

LANGUAGES IN CONTACT: THE CASE OF EDO AND PORTUGUESE

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This article deals with the result of the contact made by two languages over 500 years ago. The languages Edo /*édo*/ [jèdó] and Portuguese came into contact between 1483 and 1897 A.D. During this period, Portugal recognized the Benin Kingdom, which expanded into an Empire on the West African coast, by establishing its embassy in Benin City. Benin, as a nation, also established its own embassy in Lisbon. Though the kingdom now forms part of the present-day Nigeria as a minority speech community, it still wields a strong political influence in the country.

There was mutual borrowing of words between the two languages whilst in contact. The contributory factors are agriculture, war, religion and education, entertainment, trade and court activities, domestic needs, and building and construction. Variables such as bilingualism, geographical mobility, and lexical deficiency, have all contributed to the lexical borrowing in the two languages. The Portuguese words in Edo have stayed for so long in the language that the Edo speakers of today often mistake them for original Edo words. The six Portuguese words borrowed from Edo confirm that there was mutual borrowing between the two languages.

Cette étude concerne le contact effectué entre deux langues durant plus de 500 ans. Ces langues, l'édo et le portugais, sont restées en contact entre 1483 et 1897 de notre ère. Pendant cette période le Portugal reconnaissait le royaume du Bénin, devenu par la suite un grand empire côtier d'Afrique Occidentale, l'ambassade portugaise se trouvant dans la cité de Bénin. Le Bénin à son tour établit une ambassade au Portugal. Bien que le royaume d'Édo fasse aujourd'hui partie de Nigéria, où il subsiste sous forme de communauté à langue minoritaire, il continue à exercer une influence importante dans le pays.

Il y a eu des emprunts réciproques entre ces deux langues, tant qu'elles sont restées en contact. Ces contributions se manifestent dans les domaines de l'agriculture, de la guerre, de la religion et de l'éducation, des activités ludiques, commerciales et courtoises, des besoins ménagers, et de la construction et des bâtiments. Des variables telles que le bilinguisme, la mobilité géographique et une déficience lexicale ont toutes contribué aux emprunts de vocables entre les deux langues. Certains mots portugais en édo sont intégrés depuis si longtemps que les édophones de nos jours supposent à tort qu'ils sont d'origine édo. Les six mots édo en portugais confirment bien qu'il y a eu emprunt mutuel entre les deux langues.

0. INTRODUCTION

Relatively little work had been done on Edo and Portuguese contact. Although Han (1959:109–159) gives information that “Bini people used some written characters” before the Portuguese came, Egharrevba (1968) reports the event of how Benin and Portugal came into contact for trade matters. Agheyisi's (1986) dictionary and Munro's (1967) dictionary in archival form were there to consult, yet 90% of the words listed in the data came from Melzian's (1937) dictionary of the Bini language, reading from page to page. Calvet (1974:10) says that Europeans who went to Africa did so with a view to imposing themselves on the people with whom they came in contact, making them the underdogs and even enslaving them. But one would want to say that the case between Portugal and Benin of the time being considered was not so. Both countries respected the independence of the other; there was mutual respect between them. During the contact made by the two peoples, two languages, Edo and Portuguese, came into contact and began mutually borrowing.

Dauzart (1967:31) says that the Roman invasion of France and the imposition of Latin on the people helped for the good in fashioning the French vocabulary of today. One would also want to say something similar in the case of Portuguese and Edo. But Portugal never invaded Benin, and did not impose her language on the people, as Rome did in France. The adoption of Portuguese words by the Edo language was made in areas of need, and such adoptions have helped to increase Edo lexical items. The main interest in this article was to find out the gains made by Edo and Portuguese as a result of the contact made by Benin and Portugal since 1483 A.D.

