the property of having a single verb for the BLC. However, while English uses a copula which serves a purely tense-assigning function, the verb in Ewe expresses a general Relation between the Figure and the Ground. Dutch uses three verbs with the choice mainly determined by the posture of the Figure although, in one case, it can also be determined by focus on containment Relation. Akan uses a lot more verbs based on the disposition of the Figure. Like Dutch, Akan also uses one specific verb when it focuses on the containment relation[2]. Dutch and English share the property of using prepositions to encode Relations and Search Domain while Akan and Ewe share the property of using their postpositions to encode Search Domain only. Evidence that prepositions code both Relations and Search Domains while postpositions express Search Domain alone is the fact that in languages like English, the prepositional phrase alone can be used in answer to a where-question. Thus it is possible, in answer to the where question regarding Figure 1, to say **on the table.** In contrast, Ewe and Akan require both the verb and the postpositional phrase. Due to the behavior of prepositions in languages like English and Dutch, Heine et al (1991) refer to them as portmanteau morphemes (see also Ameka 1995). The above information is summarized in the table below:

The information from the languages could be represented in the table below which is adapted from Ameka 1999 (see also Essegbey 2005):

[2] The total number of verbs used in the BLC is 6 (van Staden et al 2006) while Akan uses more than 15 (Essegbey 2007).

Language	*Subject-NP*	*Predicate*	*Preposition*	*NP*	*Postposition*
English	Figure	Tense-bearing copula	Relation + Search Domain	Ground	
Dutch	Figure	Posture	Relation + Search Domain	Ground	
Ewe	Figure	General Relation		Ground	Search Domain
Akan	Figure	Disposition		Ground	Search Domain

Table 1 Components of the BLC

It should be stressed here that the above does not mean that Type I languages like English and Ewe do not have posture or positional verbs. Instead, as mentioned above, they use the copula or locative verb in the most neutral locative construction. Neutral is determined by default relations. For instance, the picture below shows a man standing on a roof top. In Ewe, 'to stand' is **tsi tre**. One would have thought that this is the expression that would be used to describe the location of the man in the picture. However, this is not what was elicited. Instead, as shown below, speakers use the BLC with **le** 'be at' (cf. Ameka and Essegbey 2006):

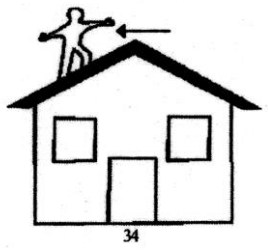

Figure 6. TPRS 34, Man on roof of building

(7) a. The man is on the roof English (Type Ia)

b. **ŋútsu-a** **le** **xɔ-a** **ta-me** Ewe (Type Ib)
man-DEF be.at room-DEF head-in
The man is on top of the building

Note that unlike Ewe and English, Dutch uses its stand verb (the same that is used for a cup located on its base in Figure 1) while Akan uses the posture verb **gyina** 'stand.' Note

further that the Akan stand-verb for animate entities is different from the be-located-on-base verb which is used for non-animate entities.

(7) c. **De man staat op het huis** Dutch (Type II)
DEF man stand on DEF house
The man is (standing) on the house

d. **Papá nó gyina dáń nó só** Akan (Type III)
Man DEF stand building DEF top
The man is (standing) on the house

Another way of putting this is to imagine what a person will say when asked about a church that is located next to a library. Although it will be possible in English to say **the church stands next to the library**, such a sentence would be odd. The unmarked expression is **the church is next to the library**. These examples reinforce the point made at the beginning of the paper that there is a difference between the resources that a language possesses and the resources that it deploys in specific functions. In the case of the basic locative function, even though Type I languages also have posture verbs, they do not use them. In the next section, I introduce the Tutrugbu language.

2. TUTRUGBU

Tutrugbu is one of a group of fourteen languages that were first characterized, in German, as *Togorestsprachen* (Struck 1912), and, in English, as "Togo Remnant languages" (e.g. Westermann and Bryan 1952). Later characterizations include "Central Togo" (Kropp Dakubu and Ford 1988) and "Ghana-Togo-Mountain" (GTM) (Ring 1995, Ameka 2002). I use the latter term because it delimits the geographical region within which the languages are spoken. The speakers refer to themselves as Batrugbu or Batugbu (singular is Atrugbu). Although the speakers refer to the language in their language as Tutrugbu they call it in Ewe Nyagbo (also written Nyangbo). Nyagbo is also the name that is used to describe people from eight out of the nine townships that make up the Batrugbu state. This is the term used in official circles and academia (cf. Gordon 2005). I have chosen to use Tutrugbu because the Emli people who belong to the ninth townships have indicated to me that they are not Nyagbo and, therefore, do not like my use of the term to characterize the language.

The GTM languages are found in three geographical groups, and Nyagbo, together with Avatime, Logba and Tafi, belongs to the Southernmost cluster (cf. Kropp Dakubu and Ford 1988, Heine 1968). Tafi is indeed considered to be so close to Nyagbo that the two are treated as dialects of the same language. In this section I discuss some typological properties of the language. Next I draw attention to the fact that there is heavy asymmetrical contact between speakers of Tutrugbu and Ewe thereby making it likely that the former will copy from the latter.

2.1 TYPOLOGICAL PROFILE

Tutrugbu has three level tones and two contour tones. The level tones are High (as in **tsí** 'die'), low (as in **kpũ** 'hide') and mid (as in **ětsī** 's/he is dying'). The contour tones are rising as in **adzɛ̃̌** 'woman' and falling (as in **pê** 'have sex with').

