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18 Cross River

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18.0 INTRODUCTION

The Cross River languages are spoken by some sixty language communities found primarily in the Akwa Ibom, Cross River, and Rivers States of southeastern Nigeria.¹ The Cross River-speaking area is loosely bounded by Ijoid, Edoid, and Igbooid speakers to the west, Idomoid and Bantoid (especially Tiv) speakers to the north, and by Bantu speakers to the east. Southeastern Nigeria is one of the most densely populated parts of Africa and one of the most linguistically diverse areas of the world. Contact between different language groups is constant and intimate.

The Efik of Calabar were among the earliest groups along the Guinea Coast to establish trade relations with European merchants. The rise of Calabar as a key link in the transatlantic trade led to its development as a point of assimilation and dissemination of nonindigenous commodities, culture, ideas, etc., for all of what today constitutes southeastern Nigeria and western Cameroon. Calabar's power and prestige also led to the use of its language, Efik, as a lingua franca in the region, along with Igbo and Nigerian Pidgin.

18.1 EARLY SCHOLARSHIP

A fairly complete summary of published materials on the Cross River languages is provided in CTL7. The following paragraphs include a brief description of works written since the early 1970s.

Discussion of early work on Cross River languages appears in Winston (1964, 1965) and U. Essien (1970a). Besides lists by Koelle (1854)

¹I would like to thank Professor Kay Williamson and Bruce Connell for reading drafts of this chapter and for sending me their helpful comments.

and Talbot (1926), word lists of several Cross River languages collected by Cook are included in Williamson and Shimizu (1968) and Williamson (1973c). Both Cook and Williamson have also done considerable unpublished work. Some general remarks concerning Cross River languages may be found in Bouquiaux (1981) as well as more detailed descriptions of noun class systems (Voorhoeve and De Wolf 1969; De Wolf 1971), vowel systems (Williamson 1983), and reduplication (Faraclas and Williamson 1984).

The Bendi languages remain almost completely unstudied, apart from Stanford's (1967) Bekwarra grammar, a work on Bokyi (Tawu-Asu 1977), long essays on Bete (Briggs 1972; Oni 1975), and some unpublished items by Crabb, Peterson, Crane, and Burns.

A survey of Upper Cross consonantal systems and a reconstruction of the consonants of proto-Upper Cross appear in Sterk (1979) and Dimmendaal (1978). Since Revill (1966) wrote on Mbembe, Barnwell has written a grammar as well as descriptions of noun classes and suprasegmentals (1966, 1969b, 1974). Besides Winston's (1962) studies on Lokə there are also those of Bendor-Samuel (1971) on syllable structure, Berry (1974) on suprasegmentals, Runsewe on tone and noun classes (1980) and vowel harmony (1982), and Iwara's (1983) phonology and grammar. Kohumono noun classes are described in Sterk (1976). Spreda and Spreda (1966) and Bendor-Samuel and Spreda (1969) remain the only published works on Legbo. An analysis of Agwagwune vowels (Williamson 1973a), notes on Doko (Simmons 1970; Cook 1970), as well as several long essays on Agoi and other Upper Cross languages have also been written. A grammar of Kukele has reportedly been prepared by J. Fajen.

Connell, Ekere, and Faraclas have begun comparative work on the Lower Cross languages. Preliminary analyses by Connell indicate that several previously unreported Lower Cross languages exist, including Enwang, Idua, Ebughu, Uda, Efiat, Itu Mbon Uzo, and Usakade (Isangele). While the works of Waddell, Goldie, Ward, Adams, Gaskin, Green, and Oyohyoh established Efik's position as one of the best studied languages in Africa throughout the colonial period, other Lower Cross languages received little or no attention until recent times. The excellent work of Welmers, Winston, Cook, O. Essien, U. Essien, and Simmons have done much to bring Efik studies into the modern era. Studies on Ibibio include the early work of Simmons, followed by Kaufman's grammar (1968) and dictionary (1985), phonological analyses (Boys 1972;

Garnes 1976) as well as the numerous works of O. Essien. For Anaang only Messenger (1960) and U. Essien (1970a) are available, while for Oro an account of verbal morphology by Kuperus (1978) supplements some preliminary work by Simmons (1956b, c, 1965). Materials on Obolo include a grammar, a phonology, and various articles on phonology and morphosyntax (Faraclas 1983, 1984a, b, and c). Works on Obolo dialectology and discourse (Aaron) and on Eket, Okobo, Ibuno, and Usakade (Simmons; Connell) are forthcoming. Several long essays have also been written on Lower Cross languages at the University of Calabar.