Paucity of data, however, does not allow precise specification of the contribution Edo has made to the development of the Portuguese lexical system, in the way that I have been able to do with Portuguese in the development of Edo lexical system.¹

1. LINGUISTIC DATA

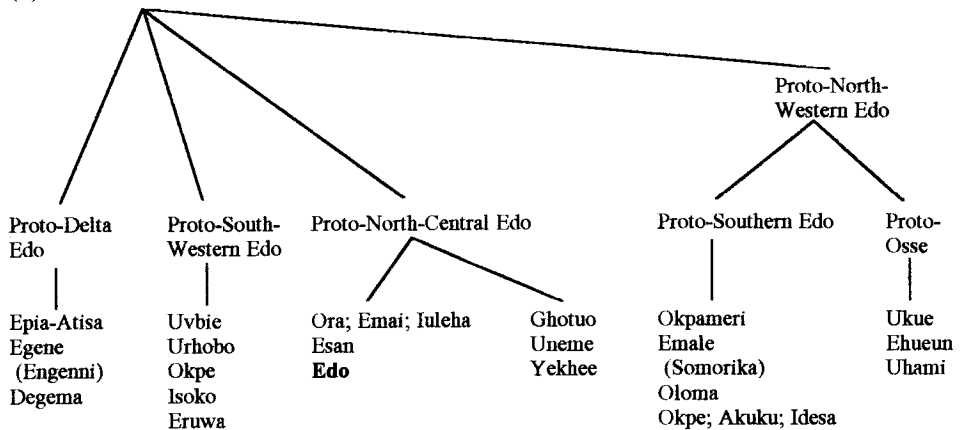
The Edo language is spoken in the lower reaches of the Niger River; particularly in Oredo, Ego-Uselu, Ikpoba-Okha, Ovia North East, Ovia South West, Uhumwuode and Orhionmwon Local Government Areas in Edo State, and other parts of Nigeria especially in Delta and Ondo States.

There are still native speakers of the language in Ondo State of Nigeria, especially in Okitipupa area, Akotogbo, Okenuhen, Idoani, and Akure. The people of Oza N'Ogogo in Delta State, are also native speakers of the language.

The Edo language belongs to the Edoid group of languages of the New Benue-Congo family as classified by Williamson (1989). According to Williamson, such languages as Yoruba, Nupe, Idoma, and Igbo, which were formally classified as Kwa, are now classified as Benue-Congo. It is to avoid confusion that the expanded Benue-Congo has been referred to as New Benue-Congo.

The latest attempt to define the relationship among the Edoid group of languages is that of Elugbe (1989:26). His Edoid family tree is adapted in (3).

(3) Proto-Edoid



From this family tree, therefore, we find that the Edo language is a core member of a larger group of genetically related languages and dialect clusters.

We should realize, however, that though the entire language is called Edoid group, this is not intended to imply that the various languages and dialects derived historically from Edo. The name was coined by Elugbe by analogy with Bantoid, Jukunoid, and so on, as used by other linguists especially Greenberg in his 1963 classification of African languages, to distinguish Edo as a language from the group to which it belongs.

¹My thanks go to the Portuguese Ambassador in Lagos at the time of writing, Rui Meira Ferreira, for making available to me a copy of a modern Portuguese dictionary in order to realize this work. I also thank all those who helped me in Ugieghudu, Ughoton, and Benin City, in confirming the Portuguese words still being used in Edo. I express my thanks, too, to Mr. Ikponmwonsa Oshemwegie for lending me his Portuguese-English dictionary whose grammatical part was very useful to me in the realization of this work.

Lastly but not the least, I express my gratitude to Professor Kay Williamson and the anonymous JWAL referee for careful reading through the work and offering useful suggestions to improve the entire work.

2. HISTORICAL DATA

The Portuguese first came to Benin in 1483 A.D. Other Europeans, who came later, were the French, the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English. Portugal traded with Benin from 1483 till 1567 when there started to be a lull in trade between the two countries. According to Ryder (1969:50), during this period some Benin people learned Portuguese and were able to use it perfectly. The Portuguese missionaries, who came to Benin after trade had been established, actually evangelized and taught the people in Portuguese. It is also possible that they learned Edo, which was the language of the kingdom of Benin.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that, five hundred years after, many loan words of Portuguese origin are still found in the Edo lexis. They have stayed there for so long that many young Benin people now think that such words are indigenous Edo words. In fact, the author did not know that some words used in Edo today were adopted Portuguese words until he started this linguistic research.

