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17 Togo

Abstract: This chapter presents French as it is spoken in Togo. Taking the form of a survey, we first attempt to situate the French language within the Togolese sociolinguistic space. We recall the endogenous (indigenous)-exogenous characterization of the various languages, their geographical spread, and social distribution. We highlight the fact that the French language is an exogenous language; and that it is placed within a rich linguistic ecology. Consequently, functionally, it participates in a multidimensional multilingual arrangement. In this arrangement, two major endogenous languages, Ewe and Kabiye, due to the rather turbulent linguistic history of the country, play major stratal vehicular roles. This has influences not only on the language ideology and policies of the country but also on the linguistic features of the most ubiquitous exogenous language, French. The linguistic influences are observable on all levels of linguistic analysis, with a seeming ongoing process of nativization. The suggestion then is that this should be the right time for full-scale projects to document the grammar of this nativized variety.

Keywords: Togo, linguistic ecology, multilingualism, French, nativization

1 Sociolinguistic situation

One of the characteristics of African countries is their rich linguistic diversity (Zsiga/ Boyer/Kramer 2015, 201–205). In the case of Togo, the linguistic landscape consists of multiple indigenous languages as well as various European, Asian, and other African languages (Lasisi 1993, 1). These languages coexist in complex and shifting structures of multilingual communication that challenge traditional views of multilingualism in Africa. On the one hand, the multilingual language situation of Togo can be described in terms of the well-known trilingual model of multilingualism that is often considered typical of Africa (Batibo 2005, 17). In this three-term system of languages, there is one language that is considered the local community language, one language that is an "indigenous" lingua franca, and the third language is a European language that has national and international currency. French is the main European language in present-day Togo, and the two other languages depend on geographic location. For example, in the town of Aklakou in the South of Togo, children are educated in French, their parents speak Mina at the local market, and Kotafon is spoken at home if they are of Kotafon ancestry – both Mina (Gen) and Kotafon belonging to the Gbe cluster of languages that are part of the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family. On the other hand, in the north, the indigenous linguae francae are Kabiye and Dagbani, and the third language is likely to be a Central Gur language.

However, multilingualism in Togo is often more complex than this three-way division. First, one could argue that Hausa is in competition with Mina and Kabiye, particularly in trading centres of the North where it is widely used as a lingua franca. In the North, Ewe and Kabiye are used in public schools as languages of instruction in addition to French, but furthermore, Arabic is the main language of instruction in Islamic schools. More importantly, the trilingual model fails to capture the common observation that individuals may use more than one language in the same social domain. Individuals may even switch between languages in the same utterance (cf. Essizewa 2007 for examples of codeswitching between Kabiye and Ewe).

In some African countries such as Nigeria, for example, new languages have emerged out of these situations of high and intense language contact, as shown by Naijá (previously known as Nigerian Pidgin) for example. No new contact language has emerged in Togo. But there is variation in French, ranging from acrolectal French to mesolectal French. This is despite the spread of Mina as a lingua franca. Thus, to capture the context within which the French language evolves in Togo, one must appreciate the linguistic ecology of Togo.

The estimated number of languages spoken in Togo varies from one scholar to another. According to Takassi (1983, 31), there are forty-four languages spoken in Togo. Afeli (2003, 120) reduces this number to about thirty languages. Ethnologue estimates the number of Togolese languages at thirty-nine, including French, French Sign Language, and Fulfulde (cf. Eberhard/Simons/Fennig 2023; Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa 2018, 24). Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa (2012, 24) count thirty-seven languages, while they lower that number to thirty-three in their newly revised edition of 2018. Glottolog lists 53 languages of Togo (cf. Hammarström et al. 2023). In summary, each author distinguishes between languages and their varieties on different grounds, reflecting increased insights into language naming practices as well as advancements in linguistic research. As languages are known by many names by different groups and peoples, some authors mistakenly count the same language twice, assuming that the names, which could refer to the language on the one hand, and the people on the other, refer to different languages. The case of Waci is very informative: While Waci was generally regarded as a language in earlier works, it is currently regarded as a variety of Ewe (Kluge 2007). A second issue concerns the categorization of the languages. Commonly, languages in Togo are categorized as either indigenous or exogenous. This is however different from author to author. Thus, Fulfulde, also known as Fulani or Peul, is sometimes labelled as indigenous but at other times as exogenous. Also, the criteria for distinction are not always clear. For example, the Portuguese arrived in the region around the same time as the Ga, but the Portuguese language is generally regarded as an exogenous language, whereas the language of the Ga, that is Gen, but more commonly known in Togo as Mina, is typically viewed as indigenous. In the next sub-section, we do not dwell on these latter issues, as they are beyond the scope of this chapter. We instead concentrate on providing information on the geographical distribution of the languages and their roles within the Togolese sociolinguistic space, as this influences French as it is spoken in the country.

1.1 Geographical distribution

Present-day Togo is divided into five regions, ranging from Savannah in the north to Kara and Central in the middle, and Plateaux and Maritime in the south. In general, Mabia (Gur) languages are dominant in the north, while Kwa languages dominate in the south. Table 1 presents an overview of the languages distributed across the various regions.

Table 1: Overview of languages per region (cf. Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa 2018, 399; RGPH 2010)

Region	Population	Area (km²)	Inhabi-tants/km²	Capital	Languages
Maritime (with Lomé)	2,565,696	6,395	401	Lomé	Ewe, Adangbe, Xwla Gbe, Xwela Gbe
Plateaux	1,363,997	16,974	80	Atakpamé	Ifè, Igo, Ikposo, Aja, Fon, Kebu Fula
Central	610,140	13,182	46	Sokodé	Tem, Akaselem, Anii, Bago-Kusuntu, Delo, Adele, Ginyanga
Kara	759,825	11,631	65	Kara	Kabiye, Ditammari, Lama, Miyobe, Nawdm, Ntcham
Savannah	816,098	8,603	94	Dapaong	Moba, Gourmanchéma, Mampruli, Anufo, Biali, Bissa, Kusaal, Ngangam, Mbelime, Konkomba, Mossi

Overviews such as Table 1 are, however, highly simplified representations of reality and should be treated with caution. Even though multiple languages are listed for each region, the total number of languages per region is higher if the languages are included that are not considered typical of the region. Due to migration (trade, education, marriage), the regions are actually more multilingual than suggested by the table.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the present geographical distribution of the languages is different from the distribution in the past. The area has seen many drawings and redrawings of linguistic and ethnic boundaries, and this is reflected in the extreme geographical and genetic discontinuity of the linguistic map of the area that is now known as Togo (also cf. Dakubu 1997; Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa 2018). The most widely known historical example is perhaps the foundation of the southern town of Glidji, that is located some thirty kilometres from Lomé, the current capital. Glidji was founded in 1663 by the Ga ruling family, which fled from the Akwamu in present-day Ghana. There, the Ga became known as the Gen (*Guin* in French), and they merged with the Mina. It is their variety of Ewe that has become the commercial language of Togo – Mina women played an important role in the early stages of this process (cf. Dakubu 1997, 126; Bole-Richard 1983, 6).