The Ogoni languages were first documented and analyzed by Wolff (1964) and Brosnahan (1964, 1967). Gokana has been the subject of most recent works (Hyman and Comrie 1981; Wagner 1984; Hyman 1982a-d, 1983, 1984b, c, d). Williamson (1985) has published a comparative study of the Ogoni languages, and long essays on Khana have been written at both Port Harcourt and Ibadan.

A comparative vocabulary of several Central Delta languages (Wolff 1969), a grammatical sketch of Abuan by the Gardners (1968), and an Abuan dictionary (Gardner 1980) have been published. An account of assimilation (Williamson 1972) as well as preliminary works on morphosyntax (Isukul 1982, 1983) now exist for Ogbia. Long essays on Central Delta languages have been written at the University of Port Harcourt.

Literacy in Efik is quite widespread in Cross River State of Nigeria. Bendi, Upper Cross, and Lower Cross literacy projects have been designed on a language-by-language basis, whereas literacy programs for the Ogoni and Central Delta languages have been integrated into the Rivers Readers Project, based at the University of Port Harcourt.

18.2 CLASSIFICATION

Figure 18.1 represents the most recent classification of Cross River languages. Bendi and Central Delta classifications are based on Williamson (CTL7), Hansford, Bendor-Samuel, and Stanford (1976), and Connell (pers. com.):

Few have questioned Greenberg's (1963) classification of Cross River as a subbranch of Benue-Congo, but his internal division of Cross River into three groups (Cross River 1, 2, and 3) has been considerably modified. Crabb (1967, 1968) noted the close relationship of Greenberg's Cross River 1 with the Bantoid languages and its distant relationship to both Cross River 2 and Cross River 3 (which he grouped together as 'Cross River', as opposed to Cross River 1, which he renamed Bendi). In CTL7 Williamson pointed out that the distinctions between the subgroups of Greenberg's Cross River 2 (the present Lower Cross, Ogoni, and Central Delta - plus a few Upper Cross languages) are at least as great as those between Greenberg's Cross River 3 (a majority of the present Upper Cross languages) and any subgroup of Cross River 2. Williamson collapsed Cross River 2 and 3 into one group, later named Delta-Cross by Cook. Cook then divided Delta-Cross into 4 subgroups: Upper Cross, Lower Cross, Ogoni, and Central Delta. Cook's work has contributed greatly to this reclassification.

The following inventory lists the Cross River languages, variations in the pronunciation and/or spelling of their names, approximate number of speakers of each, and major dialectal divisions. The population figures given (based on 1953 or 1963 census data) are rough and generally conservative estimates.

The distinction between dialect and language in this list is based as much as possible on mutual intelligibility. As Wolff (1959b) shows, this criterion is not always reliable. For example, while Khana speakers claim to understand Gokana, speakers of Gokana, probably due more to sociopolitical than to linguistic factors, claim not to understand Khana.

LANGUAGE NAME (WITH VARIATIONS)		APPROX. No. OF SPEAKERS	MAJOR DIALECTS
B. BENDI LANGUAGES			
B1	Bekwara (Bekworra(h) under B7?) Yakoro?	100,000	chain of languages
B2	a. Bete (Bette, Dama) b. Bendi		
B3	'Obanliku' (Abanliku)	65,000	
	a. Basang (or dialects?)		
	b. Busi		
	c. Bisu (Gayi)		
	d. Bishiri		
	e. Bebi		