The history of the Portuguese relationship with Benin can be seen from two perspectives. The first is trade, while the second is evangelistic. From the data below, we will see that the slave trade, or trade in general, was not the only factor for the contact of the two peoples. It is true that many factors were involved, but because many documents are missing, we may not be able to establish all the factors. Slave movement was only one of them. Portugal traded with Benin, first in pepper, and later in slaves. Because of this interaction of trade and evangelization, some Edo people were able to speak and write Portuguese to the extent that they were able to get employment as interpreters and shipworkers.

According to Ryder (1969:50), when the Portuguese missionaries, Pires and Sobrinho, arrived in Benin City in 1515, the following things happened:

1. The Oba [ɔba] (chief) gave instruction that a church should be built in the city. From research and personal contact, it appears that the present Aruosa Cathedral along Àkpàkpávà² Street in the City is built on the site where the Portuguese missionaries first built their church.
2. The Oba sent one of his sons with those of some chiefs to be baptized and to be taught to read and write in Portuguese by the missionaries.
3. The catechism was taught to these boys in Portuguese. Young Bini boys and girls were taught reading and writing in Portuguese.

A copy of the Holy Bible in Portuguese was presented as a gift from the King of Portugal to the Oba of Benin. From personal discussions with palace officials, I learned that that copy of the Holy Bible remained in the palace until 1897, when the British burned down the palace. Other documents, which would have helped to know the volume of trade between Benin and Portugal were destroyed in the fire. Ryder (1969:66) also says that most of the records of Casa da Mina in Lisbon, were also destroyed with that building in the 1755 earthquake. Casa da Mina served as a clearinghouse for trade matters for Portugal.

Pereira (1978.1:8–19) writes that some of the slaves from Benin area were not sent to Casa da Mina in Lisbon, but remained in São Tomé to perform services. He further states in his *Bini créoles of São Tômé* (Pereira 1978.2:261–263) that Edo (BINI or UBINI) is a heavy donor language to the créole language of the island. The language is made up of Edo and Portuguese words, and this is as a result of the contact made by the two languages during this period of their history.

²Some people have suggested that the name àkpàkpávà is even Portuguese, though this is unlikely. We are still researching it.

As to the origin of the lexical item, Ubini was used by the Itsekiri people to describe Benin and its people. It is still being used today. When the Portuguese came, they adopted the word from the Itsekiri people, who first described to them the Benin country and its people at that time, using the term Ubini. The Portuguese reduced it to Bini when they arrived in the country. It became the term used by the Portuguese and other foreigners to describe the Benin country and her people. Today, the term is still used by foreigners to describe the people and the area they occupy in present-day Nigeria. It does not include the present-day Republic of Benin with some Benin extractions that settled there who speak French and some of the local languages. The name, Benin was adopted by the former Republic of Dahomey, probably because of the connection her people had with the defunct Benin Empire, which extended at one time to Ghana.

From personal discussions with a nonagenarian, Mr. Ikpotokin Afonso Okunzuwa (98) of Ughięghudu, the slaves who were able to pay their own slave price became free and stayed on to trade on the Island. In the case of Okunzuwa, a son of one of the São Tomé freed slaves, his father stayed on in São Tomé while he left for Ûghoṭon by stowing away in a ship en route to Benin City in 1901.

There is also a pidgin language developed in Benin City between Edo and Portuguese for trade matters. In 1550 Oba Orhogbua spoke fluent Portuguese learnt in his youth, and in order not to lose the language he made it a language to be studied and used by one of the Palace Societies known as **Iwebo**. It is called **Ìlāzẹ**. The language is exclusively reserved for members of that society, and I am not a member. After many pleas, however, one of them gave me the sentences below made up of Edo and Portuguese words.

- (1) **i si ataka bomdia**
 I smoke cigarette early^morning
 I smoke cigarette in the morning.
- (2) **sa amę ebika rhie efaka rre**
 Fetch water earthenpot bring knife come
 Fetch cold water and bring a knife to me.

During the time of Oba Orhogbua, he ordered that Bini chiefs should sew their dresses in the style of the Portuguese fathers who came to Benin City at that time. It is still the practice today. The priests taught Bini children of the time not only to be Christians, but also to be able to carry on the faith when the priests would leave.