The Glidji case is to be distinguished from movements that occurred because of slavery. Slave raids were the cause of a lengthy period of instability in the northern regions in

the nineteenth century. Many individuals, as well as groups, migrated to safer grounds, where they were assimilated by the communities that were already there. For example, speakers of a language called Simaí became part of the Siwu-speaking Akpafu, replacing their original language with Siwu (Dakubu 1997, 127). But then, examples such as these are rare; not because these migrations did not happen, but, as Dakubu points out,

> "[s]ince no knowledge of the earlier languages has remained, it is impossible to say how many languages totally disappeared and how many lost some of their speakers but survive elsewhere" (1997, 127).

The slave trade not only impacted the northern regions but also the southern region. From the fifteenth century onwards, Europeans erected forts and castles on the West African coast to facilitate trade. At the time, the Portuguese language became an important trade language on the entire west African coast. Its presence in the coastal region of present-day Togo was reinforced by the return of Portuguese-speaking Afro-Brazilians after manumission in the early eighteenth century and later, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, by Afro-Brazilians who were looking for opportunities for advancement, but also to escape persecution by the Brazilian government. Afro-Brazilian families have gone on to have considerable influence on the economic and political life of Togo (Amos 2001). Between 1884 and 1960, the southern part of Togo known as Eweland experienced shifting and episodic colonial governance by the Germans (1885–1914), the British (1914–1919), and the French (1914/1919–1956). Furthermore, the League of Nations Mandate, the United Nations Trusteeship systems, and the Nazi-backed Vichy regime also played prominent roles (cf. Lawrance 2007, 3ss., for details). Thus, German, English, and French further diversified the already complex and variable linguistic landscape of the region.

1.2 Social distribution

From a demographic perspective, the languages of Togo can be ordered as follows, based on numbers of speakers (cf. Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa 2018, 400s.): both Ewe and Kabiye have more than one million native speakers. Ewe native speakers represent the majority in the south and in the whole country. They are estimated to be 3 million people. Kabiye occupies the second position, and its native speakers are estimated to be 1,098,393 people. Tem, Moba, Nawdm, Gourmanchéma, Ikposo, Lama, Aja, Ifè, Ntcham, Fon (including Kotafon), and Fulfulde have more than one hundred thousand speakers. Konkomba, Anufo, Akebu, Akaselem, Ngangam, Ditammari, Xwla Gbe, Xwela Gbe, Mossi, Kebu Fula, and Adele have between twenty and one hundred thousand native speakers. Ginyanga, Anii, Miyobe, Mampruli, Bissa, Bago-Kusuntu, Igo, Delo, Adangbe, Biali, Mbelime, Dagbani, and Kusaal have less than twenty thousand speakers.

The demographic composition of the population of Togo may have far-reaching consequences in terms of language maintenance and linguistic diversity. The majority of

the population (60 %) is under the age of twenty-five (INSEED 2015, 5). Young adults are particularly mobile, moving to cities for education and jobs, where they encounter Mina and/or Kabiye, depending on the location. This can shape multilingual language practices, but it may also lead to language endangerment. It should be noted, however, that other factors such as socio-economic background, group membership, location, age, and gender also impact multilingualism. For example, many members of the generally affluent and influential Afro-Brazilian community only speak French and sometimes Portuguese (Amos 2001, 296). On the other hand, it may be the case that an elderly Kusasi woman from the village of Biankouri in the North is not as fluent in French as she is in Kusaal, as she may have encountered French only in primary school (cf. Hoogeveen/Rossi 2019, 9–30, for an overview of primary education in Togo).

Furthermore, the different languages of Togo have various social meanings. While French, English, and Portuguese are generally associated with modernity and progress, they are also associated with feelings of exploitation, dishonesty, and foreignness. Depending on the location, the same holds for the languages that are used as regional linguae francae. Indigenous languages, on the one hand, are associated with authenticity, honesty and belongingness, and traditional wisdom and knowledge, but they are also regarded as backward, uneducated, obsolete, and a hindrance to economic progress. People are aware of the different and sometimes contradictory connotations of the languages, and they make use of them in conversation. For example, one of the participants in our research on codeswitching (van den Berg et al. 2017) commented that he did not want to use his indigenous language in the colour naming task as the objects were 'too modern' and 'too nice' to be characterized by a colour name that invokes the sense of murky water. Another example that illustrates the difference in social meaning of the various languages concerns language use in negotiations with taxi drivers and motorcycle taxis in Lomé. Speaking French in these negotiations causes the fare to go up.

2 Linguistic history

The linguistic history of French in Togo is closely linked to the school system under colonial rule. English, German, and two variants of Ewe were used in school during the period of German colonization (1884–1914). During the French and British occupation of Togo (1914–1920), English and Ewe were used in schools in the areas that were under British rule. In the French areas, only French was taught in schools. The first school during the French occupation of Togo was built in 1915 (cf. Afeli 2003, 19). After 1922, when the shared colonial rule of Togo by England and France came to an end, French colonizers continued their exogenous language policy, and they reinforced the position of French as the sole language of instruction (cf. Bafei 2011, 251).

