LANGUAGE IN CONTACT: THE CASE OF THE FULBE DIALECT OF KEJOM (BABANKI)

Pius W. AKUMBU

Department of Linguistics, University of Buea

Esther P. ASONGANYI

Department of Linguistics, University of Buea

ABSTRACT This paper describes the variety of Babanki (henceforth called Kejom) spoken by native Fulfulde speakers born and raised in Kejom communities. Kejom is a Center Ring Grassfields Bantu language spoken in two villages (Kejom Ketinguh and Kejom Keku) in northwestern Cameroon. This paper describes the practice in Kejom Ketinguh. The Fulbe are Fulfulde speakers of Adamawa origin who migrated from northern Cameroon and settled in Kejom more than 50 years ago. Peaceful coexistence between the two groups has encouraged young Fulbe to learn the Kejom language and to use it when interacting with Kejom people. Comparison of the speech of Fulbe and native speakers of Kejom revealed that the Kejom spoken by the Fulbe (the Fulbe dialect) contains phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical deviations from the standard variety spoken by Kejom people. In addition to Fulfulde (the Fulbe mother tongue), Cameroon Pidgin English (their second language) has also influenced the Fulbe dialect of Kejom. We argue in this paper that the Fulbe prefer to rely on Cameroon Pidgin English to fill most communication gaps with native Kejom speakers, because this widely used language is common to both communities.

Key Words: Language contact; Babanki; Kejom; Fulfulde; Northwestern Cameroon.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the variety of Babanki (henceforth Kejom, the preferred term used by native speakers for their language and villages) spoken by native speakers of Fulfulde (Fulbe) who were born and raised in Kejom communities. Kejom is a language belonging to the center branch of the Ring subgroup of the Grassfields Bantu languages. It is spoken in two villages in northwestern Cameroon, Kejom Ketinguh (Babanki Tungo) and Kejom Keku (Big Babanki). The information presented in this paper reflects the practice in Kejom Ketinguh.

In this study, we present a grammar for the Kejom dialect spoken by the Fulbe (hereafter called the Fulbe dialect) and examine differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis between this dialect and that spoken by native Kejom speakers. We also examine the source(s) of interference, finding that both Fulfulde and Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) have influenced the grammar of the Fulbe dialect.

The Fulbe have lived in Kejom territory for nearly a century. Most Fulbe elders (aged 40 or more years) do not speak Kejom, although some can understand it. Children under 10 years of age also do not speak or understand Kejom. Fulbe speakers of Kejom are thus approximately 10–40 years old, and most use the
language when interacting with native Kejom speakers. Many Fulɓe who do not speak Kejom regret this situation, and express the desire for all of their children to learn the language. They say that the Fulɓe are now part of the community and should be able to interact with everyone, to become integrated, and to be accepted as villagers. Although the Fulɓe have maintained a separate cultural and political identity until recently, their current desire to associate and socialize with the Kejom has led many Fulɓe to learn the Kejom language.

Language contact occurs when the speakers of two languages or dialects interact regularly with each other (Murray, 1998). Interference and/or borrowing can occur to fill the lexical gaps inevitably created by such contact, especially in contact situations with bilingual or multilingual individuals. This process can eventually lead to a new variety of the language in question (Rickford & McWhorter, 1998). The lexicon is usually most affected, and many grammatical components may also be influenced. The phonology may be modified by the introduction of new phonemes or allophones and changes in their distribution. The morphology may be affected through the addition or elimination of affixes. Syntactic changes in word order may also occur. All of these potential modifications were explored in this study, which investigated the manipulation of Kejom grammar by native Fulfulde speakers to convey meaning when speaking Kejom. Before presenting the Fulɓe dialect of Kejom, it is necessary to understand the historical context that brought the two groups together and to review the Kejom and Fulfulde grammars.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

I. Kejom

The Kejom people migrated to their current location from the Tikar group in northeastern Cameroon. Due to hostilities on the part of neighbors, the Tikar group was forced to split into smaller groups that drifted south and east. The Bafut, Kom, Nso, and Kejom were the last to arrive and settle in the Bamenda highlands. The Kejom people later moved from that location and settled around Lake Oku. Following a dispute over the ownership of the lake, the Oku successfully fought the Kejom and forced them to leave the territory. The Kejom subsequently lived alongside the Kom; later, they separated from this group due to disputes related to familial succession.