The fact that some stayed on to trade in São Tomé is further confirmed by Brasio (1952.1:331–332) who says in 1515 King Manuel of Portugal granted freedom to all the male slaves and their descendants in São Tomé, provided they stayed on to populate the Island. The free African population, including those of Bini extraction, became wealthy, and took over the culture of the Portuguese. Marriages even took place between the Bini people and the Portuguese.

We can say, therefore, that the Bini and Portuguese nationals were quite close during the time they came into contact with each other, to the point that their two languages must have lent each other some lexis. In fact, Benin and Portugal maintained embassies right from the time trade started between the two countries. Benin was a country of its own until 1897. Events, which led to the change of this position, are better left for history lessons.

It is interesting to note that though trade was temporarily stopped between Portugal and Benin in 1567, Portuguese influence went beyond this date, because the Portuguese language continued to be used in Benin in all trade matters, even after

trade had stopped and other European nationals came to the country. According to Ryder (1969:83), British traders Ingram and Co. conducted their trade in Benin through the use of Portuguese with the royal *veadors* (brokers). This continued till 1897.

3. LOAN WORDS

3.1 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

According to Haugen (1972:82), a loan word varies from an imitation satisfactory to a native speaker (of the donor language), to one that the native speaker would not recognize at all. By the term loan, I mean that item borrowed or adopted from one language, similar or not, into another, which has a reasonable degree of permanence in the recipient language, and is familiar to a wide spectrum of its speakers.

From this point of view, I have concerned myself in this research with the general adopted Portuguese words in Edo as shown in the speech of both monolinguals and bilinguals.

According to Kashoki (1978:80), word borrowing is often treated among the many important dimensions of the dynamics of cultural and social change, particularly in societies in a state of flux and rapid transformation. It is only one of the several means by which languages adapt in response to a continuously changing socio-cultural environment. It is important to isolate it, however, in order to gauge its significance in the development of Edo language.

The data we will be looking at appear in the following tables and include Portuguese words in Edo in (3), Edo words in Portuguese in (4), and few words that need further investigation, which are of either Portuguese or Spanish origin, in (5).

(3) Loans from Portuguese/Spanish

	Edo	Portuguese	Gloss
a.	abádà	aba	skirt, part of a garment
b.	adáná	aduaa	a measure for buying palm kernel, garri, cocoa beans in Benin even today, used for royal trade with the Portuguese traders
c.	àlìmoí	limão (limões (pl))	oranges, lemon
d.	òlímà	lima	file (for filing matchet)
e.	èkpálávà	palavra	conference, prolonged discussion
f.	ìbèlò	belo (adj)	beautiful (but name of person in Edo)
g.	ìkpòtòkín	Portuguese	Portuguese; name of a person in Edo (corrupted into IkpotoKin)
h.	èbìkà (ùtònyòtò)	bica; (bilha?)	earthen water pot
i.	èkàlákà	caneca	mug, tankard
j.	èkófí	cofe/café	coffee
k.	èkàpítè	capitão	war captain
l.	èkàrrétà	carreta	a type of dance introduced by the Portuguese but indigenized by the Edo people

m.	ètùhèrù	tesoura	scissors
n.	èsàrà / ọsàrà	serra	saw for sawing wood
o.	èkokodià	coqueiro(a)	coconut tree
p.	èfákà (èrò)	faca	razor or knife
q.	èlátúrri (ègbowà)	latrina	latrine
r.	èpínsásí	pinças	pincers
s.	èpípá (ékhaèosísí)	pipa	a keg of gunpowder, cask, barrel
t.	ámokò	hamaca (Spanish)	hammock
u.	ómégirándésì	homes grandes	big men (reference to palace chiefs)
v.	átákà	atacado	roll of tobacco, faggot, bundle
w.	èkùyẹ	colher	european spoon
x.	èsádà	seda	silk
y.	ìsanhẹn	chave	key
z.	sàbá (mẹtín, sẹtín)	saber	to be able
aa.	èviádọ	veador vedor	inspectors of trade (customs men of today)
bb.	èfiádọ	fiador	agents or brokers of trade for the Oba
cc.	èbàrrẹ	barril	barrel, cash
dd.	èbázà	bazar	bazaar, market
ee.	èbísọbù	bispo	bishop
ff.	èbílàosì	blusa	blouse
gg.	èbọi	boi	name of a person in Edo, a tough man in Portuguese
hh.	èsífi	chefe	chief
ii.	èdámásì	damasco	damask
jj.	èpásítọ	pastor	priest
kk.	ètomàtò	tomate	tomatoes
ll.	èvánrrándá	varanda	veranda
nn.	efẹnrhinyẹn	farinha	meal, flour from cassava and manioc