There are seven oral and seven nasal vowels in Tutrugbu. The language also has an active vowel harmony system in which the root, for the most part, determines the ATR status of the affixes. The vowels are given below (cf. Essegbey 2009):

	Front		*Central*	*Back*	
	[+ATR]	[-ATR]	[-ATR]	[+ATR]	[-ATR]
High	**i, ĩ**			**u, ũ**	
Mid	**e, ẽ**	**ɛ, ɛ̃**		**o, õ**	**ɔ, ɔ̃**
Low			**a, ã**		

Table 2. Vowels in Tutrugbu

Tutrugbu also has a noun-class system in which nouns occur with a class prefix. This system illustrates vowel harmony most clearly because all class prefixes have +ATR and –ATR counterparts. Thus the root **kɔkɔ́** 'fowl' takes **ɔ-**, yielding **ɔkɔkɔ́**, while **pupú** 'door' which belongs to the same class takes **o-** yielding **opupú**. Similarly **bú** 'dog' takes an **e**-prefix yielding **ebú** while **sɔ́** 'horse', which is borrowed from Ewe, takes an **ɛ**-prefix yielding **ɛsɔ́**. The vowel **a**, on the other hand, is able to occur as prefix for stems that have +ATR and -ATR vowels. Respective examples are **ashwĩ** 'grandfather' and **apalɛ̃** 'madame'.

Tutrugbu is an SVO language in which constituent order determines grammatical relations. Also, the subject is cross-referenced on the verb. However, the noun-class system has been undergoing an erosion such that there are times when a generalized **a-** form is used to cross-reference nominals from different classes and other times when the verb occurs without a cross reference marker. In the following narrations of the frog story (Mayer 1969), the first speaker uses the appropriate class marker on the verb for a **kɛ**-class noun while the next person uses the generalized **a-** form:

(8) a. **ko** **kɛ-vɔbɔ́** **kɛ-ka-lí** **ke-siakpá**
Just CM-frog AM-REP-be.at CM-ground
And the frog was still on the ground.

b. **kɛ-kpɔkplɔ** **a-yala** **nɛ́** **kipulí** **nɔ́** **m(ɛ)**
CM-frog AM-become.lost PREP container DEF inside
The frog was missing from the container.

Note that pronouns also assume the same tongue root position as the main verbs. This explains the contrast between **ɛ-vɛ** 'I go' and **i-nyí** 'I know' as well as **ɔ-vɛ** 'you go' and **o-nyî** 'you know'. However, unlike noun class prefix **a-**, the pronominal prefix **a-**, which is the third person singular pronoun, has a variant **e-**. Thus **a-vɛ** 's/he goes' contrasts with **e-nyî** 's/he knows'.

A tendency in Tutrugbu that is relevant here is the dropping of class prefixes for complements. Consider the sentences below taken from texts in my database (the transcript captures segmental deletions):

(9)	**kã**	**otsí**	**bɔkpɛ́**	**lí**	**ésí**	**ɛ**	(transcript of conversation)
	kã	**otsí**	**bɔ -kpɛ́**	**kɛ-lɛ́**	**ke-sí**	**ɛ**	(morphemic level)
	then	now	1PL-put.in	CM-3SG	CM-down	TP	
	then we begin it						

This segment is part of a statement by the chief of Esroe in which he tells us that when we are ready setting up our recording equipment, then we shall begin our conversation. 'To begin' is **kpɛ́ kesí** which literally means 'to put down'. In Tutrugbu, the Goal complement in double complement constructions is realized as a primary object à la Dryer (1986). As a result, it occurs in immediate postverbal position. This explains why the third person singular pronoun **kɛlɛ́** occurs immediately after the verb and is followed by the second complement **kesí**. Note, however, that none of the two complements is realized fully in the spoken segment: the whole class prefix is dropped in the first complement while the initial consonant is dropped in the second (see Essegbey 2009 for detailed discussion). Phonotactic rules cause the /**ɛ́**/ of the pronoun to change to /**í**/ before a velar /**k**/ which is then elided. In order to save space, I have not included phonological tier in my examples. Instead, I use the morphological tier where elided segments have been put back in and morpheme boundaries are indicated. This saves the trouble of having to explain each time why a word is represented in a particular way.

2.2 CONTACT

Tutrugbu is bordered by Ewe towns to the South East and West, and by Tafi, another GTM language to the North. As I noted in section 2, Tafi is very closely related to Tutrugbu and the two have often been treated in the literature as dialects. A sociolinguistic study which I conducted in the townships showed that every single native speaker of the language above the age of 4 spoke Ewe in addition to Tutrugbu. This is not surprising because of the heavy use of Ewe among the people. First of all, Ewe is the Ghanaian language used in the schools at all levels instead of Tutrugbu. I have a recording of a kindergarten class session in which everything that transpired is in Ewe. The teacher explained that children of foreigners who attend the class do not speak Tutrugbu and hence the need to use Ewe. Ewe is also the language used in church for the same reason. I was invited to record two child-naming ceremonies, only to record events (Christian affairs of prayers, singing and dancing) that were wholly undertaken in Ewe. The nearest big market where the people go to sell their farm produce and buy things is at Kpeve, which is an Ewe-speaking area. This means that commercial interactions are also in Ewe. The community has a small health post which is staffed by people who speak only Ewe

and English. For more serious ailments, they go to a health center at Have, which is also an Ewe-speaking town. Finally, the local administration center is also situated in Hohoe, which is also an Ewe-speaking town. Although Nyagbo towns and villages have Nyagbo names, the people rather use Ewe or Akan toponyms which are the official names of the areas. Moreover, they have abandoned all their Nyagbo names for Ewe, Akan, and English counterparts. Worse still, they appear to have lost their native songs since most of their ceremonial songs, such as songs of initiation, are either in Ewe or Akan. This heavy reliance on Ewe has led to the borrowing of several Ewe words into the language. This is seen particularly in the language of the younger people. One striking example is the word 'frog' which is **kɛvɔbɔ́** in the language but many children call **kɛkpɔkplɔ**, having maintained the noun class prefix but added the Ewe word for frog which is (**a)kpɔkplɔ**.[3]