2.1 Introduction of French in Togo

The introduction of French in Togo dates to the period of French colonization in Western Africa. French colonization in Togo came with a third educational system, as the Togolese had already been exposed to German and British educational systems prior to the arrival of the French (cf. Bunche 1934 for an early overview; Gbikpi-Benissan 2011; Lawrance 2000, among others, for more contemporary overviews). After the fall of Germany in World War I, Togo was considered an unexplored land. On 4 and 5 August 1914, Governor Von Doering sent a telegram to the Governors of Dahomey (current Benin) and Gold Coast (Ghana) to consider Togo as a neutral land. The two Governors refused, and this was followed by the invasion of Togo. On 7 August 1914, the British occupied Lomé, and on 8 August, the French took possession of Aného. By 27 August of that year, Togo was in the hands of the Allies. During the first partition, Lomé and Kpalimé were attributed to the British, who administered the areas for six years. In the second partition, which happened on 10 July 1919, France got back Lomé and Kpalimé. As compensation, France offered two portions of its Togolese territory to the British in the North. The official restoration of Lomé and Kpalimé to the French took place in October 1920. On 20 July 1922, the League of Nations Council ratified the agreement between the French and British. This marked the official occupation of Togo by France, and the delimitation of Togolese territory was reorganized.

During the French administration, the Togolese education system underwent some crises. According to Lange (1989), there were two main causes. The first was related to the change of the language of education, and the second concerned the fact that German missionaries were expelled from the country. The change of language was a hard knock because the schools situated in Lomé and Kpalimé had earlier abandoned German for English. This third change nevertheless marked the official introduction of French into Togo.

According to Essizewa (2007, 40), when the French took over, the country was not considered a French colony. It was a separate entity, governed by a French High Commissioner. As Chumbow/Bobda (2000, 40) remark, this distinction was only theoretical because Togo was treated the same way as the other French colonial territories. French became the colonial language of instruction and administration, even though very few people could speak it. The French colonial administration imposed an educational system modelled on that of Metropolitan France, with French as the sole language of instruction. Togolese languages were looked down upon and were not allowed in the classroom. The main objective of the French administration during the colonial period, as described by Lange (1989, 46) was

> 'to train as quickly as possible, the francophone workforce needed, in order to put in place a colonial administration'.[1]

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1 "Former très vite le personnel francophone nécessaire à la mise en place de l'administration coloniale" (Lange 1989, 46).

Togolese students from French colonial schools received degrees equivalent to that of Metropolitan France. In fact, it can be said without exaggeration that the Frenchification of the educational system in Togo began from the French colonial occupation, continued up to independence, and has endured, to some extent, to the present day.

2.2 Development of French in Togo

To assert their domination in Togo, the French adopted a national education policy as soon as they arrived in August 1914. The aim of the policy was to impose the French language and culture while expelling the German missionaries from Togo. Thus, the development of the French language in Togo dates to its imposition as the only language of instruction in primary schools. Similarly, the contents of the curriculum, as well as the structures of the education system, were developed according to the expectations of the French. By subjecting the population to instruction in French, France intended to transmit its own culture to the Togolese (cf. Hamelin 2014, 17). With the aim of assimilating the Togolese, the French believed that education was one of the best means to attain this objective. They, therefore, created many schools, especially in the southern part of Togo, and this constituted the springboard for the development of the French language in Togo. As Turcotte puts it:

> 'Indeed, the school is the surest way that a civilising nation can use to get a primitive population to adhere to their ideas so that they can bring them up to their level. The school is, in one word, the surest propaganda element of the cause and the French language, available to the government'.[2]

The Ewe language was thus eliminated from primary school. By 1922, only French was used in schools, and it was the only recognized language of official business (cf. Bafei 2011, 251). Indeed, to promote the language, the French imposed a system of education, which did not consider the local languages. Pupils were simply punished for using local languages at school. Students caught speaking a local language were given a dirty old animal skull to wear around the neck. It was called *signal* and constituted an insult and a shame. As Pastor Kpizing recalls,

> 'Once registered in school, whether we liked it or not, we were forced to bury our maternal language, at least on the school compound, so we speak the language of the colonial master. Many can still remember the signal system. The enlightened person was therefore the person who despised the language and culture of his ancestors and took pleasure in the language of the colonial master'.[3]

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2 "L'école est en effet, le moyen d'action le plus sûr qu'une nation civilisatrice ait d'acquérir à ses idées les populations encore primitives et de les élever graduellement jusqu'à elle. L'école est, en un mot, l'élément de propagande de la cause et de la langue française le plus certain dont le gouvernement puisse disposer" (Turcotte 1981, 51).
3 "Une fois inscrit à l'école, bon gré, mal gré, on était contraint d'enterrer la langue maternelle, du moins sur le territoire scolaire pour ne parler que la langue du colon. D'aucuns peuvent encore se souvenir du

The period after 1920 was marked by French concern to spread the French language in Togo. Hence, schools were built in almost all administrative districts of the country. They also restructured the education policy, and created village, regional and complementary schools (cf. Marguerat 2003, 392). However, in the North of the country, few schools were built, as parents were reluctant to send their children, especially boys, to school. On the other hand, in the south, especially on the coastal lands, people expressed huge demands for school buildings. As Afeli puts it, 'The 1920s was characterized by a huge development in the public school system'.[4] This school system continued until the aftermath of World War II when, under the pressure of post-war events, the Togolese education system was harmonized with the French system. Thus, from 1915 to independence, there was a rapid development of primary education, which was accompanied by the emergence of secondary education and the consolidation of elite training. Consequently, at the end of the French era (before independence), Togo was the most educated country in French West Africa, with an average literacy rate of 24 % in 1950.

3 External language policy

This section deals with the legislation on French as the only official language in Togo, as well as with its use among public authorities, in education, and the media.

3.1 Legislation of French in Togo

French became the official language in the first Constitution of the country (cf. Essizewa 2007, 41). Thus, at independence, the language issue was not a debate: French continued and continues to be the only official language for conducting government business.

3.2 Language used by public authorities

We observe that French is mainly used by public authorities in Togo. However, individual representatives use, in addition to French, their native languages, especially in oral communication. Consequently, although French is the unmarked choice, authorities use their native languages depending on the interlocutor or the intended audience. The other choice is often Ewe, which is assuming the role of a lingua franca. Codeswitching seems nevertheless limited: Official representatives such as the president, ministers,

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système du "signale." L'évolué était donc celui qui avait méprisé et la langue et la culture de ses ancêtres pour se plaire dans la langue du colon" (Kpizing 1992, 2).