Two Kejom groups were later formed when a prince died shortly before the Kejom annual dance. Contrary to the custom demanding that royal funerals be completed before the annual dance, the Fon ordered that the dance begin and postponed the prince’s funeral celebration. Forty disgruntled people decided to separate from the others, and eventually settled in present-day Kejom Ketinguh. The Fon and his supporters remained in present-day Kejom Keku. The Fulɓe came to Kejom territory many decades later.
II. Fulɓe

The Fulɓe began to enter the Grassfields in the 1910s, driven by their continuous search for pastureland. They left northern Nigeria in the early 19th century, slowly migrating to the east and south. Their movements were guided by ecological and political considerations, with the central goal of sustaining their pastoral economy. Because the western Grassfields provided exceptionally favorable conditions that promoted the growth of their herds, many families settled in this area and have remained for several decades, becoming part of the local community.

The Fulɓe included in this study first moved to Kejom between 1935 and 1940, but left in 1958 because of grazing land disputes. They returned in 1970 to settle in their present locations, mostly in the grasslands or hills on the outskirts of Kejom Ketinguh. They perceived themselves as politically marginalized. The hostility that prevailed between the two communities has dwindled in the last 20 years, to the extent that the Fulɓe have interacted with the Kejom more closely and have allowed their children to learn the Kejom language. When Fulɓe who have learned the language interact with Kejom people, they generally prefer to speak Kejom rather than CPE. CPE is a more broadly dispersed language that is spoken by the Kejom and Fulɓe, as well as by most English-speaking and some French-speaking Cameroonianians. Unless a Fulɓe has learned Kejom, CPE is the only language in which the two groups can communicate.

OVERVIEW OF PHONOLOGY, MORPHOLOGY, AND SYNTAX

I. Kejom

1. Phonology

The Kejom language uses 26 consonant phonemes /b, t, d, k, ɡ, ʔ, m, n, ɲ, ɲ̊, f, v, s, ʃ, ʒ, ɣ, h, pf, bv, ts dz, tj, dʒ, l, w, j/ and eight vowels /i, e, a, i, u, o, u/. Kejom is a tonal language that uses high (H) and low (L) underlying tone levels and three contour tones (rising, high-falling, low-falling). The mid tone also occurs, but is considered to be the result of a step down from a high tone rather than an underlying tone (Akumbu, 2008).

Four basic canonical syllable types occur in Kejom: N, V, CV, and CVC. The latter two types can be modified by palatalization, labialization, or prenasalization to yield syllables such as CGV, CGVC, NCV, and NCVC (where G represents

| Table 1.   Syllable structure of Kejom noun roots |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| CV  | CGV | CVC | CGVC | NCV | NCGV | NCVC | NCGVC |
| Low | ɗ-bè | bji | dzòm | kò-bji? | kɔ-nɗà | ɗdjà | kɔ-m两地 | çgwà? |
|      | ‘liver’ | ‘pit’ | ‘back’ | ‘dust’ | ‘whip’ | ‘thing’ | ‘blind (n)’ | ‘seed’ |
| High | ɗ-tà | ɗ-lgi | tò-kàŋ | ɗ-fwín | kà-mɓó | çgwè | ɗkà ámb | ɗbjà? |
|      | ‘leaf’ | ‘nose’ | ‘skies’ | ‘leg’ | ‘madness’ | ‘name’ | ‘basket’ | ‘shoulder’ |
2. Morphology

Most Kejom nouns are made up of a prefix+root, and class 10 nouns consist of a root+suffix. Overt noun prefixes in Kejom are either CV or V. Noun roots occur with all syllable types except V. The underlying tone melodies on noun roots are L, H, LH, and HL. The Kejom noun class system includes Bantu classes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 6a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 19 (Table 2). Possible class pairings are 1/2, 3/6, 3/13, 5/6, 5/13, 7/8, 7/6, 7/6a, 7/10, 9/6, 9/10, and 19/6a.