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

I have indicated that the BLC is the answer to a "where"-question. As I noted in section 1, the where-question is intended to elicit the neutral way in which languages localize objects. To collect the data I used the stimuli that have been used in generating such constructions. One of these is the Topological Relations Picture Series (TRPS) which is a booklet containing 71 stimulus pictures developed by Melissa Bowerman and Eric Pederson at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (MPI) in Nijmegen. The pictures, some of which I have shown in section 1, represent various topological relations which are expressed by prepositions like *in*, *on*, and *under* in English. Speakers are shown the picture and asked in their language where the Figure (which is marked by an arrow) is. The where-word in Tutrugbu is **fakɔ́** and a question about the location of the cup in Figure 1 is provided below:

(10) **Fakɔ́ kɔ́pu a-lɛ?**
Where cup AM-be.at
Where is the cup?

The TRPS pictures were supplemented by other in The Picture Series for Positional Verbs (PSPV), consisting of 68 photos involving 9 Figures and seven Ground objects, which were designed by Ameka and Levinson and colleagues at the MPI. The data reported here is from 3 adult speakers between the ages of 65 and 75, and a 59-year old field assistant who helped me with the transcription and commented on some of the uses. In many cases, I represent her as the fourth consultant. Discussions about the pictures took place in Ewe.

3. THE BLC IN TUTRUGBU

The BLC in Tutrugbu is made up of a subject noun phrase which expresses the Figure, a verb which expresses the Relation, and a postpositional phrase which, like similar phrases in Ewe and Akan discussed above, express a Ground and Search Domain. Ameka (2007:1071) notes that in Likpe the postposition can be left out if "the information it carries is redundant because it is encoded in the verb." As I show

[3] 6 out of 8 children between the ages of 9 and 16 who narrated the frog story used **kɛkpɔkplɔ** instead of **kɛvɔbɔ**.

below, a similar situation occurs in Tutrugbu. In what follows I discuss the verbs individually. I compare their semantics with the semantics of their equivalents in Likpe in order to show that, with the exception of the general locative verb **lɛ** 'be.at', Tutrugbu speakers have restricted the semantics of their relational verbs.

3.1 **KPASƐ**

Kpasɛ describes containment Relation. That is to say it describes situations in which a Figure is located in a contained space. The prototypical scenario involving containment is represented by a TRPS (2) in which a fruit is located inside a bowl. Every consultant used **kpasɛ** to describe this picture. A typical response is provided below:

(11)	**A-kutú**	**nɔ́**	**á-kpasɛ**	**a-gbɛ**	**nɔ́**	**mɛ**
	CM-orange	DEF	AM-be.contained	CM-bowl	DEF	inside
	The orange is inside the bowl					

The orientation of the Figure does not play a role in the choice of **kpasɛ**. That is to say it does not matter whether the Figure is in a lying position or a standing position. Consider the following pictures below from the PSPV booklet:

Figure 7a bottle lying in basket

Figure 7b bottle upright in basket

Figure 7c bottle upside down

Tutrugbu does not distinguish between these three pictures in a way that, for instance, Dutch or Akan would. Dutch could use the general containment verb which is **zitten** 'to sit' to characterize all three scenarios or it could use **liggen** to characterize the lying posture in Figure 7a, and **staan** 'stand' to characterize the upright posture in Figures 7b and 7c. Akan could also use the general containment verb which is **hyɛ** 'to fit' or, alternatively, it could use **da** 'lie', **si** 'located on base', and **butu** 'be upside down' to characterize the disposition of the Figures in Figures 7a, 7b, and 7c respectively. In Tutrugbu, by contrast, the BLC which describes three pictures involves **kpasɛ** only. A typical answer is provided below:

(12)	**Tumpá**	**nɔ́**	**kpasɛ**	**kɛ-shwɛ**	**nɔ́**	**mɛ**
	Bottle	DEF	be.contained	CM-basket	DEF	inside
	The bottle is in the basket (literally the bottle is contained in the basket)					

The posture of animate entities does not matter either as long as they are contained. As such containment relations depicted in TRPS pictures involving a dog sitting in a bowl (47) and a dog lying inside a kennel (71) do not elicit a sit-verb and lie-verb respectively. Instead, both scenarios were also expressed with **kpasɛ**. Other instances of animate Figures in containment relations are a rabbit in a cage (TRPS 54), an owl in a hole inside a tree (TRPS 67), and a fish in a bowl (TRPS 32). While almost all the above situations involve contact of a sort between the Figure and the Ground, this does not need to be the case. Thus a house that is situated inside a fence (TRPS 15) is also described with the verb (see Ameka 2007 for similar situation in Likpe). Another situation involving a Figure that is not in contact with the container and that elicits a BLC with **kpasɛ** is a fruit in a hoop (TRPS 19).