LANGUAGE NAME (WITH VARIATIONS)		APPROX. No. OF SPEAKERS	MAJOR DIALECTS
B4	a. Ukpe	140,000	chain of languages (or dialects?)
	b. Bayobiri		
B5	Ubang		
B6	Alege		
B7	a. Utungwang		
	b. Okorogung		
	c. Okorotung?		
	d. Eastern Mbube (Mbefal, Obe ,Oboso, Mbe afal, 'Mbe two')		
	e. Afrike		
B8	Bumaji	140,000	Western Northern Eastern Middle Southern
B9	Bokyi (Boki, Nki, Okii, Uki, Nfua)		
U. UPPER CROSS LANGUAGES			
U1	Koring (Oring, Orri)	75,000	Ufia Ufium (Effium) Utonkon Okpoto Northern Southern Ugbala? Iteeji (Mtezi)?
U2	Kukele (Ukele, Ukelle)	95,000	Biakpan Ikun Etono I? Ugbem? Utuma?
U3	Uzekwe (Ezekwe)	30,000	Central Ebom? Anong? Central Western (Bini) Northern (Dim) Southern Ezei (Erei) Abayongo
U4	Ubaghara		
U5	Kohumono		
U6	Agwagwune (Gwune, Akunakuna) Umon?	25,000 5,000 120,000	
U7	Umon (under U6?)		
U8	a. Ikom		
U9	b. Olulumo		
	Lokə (Lokəə, Loko, Yakur(r), Yakur(i), Yako, Ko)		
U10	Lokoli (Nkukoli, Nkokolle, Eduri) (under U8?)	120,000	
U11	Lubila (Ojor, Kabila) (under U8?)		

LANGUAGE NAME (WITH VARIATIONS)		APPROX. No. OF SPEAKERS	MAJOR DIALECTS
U12	Mbembe	100,000	Ofunobwan Oderiga Wakande Ofombonga Osopong Adun Okam Ekama Letatama Lebamal
U13	Legbo (Agbo, Gbo)	60,000	
U14	Leyigha (As(s)ig(h)a, Yigha) (under U9?)	10,000	
U15	Lenyima (Inyima) (under U9?)		
U16	Ukpet - Ehom		Ukpet, Akpet
U17	Agoi	12,000	Ehom, Ubeteng Dialect A Dialect B
U18	Doko (Uyanga, Basanga, Iko) (under U17?)		
U19	Iyonyong (Bakpinka) (under U17?)	becoming extinct?	
U20	Kiong (Akoiyang, Akayon, Okoyong, Okonyong)	near extinction	
U21 (U22)	Korop (Ododop) (under U20?) (Odut)	(extinct?)	
L. LOWER CROSS LANGUAGES			
L1	Efik (1st language) (2nd language)	360,000 2,000,000	Calabar
L2	Ibibio	2,000,000	Central Itak Nsit Nkari
L3	Anaang (Annang, Anang)	400,000	Ikot Ekpene Abak Ukanafon
L4	Eket (Ekit)	35,000	Central 2 other dialects?
L5	Ibuno (Ibino, Ibeno)	10,000	
L6	Oro (Oron)	75,000	
L7	Okobo	20,000	2 dialects?
L8	Obolo	100,000	Western Northern Eastern
L9	Itu Mbon Uzo	10,000?	

LANGUAGE NAME (WITH VARIATIONS)		APPROX. No. OF SPEAKERS	MAJOR DIALECTS
L10	Efiat	10,000?	
L11	Enwang	25,000	
L12	Uda	10,000?	
L13	Ebughu	15,000	
L14	Idua	17,000	
L15	Usakade	10,000	
O. OGONI LANGUAGES			
O1	Eleme	50,000	
O2	Ogoi	10,000	
O3	Khana (Kana)	200,000	Southern Northern Tai
O4	Gokana	100,000	
C. CENTRAL DELTA LANGUAGES			
C1	Abua (Abuan)	25,000	Central Okpeden (Southern) Oghozo (Southeastern) Emugan (Northwestern)
C2	Oduai	18,000	
C3	Kugbo		
C4	Ogbia (Ogbinya)	200,000	Kolo (Eastern) Anyama (Western) Oloibiri (Western)
C5	Ogbronuagum (Bukuma)		
C6	Obulom (Abuloma)		
C7	Ogbogolo		
C8	Mini (under C3?)		