Verb roots are monosyllabic except when reduplicated and occur with CV, CGV, CVC, and CGVC syllable types and L and H tone levels. A few verbal extensions with CV structure exist in Kejom. According to Akumbu (2009) the language uses eight temporal distinctions, including four past tenses (immediate, recent, distant, remote), a present tense, and three future tenses (immediate, proximate, remote). Tense is grammaticalized in Kejom, with distinct grammatical morphemes marking all past and future tenses. Time adverbials or particles are used to indicate temporal specification in the language, but mixing of tense and adverb meanings is prohibited. Hence, past-referring deictic adverbs occur with past tenses and future-referring deictic adverbs occur with future tenses. The two main aspects in Kejom are perfective and imperfective (e.g., progressive, habitual, repetitive, anterior). Table 3 provides examples of tense and aspect co-occurrences.

3. Syntax

Word order in Kejom is STVO (where T is the tense or aspect marker). As a head-first language, the modifier of a noun phrase normally occurs after the noun it modifies. However, this order is inverted in many occurrences. Apart from discontinuous morphemes, tense and aspect markers occur before the verb root:

1) /fɔ̀-sès fɔ̀-kó/ [fɔ̀ sès fɔ̀ kó] ‘expensive pepper’
c19-pepper AM c5-money

Table 2. Kejom noun classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun Class</th>
<th>Prefix or Suffix</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ō-</td>
<td>sàŋ, sùʔ, wùlìm</td>
<td>‘month’, ‘bottle’, ‘man’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>vɔ̀-, ō-</td>
<td>vɔ̀-sàŋ, vɔ̀-sùʔ, lëʔmá</td>
<td>‘months’, ‘bottles’, ‘men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ā-</td>
<td>ā-fwin, ā-wòŋ</td>
<td>‘leg’, ‘market’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ā-</td>
<td>ā-ńi, ā-ńoŋ</td>
<td>‘eye’, ‘spear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mà-</td>
<td>mà-ŋpìn, mà-fù</td>
<td>‘birds’, ‘medicines’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kà-</td>
<td>kà-ńbò, kà-ńyù, kà-fò</td>
<td>‘bag’, ‘foot’, ‘thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ō-</td>
<td>ō-ńbò</td>
<td>‘bags’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ò-</td>
<td>mòbàʔ, Bù</td>
<td>‘insult (n.)’, ‘dog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-sò</td>
<td>mòbàʔ-sá, Bù-‘sá</td>
<td>‘insults (n.)’, ‘dogs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>tǎ-</td>
<td>tǎ-woŋ, tǎ-ńoŋ</td>
<td>‘markets’, ‘spears’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fà-</td>
<td>fà-ŋpìn</td>
<td>‘bird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>ghò ́źhım li</td>
<td>ghò ́źhímá</td>
<td>ghò ń ́źhımá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He sang’</td>
<td>‘He was singing’</td>
<td>‘He used to sing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>ghò tò ́źhım</td>
<td>ghò tò ́źhímá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He sang’</td>
<td>‘He was singing’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>ghò yì ́źhım</td>
<td>ghò yì ́źhímá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He sang’</td>
<td>‘He was singing’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>ghò ́źhım li</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He sang’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P0</td>
<td>ghò ́źhımá</td>
<td>ghò ́źhımá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He is singing’</td>
<td>‘He is singing (now)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>ghò ́źhım</td>
<td>ghò ́źhımá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He will sing’</td>
<td>‘He will be singing’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>ghò nè ́źhım</td>
<td>ghò nè ́źhımá</td>
<td>ghò nè ń ́źhımá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He will sing’</td>
<td>‘He will be singing’</td>
<td>‘He will be singing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>ghò lú ́źhım</td>
<td>ghò lú ́źhımá</td>
<td>ghò lú ń ́źhımá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He will sing’</td>
<td>‘He will be singing’</td>
<td>‘He will be singing’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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2) /mà ǝˊ bè tò nú/  
   1s SM REP P3 defecate

‘I defecated again’.