Speakers do not always agree on what constitutes containment. The areas where they disagree show a rather narrow conception of what constitutes a container. Thus where the Ground is not a prototypical container, not all the consultants choose **kpasɛ** as the appropriate verb to use. Consider the TRPS picture below which shows a spoon that is almost completely concealed under a napkin:

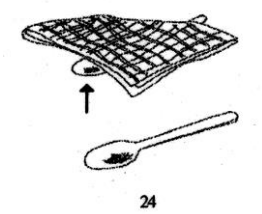

Figure 8 spoon under napkin

While one consultant used **kpasɛ** during the elicitation, the other two used **lɛ** 'be at'. The field assistant also accepted that one could use **kpasɛ**, thereby, yielding two for and two against. One of the elicited sentences containing **kpasɛ** is provided below:

(13)	**Gatí**	**nɔ́**	**kpasɛ**	**napkin**	**nɔ́**	**ke-sí**
	Spoon	DEF	be.contained	napkin	DEF	CM-ground
	The spoon is under the napkin					

Since the napkin is not a typical container, the other two consultants rejected it. A look at the semantics of the equivalent of **kpasɛ** in the Likpe language shows that speakers of that language construe containment more broadly than speakers of Tutrugbu. Thus not only is the above scenario construed as involving containment but so does a ball under a chair (TRPS 16). In Tutrugbu, only one person used **kpasɛ** to describe this scenario while the other two and, later, the research assistant used **lɛ**. In another picture involving a cat sitting under a table (TRPS 31), a different person preferred **kpasɛ** for the locative relation while the remaining three, including the one who had accepted **kpasɛ** for the ball under the chair rejected it. Note that the alternative verb choice in this case too was **lɛ**. In a picture involving a gum stuck under a table, all the speakers used **lɛ**.

Speakers of Likpe also extend their containment-verb to negative space conceived as a Figure that is contained in a place. Examples of such scenarios are represented by a

hole in a towel (TRPS 18) and a crack in a cup (TRPS 26). While one speaker used **kpasɛ** to describe the location of the holes in the towels they all rejected its use for the crack in the cup. Likpe also extends its verb to attachment scenarios such as handle on door (TRPS 61), pendant on chain (TRPS 57), and handle on purse (TRPS 66). Adornment scenarios such as shoe on foot (TRPS 21), necklace around neck (TRPS 51), ring on finger (TRPS 10), and earring in ear (TRPS 69) all elicit the containment verb in Likpe. In Tutrugbu, the attachment scenarios do not elicit **kpasɛ**. In the case of adornment, one person used **kpasɛ** to describe the earring in the ear scenario, and another accepted it as an alternative verb for the picture of the necklace around the neck. Those who used **kpasɛ** for the adornment pictures did not include a postposition. An example is provided below:

(14)	**Tógɛ̄**	**nɔ́**	**a-kpasɛ**	**yɛ**	**atɔ̋**
	Earring	DEF	AM-be.contained	3SG	ear
	The earring is in her ear				

Constructions which contain information about the reference object but say nothing about the Search Domain are taken to be reduced BLCs. Stereotypical relations, which include adornments such as ring in ear and necklace around the neck, are mostly expressed by reduced BLCs in many languages (cf. Levinson and Wilkins 2006). Note, however, that for most of the scenarios, **lɛ** was the preferred choice of verb.

From the foregoing, we can say that detachable Figures that are fully contained inside a large object are prototype scenarios for **kpasɛ**. This is why I have characterized the verb as expressing a containment Relation between a Figure and a Ground. I suggest that the restriction in the type of Ground that qualifies as the appropriate container, and disagreements among speakers as to which scenarios outside of prototype containment should allow for the verb is an indication of a change in progress. In other words, it reflects a lack of stability in the semantics of the verb. In addition to the fact that the alternative choice of verb **lɛ** and the postposition **mɛ** are all cognates in Ewe, a discussion I had with one of the consultants during the elicitation suggests that there is influence from Ewe. All three speakers described the relation depicted in TRPS 31 in which a man has a cigarette butt in his mouth with smoke curling (to show that he is smoking) with **kpasɛ** and the postposition **mɛ**. When I got to the third consultant, I asked him how one would differentiate between a situation in which just the butt of the cigarette is in a person's mouth and another in which the whole cigarette is contained inside the mouth. After pondering over my question for a brief moment, he decided that **kpasɛ** was not good after all but that the best answer is the one below:

(15)	**a-lɛ**	**yɛ**	**o-lugbŭ**
	3SG-be.at	3SG	CM-mouth
	It is at his mouth		

He then adds in Ewe that this is a better characterization of the relation. The shift from **kpasɛ** to **lɛ** and, most importantly, the dropping of the postposition gives rise to a contrast that is similar to what exists in Ewe. Consider the sentences below:

(16) a. **Sigaréti-á** **le** **nu** **mɛ** **nê** Ewe
Cigarette-DEF be.at mouth inside give:3SG
The cigarette is in his mouth

b. **Sigaréti-á** **le** **nu** **nê** Ewe
Cigarette-DEF be.at mouth give:3SG
(The butt of the) the cigarette is in his mouth.

Nê is a conflation of the verb **ná** 'give' and the third person singular pronoun **–i**. Note that (16b), like (15) uses **le** and does not have a postposition. It was clear that Ewe, which was the language in which I was conducting the elicitation, had influenced the new construction he came up with.

I mentioned above that speakers could leave out the postposition when the information encoded in the verb renders it redundant. Although this did not occur in my elicitation sessions using the TRPS and PSPV, spontaneous utterances showed that this occurs. One example which I provide below was uttered by a speaker describing the process of tapping palm wine:

(17) **ee** **yálɛ** **a-kpasɛ** **ke- litú- ɔ́**
Yes this.one AM-be.contained CM- tapping.hole-DEF
Yes this thing is inside the mouth of the tapping hole.

The speaker at this instance was pointing to some residue that prevents the wine from passing through the tapping hole (**kelitú**) in order to enter a container. He therefore has to use his tapping knife to clear the mouth of the hole for the free flow of the wine. Note that when he mentioned the reference object, which is **kelitú**, he did not mention the postposition **mɛ** 'inside'.