FIGURE 18.2 An inventory of Cross River languages

18.3 PHONOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

18.3.1 SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

Cross River languages lie midway along the Benue-Congo continuum of canonical root structure, which stretches from -CVCV roots in the eastern subbranches to -CV roots in the western ones, so that, while both -CVCV and -CV roots are normally present in Cross River languages, the group is typified by -CVC (and, to a lesser extent, -CV:C and -CV:) roots. Consonant glide onsets are found in most languages; /j/ is

more common than /w/ in such structures, with glides usually in free variation with corresponding high vowels. Consonant-liquid clusters also occur, but can usually be attributed to a late rule of vowel deletion.² Sequences of consonants are otherwise unattested. Syllabic nasals occur in all languages, normally as prefixes, but sometimes also word-medially and finally (Central Delta and Ogoni).

18.3.2 CONSONANTAL SYSTEMS

Dimmendaal (1978) reconstructs the following consonants for proto-Cross River (PCR):

pp	tt	kk			j
p	t	k	k ^w	kp	(w)?
b	d		g ^w		
m	n	ŋ			(ŋ)?

/pp/, /tt/, and /kk/ are 'fortis' and /p/, /t/, and /k/, 'lenis'. A similar fortis/lenis distinction in consonants is reported synchronically in Upper Cross by Sterk (1979) and Bendor-Samuel and Sprea (1969). However, convincing arguments against the vague terms fortis and lenis (Jaeger 1983) have been given. Some scholars prefer to describe the distinction between the two voiceless stop series as a long versus short opposition, which seems more precise and will be adopted here. Contrast between normal (longer) stops and short (fricated or tapped) stops occurs in some Central Delta languages (Williamson and Elugbe 1984) as well as in Ibibio and Efik, where they are analyzed as geminate clusters by Kaufman (1968) or 'ambisyllabic'³ by Welmers (1966). The geminate analysis seems simpler and just as adequate as the ambisyllabic analysis and fits within the proposed long versus short framework for all of Cross River. Elsewhere in Delta-Cross the proto-long/short distinction is reflected synchronically in such oppositions as /l/ versus /r/ in Obolo and Eleme, and /p/ versus /b/ in Khana. As for the probable source of the long/short distinction, the suggestions of Bendor-Samuel and Sprea, which include 'shrinkage' of reduplicated or composite roots as well as the fusion of consonants across root-suffix boundaries, seem plausible and correspond to the limited and skewed distribution of long stops (or their synchronic reflexes). The persistence of the long/short distinction in stops in Upper

²Consonant-liquid sequences in Legbo are a possible exception; see Bendor-Samuel (1971).

³According to Welmers, 'ambisyllabic' consonants belong both to the coda of one syllable and the onset of the following syllable.

Cross, at least, appears to be an areal phenomenon (Sterk 1979) with northern and western languages being more conservative than southern or eastern.

Several additions to the basic inventory of consonants have been proposed. Although Dimmendaal reconstructs no fricatives for proto-Cross River, /f/ and /s/ are found throughout the subbranch in many languages. It seems that /f/ and /s/ may have developed from original stop consonants; this process must have been at work even before the Bendi/Delta Cross split took place. /s/ was probably the product of the first of several waves of stop palatalization; these yielded a palatal nasal /ɲ/ and eventually an entire palatal stop series or an alveolar palatal affricate series, especially in Bendi and Ogoni but sporadically elsewhere as well.⁴ Sterk reconstructs a full series of long stops /bb, dd, tt, gg, kk^w, gg^w kkp, ggb, ɲɲ, mm, nn/ for proto-Upper Cross, alongside /ll/ and /ww/. Dimmendaal is more conservative, adding only /ɲ/, /j/, /w/, and /gb/ to the proto-Cross River inventory for his proto-Upper Cross consonant set. Implosive /ɓ/ and /ɗ/ are found in the Central Delta languages as well as in isolated cases in Upper Cross (e.g., Ufia). The glottal stop /ʔ/ is phonemic in all of the Ogoni languages.