II. Fulfulde

1. Phonology

Fulfulde uses 28 consonant phonemes /p, b, t, d, c, j, k, g, j, ɓ, ɗ, ƴ, m, n, n, f, v, s, h, mb, nd, ng, l, r, w, j/ and five vowel phonemes /i, e, a, o, u/. Consonant doubling is a widespread feature, involving all consonants except the glottal and prenasalized stops:

3) fotuki  ‘fitting’
    fottuki  ‘passing’
    taguki  ‘creating’
    tagguki  ‘folding up’

Vowel length is also contrastive or phonemic:

4) hor  ‘spy’
    hoor  ‘take away’

Each of the five vowel phonemes may be lengthened:

5) horuki  ‘remaining’
    hooruki  ‘taking back’

Although the verb root has a long vowel, it is only realized as such if the morphology allows the “m” to begin a new syllable, thus leaving the first syllable open. However, the “m” cannot join a subsequent syllable that starts with a consonant because tautosyllabic consonant clusters are not allowed. For this reason, the verb root is shortened.

Fulfulde is a stress-timed language, and almost all words of more than one syllable carry penultimate stress. Most exceptions to this rule are borrowed words, such as habaru ‘story’ from Arabic.

2. Morphology

Most Fulfulde nouns are composed of a stem + class suffix. Consisting of 19 singular classes and five plural classes (Stennes, 1967), the nominal class system is based largely on a semantic taxonomy. The classes are divided into four semantic
groups: person, non-person, diminutive, and augmentative classes. Each of these
groups uses singular and plural class markers (Table 4).

The verb phrase core in Fulfulde is composed of a verb stem+tense-aspect-
voice suffix:

6) wár- ‘come’
   wár-t- ‘come back’
   wár-t-ir- ‘come back in a certain way’

The stem may be a verb root, verbalized noun, or adjective root with or without
a stem extension. The tense may be past, future, or continuative. The future and
continuative tenses are differentiated from the past by the morphemes dô and -at,
whereas the past tense has a zero morpheme. Past and future meanings are
distinguished by context, which is not necessarily the actual present. Fulfulde has
two main aspects (perfective, imperfective) and three voices (active, middle, pas-
sive). A significant feature of the verbal system is the ability to refocus; whenever
the focus of a clause is on a fronted constituent rather than on the verbal event,
the set of voice-aspect verbal suffixes differs from that used in a normal sentence
(where the verbal event is the focus). Negatives occur only in the past and future
tenses (e.g., mi-yâhâyi ‘I did not go’, mi-yâhâtaa ‘I will not go’). Tense is
differentiated from aspect in that a pre-time suffix may be added to tense forms,
but not to aspect forms (Stennes, 1967).

3. Syntax

Fulfulde is a STVO language. Noun phrases with a single head nominal
generally show a head-modifier relationship, with limitations on the elements that
can occur together (e.g., bingel gorgel ‘boy’, bingel déyel ‘girl’). A very few
plural-centered or compound noun phrases with more than one head nominal exist.
The verb phrase is composed of a verb core and a modifier that may or may not
be present (e.g., be-kûlî ‘they feared’, mi-dôrêena kadi ‘I am waiting then’). Verb
phrase modifier types include adverbs, infinitives, and negative particles. For more
information on Fulfulde grammar, the interested reader is referred to Stennes
(1967) and Taylor (1953).
THE FUL’BE DIALECT OF KEJOM

The speech of the Fulɓe and that of the Kejom vary considerably. Given the regularity of these variations, the Fulɓe can be said to speak a dialect of Kejom. Differences are present at nearly all grammatical levels, most notably in the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. The following discussion considers these differences.

I. Phonology

The phonological elements of Kejom are modified in various ways in the Fulɓe dialect. Some sounds have been replaced or are treated as interchangeable.

1. Consonants

The two dialects differ in the interaction between fricatives and affricates. Affricates and some fricatives are widely used in place of other fricatives and affricates in the Fulɓe dialect (Table 5). However, this use is not regular. For the majority of speakers, [dʒ] is used in place of [dz], [s] replaces [ʃ] and [ts], and [z] is replaced by [ʃ] or [ʒ]. This mixing of fricatives and affricates can be explained by the presence of these sounds in the Kejom language and their absence (except [s]) in Fulfulde. The Fulɓe are therefore unable to distinguish between the sounds and use them indiscriminately.