4 "La période des années 20 est marquée par un très grand développement de l'enseignement public" (Afeli 2003, 207).

members of parliament, or mayors use only French for their official speeches. French is also the only language used in official documents and correspondences, on road signs, banknotes, and stamps. It is a common language in multilingual official and unofficial meetings across the country (cf. Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa 2018, 406).

3.3 Languages used in education

In many French-speaking countries, the education system is generally dominated by the use of one language, which is French (cf. Reutner 2017, 31ss.). In Togo, three languages are officially used in education, but not at the same levels. French is the only language of instruction. Children are taught in French from the first year onwards, even if they have little exposure to French prior to school entry. Hoogeveen/Rossi (2019) compare outcomes on learning tests in primary education across francophone Africa. They conclude that Togo does worse in French than most francophone countries, but it is better in maths (Hoogeveen/Rossi 2019, 24). Furthermore, they observe that the problem of low learning achievements emerges in the early grades (Hoogeveen/Rossi 2019, 24). Note that when Togo was under German rule, many schools offered instruction in Ewe. This development was part of the process of standardization that ultimately resulted in a high proportion of Togolese learning to speak, read and write the Ewe language. Ewe books and newspapers were commonplace in Lomé in 1910 (Lawrance 2000, 490). So, as Gbikpi-Benissan observes,

> 'by becoming the only language of instruction in Togo, French took that function away from the Ewe language, one of its core functions under German rule'.[5]

In primary education, only French is used; English is introduced in Junior Secondary School as a compulsory subject, and French remains the core language of instruction; Togolese national languages (Ewe and Kabiye) are subjects of study at both Junior and Senior Secondary school levels (named *collège* and *lycée*, respectively), but not in all secondary schools in Togo – only a few schools, especially confessional schools, teach them as subjects. The two languages are optional subjects in the Junior Secondary School Certificate (*Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle*) examination. They are also optional in the Senior Secondary school Certificate (*baccalaureate*) examination. In addition to the two colonial languages, German and Spanish are also introduced in Senior Secondary School for students whose main field of study is literature and arts. They also appear as optional subjects for students who major in sciences.

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5 "En devenant la seule langue d'enseignement au Togo, le français enlevait à l'éwé une des fonctions qu'elle avait sous l'occupation allemande" (Gbikpi-Benissan 1990, 13).

At the university level, French is the only language of instruction, apart from the departments of English, German, and Spanish, where instruction is done in those languages. Because of its importance in the world today, English is gradually being introduced as a component in other departments apart from the department of English. Ewe and Kabiye are taught in the department of linguistics, and Arabic is taught in the department of English as an optional subject. Today, Chinese is also taking ground in Togo. There is one Chinese institute (*Institut Confucius*) at the University of Lomé offering a bachelor's degree in translation.

3.4 Language used in the media

The media is one of the most important domains for the use of languages in multilingual countries. Because of the official status of French, it is the main language used in almost all domains of the media.

Press – After independence, the first state newspaper was published in 1962. The paper was mainly written in French. A little portion, called *Denyigba* 'homeland', was nevertheless reserved for Ewe. In 1977, Kabiye was introduced in the newspaper, under the heading *Dɛcadɛ* (modified later as *Dɛ-ɛjadɛ* 'homeland'). Today, four languages (French, English, Ewe, Kabiye) are used in various newspapers, with French as the dominant language. In general, only one page is reserved for Ewe and Kabiye, and half a page for English in the official newspaper, *Togo Presse*. Private newspapers and magazines publish exclusively in French. French is also exclusively used in advertising both in print and on screen.

Radio – The situation is different on the radio, where many languages can be heard in addition to French. The use of Togolese languages varies from one radio station to another. There are seventy-nine radio stations in Togo – two state radio stations and seventy-seven private radio stations. Ewe is most widely heard on radio, followed by Kabiye, Gen, Tem, and Moba. Some minority languages such as Adangbe, Anii, Biali, Delo, Adele, Ginyanga, Igo, Kusaal, Xwla Gbe, and Xwela Gbe are not used on the radio. An overview of radio stations and their languages can be found in Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa (2018, 428).

Television – The most frequent languages on television are French, English, Spanish, and Arabic, and further Ewe, Gen, Kabiye, Tem, Ifè, and Ikposo. French is used on all channels, but the other languages differ per channel. On state television (*Télévision Togolaise*), broadcasting is in French, English, Ewe, and Kabiye. Ewe and Kabiye are given fifteen minutes of broadcasting on a daily basis; the rest is mostly French. Private television stations broadcast in French as well as other languages depending on the location of the intended audience and the type of television station. Commercial and regional channels broadcast in French, Ewe, Kabiye, and sometimes in Gen, Tem, Ifè, Ikposo, and Spanish, while religious channels will also use Arabic. A list of television stations can be found in Gblem-Poidi/Kantchoa (2018, 434).

Internet – On the internet, French is the only language used across all the official Togolese websites. Some Togolese languages are used on social media, depending on the user and the intended audience.

4 Linguistic characteristics

The linguistic features characteristic of Togolese French occur on all levels of linguistic analysis. Thus, there are many idiosyncratic features relative to phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicology, semantics, and pragmatics of Togolese French. In this chapter, we restrict ourselves to some phonetic and phonological features, some syntactic features, and some aspects of lexicology.

4.1 Pronunciation

Investigations into the phonetic and phonological features of French spoken in Togo have largely been undertaken within a comparative framework. The main concern has been to interrogate the crosslinguistic phonetic and phonological influences that can be noted. Thus, while Lafage (1985) focuses on juxtaposing the phonological systems of Mina and French in order to identify various influences, including the phonetic and phonological ones, Picron/Simon (2018), carrying out their investigation within the project *Phonologie du Français Contemporain* (cf. Durand/Laks/Lyche 2009), attempt to interpret the features noted of Togolese French as partially the result of influences from Mina. With increasing discussions on the similarities and differences that can be noted in the phonologies of the different varieties of French spoken on the continent, it can be argued that the phonological and phonetic features of Togolese French are better considered as the result of a process of nativization. (We use the term "variety" to refer to the intersubjective form of the language and not to any idiolectal variant, the practice of which Telep (2019) suggests the term *style*). Consequently, many of the phonetic and phonological features of Togolese French, taken from works cited above, align with features noted for varieties spoken elsewhere on the continent, while few seem idiosyncratic (cf. Nimbona/Steien 2019 for similarities between the phonological and phonetic features of various African French varieties, and de Mareüil/Boutin 2011 for a perceptive difference between some of the African French varieties). In this light, the features surveyed concern segmental features more than supra-segmental properties. This notwithstanding, sporadically, some few supra-segmental values are highlighted. We survey not only vowel, consonantal, and glide properties but also some phonological process and their relationship with syllable structures.