Consonants are distributed as follows. In roots of the shape:

$$-C_1V_1C_2(V_2)$$

the root initial (C_1) slot may normally be filled by any consonant.⁵ All distinctions of manner of articulation (but not place), except the oral-nasal distinction, are neutralized in C_2 position, so that almost everywhere in Cross River only a single labial (usually [b] or [β], but sometimes [w]), a single alveolar (usually [d] or [r], sometimes [l], [r], or [j]), and a single velar (usually [g] or [ɣ], sometimes [K] or [ʔ]) may occur, in addition to their nasal counterparts, root medially or root finally. Root final position C_2 is often devoiced and unreleased. Some languages allow two different oral alveolar consonants to occur in C_2 position. This is perhaps a relic of the long/short opposition between alveolar stops in the proto-language.

⁴Bouquiaux (1981) seems to overgeneralize when he states that a series of palatal stops or alveolar fricatives tends to characterize the entire subbranch. In Lower Cross, for example, /z/, /c/, and /j/ are never distinctive, while /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ occur phonemically only in Obolo, although Connell suggests that Eket may have /dʒ/, while some dialects of Anaang and, perhaps, Ibuno have /tʃ/.

⁵/ɲ/ is normally realized [ɲ^w] in root initial position. In some languages /ɲ/ may not occur at all in this position.

18.3.3 VOWEL SYSTEMS

A full range of vowel systems representing varying degrees of retention/simplification of the proto-Benue-Congo ten-vowel [\pm wide pharynx] ([\pm ATR]) harmony system is found.⁶ Most Central Delta languages and at least Kohumono in Upper Cross have full ten-vowel harmony systems. Agwagwne (Adim) has a nine-vowel harmony system with the /a/ - /ə/ opposition neutralized, while Lokə and Mbembe have eight-vowel harmony systems with the [\pm wide] distinction neutralized for high vowels. (Bokyi of the Bendi group may have a similar system). Most Bendi and all Ogoni languages have seven-vowel systems with the [\pm wide] distinction limited to the mid-vowels. Lower Cross systems consist basically of six vowels, the [\pm wide] feature relevant only for the mid-back vowel, although some relics of the /e/ versus /ɛ/ distinction seem to have survived in Efik and Oro. Phonemic centralized vowels have been reported for Ibibio by O. Essien and for Anaang by U. Essien. In general, only relics of the original harmony system have survived in Ogoni and Lower Cross.

Nasalized vowels are phonemic in all Ogoni languages; five nasalized vowels contrasting with seven oral vowels (the [\pm wide] distinction is neutralized for mid-nasal vowels). No Cross River language outside the Ogoni group (except possibly Alege in the Bendi group) appears to have significant contrastive nasalization.

Vowel length is contrastive in all Ogoni and Central Delta languages, as well as in some languages of every other subgroup of Cross River. The fact that in most Cross River languages VV sequences involving vowels of different qualities do not occur underlyingly would indicate that two identical vowels should be analyzed as long, rather than as a sequence of like vowels. In languages like those of the Ogoni group where unlike VV sequences as well as long series of underlying vowels are possible, this question remains open.

18.3.4 INTONATION, ACCENT, STRESS, AND TONE

All Cross River languages have systems of contrastive tone that co-occur and interact with intonational systems such as downdrift, register raising, boundary-related (demarcative) pitch-level modification, etc. Most have two levels of contrastive tone, but the Ogoni languages as well as

⁶The remarks of Bouquiaux (1981) concerning vowels seem to be applicable to the Ogoni group only.

some of the Upper Cross and Bendi languages have three level tonemes. Gliding tones and phonemic downstepped high tones are common throughout the subbranch.

At least some languages of every group for which instrumental or impressionistic data are available have different types of stress and/or accent systems co-occurring and interacting with both tonal and intonational systems. Typical stress patterns involve the parsing of utterances into phonological phrases over which a single stress (peak of pitch, duration, and/or perceived loudness) falls, the pragmatically or grammatically controlled emphasis of certain 'focused' items, etc. (see Faraclas 1984c). Typical accent patterns include assigning a single pitch pattern over each member of a given verb class regardless of the number of syllables it contains, pitch melodies determined by particular grammatical constructions, etc.