(4) Loans from Edo to Portuguese

	Edo	Portuguese	Gloss
a.	èbábò	bambu / bamboo	raffia palm leaves
b.	ìyán	inhame	native Edo yam
c.	ùkpọn	moupon (pano)	cloth
d.	ùkpọn nọkhuà	mouponoqua	big cloth
e.	ígho	iguou/igos	money
f.	úníẹ	unie	an ingredient for pepper soup

(5) For further investigation

	Edo	Portuguese	Gloss
a.	ítábà (égbòghò)	tabaco	tobacco
b.	èsètè (èmwírèbò)	sertã	plates (china)

3.2 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data as they have been presented deal with Edo words borrowed from Portuguese and Spanish (3), those loaned from Edo to Portuguese (4), and yet another set of two words for further investigation (5).

As previously observed, the major factors that brought the Bini people and the Portuguese together were trade and evangelization. These two factors, therefore, were the base from which other factors took off; education, geographical mobility, internal and external migration, urbanization, and religious worship, all took off from the original two factors, bringing about innovation in the Edo lexical system. Before analysing the data, it would help to have an idea of the probable date of adoption of the loanwords.

All words in list (3) must have entered the language between 1483 and 1567 when active trade transactions were going on between Benin and Portugal. After 1567, trade transactions experienced a lull between the two countries.

We can be sure that the words in list (4) were borrowed during the time Benin actively traded in slaves with Portugal. Through personal contact and interviews, I came to know that the commercial storey building used by the Portuguese traders in Òghoton (Gwatto), was roofed with bamboo leaves (èbábò). Other items on this list were special, and so they were accepted with some modification by the recipient language.

The list in (5) has just two items for further investigation: *ítábà (égbòghò)* and *èsètè (èmwírèbò)*.

Concerning the first item, the Edo word is (*égbòghò*). The second word, *ítábà* must have begun to be used during the time of the Portuguese. But the name is widespread in West Africa, even in areas not reached by the Portuguese. Since the word started to be used during their time, I am of the opinion that it came through them either from their word, *tabaco* or from somewhere else.

The meaning of *èsètè (èmwírèbò)* 'china plates' is the same in both Edo and Portuguese. But the form *èsètè* differs from Portuguese *sertã*. Could the nasal sound on *ã* in Portuguese have changed to *e* in Edo in the process of phonological modification? By phonological modification Edo would definitely add an initial vowel to the word in order to make it fit into its phonological system. I cannot easily locate their time of arrival into the language; in fact, they are for further investigation.

3.3 FUNCTION OF THE DATA

Looking at the function of the data presented, the items fall into substantives, verbs, and adjectives. The substantives fall into eight groups covered by the base factors, trade and evangelization. Thus, we have agriculture, war terms, religious worship, education, court ceremonies, domestic utensils, building, and a few items which need further investigation. The numbers in parentheses refer to the lists in (3)–(5) plus the letter of the row.

Loans from Portuguese to Edo

Substantives. These all come under the eight headings below.

AGRICULTURE. These words include *àlìmoí* (3c), *èkófí* (3j), *èkokodià* (3o), *èfákà* (3p), *ítábà* (5a), *ètomàtò* (3kk), *átákà* (3v), *òlímà* (3d) which was used to sharpen matchets for working on the farms, and *efènrhinyen* (3nn).

WAR TERMS (MILITARY). These were needed to supplement what the Bini people already had for an expanding empire. Their *igún*, bronze and blacksmiths, manufactured their guns (*osísí* and *òkòdù*), but they needed gunpowder to operate them. The items include *épípá* (3s), *èbàrrè* (3cc), and *èkàpítè* (3k).