Vowels – The vowel sounds inventory of Togolese French is the same as that of standard French i.e., a fifteen-unit system that has eleven oral sounds and four nasal sounds.

Vowels: oppositions – However, like what pertains in standard French and other varieties, the opposition /a/ : /ɑ/ is not manifest. Thus, unlike in Belgian French for instance, where the opposition is realized as a durational contrast (cf. Hambye/Francard/Simon 2003, 4), a distinction is not made between the vowels in the minimal pair *pâte* 'pasta' ~ *patte* 'leg', realized both as [pat] instead of, respectively [pɑt] and [pat].

Vowels: mid vowels – Another noteworthy characteristic of Togolese French is the pattern associated with central vowels, which is often referred to as the law of position (*loi de position*). There are notable exceptions to *la loi de position* in standard French. A systematic characterization of the exceptions in Togolese French is part of the work left to be done on the pronunciation of this variety. See Lenzen (2008) for a succinct overview of discussions involving *la loi de position* in central French and some southern varieties of French. The idea is that, in standard French, the middle vowels distribute such that the tendency is to produce mid-high vowels in open syllables, and mid-low vowels in closed syllables. Thus, in an open syllable, *léger*, *sot*, and *peut* will have a closed pronunciation (respectively [leʒe], [so], and [pø]), while in a closed syllable, *légère*, *sotte* et *peuvent* will have on opened pronunciation (respectively [leʒɛʁ], [sɔt] and [pœv], cf. Lenzen 2008, 7). In Togolese French as well, the tendency is to reduce the phonemic relevance of these oppositions, hence aligning with the standard French pattern. The manifestation of the *loi de position* is, however, only evident when the features of productions are concomitant with targeted features.

Vowels: substitutions – Substitutions mainly concern rounded vowels. For instance, it is not rare for the high front rounded vowel [y] to be realized as the high front unrounded vowel [i]; for the mid-high front rounded vowel [ø] to be realized as the mid-high front unrounded vowel [e]; and for the mid-low rounded vowel [œ] to be realized as the mid-low front unrounded vowel [ɛ] as evidenced in the following examples: *bureau* 'office' can be realized as [biro] instead of [byʁo], *des œufs* 'eggs' as [deze] instead of [dɛzø], and *cœur* 'heart' as [kɛɹ] instead of [kœʁ].

Vowels: nasals – Nasal sounds also manifest the same characteristics. First, all four nasal vowel sounds of standard French can be observed in Togolese French as well. With acoustic correlates yet to be determined, unlike for other African varieties such as Cameroonian French (cf. Nkwescheu 2010), it is not possible to determine the stage of nasality that can be noted for nasal vowels of Togolese French. That which is evident, however, is that nasal sounds can also be substituted for each other. Thus, for instance, [ɛ̃] can be pronounced as [ã]; [ɔ̃] can sound as [õ], and [œ̃] can be realized as [ɛ̃]. The critical point is that the sounds produced differ from those of standard French, as shown in the following examples: *invincible* 'invincible' can be realized as [ãvãsibl̩] instead of [ɛ̃.vɛ̃.sibl], *garçon* 'boy' can be realized as [gaɹsõ] instead of [gaʁ.sɔ̃], and *défunt* 'deceased' can be realized as [defɛ̃] instead of [de.fœ̃].

Vowels: vowel harmony – A final comment concerning vowels in Togolese French involves their participation in assimilation processes. Vowel harmony usually concerns height and labial assimilation. The production of *rhinocéros* 'rhinoceros' [ʁinɔseʁɔs] by Togolese French speakers illustrates vowel height harmony. In the Togolese pronuncia-

tion, the mid-low back vowel of the second syllable assimilates to the height of the nucleus of the following syllable [e] so that the mid-high back vowel is produced instead [ʁinoseʁɔs]. On the other hand, the pronunciation of *déjeuner* 'lunch' [deʒœne] illustrates labial harmony. In the Togolese pronunciation, the mid-high front vowel of the first syllable undergoes roundness effects so that its features assimilate to the labiality of the nucleus of the following syllable [œ]. Both vowels then assimilate to the height position of the nucleus of the last syllable, i.e. the mid-high front vowel. Thus, the word is pronounced as [dø.ʒø.ne]. Indeed, an alternate analysis of the latter production is to consider that the mid-low round vowel of the second syllable first assimilates to the height position of the vowel of the last syllable; then the mid-high front vowel of the first syllable assimilates the labiality of the nucleus of the second syllable. Although not without merit, as evidenced in the production of *rhinocéros* [ʁinoseʁɔs], vowel harmony in Togolese French seems too often to be of the regressive type, hence favouring a regressive analysis of *déjeuner* [døʒøne].

Consonants: /ʁ/ – Turning to consonants, the consonant phoneme that manifests the most idiosyncratic features vis-à-vis standard French and other African varieties is /ʁ/. In standard French, /ʁ/ is considered to either occur as [χ], when it occurs in the neighbourhood of an unvoiced obstruent, and [ʁ] elsewhere (cf. Léon 1966, 111ss.). Since Carton (1974, 30), it is considered that /ʁ/ can occur variably in spoken French in France, in two major ways: first, [r], which has the articulatory characteristic of involving the apex of the tongue and the alveolar region, and, second, [ʁ], which involves either the back of the tongue and the hard palate or the uvula. Boutin/Turcsan (2009, 7) note for Ivorian French eight different phonetic realizations of /ʁ/, which are neither associated with particular phonetic contexts nor sociolinguistic variables: an alveolar approximant [ɹ], an alveolar trill [r], a voiced fricative uvular [ʁ], an unvoiced fricative uvular [χ], a voiced pharyngal fricative [ʕ], an unvoiced pharyngal fricative [ħ], an unvoiced glottal fricative [h], and a uvular trill [ʀ]. This is in addition to the fact that /ʁ/ can also be elided, and the elision compensated for via vowel lengthening (Côté/Lamy 2012 observe a similar tendency for Canadian French). Togolese French seems to mirror the Ivoirian situation, albeit with its own peculiarities. First, like that which is noted for Ivoirian French, /ʁ/ can be elided, especially in coda position. The elision of /ʁ/ is often compensated for by vowel lengthening. Thus, *fêtard* 'party animal' will be realized as [fɛta:] instead of [fɛtaʁ], *pêcheur* 'fisherman' as [pɛʃœ:] instead of [pɛʃœʁ], and *millionaire* 'millionaire' as [miljɔnɛ:] instead of [miljɔnɛʁ]. When /ʁ/ occurs, eight phonetic variants surface: an alveolar trill [r], a voiced alveolar tap [ɾ], an alveolar approximant [ɹ], a uvular trill [ʀ], an unvoiced fricative uvular [χ], an unvoiced pharyngeal fricative [ħ], an unvoiced glottal fricative [h], and a voiced glottal fricative [ɦ]. Thus, six of the eight phonetic realizations of /ʁ/ in Ivoirian French occur in Togolese French. Two phonetic realizations of Togolese French are, however, not noted for Ivoirian French: the voiced alveolar tap [ɾ] and the voiced glottal fricative [ɦ]. It can thus be considered that these variants are idiosyncratic values of Togolese French.