18.4 MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

18.4.1 NOMINAL CLASS-CONCORD SYSTEMS

Figure 18.3 shows Cross River nominal *class-concord systems* that typify almost every possible stage of simplification of the proto-Benue-Congo system⁷, from full retention in some conservative Upper Cross and Bendi languages to near complete elimination in the Ogoni group. An examination of the extent to which neighboring non-Cross River Niger-Congo languages tend to retain, modify, or abandon the proto-class-concord system suggests that areal processes due to language contact may be at work.

While the typical proto-Benue-Congo *prefix shapes* (CV- or V-bearing contrastive tone) have been retained in many Upper Cross and Bendi languages, most have added the syllabic nasal (N-) to their inventory of possible shapes⁸. Outside of Upper Cross and Bendi, the CV-shape is lost altogether (Lower Cross and Ogoni) or incorporated into roots via a process of pre-prefixing (Central Delta). In most Lower Cross languages, a small number of nouns occur with no apparent prefixes. In

⁷Again, Bouquiaux (1981) seems to be off the mark.

⁸Cross River languages provide some interesting evidence as to the possible source of the N- prefix, which occurs quite commonly throughout Western Benue-Congo as well as in some western Bantu languages. The N- prefix may have originated from a pluralizing affix (akin to PBC *ma-?) as found, for example, in Ibibio or Oro.

the Ogoni group, distinctive tone is lost over prefixes almost everywhere, while N- prefixes are lost in all languages except Eleme and Ogoi and V- prefixes are retained only in Eleme. In Khana and Gokana, nouns are essentially prefixless as a result of these developments.

PREFIX SHAPE	CONCORD POINTS	NOUN CLASSES
<p>*PBC CV-, V- ↓ Kohumono (U5)</p> <p>CV-, V-, N- ↓ Ukele (U2) Lokə (U9) Mbembe (U12) Bokyi (B9)</p> <p>V-, N- V-, V- CV- ↓ ↓ Oro (L6) Central Delta (all)</p> <p>V-, N-, Ø- ↓ Efik (L1) Anaang (L3) Ibibio (L2) Obolo (L8)</p> <p>V-, N-, Ø- ↓ Eleme (O1)</p> <p>N-, Ø- ↓ Ogoi (O2)</p> <p>Ø ↓ Khana (O3) Gokana (O4)</p>	<p>*PBC Full concord ↓ Lokə (U9) Bokyi? (B9)</p> <p>Full concord except numerals ↓ Kohumono (U5) Ukele (U2) Mbembe (U12) Alege? (B6) Central Delta (all?)</p> <p>Relics of adjective and subject-verb concord only ↓ Oro (L6) Efik (L1) Ibibio (L2) Anaang (L3)</p> <p>Relics of subject-verb concord only nouns only ↓ Obolo (L8) Ogoni (all)</p>	<p>*PBC Full class/gender distinctions ↓ Upper Cross (all?) Bokyi (B9) Partial merger of [-HUMAN] nouns to O-/I- ↓ Kugbo (C3) Oduai (C2) W. Ogbia (C4)</p> <p>Full merger of [-HUMAN] nouns to O-/I- ↓ Abuan (C1) E. Ogbia (C4)</p> <p>Relics for both [+HUMAN] nouns ↓ Oro (L6) Eket (L4)</p> <p>Relics for [+HUMAN] ↓ Efik (L1) Anaang (L3) Ibibio (L2) Obolo (L8)</p> <p>no distinctions ↓ Ogoni (all)</p>

FIGURE 18.3 Reflexes of the proto-Benue Congo nominal class-concord system in Cross River

Full or complete *concord* between nouns and morphemes associated with them in a given structure (adjectives, demonstratives, relativizers, etc.) as hypothesized for proto-Benue-Congo is retained in most Upper Cross, Bendi, and Central Delta languages, except for noun-numeral concord, which is restricted, fossilized, or completely lost in most

cases. In Lower Cross and Ogoni, only subject noun-verb concord normally survives, except in Oro where limited noun-adjective concord persists. In Efik, some otherwise prefixless nouns 'regain' their prefixes when modified by certain adjectives (e.g., *bùd* 'shame' versus *à-kám-bá ó-bùd* 'great shame', see Cook and Ita 1967), suggesting that concord is processed more like a prosody over noun phrases than via a noun-based prefix-copying system (see Demuth, Faraclas, and Marchese 1986).