3.2 **TSIÐI**

Tsiḍi is another verb that describes the Relation between the Figure and the Ground. In this case, it indicates that the Figure is supported on the horizontal upper surface of the Ground. A prototypical scenario of the **tsiḍi**-type support is illustrated by Figures 1 and 2 in section 1 above which involve a cup and a pen on a table respectively. All the consultants used **tsiḍi**. A typical sentence is produced below:

(18) **kɔ́pu-ɔ́** **tsiḍi** **ɔ-kplɔ̃** **nɔ́** **k-abhā**
cup-DEF H.support CM-table DEF CM-top
The cup is on the table

Just as we saw regarding containment scenarios, the orientation of the Figure does not play a role in determining the choice of the verb. The contrast between two PSPV pictures involving a bottle standing on a table (PSPV 37) and bottles in a lying position on the tables (PSPV 52) are not captured in Tutrugbu either. Instead both are described with **tsiḍi**. The typical response for the bottles scenario is provided below:

(19) **Be-tumpá** **nɔ́** **tsiɖi** **ɔ-kplɔ̃** **nɔ́** **k-abhā**
CM-bottle DEF H.support CM-table DEF CM-top
The bottles are on the table

The relation depicted in pictures involving a rope coiled on top of a tree stump (TRPS 23) and a tablecloth spread over a table (TRPS 29) are also described with **tsiɖi**.

Animacy does not influence the choice of verb either as the relation depicted in the picture of a man standing on the roof of a building (see Figure 6 above) is described by all consultants as:

(20) **anyɛ́** **nɔ́** **tsiɖi** **bɔpá** **nɔ́** **k-abhā**
CM-man DEF H.support CM-house DEF CM-top
The man is on the roof

Ameka (2007) notes that the equivalent of **tsiɖi** in Likpe applies to all surfaces, including rough surfaces like rocks (e.g. in a bottle on a rock), and liquid surfaces (e.g. a boat on water). Since all the scenarios discussed thus far involve support relations, it might appear as if **tsiɖi** possesses the same semantics as the preposition **on** which also expresses support. However, the two differ in that **tsiɖi** expresses support on upper surface. For instance, the relation depicted in the picture on a wall (TRPS 44), and a hat on the head (TRPS 5), among others, elicit completely different verbs. Note that **tsiɖi** cannot be used to describe a relation in which the Figure is on the floor. For some reason, the floor is not conceived as a supporting entity in these languages (see also Ameka 2007 for the discussion of a similar situation in Likpe).

Comparing the BLC in Tutrugbu to that in the four languages discussed in section 1, we notice that Tutrugbu differs from English and Ewe which belong to type I and use a single verb, i.e. **be** and **le** 'be at' in the BLC respectively to describe all the scenarios discussed thus far. English then uses the preposition **on** to express the Relation and Search Domain while Ewe uses **dzî** 'upper surface' to describe the Search Domain alone. In contrast, Tutrugbu uses different verbs to describe containment and support scenarios. However, I noted earlier that Ewe and Tutrugbu share a characteristic in that the postpositions **dzî** and **kabhā** in the two respective languages are used to locate objects on the upper surface of a Ground. Note that Tutrugbu also differs from Dutch and Akan in that while the two verbs focus on the Relation between the Figure and the Ground, the choice of verb is based on the posture in Dutch and the position in Akan.

3.3 SƆMƐ́

This verb describes attachment of the Figure by "a point suspension where the Figure is not supported on any other side" (Ameka 2007:1091). An instance of such a relation is depicted by a coat supported solely by the hook (TRPS 9). Sentences elicited for this particular scenario reflected the possibility of having two different types of Ground, i.e. the nail and the sky. The sentences are provided below:

(21) a. **a-wu** **a-sɔmɛ́** "**nail**"**- ɛ** **ki-shú**
CM-garment AM-suspend nail-DEF CM-skin
A garment is hanging on the nail.

b. **a-wu** **a-sɔmɛ́** **kɛ-lɛ́** **nɔ́** **kɛ-mɛ**
CM-garment AM-suspend CM-sky DEF CM-inside
A garment is hanging in the sky.

The relation in Figure 4 in section 1 involving clothes suspended on a line (TRPS 37) which, as I noted in that section, elicited hang-verbs in Akan and Dutch also elicits **sɔmɛ́**. Likewise the localization of a lamp suspended from the ceiling (TRPS 63).

The "single-point" characterization is important for the semantics of **sɔmɛ́**. Consider Figure 5 in section 1 in which a picture is hanging on the wall (TRPS 44). Although this picture is suspended on a nail like the coat in Figure 9 (TRPS 9), it is also supported by the wall on its lower edges. As such not a single one of our consultants described the relation with **sɔmɛ́**. Instead they all used **lɛ**. In one picture involving a flag on a pole where one could argue that there is more than one point of contact, one person used **sɔmɛ́**. The same person used the verb to describe the localization of a telephone on a wall (TRPS 25). Significantly, the other two speakers together with the field assistant preferred to use **lɛ** for both instances.

Unlike Likpe, Tutrugbu does not extend the meaning of its hang-verb beyond concrete single-point contact. Thus a cloud suspended over a mountain is not described thus. In sum, **sɔmɛ́** involves the suspension of a concrete Figure at a single point.

3.4 **DZI**

Dzĭ characterizes a Figure which is located on its base on the floor. Recall that objects that are supported on a raised surface are described with **tsiḍi**. When such objects are located on their base on the floor, they are described with **dzĭ.** When I first asked people what **dzĭ** means I was told that it means 'to sit'. The one who provided the translation then went on to say that he meant it in the sense in which someone plants himself at a location. **Dzĭ** was indeed used to describe a boy sitting by a fire (TRPS 38). Below is one of the sentences I elicited:

(22) **a-nyɛ́núvɔɛ** **nɔ́** **e-dzĭ** **ki-fú** **ɔ-bha**
CM-boy DEF AM-be.on.base CM-fire CM-side
The boy is at the side of the fire.