Consonants: elisions – It is important to note that sound elision does not concern just /ʁ/ but can involve other consonants as well. Elision occurs typically in coda position and can involve simple as well as complex codas. Thus, words such as *roc* 'rock' and *jeune* 'young' can be realized as [ʁɔ] and [ʒœ] instead of [ʁɔk] and [ʒœn]. On the other hand, *intact* 'intact' and *articles* 'articles', which involve complex codas, can be produced as [ɛ̃tak] and [aʁtik] instead of [ɛ̃takt] and [aʁtikl] – [t] and [l] being the consonant sounds that are elided. It is to be noted that elision in coda position does not always co-incide with word-final position as the examples above could suggest. Consonant elision in Togolese French can equally occur in word-median and onset position: *jusqu'ici* 'so far' can be realized as [ʒysisi] instead of [ʒyskisi], *ex-mari* 'ex-husband' as [ɛsmaʁi] in-stead of [ɛksmaʁi], *livraison* 'delivery' as [lirezɔ̃] instead of [livʁezɔ̃], and *voilà* 'there is' as [wala] instead of [vwala].

Consonants: epenthesis – In complex codas, especially in non-word-final positions, where elision does not occur, an epenthetic schwa can occur. Thus, in a word such as *ex-femme* 'ex-wife', the epenthetic schwa occurs after the last consonant of the coda of the first syllable, hence producing a resyllabified unit [ɛk.sə.fam] instead of [ɛks.fam].

Consonants: devoicing – Devoicing mainly concerns fricative sounds that occur in both onset and coda position. In onset position, a word such as *gingembre* 'ginger' can be realized as [ʃɛ̃ʃãbʁ] instead of [ʒɛ̃ʒãbʁ], and *jaloux* 'jealous' can be produced as [ʃalu] in-stead of [ʒalu]. In coda position *village* 'village' can be produced as [vilaʃ] instead of [vilaʒ], and *église* 'church' can be produced as [eglis] instead of [egliz]. This does not ex-clude other sounds such as voiced plosives undergoing devoicing. For instance, *club* 'club' can be pronounced as [klœb̥] instead of [klœb]. Indeed, it is not rare for the oppo-site, voicing of unvoiced consonants, to also occur. Therefore, *oncle* 'uncle' can be pro-nounced as [ɑgl̥] instead of [ɔ̃kl], and *difficile* 'difficult' can be pronounced as [divisil̥] in-stead of [difisil]– in the latter case, both processes i.e. voicing [v] and devoicing [l̥], occur. The tendency is that, in post-vocalic position, a consonant is likely to undergo a phonolo-gical process.

Consonants: assimilation – There are rare cases of assimilation involving conso-nants. This often involves the manner of articulation. Thus, for instance, plosives can as-similate to fricatives when they precede a fricative. *Objet* 'object' and *absent* 'absent' can be realized as [ɔβʒɛ] and [aβsã] respectively instead of [ɔbʒɛ] and [apsã]. More impor-tant, however, is the fact that, as with *rhinocéros* 'rhinoceros', assimilation is regressive and not progressive (cf. section on *vowel harmony*).

Glides – Glides are often subject to dieresis. Thus, syllables in which glides occur can be divided into two different syllables when dieresis occurs. Consequently, *scier* 'to saw' and *relier* 'connect', which undergo dieresis, are pronounced as [si.je] and [ʁə.li.je] in-stead of [sje] and [ʁə.lje].

Prosody – Finally, the prosodic features of Togolese French have not been inten-sively investigated. Together with nasality, they represent some of the grey areas of in-quiry into this endogenous French variety. Lafage (1985) represents one of the very rare studies into the domain. However, as she notes in her conclusion:

'The elite tend to produce intonation patterns that closely resemble those of ours [standard French], so that we are unable to note the differences…concerning the French spoken by the uneducated, we were unable to discover any stable structures'.[6]

4.2 Morphosyntax

(Morpho-)Syntactic features of Togolese French occur on word, phrasal and clausal levels.

Nominal phrase – Togolese French speakers typically use nominals (with number and gender marking often present) with the required determiners. As such, it is not uncommon to hear students say to their parents *je vais à l'école* 'I am going to school' in which case, like what pertains in standard French, the noun *école* 'school' occurs with the definite article. However, in the mesolectal variant, some peculiarities can be noted in the way bare nouns occur with determiners. First, it is not uncommon for Togolese speakers to use nouns without determiners, where it is not expected in standard French. For instance, speakers can use the nouns *cabri* 'goat' and *couteau* 'knife' instead of *un cabri* 'a goat' and *du couteau* 'of a knife', in the expression *Cabri mort n'a pas peur de couteau* 'A dead goat does not fear the knife', when one will expect the expression *un cabri mort n'a pas peur du couteau* in standard French. The omission of determiners, especially of the definite article, is the most frequent with nouns that are borrowed from the local language. In the construction *manger gbekui*, which means 'to eat gbekui', one can observe the non-occurrence of an article with the borrowed term *gbekui*, which refers to a local sauce made of leafy vegetables. Indeed, the omission of determiners has found space in some localized expressions. Thus, in the expression *avoir façon blanc*, which can be used to mean 'to have Western manners' instead of *avoir des mannières des blancs*, the article is most often omitted. Furthermore, even where articles occur with the noun, they can fulfil different grammatical functions than those that are noted in standard French. For instance, the definite article can occur to function as a possessive adjective. Lafage (1985, 410) reports that an employee can use the sentence *le patron est venu* 'the boss has come' instead of *mon patron est venu* 'my boss has come' to signal that his (the employee's) boss has come. i.e., the definite article receives an adjectival interpretation. Finally, pronouns are also often correctly used. However, the adverbial pronoun *y* seems to be undergoing collocational restriction. It often occurs with the pronoun *en*. Thus, while it is difficult to hear a sentence such as *il y est* 'he is there' spoken by mesolectal users of the language, it is not uncommon to hear *y en a marre* instead of *on en a marre* 'we are fed up'.