2. Vowels

The central high vowels [i, u] in Kejom are consistently replaced by the front or back high vowels [i, u] in the Fulɓe dialect. Whereas [u] is always replaced by [u], [i] can be replaced by [i] (as expected) or by [u] (Table 6). This process represents the reduction of the four Kejom high vowels [i, i, u, u] to the two Fulfulde high vowels [i, u].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Consonant variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulɓe speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) mà dʒáŋ ɔ̀? yɔ̀m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I call name my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I called my name’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) súsó ‘fish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) tʃɛn mà dʒu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if I go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘if I go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) jɛn nɔ̀?lɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buy book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘buy a book’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) mà dʒu sɔ̀ŋ kɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go steal money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I went and stole money’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Tones

Variations in the use of tone are closely related to the morphology of the languages. The Fulɓe dialect does not incorporate the tonal differences that occur among Kejom verb tenses. The presence or absence of some surface tones results in differences in meaning between the dialects (Table 7).

These data as reveal that tone does not surface in the Fulɓe dialect in exactly the same manner as it does in Kejom. This can be explained by the failure of Fulfulde speakers to fully recognize and produce the salient tonal distinctions in Kejom, because Fulfulde is not a tonal language.
The manner in which different morphemes combine to form words, as well as the shape of some modifiers, is affected in the Fulɓe dialect.

1. Tense

The tense-aspect system of the Fulɓe dialect has segmental and tonal differences, as compared to that of Kejom. Examples (a) and (b) in Table 8 show that the near-future tense (F2) marker surfaces in the Fulɓe dialect as [ná] instead of [né]. In example (c), the progressive aspect is used instead of the general past-tense marker used in narratives. In examples (d) and (e), the verb root tones are high instead of low (note that the action is in the general past). In example (f), the recent past (P2) marker is omitted in the Fulɓe dialect; in (g), the immediate past (P1) is used instead of P2. These variations can be attributed to differences in the tense and aspect systems of Kejom and Fulfulde. For example, while Fulfulde has single past, present, and future tense markers, Kejom has five past, one present, and three future tense markers. Fulɓe speakers therefore find it difficult to master and distinguish all of the subdivisions of Kejom tenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fulɓe speakers</th>
<th>Kejom speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>mà ná gà? là…</td>
<td>mà nél gà? là…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I F2 speak that</td>
<td>I F2 speak that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I will say that…’</td>
<td>‘I will say that…’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>mà ná sọŋ kó</td>
<td>mà nél tsọŋ ɗ-kó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I F2 steal money</td>
<td>I F1 steal c7-money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I will steal money’</td>
<td>‘I will steal money’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>…kám-ɗ máljik</td>
<td>…kám máljik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>squeeze-PROG milk</td>
<td>squeeze.PST milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘collecting milk’</td>
<td>‘collected milk’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>jës fúkò</td>
<td>jës fúkò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>we leave</td>
<td>we leave.PST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘We left’</td>
<td>‘We left’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>…là kó mà yöm</td>
<td>…là kó mà yöm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that not I beat</td>
<td>that not I beat.PST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘…that I should not beat’</td>
<td>‘…that I should not beat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>à di? ndá á mà né</td>
<td>à di? yó a mà yi né’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it is who that I do</td>
<td>It is what that I P2 do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘What did I do?’</td>
<td>‘What did I do?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>à di? màmì yöm ténsó lì</td>
<td>à yì tònsì màmì yöm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it is mother my refuse P1</td>
<td>it P2 refuse mother my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘It was mother who refused’</td>
<td>‘It was mother who refused’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Morphology

The manner in which different morphemes combine to form words, as well as the shape of some modifiers, is affected in the Fulɓe dialect.

Table 8. Irregular tense markers
Language in Contact: The Case of the Fulɓe Dialect of Kejom (Babanki)

2. Modifiers

Like other languages with a noun class system, Kejom requires agreement between the noun and nominal modifiers. With certain nouns, Fulɓe speakers may find it difficult to choose an appropriate modifier or to use its correct form. Examples (a) through (c) in Table 9 show differences in the form of the possessive. Native Kejom speakers usually drop the class suffix when modifying a class 10 noun (Hyman, 1979; Akumbu, 2010). In the Fulɓe dialect, this suffix is retained. In examples (d) and (e), the Fulɓe speaker uses the wrong possessive marker. In example (f), the Fulɓe speaker uses the possessive for a class 1 noun instead of that for a class 5 noun. These data show that differences in the noun class systems of Fulfulde and Kejom make it difficult for Fulɓe speakers to master the agreement patterns of Kejom.

