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A Sociolinguistic Study of an Ewe-based
Youth Language of Aflao, Ghana



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In one of Africa's most blended, cosmopolitan and vibrant border towns, Aflao, Ghana, a captivating youth culture has given birth to an Ewe-based youth language called Adzagbe 'rogue/hooligan language'. An exploration of recorded conversations, interviews, and observations of this language reveals a linguistic potpourri where Adzagbe speakers skillfully blend their native Ewe with linguistic elements from various sources. English and French make a significant contribution to the Adzagbe lexicon given that Aflao is sandwiched between Anglophone Ghana and Francophone Togo.

Adzagbe emerges as a rich fusion of morphological, phonological, and semantic manipulations, crafting a lexicon with novel expressions and idioms. Morphological manipulations, including prefixation, suffixation, and inventive coinages, intertwine with phonological creativity, featuring clipping and metathesis of word syllables. Equally captivating, Adzagbe semantic manipulations include metaphors, metonymy, and playful speaker etymologies that breathe life into the idiomatic expressions.

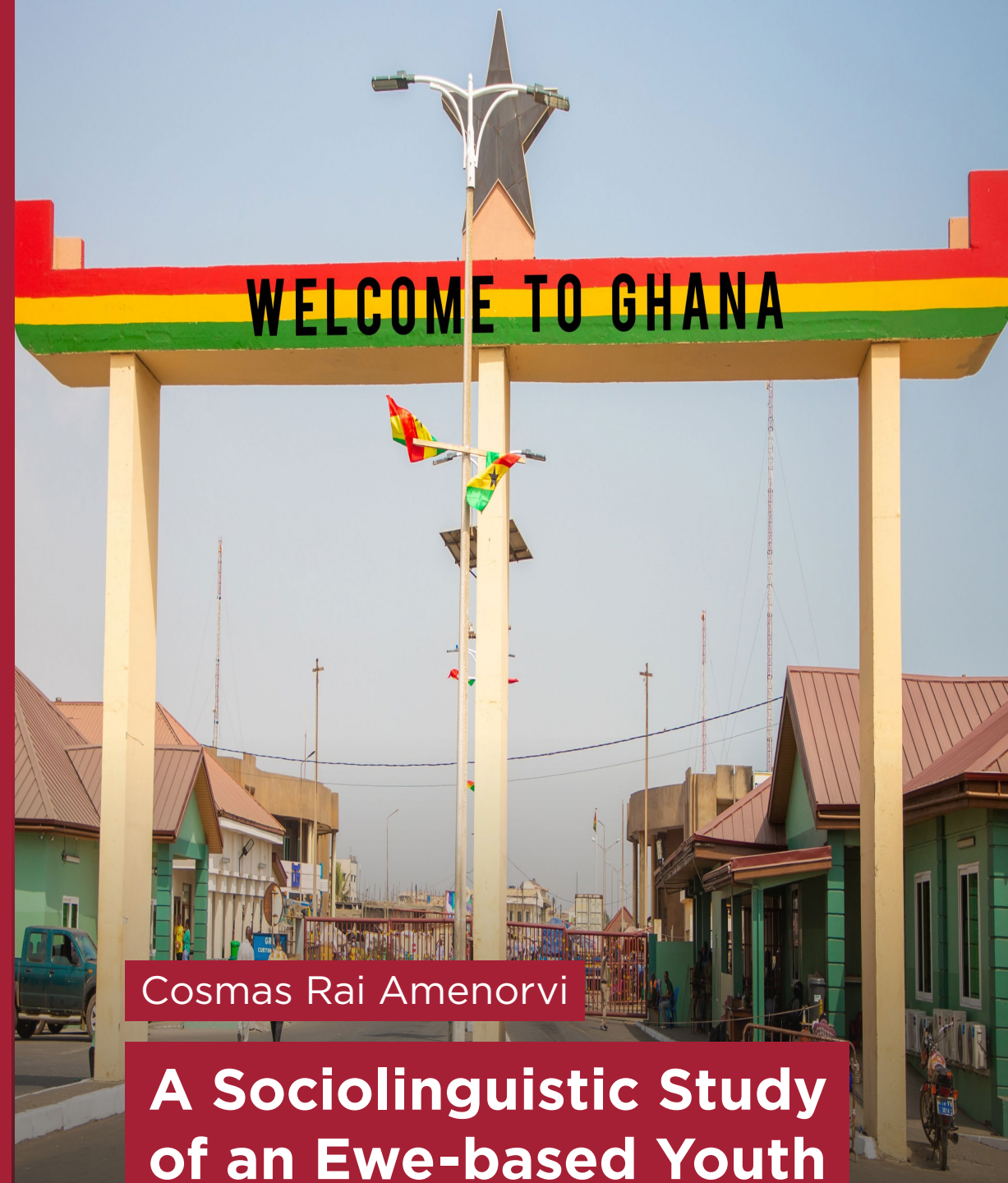
Yet, beyond the linguistic allure lies a profound purpose – the forging of a distinct identity. Adzagbe speakers, predominantly male, weave a cultural identity that defies conventional norms. From their love for rebellious music, flamboyant grooming styles to taking of controversial nicknames, Adzagbe becomes a symbol of defiance and self-expression. This book describes a fascinating social rebellion, with Adzagbe youth openly embracing controversial lifestyles, recreational indulgences, and a unique gendered and ageist identity that draw both admiration and criticism from the older generation and the wider community of Aflao.

Step into the Adzagbe world, where language is not just a means of communication but also an expression of youth identity and cultural dissent.

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