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6 "Les élites tendent à réaliser des intonations assez proches de notre propre intonation pour que les différences ne nous soient pas audibles…en ce qui concerne le français des non-lettrés, nous n'avons pas été capable [sic] de découvrir des structures stables" (Lafage 1985, 223).

Verb – Phrasal features are not limited to the noun phrase but can occur in the verb phrase as well. Generally, highly educated speakers of French have mastery of the linguistic features of standard French verb phrase. Idiosyncratic features that can be labelled as being typical of Togolese French are thus of the mesolectal variant. For instance, one can note the ubiquity of the use of the periphrastic future in referring to future events. Thus, between *il va manger* 'he is going to eat' and *il mangera* 'he will eat', a typical Togolese French speaker employs the latter to refer to the future activity. Another example of idiosyncrasy in the verb phrase concerns the expression of deontic modality. The tendency in Togolese French is to use the form *faut* without the impersonal third-person singular pronominal subject to express deonticity. Thus, to inform someone of the need to eat, a Togolese French speaker is likely to use the construction *faut manger* instead of *il faut manger/tu dois manger* 'you must eat'. Argument structure can equally be concerned. For instance, a high school leaver can use the expression *j'ai fréquenter* instead of *je suis scolarisé* to mean 'I have had formal education/I am literate'. Also, Noyau (2001, 67) notes that it is not uncommon to hear a Togolese teacher use the expression *qui peut ∅ expliquer?* instead of *qui peut l'expliquer?* 'Who can explain it?'. In this latter instance, the direct object pronoun *le* that occurs in the standard French construction is not part of the Togolese construction.

Prepositions – In most instances, prepositions occur along similar lines as in standard French. However, in some instances, where in standard French prepositions are expected to occur, in Togolese French, the prepositions can be elided. This concerns especially construction involving time nominals. For instance, speakers can use the expression *il travaille trois heures* instead of *il travaille depuis trois heures* (*déjà*) to mean 'he has been working for trois hours already'. While in the standard French expression the preposition *depuis* 'since' occurs to function as the head of the phrase in which *trois heures* 'trois hours' is a dependent, in the Togolese French construction, it is not available. Given that a sentence such as **trois heures il travaille* is not productive in Togolese French, it can be considered that absence of the preposition is proof of the fact that the verb *travailler* 'to work' in the construction is conceptualized as a transitive verb; *trois heures* 'trois heures' in the Togolese construction, therefore functions as a direct object of the verb, and not a dependent of a null prepositional head. Consequently, while, as mentioned above, in certain instances there can be reduction in argument structure, there also are constructions in which argument structure is extended.

Negation – On the clausal level, one can mention the non-elision of the first part of the bipartite negation marker. Thus, unlike that which pertains in contemporary standard French, where *ne* is often elided, this is rarely the case in Togolese French.

Conjunctions – Syntactic features can also concern coordinated, subordinate and relative clauses. Indeed, the fascinating thing about the features at this level involves the fact that prosodic features can intervene to convey grammatical information. For instance, it is not uncommon to have coordinating conjunctions elided, and these compensated for via prosody.

4.3 Lexicon

The lexicology and vocabulary of Togolese French also present interesting data for investigation. First, Togolese French has lexicalized many forms that are borrowings from indigenous languages (most borrowings are from Ewe and Kabiye) and exogenous languages (English, German, Portuguese, Arabic, Hausa etc). There is a current process of borrowing from Nouchi (an Ivoirian French variety) and Ghanaian Pidgin (a Ghanaian English variety) because of the intense contact between urban youth culture across the west-African sub-region (e.g., *kpakpato* 'a gossip', *chalé* 'my guy'). More importantly, like what occurs in other varieties of African French, a large part of the vocabulary of Togolese French is the same as that of standard French. However, there are many aspects of the non-borrowed vocabulary of Togolese French that can be considered localized.

Frequency effects – The first type of these lexical items involves terms originally of standard French but very commonly used within the Togolese context (e.g., *banane-plantain* 'plantain', *karité* 'shea'). A second set concerns terms that are not commonly used in contemporary standard French but very commonly used in Togolese French. Typical examples are *honnir* 'to shame publicly' and *cabri* 'billy-goat', which are archaic forms in standard French.

Meaning changes – Another case are words that have acquired new meanings within the Togolese context. This can involve words for which the semantics have been restricted (e.g., *fréquenter* 'to go to school' instead of 'to frequent') or words in which there is an extension of meaning (e.g., *gâter* 'to spoil, to destroy' instead of 'to ruin').

Word formation – Another category are words that are derived via derivation processes that are productive in French but which refer to indigenous socio-cultural activities, like *maraboutage* 'the act of influencing the course of physical activities by resorting to spiritual interventions carried out by a traditional priest' (< *marabout* 'traditional priest' + *-age*), *veuvage* 'widowhood rites' (< *veuve* 'widow' + *-age*), *re-enceinter* 'to get one's spouse pregnant after a previous pregnancy' (< *re-* 'again' + *enceinter* 'to get pregnant'), and *co-habitant* 'co-tenant in a compound house' (< *co-* 'co' + *habitant* 'resident').