Other uses indicate that its meaning is more general hence the characterization as a figure located on its base. For instance, as shown below, the relation depicted in a picture of a tree standing in front of a church (TRPS 49) elicited **dzĭ**:

(23) **O-sí-ɔ́** **o-dzĭ** **sɔlɛmɛ** **nɔ́** **o-tugbă**
CM-tree-DEF AM-be.on.base church DEF CM-front
The tree is (standing) in front of the church.

Dzĭ is used here because the tree is firmly rooted in the ground. If it had been cut down, it would not have elicited the verb. Similarly, in describing PSPV 58 in which a bottle is planted firmly on the ground **dzĭ** was used.

The curious thing about **dzĭ** is that there was not a single instance in which all the consultants used it to describe a picture as they did with **kpasɛ** and **tsiɖi**. In the scenario involving a boy sitting by the fire, two speakers used it while the third person used **lɛ**. The field assistant later confirmed that **dzĭ** was an appropriate verb. Where the tree stands in front of the church in Figure 10 above too, only one consultant used it during the elicitation. However in this case too, the field assistant explained that it could be used. Likewise Figure 3 in which a ladder is leaning against a wall. In the last two cases, different people used **dzĭ**, suggesting a lack of consistency among the people. I take it to be evidence that the verb is ceding its position to **lɛ** in the BLC.

3.5 **LƐ**

The final verb is **lɛ**. Ameka (2007:1085) characterizes the Likpe equivalent **tə́** as "signal[ing] the topological relation of coincidence". A similar characterization can be given to **lɛ** in Tutrugbu. However, the uses to which the latter is put are much broader. The best way to put it is that it is used for relations that are not pre-empted by **tsiɖi**, **kpasɛ** and, to a lesser extent, **ɗzĭ**. For an illustration, consider a scenario of a dog sitting beside a kennel (TRPS 47). This is one scenario in which, because the dog has assumed a sitting posture, one would assume that **dzĭ** would be used. However, all my consultants, including the field assistant chose **lɛ**. In Likpe, the propinquity verb (**fi** 'be near) was the preferred option. Scenarios involving butter on a knife (TRPS 12), hole in towel (TRPS 18), telephone against a wall (TRPS 25), crack in a cup (TRPS 26), arrow through a fruit (TRPS 30), rain on a pane (TRPS 48), holders on a wall (TRPS 50), etc., were all described with **lɛ**. These scenarios include part-whole relations and negative-space Figures for which there are no specific verbs to describe the relation. In cases where the Figure is located at its base on the floor, **lɛ** competes with **dzĭ**. In the scenario where a boy is sitting by a fire, one of the two consultants who used **dzĭ** first used **lɛ**. Thus **dzĭ** was offered only as an alternative. Also, in describing a ring on a finger, one of the consultants first described the relation using **lɛ** and then offered **kpasɛ** as an alternative. In fact of the relations depicted in the 71 TRPS pictures, the first, second and third consultants used **lɛ** 40, 38 and 28 times respectively in their first responses. The question then is why is **lɛ** so overwhelmingly used in the language?

I propose that the situation has not always been like this but that there has been a change under the influence of Ewe. Recall that Ewe speakers use **le** exclusively in their BLC. Recall further that when a consultant tried to distinguish between having the butt of a cigarette in between the lips and having the whole cigarette in the mouth, he switched to a construction with **lɛ** that looked suspiciously like one in Ewe.

Tutrugbu has verbs like **kana** 'surround', **nyá** 'tie' **kpa plénɔ** 'lean against'. Yet these verbs, when used, were rather used causatively. Consider the sentences below:

(24) a. **Ba-kpɛ́** **bɔ-ká** **kana** **bu-vũ-ɔ**
3PL-put.in CM-wall surround CM-room-DEF
They have put a wall around the house.

b. **A-nyá** **bɛ́lɛt**
3SG-tie belt
She's wearing a belt (literally tied a belt).

Sentence (24a) describes the location of a fence around a house (TRPS 44). It involves a causative verb occurring together with a directional verb thereby yielding a serial verb construction (SVC). Sentence (23b) describes the location of a lady wearing a belt around her stomach (TRPS 42). When I pressed the consultant to tell me where the belt was (in an attempt to have the belt in subject position), she said the following:

(25) **a-lɛ** **yɛ** **ɛyá** **mɛ**
3SG-be.at 3SG CM-stomach inside
It is at her stomach

In sum although Tutrugbu speakers have verbs describing some postures and dispositions, they prefer to use the general relational verb **lɛ** which has a cognate in Ewe, a language with which it is in heavy contact. I will show presently that other GTM languages make use of their posture and positional verbs in the BLC. I take that to be further evidence that Tutrugbu is losing the use of its verbs because of influence from Ewe. Before looking at the other languages, I briefly discuss the postpositions used in the BLC.

3.6 THE POSTPOSITIONS

As I have shown in the discussion, the BLC in Tutrugbu includes a postpositional phrase headed by a postposition. I use the term in the same way that it has been used in the Kwa literature and cogently argued by Ameka (2003). It should be stressed that the Kwa postposition differs from the type in languages like Japanese where they are necessarily adjuncts. As argued by Ameka (2003), postpositions in Kwa languages can occur as arguments.

The postpositions that occur in Tutrugbu are **kɛmɛ** 'inside', **kabhā** 'top', **kishú** 'skin (outer layer)' **kishi** 'middle', **kelũ** mouth, tip', and **kesî** 'down, under'. Although I have written these postpositions with their class markers, they rarely occur with the markers. Postpositions are known to derive mainly from grammaticalized body parts. Of the ones I elicited during my research for this paper, **kelũ** 'tip' derives from **olũgbŭ** 'mouth' while **kishú** 'skin' comes from **shumɛ** 'body' and **shupî** 'skin'. When **kesî** occurs alone as the complement of a verb, it means 'down', as in **zã̀ kesî** (pronounced **zĩ̀ esí**) 'sit down'. As a postposition, it indicates the down part of the noun which is the Ground. This gives rise to an 'under' interpretation. **Kabhā** 'top' derives from **piabha** 'upper part' which is used to describe the higher parts of mountainous regions. I believe **kɛmɛ** is borrowed from Ewe **mɛ** and, thus far, I have not been able to determine the source of **kishi**.