III. Syntax

Word order within phrases and sentence structure are the most affected Kejom syntactic units in the Fulɓe dialect. In examples (a) through (d) of Table 10, the order of the highlighted units is reversed in the Fulɓe dialect. In example (b), retention of the head-first position of nouns in nominal phrases renders the construction ungrammatical, because native Kejom speakers place the modifier before the noun in adverbial phrases. These syntactic variations suggest that Fulɓe speakers do not master the movement constraints of Kejom, and tend to overgeneralize grammatical rules.

Table 9. Atypical modifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fulɓe speakers</th>
<th>Kejom speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) ndʒi säm-sä sän</td>
<td>ndʒi  jäm sän</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress my-c10 this</td>
<td>dress c10 my this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘this my dress’</td>
<td>‘this my dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) ndʒi säm-sä jäm</td>
<td>ndʒi  jäm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress my-c10 my</td>
<td>dress c10 my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘my dress’</td>
<td>‘my dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) ndʒi säm-sä wën</td>
<td>ndʒi-sá wën</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress my-c10 his</td>
<td>dress-c10 his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘his dress’</td>
<td>‘his dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) ndʒʊŋ-só vwäm</td>
<td>ndʒ  jäm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend-c10 my</td>
<td>friend my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘my friends’</td>
<td>‘my friends’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) lójn à wù-n dóŋ mɔ</td>
<td>lójn fá wù-n dóŋ jäm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beg from c1-friend my</td>
<td>beg from c1-friend my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘beg from my friend’</td>
<td>‘beg from my friend’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) mà dʒʊŋ ṣiʔ jäm</td>
<td>mà dʒʊŋ ṣiʔ jäm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I call name my</td>
<td>I call c5-name AM my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I called my name’</td>
<td>‘I called my name’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10. Divergent word order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fulɓe speakers</th>
<th>Kejom speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) yǝ̀ kò mo kò</td>
<td>yǝ̀ kò à mò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘he give me money’</td>
<td>‘he give money to me’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) bwíná vi á gǝ̀ jés</td>
<td>bwíná vi á jé gǝ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘turn come to home our’</td>
<td>‘turn come to our home’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) …là mà kó vi nà wi?</td>
<td>…là kô mà vi nà wi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘that I NEG come with person’</td>
<td>‘that NEG I come with person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) à di’ mà mɪ̀ yǝ̀ m tɛnsɔ́ li</td>
<td>à yi tɔnsɔ́ mà mɪ̀ yǝ̀ m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘it is mother my refuse P1’</td>
<td>‘it P2 refuse mother my’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) mà fwan li, mà niŋ li</td>
<td>mà fwan, ñiŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I fear P1, I run P1’</td>
<td>‘I fear, CONJ run’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) mà niŋ mà niŋ mà niŋ</td>
<td>mà niŋ ñiŋ ñiŋ ñiŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I run I run I run’</td>
<td>‘I run RED run RED run’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Lexis

As mentioned above, the lexicon is usually the most affected grammatical component in language contact situations. In the following subsections, we explore lexical modifications internal to Kejom and those that have resulted from borrowed CPE words.

1. **Kejom words**

Fulɓe speakers commonly use certain Kejom lexical items to convey other semantically related meanings. Table 11 provides examples of the use of semantically related words to represent Kejom words that are not easily accessed by Fulɓe speakers. In example (d), the Fulɓe speaker uses the name of a very rich individual known to them, in this case Cameroon’s president Paul Biya, to refer to a rich person.