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND EDUCATION. As said earlier, the Portuguese who made early contacts with Benin made some impact through evangelization and education. It is as a result of this that we came to have items like *èbísòbù* (3ee) and *èpásító* (3jj)

After the arrival of the missionaries, many Bini people were able to read and write Portuguese. This all resulted from the education they received at that time. Interestingly, as a result of their education, many Bini people of that time (as it is today for English names) abandoned their Edo names totally, adopting Portuguese names with a view to getting fully assimilated into the Portuguese culture. Names like Dom Jorge, Dom Antonio, Pero Barroso, Fernão Vella, and Gregorio Lourenço³ support this theory (Ryder (1969). Nobody would think that possessors of such names were Bini people.

Among the personal names among us today, we have *Ìkpòtòkín* (3g) and *Èbóí* (3gg) which have remained as Edo lexical items till today. Bini men still bear the names now.⁴

ENTERTAINMENT (SOCIAL). Benin City has long been an urban centre, right from the time of Ogiso Éré. As a result of urbanization, social groups started to emerge. Thus, from the data we have *èkàrrètà* (3l), a dance which was introduced by the Portuguese for some change from many Bini ones. This dance has since been indigenized by Bini people, but it is not taken as a cultural dance of the Bini people.

³Dom Jorge and Dom Antonio were Oba Esigie's envoys to King Manuel of Portugal to ask for missionaries and arms. They were the first embassy to Portugal by the Oba. King Manuel sent missionaries but refused to send arms.

Pero Barroso was the second envoy sent by Oba Esigie to King Manuel in 1516 to ask for arms. He was good in the use of the Portuguese language and served as an interpreter in trade transactions with the Portuguese traders in Benin.

Fernão Vella was an Edo slave who was freed. He had an Edo wife with whom he left Benin for São Jorge in order to trade.

Gregorio Lourenço was formerly a servant to a Portuguese in one of the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. He returned to Benin to become an interpreter for other Portuguese who visited Benin for trade.

⁴We have information which says that some of these educated Bini people left Benin for São Tomé and Brazil, and even for Portugal. While we have documents on those in São Tomé, (Pereira 1978; I and II), giving rise to the development of a pidgin out of Edo and Portuguese, which has since developed into a créole, now a major language of the island, we have no document so far on those who went to Brazil.

However, we find here that geographical mobility and external migration have played some positive and negative roles in the development of Edo lexical innovation.

COURT CEREMONIES AND TRADE. Under this heading, we have items like *adána* (3b), *èkpálávà* (3e), *èbázà* (3dd), *èsífi* (3hh), *omégùràndèsi* (3u), *èviádó* (3aa), *èfiádó* (3bb). These items were for palace administration and royal trade.

DOMESTIC ITEMS. Items here include *abádà* (3a), *èbìkà* (3h), *èkàlákà* (3i), *èbíláosi* (3ff), *ètùhèrù* (3m), *èdámási* (3ii), *ítábà* (5a), *èkùyè* (3w), *èsádà* (3x), and *èsètè* (5b). All these were adopted for home use.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION. Under this heading we have lexical items like *ébábò* (4a), *èsàrà / ọsàrà* (3n), *èlátírí* (3q) (*ègbowà* is the Edo word), *èpínsásí* (3r), *isanhẹn* (3y), *òlímà* (3d). These were all adopted for the construction of houses.

Verbs. There is one verb on loan in the data as we see in *sàbá* (3z). Two other equivalents in the language are *mètín* and *sètín* 'to be able'.

Adjectives. The only adjective *belo* (3f) has turned into a noun in Edo. It is now a personal name, *Ìbèlò*.

Loans from Edo to Portuguese

The data in (4) are Edo words which have been borrowed by Portuguese (cf. Ryder (1969)). The words are few, but they show that there was mutual borrowing between the two languages. There probably would have been more revealed, had more Portuguese documents been available.

The lexical items are:

iyán (4b): The Portuguese bought this food item from the Bini people as provision to feed slaves on their ships on their way to Brazil.

únié (4f): This is also a food item, an ingredient for preparing pepper soup in the absence of pepper and used to feed slaves on ships going to Brazil. It was known to the Portuguese and adopted as such.

ùkpọn (4c): Clothes made the Bini way and used for clothing slaves to protect them from cold on the high seas while going to Brazil.

ùkpọn nọkhuà (4d): Big cloth made the Bini way and wide enough to cover ships and preserve contents.

ígho (4e): This is the name of money used as currency at that time. The Portuguese in São Tomé called it *igos* while others called it *iguou*.