4. EVIDENCE FROM OTHER GTM LANGUAGES

In this section, I look at three other GTM languages in which the BLC has been investigated. As I show, all these languages have a lot more verbs than Tutrugbu has. Interestingly, they all have the support and containment-type verbs. This suggests that they used to share some properties relating to this construction. I take this to be evidence that Tutrugbu has lost some of its verbs.

4.1 LIKPE

Ameka (2007:1066) writes "Likpe is a multiverb language since it uses a set of 15 contrasting verbs in the BLC." In the abstract to the paper, he writes:

> The verbs fall into four semantic subclasses: (a) basic topological relations: **tə́** 'be.at', **tə́kə́** 'be.on', **kpé** 'be.in', and **fi** 'be.near'; (b) postural verbs: **si** 'sit', **nyə̃** 'stand', **fáka** 'hang', **yóma** 'hang', **kpə́sé** 'lean' **fusə́** 'squat', and **labe** 'lie'; (c) "distributive verbs": **kpó** 'be spread heaped' and **tí** 'be covered'; and (d) "adhesion" verbs: **má** 'be griped, be fixed', **mánkla** 'be stuck to' (Ameka 2007:1066).

According to Ameka **kpé** is used to localize entities in contained spaces — be they concrete or abstract, animate or inanimate (2007:1080), while **tə́kə́** 'be.on' is used to describe a locative configuration where a Figure is in contact with and supported by a surface on the horizontal plane (p1083). As I showed above, these are clearly equivalents of **kpasɛ** 'be contained' and **tsiɖi** 'horizontal support' in Tutrugbu. **Si**, which Ameka characterizes as "the canonical state of an animate entity on its base supported from below by a surface" (p1086), is similar to **dzĭ** although, unlike **si dzĭ** is not restricted to animate entities alone. Finally **fáka** is similar to **sɔmɛ́** 'hang'. In spite of the similarity of meaning between the forms, I have shown that the uses of Trutrugbu equivalents are more restricted than the ones in Likpe. Moreover in the few cases where the extended meanings are used, speakers do not agree on whether the use is appropriate or not.

4.2 TAFI

Tafi, like Tutrugbu has equivalents for **tsiɖi** (**tsirí**) and **kpasɛ** (**kpasɪ̄**). In a paper presented at the International Workshop on GTM languages, Bobuafor (2008) lists 10 verbs for Tafi. These include **kpaplúnɔ̄** 'lean against', **sɔmɪ́** 'hang', **dzí** 'be located on base', **tsobúnɔ̄** 'be near', **lí** 'be positioned', **lɪ** 'be at', **kplá** 'be fixed', **bʊbɔ** 'squat'. Adaptations of some examples from Tafi are provided below:

(26) a. **kɔpu=n** **é-tsirí** **kplɔ̃̌** **ní** **abhā** Tafi
Cup=DEF AM-be.on table DEF top
The cup is on the table.

b. **Ki-sígbé=n** **í-kpasɪ̄** **'ɪ-wɔ́ɛ̄=n** Tafi
CM-ring=DEF SM-be.in CM-finger-DEF
The ring is on the finger.

c. **a-dʒramoá=n** **é-dzí** **o-pútsó** **ní** **ábhā** Tafi
CM-cat=DEF SM-be.located.on.base CM-mat DEF top
The cat is sitting on the mat.

d. **á-nyínúvɔ̄ɛ̄=n** **é-tsobúnɔ̄** **ki-fú** Tafi
CM-boy=DEF SM-be.near CM-fire
The boy is near the fire.

e. **ké-dénglé=n** **á-kpaplínɔ̄** **ki-drī=ń** Tafi
CM-Ladder=DEF SM-lean.against CM-wall=DEF
The ladder is leaning against the wall.

Sentence (26a) is similar to the one elicited in Trutrugbu where **tsiḍi** was used to describe a cup located on a table. I noted that only one person used **kpasɛ** to describe the ring in the ear. I also stated that the construction that the person used was a reduced BLC because it didn't have a postposition. It is not immediately clear how many used the equivalent **kpasɪ̄** in Tafi. Note however that (26b) which refers to an adornment is also a reduced BLC. The most interesting sentences for our purposes are (26c-26e). As I explained in section 3.4, although **dzi** means 'be located on base' which, for animate entities, means to be seated, this verb was not used to describe the cat sitting on the mat. Instead, **tsiḍi** was used. Sentence (26c) shows that this is the verb of choice to represent the scenario in Tafi. Finally **tsobúnɔ̄** and **kpaplínɔ̄** were not elicited at all even though **kpa plénɔ**, the equivalent of the latter exists in Tutrugbu as well.

4.3 LOGBA

Logba does not have the two relational verbs that Tutrugbu, Likpe and Tafi have. However, according to Dorvlo (2008) it uses 12 verbs in its BLC. Interestingly, this includes **le** 'be located'. The other verbs are **kpɔ** 'lie', **kɔ** 'hang', **tɔ** 'fix', **tsi** 'sit', **ye** 'stand', **gbɛ** 'lean', **gbo** 'fall', **tsoga** 'lie across', **buá** 'turn upside down', **glɛ́** 'tie', and **dzi** 'tie firmly' (Dorvlo 2008:115). In order to discuss the scenario involving the cup on a table, Logba uses **le** 'be located', as shown in an adaptation of Dorvlo's example (44) below as (27):

(27) a. **kɔpu-é** **ó-le** **ɔ-sá-á** **zugbó** Logba
Cup-DEF AM-be.located CM-table-DEF top
The cup is on the table.

b. **U-rime-é** **ɔ́-tɔ́** **bagi-é** **yó** Logba
CM-handle-DET CM-fix bag-DET skin
The handle is on the bag.

c. **n-tsɔḍi** **ɔ́-gbɛ** **a-gli- é** **yó** Logba
CM-ladder AM-lean wall-DET skin
The ladder leans against the wall.