Phraseologisms – An interesting group are collocations that are not available in standard French but which are very common in Togolese French. For instance, speakers use the expression *porter de l'argent* instead of *avoir de l'argent sur soi* to mean 'to have money with oneself', and *porter son âge* instead of *faire son âge* to mean 'to look one's age'. Finally, there are some rather unique idiomatic expressions, most of which refer to specific aspects of Togolese culture. For instance, *cracher l'eau sur quelqu'un* refers to the activity of blessing a child by sprinkling water on him especially during the traditional ceremony that introduces the child to the community. Also, *souffler un feu* refers to the act of blowing air on fire in a hearth.

To conclude on the linguistic features of Togolese French, it seems that since Lafage's enquiry (1985) and the few sporadic inquiries into specific domains, Togolese

French has further developed to acquire more stable features. The hypothesis is that the stability should be visible in not only the few features at the levels of linguistic analysis surveyed but also in the semantics and pragmatics as well. Thus, there cannot be any better time than now to launch full-scale projects to investigate the linguistic features of Togolese French. It should be interesting to understand how the features at the different interfaces of linguistic analyses interact to single out Togolese French as a variety distinct from (especially) other west-African French varieties.

5 Internal language policy

5.1 Linguistic purism

Language attitudes towards French in Togo have not yet been investigated in a systematic manner in recent years. Lafage (1985, 58) notes that the choice of French in a conversation can be interpreted as a way of increasing one's prestige. However, it is not always viewed in a positive manner. It can be interpreted as an act of arrogance, pretention, and self-betrayal:

> 'According to popular morality, *even if the cat wears human clothes, it still meows* (if one pretends to be what one isn't, one ends up betraying oneself)'.[7]

Based on our observations, we conclude that there is little evidence of people openly criticizing the local variety of French. At the same time, Togolese French receives little overt support or recognition. Note, however, that the spread of lexical innovations such as *maraboutage* and *veuvage* (cf. 4.3 above) to informal as well as formal domains (government, newspapers, and websites) can be interpreted as a form of covert recognition.

Furthermore, borrowing and codeswitching can offer informative insights into linguistic purism. Essizewa (2009) observes that Ewe borrowings and Kabiye-Ewe codeswitching are commonly used in daily conversation in the Kabiye speech community, particularly in Kara and other urban areas. For most Kabiye speakers that were interviewed (but not the language purists), Kabiye-Ewe codeswitching is a preferred choice because it signals solidarity among the speakers. Essizewa (2009, 71) explains that "[t]his preference is even more pronounced than that for the use of Kabiye and French and/or Kabiye-French code-switching, because the former language contact, signaling solidarity among the speakers, is much more intense and intimate, than the latter" (2009, 71). Borrowings from indigenous languages such as Ewe, Kabiye etc. into French and code-

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7 "Et la morale populaire affirme que *même si le chat met des vêtements humains, il fait toujours miao* (si l'on veut se faire passer pour ce que l'on n'est pas, on finit toujours par se trahir)" (Lafage 1985, 58, italics in the original).

switching between French and the indigenous languages appear to be less frequent than French borrowings into indigenous languages (also cf. Amuzu 2013, 74; van den Berg et al. 2017, 355). This asymmetry suggests that even though there may not be overt attempts to preserve French from influence from African languages, the result is the same; speakers keep their languages separate.

As to borrowings in the indigenous languages, Pere-Kewezima (2009, 209) observes that French or English borrowings, 'borrowings from the "white language"' ("les emprunts à la 'langue du Blanc'") in Kabiye and codeswitching are not appreciated, in particular in rural areas:

> 'Moreover, in the villages of the Kabiye linguistic area, the elderly use the onomatopoeia *sulesulɛ* 'manner to imitate the hard accent to speak European to designate the French language'; for them, the use of this language is difficult, since they do not understand it'.[8]

5.2 Description of linguistic characteristics

Dictionaries – Two kinds of dictionaries can be noted for the French spoken in Togo. The first kind includes bilingual dictionaries that attempt to capture Togolese socio-cultural realities expressed in indigenous languages, in French. The results are the use of localized French to remain faithful to the worldviews being translated. In this respect, Rongier (1995)'s *Dictionnaire français–éwé* 'French-Ewe dictionary', and Rongier (2015)'s *Dictionnaire éwé–français* 'Ewe-French dictionary' are interesting sources. There are also French–Kabiye (CLNK/SIL-Togo 1999), Nawdm–French (Babakima 2013) dictionaries, among others. The second kind comprises monolingual dictionaries dedicated to capturing the peculiarities of the Togolese variety of French. In this regards, Lafage's *Dictionnaire des particularités du français au Togo et au Dahomey* 'A dictionary of the particularities of French in Togo and Dahomey' (1975) stands out as the major reference.

Grammars – Lafage (1985) remains the most influential grammar available on the French spoken in Togo. However, this work is restricted to the French spoken by Ewe-speakers. Lafage's work was written at a time when various language assistants (*coopérants*) from France found themselves working on local varieties of French in Africa. As such, the tendency is to identify the sources that are responsible for the divergence of the local variety from the standard language. Her work, therefore, takes on a very comparative approach. Noyau (2001) and Picron/Simon (2018) represent more recent attempts at characterizing various aspects of the variety of French spoken in Togo. They

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8 "D'ailleurs, dans les villages de l'aire linguistique kabiyè, pour désigner la langue française, les personnes âgées ironisent en utilisant l'onomatopée *sulesulɛ* 'maniere d'imiter l'accent dur parler européen'; pour eux, l'usage de cette langue relève plutôt d'un autre génie intellectuel puisqu'ils ne le comprennent pas" (Pere-Kewezima 2009, 209).

are, however, restricted in scope, and do not capture the full range of linguistic properties instantiated by this French variety.

5.3 Usage of linguistic characteristics

Usage – The linguistic characteristics described in 4 appear mostly in spoken language in informal contexts. They rarely occur in literature, official texts, school books, and newspapers (online or in paper) as far as we know, although certain frequently used words such as *maraboutage* and *veuvage* (cf. 5.1 and 4.3 above) are more likely to appear in these contexts than morphosyntactic features such as elision of coordinating conjunctions for example. Media that focus on the spoken word, that are less norm-oriented, and where the norms themselves are less well established, such as call-in talk radio or online social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram, among others, display more diversity.

Conclusion – We would like to call for full-scale projects that document the lexicon and grammar of Togolese French as well as the on-line and off-line contexts in which it is used, across various age groups and different ethnicities, with various educational, social class, and regional backgrounds, and their language attitudes.

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