èbábò (4a): Raffia palm leaves used for roofing houses built by Portuguese traders in Ùghọtọn for their commercial wares (cf. Ryder (1969)).

(6) Summary of gains by each language

Edo		Portuguese	
1. Agricultural	9	1. Provision	2
2. Military	2	2. Clothing	2
3. Religion and education	4	3. Trade	1
4. Entertainment	1	4. <u>Construction</u>	<u>1</u>
5. Trade and court ceremony	7	Total =	6
6. Domestic items	10		
7. Building construction	6		
8. Further investigation	2		
9. <u>Others</u>	<u>2</u>		
Total =	43		

From the summary of gains made by the two languages in contact, we find that Edo gained forty-three words from Portuguese while Portuguese gained only six words from Edo. The difference is certainly a limitation of documentation available and needs further research.

Clearly, Portuguese had an important impact on Edo language during the time that they were in contact.

4. THE VARIABLES

4.1 BILINGUALISM

According to Haugen (1972), in any large-scale borrowing of words, a considerable group of bilinguals has to be assumed. We will take this as our first variable.

Portuguese, functioning as it did when introduced into Benin as the language of trade and religion in the 15th century, would be expected to constitute a good source of loan words in Edo. Portuguese enjoyed a unique place in Edo society at that time because it served as a vehicle for instruction, at least in evangelization and teaching young Bini boys and girls of that time. In addition, it served as the only means of communication between the palace and European traders. We can also add that the language was ascribed a high social status and prestige at that time as evidenced by the total abandonment of Edo names for Portuguese names by young Christians of the time (cf. Ryder 1969:130). The language was spoken by those who studied it as a second language. It offered some people jobs as interpreters and shipworkers and even helped others to migrate to São Tomé, Brazil, and Portugal. It served as a means of communication among the educated sector of Edo society. Even today, the palace language, Ìlàzè is still spoken by members of the Iwebo society in the palace of the Oba. I wrote to the Omo N'Oba to request him to link me up with some of his chiefs who could speak the language which is when I found out that the language is Ìlàzè and not Ìbiè.

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

Our second variable is geographical mobility of the population. A good number of Bini people patronized the Portuguese traders at the Port in Òghotṣon (Gwatto). The language of communication was Portuguese, even when other European nationals were involved. The Bini people who were good at Portuguese served as interpreters for them because Ryder (1969:130) says that in Europe at that time, Portuguese was still regarded as the lingua franca of European trade. This means that every European trader had to use it for his business with the Bini people.

We can safely assume, therefore, that the interaction of peoples of Europe with the Bini people must have contributed to having some words which are similar in Portuguese, French, Spanish, and English. Thus, we have **bazaar** (3dd), **cofe/café** (3j), **pastor** (3jj), **tomate** (3kk) and **hamaca** (3t). That there are more original Portuguese words in the data shows its crucial importance.

4.3 LEXICAL DEFICIENCY

The third variable is that cultures in contact with others undergo lexical change in those areas where they are lexically most deficient. A look at the summary of gains for Portuguese and Edo in (6) shows that Edo has ten items under domestic items, the area of highest borrowing. It means that the language was most deficient in this area,

or rather, more useful new items came in. Agriculture comes second with nine lexical items, followed by trade and court ceremonies with seven, building and construction six, religion and education four, military two, while entertainment has only one item. Edo gained a total of forty-three items. On the whole, Portuguese gained only six items made up of provision two, clothing two, and trade and construction both have one item each.

From the foregoing, we find that the categories which affect the daily lives of the people have the highest number of loans.

5. CONCLUSION

From what we have seen, we find that Portuguese has succeeded in increasing the vocabulary of Edo language by at least forty-three loan words. The question is whether or not these loans have affected the phonological system of Edo. This must remain the subject of another paper. At the time when the two languages were in regular contact, we can only guess that there must have been many more loans, which have now been replaced.

One can, therefore, safely say that had Portugal and Benin pursued their policy of cooperation further than they did, perhaps the Nigeria of today would have had Portuguese as a second official language, at least in the former Benin-dominated areas of the country.

This article only serves as a beginning for researchers in linguistics interested in going deeper into this field of research.

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