While nouns in most Upper Cross and Bendi languages show *class marking* and *gender patterning* more or less traceable to proto-Benue-Congo, nouns referring to non-human entities are collapsed into a single O-/I- gender in the Central Delta languages. In Lower Cross, Ogoni, and, to a lesser extent, in Central Delta, proto-Benue-Congo noun class-gender classification is essentially lost through the assimilation of prefix vowel quality to that of root vowels, the loss of CV- prefixes, the proliferation of the N- prefix, as well as through wholesale prefix loss⁹.

18.4.2 VERBAL MORPHOLOGY

Verbs are *inflected* primarily via a system of prefixes and (perhaps more rarely) suffixes. Focus-related *reduplication* of verbal stems in Lower Cross involves the lowering of reduplicated vowels, rather than the vowel raising that is the typical Niger-Congo pattern (for further discussion see Faraclas and Williamson 1984):

OBOLO (L8)

ń-gé íkpá
'I wrote the book'

ń-gè-gè íkpá
'I wrote (didn't read) the book'

BUT
ń-fùk íkpá
'I read the book'

ń-fò-fùk íkpá
'I read (didn't write) the book'

As in most of Benue-Congo, verb roots in the Cross River languages fall into two (or three?) classes, depending on the pitch patterns normally associated with them. Obolo has a high-tone (or +accent) class, exemplified by *gé* 'write', and a low-tone (or -accent) class, exemplified by *fùk* 'read'.

⁹ A pluralizing definite suffix /-zA/ (which contrasts with singular definite /-A/) occurs with Ogbia nouns that have lost gender-type singular-plural prefix markings. In Oro a pre-nominal pluralizer /i-mà/ exists.

18.5 SYNTACTIC AND PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS

18.5.1 WORD ORDER

The basic word order of components is SVO. Noun phrase order is more variable, with 'adjectives' sometimes preceding and sometimes following the noun. This may be more due to the fact that items that function adjectivally may be derived from diverse sources (including verbs of being/becoming, nouns, etc.) rather than due to some syntactic variability particular to the category 'adjective' (if such a category can be said to exist in these languages). Demonstratives, articles, possessives, and numerals normally follow the noun.

18.5.2 NOUN PHRASES

As in many Benue-Congo languages, noun-noun associative (genitive) constructions, noun-adjective (or adjective-noun) constructions, and, to some extent, noun-determiner constructions normally bear an accentual pattern that (unless superseded by some other pitch-related system such as stress) imposes a falling pitch pattern over the final syllables of the noun phrase that they constitute.

ORO (L6):

ù-sìm ábá
tail dog

[ùsìm ábà]NP
'dog's tail'

òtìdò ù-sìm
long tail

[òtìdò ùsìm]NP
'long tail'

LOKE (U9):

kò-fè ò-kálán
leg white man

[kò-kálám-fè]NP
'white man's leg'

or

[kò-fè-kóó-kálán]NP

OBOLO (L8):

à-kpà -kè lò
bag demonstratives

[àkpàkèlò]NP
'that bag'

è-gwé gwèrègwèn
day six

[ègwé gwèrègwèn]NP
'six days'

18.5.3 VERB PHRASES AND FOCUS SYSTEMS

In many Cross River languages, verbs constitute single accentual units along with any objects associated with them, each verb (including each verb in a serialized construction) in a sentence receiving a single stress or accent. Pragmatic focus is commonly marked by sentence-level speaker-controlled stress in the world's languages. In the Cross River languages, however, focus systems seem to have undergone varying degrees of grammaticalization. In the Lower Cross group, focus is sensitive to the syntactic position of the emphasized information in relation to the verbal root (pre-verbal, post-verbal, etc.) and must be marked in the verb phrase itself, rather than wherever in the sentence the focused item occurs.

OBOLO (L8) (Falling tone ^ signals stress):

ńgè íkpá	'I wrote the book'	(neutral)
íkpá ńgè	'the book, I wrote (it)'	(pre-verbal)
ńgègè íkpá	'I wrote (not read) the book'	(verbal)
ńgè íkpá	'I wrote the book'	(post-verbal)
ńbàgè íkpá	'I will write the book'	(auxiliary)

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