2. **Cameroon Pidgin English words**

When Fulɓe speakers cannot access a Kejom word, they frequently turn to CPE. The Fulɓe prefer to incorporate a word from this common language to avoid interrupting the conversation. Many words in the Fulɓe dialect have been borrowed from CPE, and native Kejom speakers also commonly use CPE. CPE has influenced the way many Cameroonian speak their mother tongues. Example (f) in Table 12 shows that some CPE words have been adapted to the structure of Kejom words. The Kejom verbal extension (sɔ) is added to the CPE root (ver)
Table 11. Kejom words with different meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fulɓe speakers</th>
<th>Kejom speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) mà dï̀? á dʒʊŋ</td>
<td>mà sáŋlɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am in good</td>
<td>I happy.PROG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I am happy’</td>
<td>‘I am happy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) pfẹ̀ kà-bàn</td>
<td>lám kà-bàn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cook c7-fufu corn</td>
<td>mix c7-fufu corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘prepare fufu corn’</td>
<td>‘prepare fufu corn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) ǹë kà-fọ̀ tradition</td>
<td>ǹë ọ̱ ny lɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do c7-thing tradition</td>
<td>do c8-thing village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘perform traditional rites’</td>
<td>‘perform traditional rites’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) mà jèn paul biya</td>
<td>mà jèn wù yɤyō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see Paul Biya</td>
<td>I see person rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I saw a rich man’</td>
<td>‘I saw a very rich man’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) ndʒi sɔ̃-sɔ̃ yɔm</td>
<td>ndʒi jɔm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress my-c10 my</td>
<td>dress.c10 my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘my dress’</td>
<td>‘my dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) à dì? ndà á wàŋn lɔ̀</td>
<td>à dì? yɔ̀ á wàŋn lɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is who with child this</td>
<td>it is what with child this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘What is this with the child?’</td>
<td>‘What is this with the child?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Cameroon pidgin English words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fulɓe speakers</th>
<th>Kejom speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) ò-sù fasting</td>
<td>ò-sù bàmò tʃù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c5-time fasting</td>
<td>c5-time abandon mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘during a fasting period’</td>
<td>‘during a fasting period’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) mà dʒù egein</td>
<td>mà bè dʒù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go again</td>
<td>I again go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I went back’</td>
<td>‘I went back’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) five o’clock kwì</td>
<td>tɔ-sù tɔ tɛ̃ŋ kù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five o’clock reach</td>
<td>c13-time AM five reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘at five o’clock’</td>
<td>‘at five o’clock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) all vĩi á tsùŋgãŋ</td>
<td>nò vĩi \ vɔ̃-tsɛ̃m á tsùŋgãŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all c2.person in compound</td>
<td>all person c2-all in compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘everyone in the compound’</td>
<td>‘everyone in the compound’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) ǹë kà-fọ̀ tradition</td>
<td>ǹë ọ̱ ny lɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do c7-thing tradition</td>
<td>do c8-thing village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘perform traditional rites’</td>
<td>‘perform traditional rites’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) mà vékɔ̀ tɔ̀ vɔ̃ksɔ̀</td>
<td>mà fwiśɔ̀ tɔ̀n tɔ̀ fwiśɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I angry only angry</td>
<td>I burning heart only burning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I continued to be angry’</td>
<td>‘I continued to be angry’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and the Kejom phonological process changes /x/ to [k].

SOURCES OF INTERFERENCE

Interference typically occurs when two languages come into contact. In this case, Fulfulde is expected to influence the way in which the Fulɓe speak Kejom. Indeed, we found that Fulfulde grammar has influenced the grammar of the Fulɓe dialect, as shown above. In addition, a third language (CPE) influences the Fulɓe dialect. As discussed in section IV.2, CPE words and expressions occur throughout the Fulɓe dialect. CPE is a common language that the speakers of both communities use in their daily lives, and thus serves to fill communication gaps experienced by Fulɓe speakers interacting with native Kejom speakers.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the Kejom spoken by native Fulfulde speakers differs significantly from that spoken by native Kejom speakers. We have demonstrated that the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis have been affected in various ways. We found that Fulfulde and Cameroon Pidgin English have influenced the variety of Kejom spoken by the Fulɓe. Whatever the degree of variation between dialects, the Fulɓe prefer to speak Kejom and the Kejom people appreciate this effort during verbal interactions. In this context, the use of Kejom has provided a sense of belonging to, and unity with, the larger Kejom community. The language has thus served as a tool for village integration.

NOTES

(1) The data used in this paper were obtained from interviews and tape-recorded personal narratives elicited from four females (aged 15, 20, 28, and 50 years) and 3 males (aged 13, 21, and 48 years). All were born in Kejom and continue to live there. The deviations reported here occurred in the language of at least 57% of informants.

REFERENCES


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Correspondence Author’s Name and Address: Pius W. AKUMBU, Department of Linguistics, University of Buea, P.O. Box 63, Buea, Cameroon.
E-mail: akumbu_pius@yahoo.fr