Dorvlo notes that Logba combines **gbó** which he glosses as 'be placed' together with other posture verbs in order to describe the position of the Figure. Two of his examples are provided below:

(28) a. **ɔ-yɔ́tsi-é** **ó-gbó** **gbɛ** **ɔ-yɔ́-á** **yó** Logba
CM-stick-DET AM-be.placed lean CM-tree-DEF skin
The stick leans against the tree.

b. **Tumpa ɔ-kpɛ ó-gbó kpɔ o-yɔ́tsigbo-é tsu** Logba
Bottle AM-one AM-be.placed lie CM-stump-DET top
One bottle lies on the stump.

Constructions involving **gbó** and a posture verb are not BLCs. Instead, they represent a different way of expressing locative constructions. I will therefore not consider these among the BLC verbs. Still, even if these verbs are left out, Logba has 10 verbs as opposed to the 5 in Tutrugbu. It shows that the three GTM languages have many more verbs than Tutrugbu has. According to the typology of BLC, they belong to Type III. In the next section, I provide evidence that Tutrugbu may have possessed that many number of verbs before.

4.4 THE LONE PREPOSITION

According to the hierarchy, Tutrugbu which has five verbs should belong to Type II. This means that the verbs should express posture if the language belongs to Type IIa or Ground space if it belongs to Type IIb. However, the discussion has shown that the verbs in Tutrugbu are best characterized as relational verbs. For this reason, Ameka and Levinson (2007:865) propose that the language "probably belongs to a configurational verb subtype of the small-type languages (a Type IIc)." In other words, Tutrugbu belongs to a category of its own. In this section I discuss one property of Tutrugbu which suggests that it might originally have belonged to the multiverb category (i.e. Type III). That is the fact that it possesses only one preposition.

Ameka and Levinson note that multiverb languages, i.e. languages belonging to Type III usually have a limited number of prepositions. They note, for instance that Tzeltal has "just one noncontrastive preposition [and] all the spatial information in this language is in the predicate" (Ameka and Levinson 2007:849). Tzeltal, it turns out has about 200 positional verbs. Tutrugbu also has just one preposition. Consider the sentences below:

(29) a. **Ko kɛlɛ a - shɛ̃ né kɛlé**
Just then 3SG - leave PREP there
Then she left that place

b. **kɛlɛ a-flá né kɛlé**
then 3SG-pass.by PREP there
Then she passed by the place

c. **klɛ otsí a-lɔkɔ-e kpũ a-lɔkɔ**
then now 3SG- take-3SG hide 3SG- take
e-dé-kpũ né ɔ-kɔ́ bhlatɔ́.
SCONN-go -hide PREP CM- place other
Then now she took it (watch) and went and hid it at the other place

The examples here are taken from an elicitation for focus construction in which speakers are shown a video of a lady who goes into an office which she shares with two colleagues, leaves her watch on the table, goes out to make tea and comes back to find the watch gone. **Shɛ̃** in (29a) means to move from a place and, therefore, the preposition receives a 'from' interpretation (see also example 8b above). In (29b) **flá** means to pass by and therefore **nɛ́** receives a 'by' interpretation. The default interpretation for **nɛ́**, however, is the one that appears in (29c), which is 'at'. What this shows is that the translation of nɛ as either 'from', 'by' and 'at' depends on the verb with which it occurs. If the meaning of the sole preposition in Tutrugbu is, as we have shown, determined by the meaning of the verb[4], then it suggests that this verb should belong to Type III. The fact that it doesn't today, is most likely due to influence from Ewe.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have discussed the BLC in Tutrugbu which I have shown to be the default way in which it localizes entities. According to the typology of such the BLC, there are four main types, with types I and II having sub-types. I have shown that Tutrugbu currently belongs to type II because it uses 5 relational verbs. However, unlike other verbs of the type that either express postural information or information about the Ground, Tutrugbu rather expresses relational information. Ameka and Levinson (2007) therefore propose that the language belongs to a sub-type of its own. I have proposed that Tutrugbu possibly started as a Type III, i.e. a multiverb language. The reasons include the restriction of the meaning of its relational verbs and lack of consistency among speakers as to which one is appropriate. This suggests a flux in the meaning of the verbs. Moreover, where there is doubt, speakers are inclined to choose the general relational verb **lɛ** 'be at' which has a cognate in Ewe. In Ewe, this is the only verb that is used to localize objects in the BLC. I have suggested that the construction in Ewe has influenced what I consider to be an emergent type in Tutrugbu. The final two reasons that support this position is that other GTM languages, including Tafi of which Tutrugbu is said to be a dialect, all belong to Type III. Moreover, like multiverb languages, Tutrugbu has only one preposition.

ABBREVIATIONS

3	third person	PL	plural
AM	agreement marker	PREP	preposition
CM	class marker	SCONN	serial connective
DEF	definite	SG	singular
H.support	horizontal support	TP	terminal particle,

[4] In some cases the interpretation of the preposition is determined by the postposition. Consider the sentence below:

ɛmɔ	**anyɛ́-ɛ́**	**nɛ́**	**bu-vũ-ɔ**	**mɛ**
1SG	CM-man-DEF	PREP	CM-room	inside

'I saw the man in the room'

Note that **nɛ́** does not appear to have any meaning here and 'in' in the translation comes from **mɛ** 'inside.

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